

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENT ON YOUNG CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how advertising on social media influences the buying behaviour of young consumers in Nigeria. Four objectives guided the work: to determine the level at which young consumers use social media platforms, their level of awareness of social media advertisements, the sources from which they obtain information about advertised products, and their level of acceptance of social media advertisements and shopping. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted with 120 young consumers selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected in person with a structured five-point Likert questionnaire (pilot Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$) and analysed with frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. All respondents held at least one active social media account, and 76% spent six or more hours on the platforms each day. Awareness of advertisements placed by Nigerian vendors was high (82% reported noticing them to a great or very great extent). Willingness to buy ($M = 3.68$) and the factors supporting online shopping ($M = 4.01$) were high, whereas information sources were only moderately used ($M = 3.38$), with comparison and peer recommendation scoring lowest. The findings indicate that social media advertisement is strongly associated with young consumers' buying behaviour, although its role as a decision-support tool is still limited. Implications for marketers and policy makers are discussed.

Keywords:

social media advertisement, consumer behaviour, young consumers, online shopping, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has changed how people communicate, how they discover products, and how businesses reach them. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe social media as a group of internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Boyd and Ellison (2007) add a more specific account of social network sites, which let individuals build a public or semi-public profile, list the people with whom they are connected, and view the connections made by others. Together these definitions capture what makes the medium attractive to advertisers: it brings very large audiences together on platforms where people already spend much of their day, and it allows messages to be shared, discussed, and answered rather than simply received.

For marketers, the practical consequence is that advertising is no longer confined to television, radio, print, and billboards. Business owners, vendors, brand ambassadors, and service providers now maintain a visible presence on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube, where they interact with existing customers and attract new ones at comparatively low cost. Individual influencers have also become a recognisable feature of this environment; Freberg et al. (2011) characterise them as a new kind of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, short posts, and other social channels. At the level of the firm, Pourkhani et al. (2019) synthesised research that links social media to business growth and performance, which helps explain why so many organisations now treat social media advertising as a core part of their marketing mix.

Nigeria offers an important setting in which to study these developments. Its population is young, mobile phone use is widespread, and informal and small-scale trading has moved rapidly onto social platforms, where a seller can post a photograph, quote a price, and receive an order within minutes. Empirical work on the Nigerian market exists, but it tends to concentrate on a single company or a single type of effect. Abdulraheem and Imouokhome (2021), for instance, examined the influence of social media sites on consumer buying behaviour at one retailer, Shoprite Nigeria Limited, while Agbele et al. (2019) offered an analysis of social media marketing in the country

more broadly. What is less clear from this literature is how young consumers themselves describe the chain that runs from using social media, to noticing advertisements, to gathering information, to accepting advertised products and online shopping.

The present study addresses that gap with a descriptive survey of young Nigerian consumers. It is organised around four research objectives. The first is to determine the level at which young consumers use social media platforms. The second is to determine their level of awareness of social media advertisement. The third is to identify the sources from which they obtain information about products advertised on social media. The fourth is to examine the level of their acceptance of social media advertisements and shopping. These objectives correspond to four research questions: To what level do young consumers use social media platforms? To what level are they aware of social media advertisements? Through which sources do they obtain information about advertised products? To what level do they accept social media advertisements and shopping?

The study is of value to several groups. Business managers can use the findings to judge how far social media advertising reaches and persuades young buyers. Policy makers concerned with electronic commerce can see where young consumers are already active and where their use of social media for purchasing remains limited. Researchers gain a documented baseline against which more explanatory designs can be developed. The remainder of the article reviews the relevant literature, describes the method, presents the results, discusses their meaning, and closes with implications, limitations, and conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media and Social Media Advertisement

A useful way to understand why social media works as an advertising channel is to look at what the platforms actually do. Kietzmann et al. (2011) proposed a framework of seven functional building blocks of social media: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups. Different platforms emphasise different blocks. A photo-sharing platform leans on identity and sharing, a messaging platform on conversations and presence, and a community platform on groups and reputation. For advertisers, this means that the same product message must be adapted to the particular way each platform lets people relate to one another.

Advertising on social media differs from traditional advertising in at least two respects. First, it is interactive: audiences can comment, share, ask questions, and buy within the same environment in which they saw the message. Agbele et al. (2019) argue that, in the Nigerian context, social media has moved marketing communication away from one-way broadcasting and towards exchange between sender and receiver. Second, it is closely tied to users' own reasons for being online. Chi (2011) compared interactive digital advertising with virtual brand communities among Taiwanese college students on Facebook and found that users' motivations for social networking shaped how they responded to different forms of social media marketing. The implication is that advertising effects cannot be separated from the habits and purposes that bring people to a platform in the first place.

Influencer-based promotion adds a third dimension. Because influencers are perceived as ordinary individuals rather than corporate voices, their recommendations can be received as more personal and credible than conventional advertisements (Freberg et al., 2011). This matters for young consumers in particular, since they are among the heaviest users of platforms on which influencers operate.

Consumer Buying Behaviour and the Online Purchase Process

Consumer buying behaviour is commonly described as a sequence of stages: recognising a need, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, deciding to purchase, and judging the outcome after purchase. Online environments change what happens at each stage. Information is easier to find, alternatives are easier to list, and the decision can be made at any hour. Research on early internet shopping already showed that information search and online buying were closely connected. Bellman et al. (1999), using a survey of more than ten thousand web users, found that a "wired" lifestyle and a shortage of free time predicted online buying better than demographic characteristics did, and that looking for product information online was the strongest single predictor of buying there.

A related question is why some people use the web only to look while others complete a purchase. Swaminathan et al. (1999) investigated this distinction between browsers and buyers, treating consumer characteristics and features of the electronic shopping environment as joint influences on whether electronic exchange takes place. Their work suggests that willingness to buy online depends not only on exposure to a product but also on how convenient, trustworthy, and rewarding the shopping environment appears. These ideas are directly relevant to the present study, which treats information sources and the perceived benefits of online shopping as two distinct parts of the buying process.

Trust, Convenience, and Price in Online Shopping

Beyond information, the literature points to a small set of conditions that make online shopping acceptable. Convenience is the most obvious: the ability to browse and order at any time, from any place, removes the travel and time costs associated with physical stores. Trust is a second condition, because the buyer must pay for and wait for goods that cannot be inspected beforehand. Price and promotion form a third, since online sellers often compete through discounts and special offers. Swaminathan et al. (1999) placed the characteristics of the shopping environment alongside those of the consumer, and Bellman et al. (1999) showed that time pressure encourages online buying because it saves effort. Where income is modest, as is the case for many young consumers in Nigeria, price and promotion are likely to carry additional weight. The survey items on preparedness for online shopping were designed to capture these conditions, and the items on trust in advertised products were included to reflect the second.

Young Consumers and the Nigerian Context

Young consumers deserve separate attention because their relationship with technology differs from that of older groups. They are more likely to own smartphones, to hold several social media accounts, and to rely on peers and online content when forming opinions. In Nigeria, the combination of a young population, expanding mobile connectivity, and a large informal trading sector has produced an environment in which social media is both a social space and a marketplace. Studies of Nigerian consumers have reported that social media sites shape buying behaviour (Abdulraheem & Imouokhome, 2021) and that social media marketing has become established as a communication practice (Agbele et al., 2019). However, many of these studies examine single firms or narrow product categories, and few describe young consumers' use of social media, awareness of advertising, information habits, and acceptance of online shopping within one consistent framework.

Conceptual Framework

The study follows a simple descriptive framework derived from the literature above. Use of social media platforms is treated as the entry point, since advertising can only influence people who are present on the platforms. Awareness of advertisements represents exposure to the message. Information sources describe how consumers turn exposure into knowledge about products, and acceptance of advertisements and shopping represents the behavioural and attitudinal outcome. Each element corresponds to one research objective, and together they allow the overall influence of social media advertisement on buying behaviour to be described in stages rather than as a single score.

3. METHOD**Research Design**

The study adopted a quantitative approach using a descriptive cross-sectional survey. A survey was appropriate because the aim was to describe the levels and patterns of use, awareness, information sourcing, and acceptance among a population, and because a questionnaire permits the collection of comparable data from a fairly large group at modest cost. The survey was designed to record what respondents reported about their own behaviour and attitudes; it was not designed to test causal relationships, and the results are interpreted accordingly.

Participants and Sampling

The population comprised young consumers in Nigeria. A sample of 120 respondents was selected through simple random sampling. Table 1 summarises their characteristics. Males made up about two thirds of the sample, and almost half of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years old. Most lived in urban areas, most held a National Diploma or a Bachelor's degree or Higher National Diploma, and almost half earned between NGN18,000 and NGN29,000 a month.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	79	65.83
Female	41	34.17
Age (years)		
18–25	59	49.17
26–30	42	35.00
Above 30	19	15.83
Highest qualification		
Primary school certificate	6	5.00
Secondary school	26	21.67
National Diploma	48	40.00

Bachelor's degree/HND	40	33.33
Residence		
Urban	111	92.50
Rural	9	7.50
Employment status		
Civil servant	41	34.17
Self-employed	37	30.83
Student	33	27.50
Unemployed	9	7.50
Monthly income (NGN)		
Less than 18,000	39	32.50
18,000–29,000	53	44.17
30,000–49,000	16	13.33
50,000 and above	12	10.00

$N = 120$. f = frequency. HND = Higher National Diploma. Age category "Above 30" is labelled as in the questionnaire; the 26–30 category also ends at 30.

Instrument

Data were collected with a structured questionnaire adapted to the study objectives. It was arranged in four sections. Section A contained six questions on socio-demographic characteristics. Section B contained five questions on the use of social media. Section C contained three questions on the extent of social media advertisement in Nigeria. Section D contained three main questions with 26 sub-constructs on consumers' buying behaviour on social media. These were grouped into three sets: willingness to buy through social media markets (5 items), factors influencing preparedness for online shopping (9 items), and sources of information used in purchase decisions (12 items). Items in Section D were rated on a five-point Likert scale scored as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Seldom = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly Agree = 5. All items were close-ended so that responses could be recorded accurately and without alteration.

Validity and Reliability

Before administration, the questionnaire was submitted to the research supervisor, and corrections were made so that the items matched the study objectives. Reliability was assessed in a pilot test with a small group of respondents using Cronbach's alpha, which gave a composite coefficient of .93, indicating high internal consistency.

Procedure

A trained research assistant based in Nigeria distributed the questionnaires in person, collected them, and returned them immediately, so that no completed forms were lost or misplaced by respondents. Data collection took place in 2023. All 120 distributed questionnaires were returned and used in the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed descriptively in Microsoft Excel. Frequencies and percentages summarised the demographic data and the single-choice items. Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) were calculated for each Likert item from the response frequencies, and an overall mean for each set of items was obtained by averaging the item means. Mean scores were interpreted using three bands: 1.00–2.33 indicated a low level, 2.34–3.66 a moderate level, and 3.67–5.00 a high level.

Results

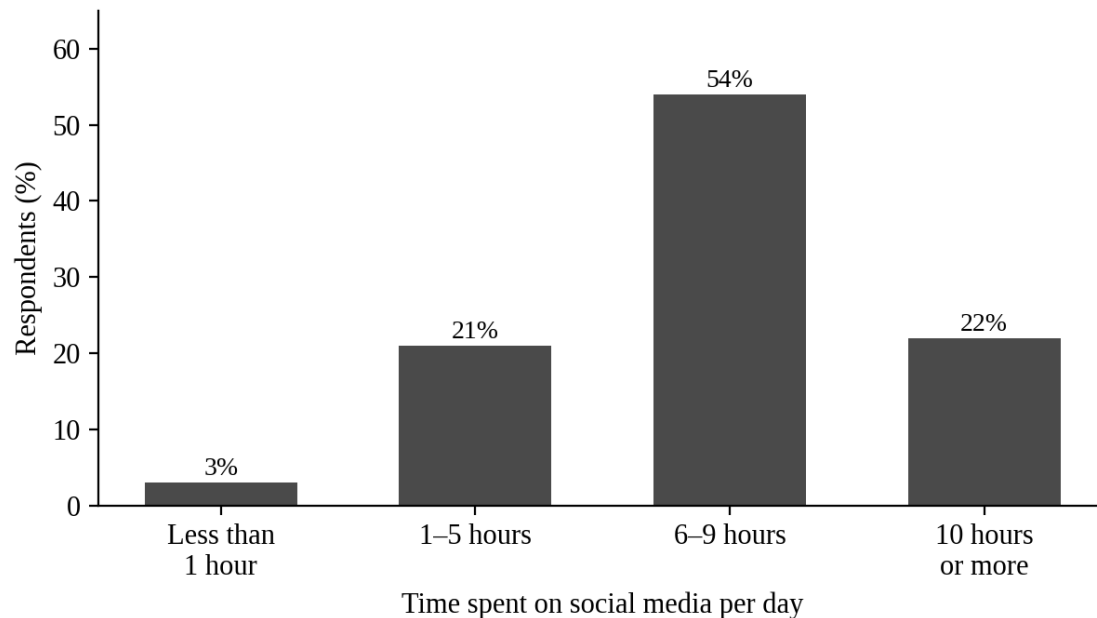
Table 1 shows that respondents were mostly male (65.83%), mostly under 30 years of age (84.17% were between 18 and 30), and mostly urban (92.50%). Most held a post-secondary qualification, with 40.00% holding a National Diploma and 33.33% a Bachelor's degree or Higher National Diploma. The employment profile was mixed: civil servants (34.17%), self-employed respondents (30.83%), and students (27.50%) were the largest groups, while 7.50% were unemployed. Income levels were modest, since 76.67% earned less than NGN30,000 a month. This profile suggests a young, educated, urban, and relatively low-income group, which is a context in which price-related considerations might be expected to matter.

Use of Social Media Platforms

The first objective concerned the level at which young consumers use social media platforms. Every respondent (100%) held at least one active social media account. Intensity of use was high: as Figure 1 shows, the largest group of respondents (54%) spent between six and nine hours a day on social media platforms, and a further 22%

spent ten hours or more, so that 76% were online for six hours or longer each day. Only 3% spent less than one hour, and 21% spent between one and five hours.

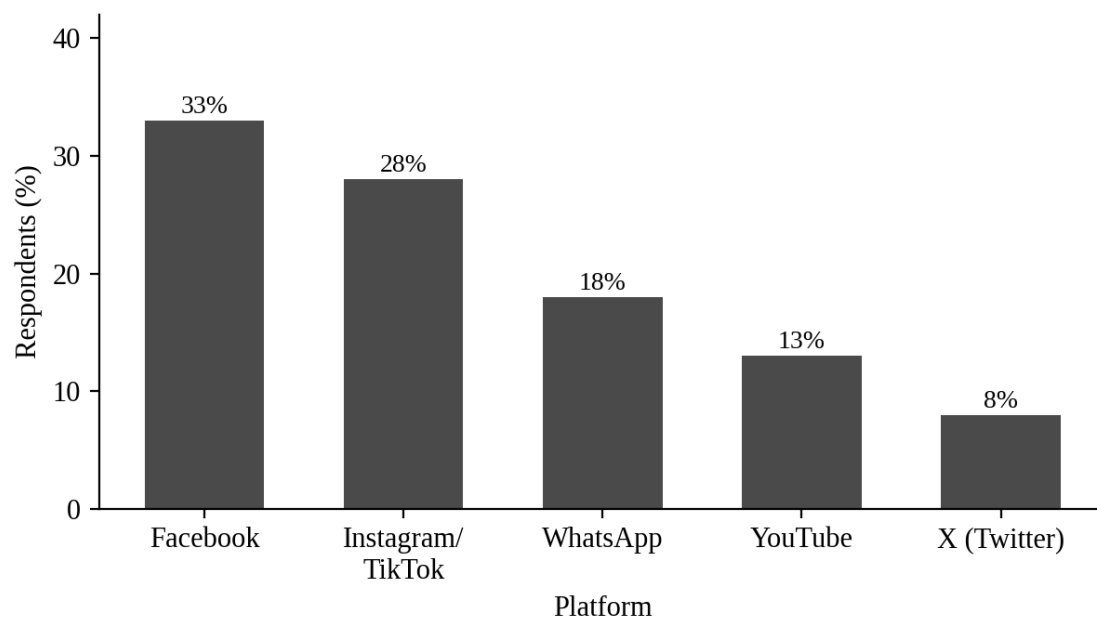
Figure 1 Daily Time Spent on Social Media Platforms



$N = 120$. Percentages are of respondents.

Preferences among platforms were spread across several services. Facebook was the most frequently used platform (33%), followed by Instagram or TikTok (28%), WhatsApp (18%), YouTube (13%), and X, formerly Twitter (8%), as displayed in Figure 2.

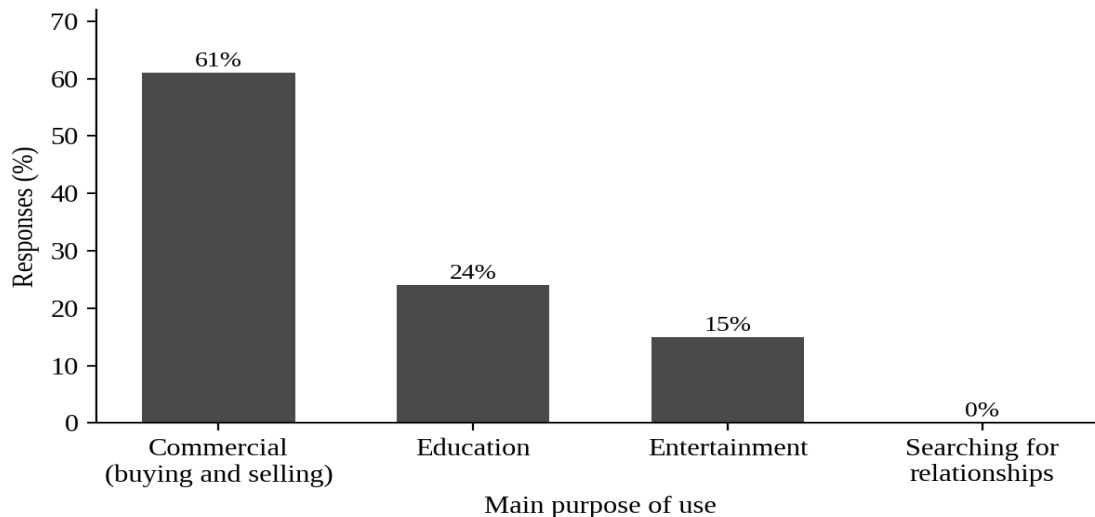
Figure 2: Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms



$N = 120$. Respondents named the platform they use most often.

Respondents were also asked about the most significant purpose for which they use social media. As Figure 3 shows, 61% of responses named commercial motives (buying and selling), 24% named education, and 15% named entertainment; none named searching for relationships. Because the raw counts reported for this item (86, 34, and 21) exceed the sample size, the percentages are interpreted as shares of responses rather than of respondents. Trust in advertised products was also high: 66% of respondents trusted products advertised on social media to a very great extent and 16% to a great extent, whereas 11% trusted them to a low or very low extent (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Main Purpose of Using Social Media

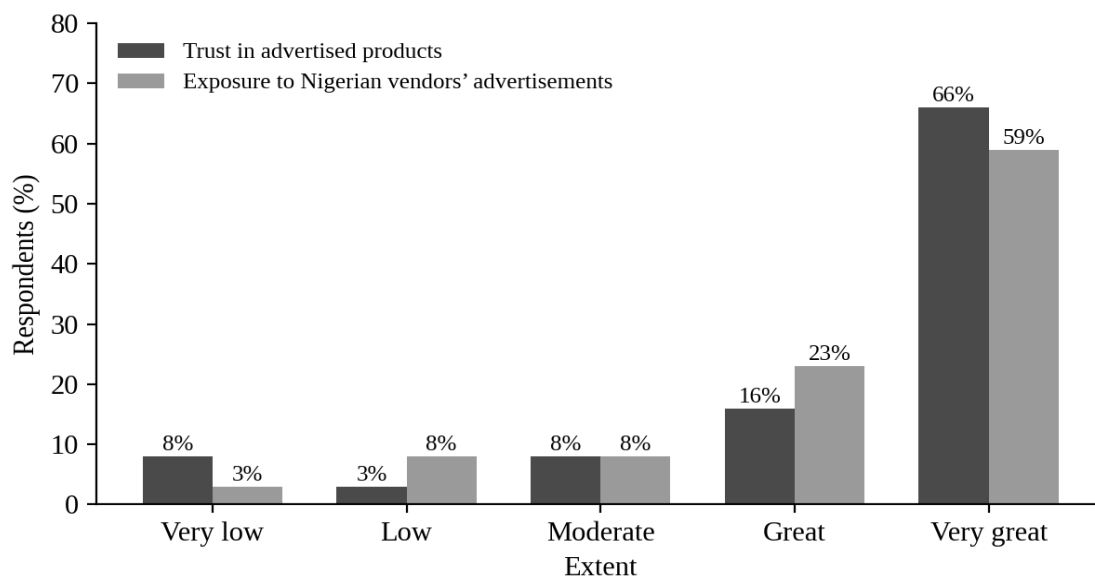


Percentages are of responses (141 responses from 120 respondents).

Awareness of Social Media Advertisement

The second objective concerned awareness. Asked to what extent they come across advertisement content placed by Nigerian business owners, vendors, and marketers, 59% of respondents said to a very great extent and 23% to a great extent, so that 82% reported frequent exposure. Eight percent each reported moderate and low exposure, and 3% reported very low exposure (Figure 4). Respondents also judged the development of social media advertisement in Nigeria relative to technologically advanced countries: 32% considered it developed to a very great extent, 38% to a great extent, 20% to a moderate extent, 8% to a low extent, and 2% to a very low extent. Overall, awareness of social media advertisement was at a high level.

Figure 4 Trust in Advertised Products and Exposure to Nigerian Vendors' Advertisements

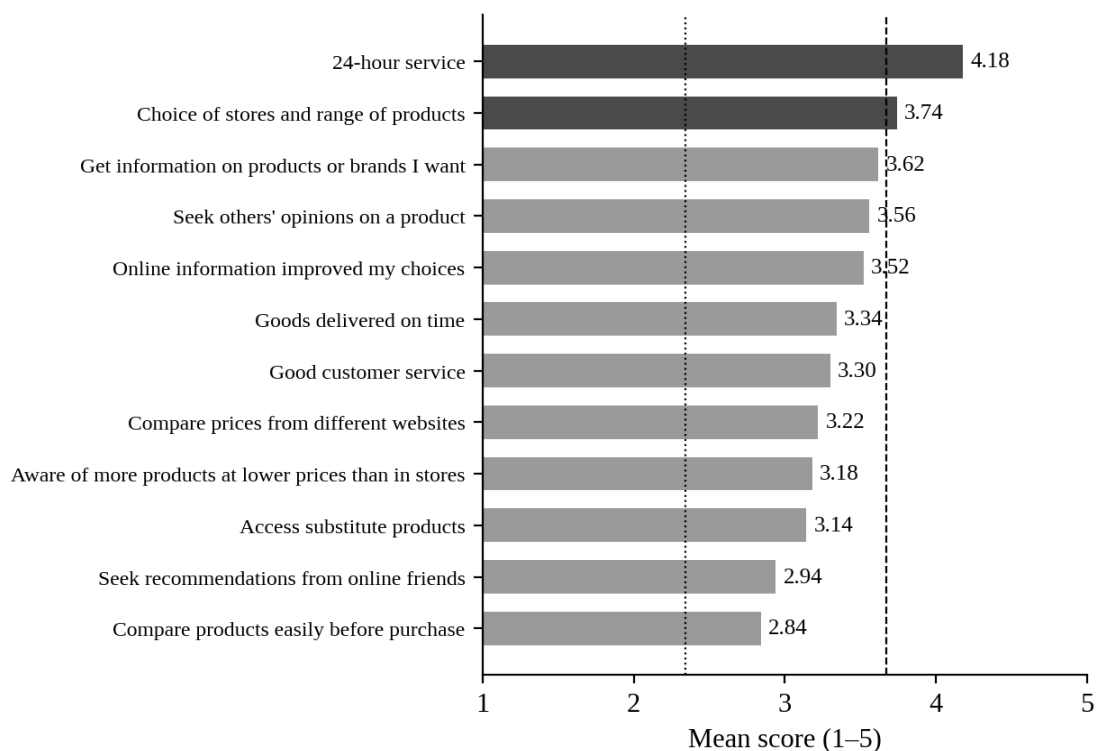


$N = 120$. Percentages are of respondents for each question.

Sources of Information

The third objective concerned the sources from which young consumers obtain information about advertised products. Twelve statements were rated, and their means are shown in Figure 5. The overall mean was $M = 3.38$, which falls in the moderate band. Only two statements reached the high band: the appeal of 24-hour service ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.38$) and the choice of stores and range of products that social media offers ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.75$). Items on obtaining information about wanted products ($M = 3.62$), seeking the opinions of others ($M = 3.56$), and the view that online information improves choices ($M = 3.52$) were moderate. The lowest means were recorded for comparing products easily before purchase ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.40$) and for seeking recommendations from online friends ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.46$). Information sources were therefore multidimensional, in that respondents drew on several of them, but their use was only moderate.

Figure 5: Mean Scores for Sources of Information Used in Purchase Decisions



$N = 120$. Scores range from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Dashed line = lower boundary of the high band (3.67); dotted line = lower boundary of the moderate band (2.34). Dark bars indicate a high level.

Acceptance of Social Media Advertisements and Shopping

The fourth objective concerned acceptance, which was examined through two sets of statements. Table 2 shows willingness to purchase products and services advertised on social media. The overall mean was $M = 3.68$, in the high band. The highest-rated statements were being always interested in buying in the online market ($M = 4.22$) and recommending online shops to family or friends ($M = 4.05$). The lowest were the intention to buy from online stores if given the chance ($M = 3.16$) and planning to purchase through social media markets instead of offline stores ($M = 3.43$), both in the moderate band.

Table 2 Level of Willingness of Young Consumers to Purchase Products and Services Advertised on Social Media

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Agree/SA (%)	Level
1. I am willing to buy a product through an online store	3.53	1.83	60.00	Moderate
2. I intend to buy from online stores if given the chance	3.16	1.87	50.83	Moderate
3. I always recommend online shops I have used to family or friends	4.05	1.30	75.00	High
4. I plan to purchase through social media markets instead of offline stores	3.43	1.67	60.00	Moderate
5. I am always interested in buying in the online market	4.22	1.08	80.83	High
Overall	3.68	1.63		High

$N = 120$. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Agree/SA = percentage responding Agree or Strongly Agree. Items scored 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Level: 1.00–2.33 = low, 2.34–3.66 = moderate, 3.67–5.00 = high. Overall M is the mean of item means; overall SD is computed across all item responses.

Table 3 presents the factors that influence young consumers' preparedness for online shopping. The overall mean was $M = 4.01$, again in the high band. Eight of the nine factors were rated high. Special offers and discounts received the highest mean ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.92$), followed by satisfaction with product tracking ($M = 4.28$), simplicity of the purchase process ($M = 4.20$), and the opportunity for a large selection of products ($M = 4.14$). Only the statement that online prices are highly competitive, and therefore a reason to keep shopping online, was moderate ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.64$). In total, acceptance of social media advertisements and shopping was at a high level.

Table 3 Factors Influencing Young Consumers' Preparedness for Online Shopping Through Social Media

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Agree/SA (%)	Level
1. I prefer to purchase online because it is very convenient	4.05	1.59	75.83	High
2. I shop online because of the broader selection available	3.76	1.54	69.17	High
3. I will continue to shop online because prices are highly competitive	3.23	1.64	50.00	Moderate
4. I prefer online shopping because of better product information and previous buyers' reviews	3.89	1.27	70.00	High
5. I patronise online products because of special offers and discounts	4.43	0.92	83.33	High
6. Online shopping gives me the opportunity for a large selection of products	4.14	1.25	73.33	High
7. I am satisfied with the product tracking process	4.28	1.06	89.17	High
8. I like the simplicity of the purchase process	4.20	1.27	77.50	High
9. I am satisfied with the prices of products advertised on social media	4.08	1.55	76.67	High
Overall	4.01	1.40		High

$N = 120$. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Agree/SA = percentage responding Agree or Strongly Agree. Items scored 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Level: 1.00–2.33 = low, 2.34–3.66 = moderate, 3.67–5.00 = high. Overall M is the mean of item means; overall SD is computed across all item responses.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Across the four objectives, the results formed a consistent but not uniform picture. Use of social media (all respondents active, 76% online for six hours or more each day) and awareness of advertisements (82% reporting

frequent exposure) were at a high level. Acceptance was also high, both in willingness to buy ($M = 3.68$) and in the factors that prepare consumers for online shopping ($M = 4.01$). The exception was the use of information sources, which was moderate ($M = 3.38$). Among all 26 statements in Section D, special offers and discounts and the appeal of 24-hour service were among the highest rated, whereas comparing products before purchase was the lowest. The next section considers what this pattern means.

Discussion

This study set out to describe how social media advertisement relates to the buying behaviour of young consumers in Nigeria. The results point to four main findings: use of social media platforms was high, awareness of social media advertisement was high, information sources were multidimensional but only moderately used, and acceptance of social media advertisements and shopping was high. Taken together, they indicate that social media advertisement has a strong association with young consumers' buying behaviour, while also showing where that association is weaker than the headline result suggests.

The first finding, universal account ownership and heavy daily use, confirms that young Nigerian consumers are reachable through social media on a scale that few traditional channels can match. The definitions offered by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and by Boyd and Ellison (2007) describe platforms that depend on users spending time creating profiles, connections, and content, and the present sample shows exactly that kind of sustained presence. The distribution of platform preferences is also informative. No single platform dominated: Facebook led, but Instagram or TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube together accounted for a majority. This is consistent with the view of Kietzmann et al. (2011) that platforms offer different mixes of functions, and it suggests that advertisers who rely on a single platform may miss a large part of this audience. The small share for X indicates that microblogging matters less for this group than general discussions of social media might lead one to expect. The finding that commercial motives were the most frequently reported purpose of use deserves particular attention. In many markets, social media is described mainly as a space for social contact and entertainment, with advertising layered on top. In this sample, buying and selling ranked first and searching for relationships did not feature at all. This supports the argument of Agbele et al. (2019) that social media marketing in Nigeria is closely tied to interactive exchange between senders and receivers, and it helps explain why awareness of advertising was so high. When a platform is used for trade, advertisements are not an interruption but part of what users came to find.

The second finding, high awareness, is consistent with the same pattern. More than four fifths of respondents said they notice advertisements placed by Nigerian vendors to a great or very great extent, and most judged social media advertising in Nigeria to be well developed compared with technologically advanced countries. It must be noted, however, that awareness was measured through self-reported exposure rather than recall of particular advertisements. The result therefore speaks to the volume of advertising that respondents believe they see and not to how persuasive it is.

The third finding is the most nuanced. Respondents rated social media highly as a convenient and always-available point of access, with a wide choice of stores and products, but they gave their lowest ratings to comparing products before purchase and to seeking recommendations from online friends. This pattern echoes the early evidence of Bellman et al. (1999), who found that product information search was the strongest predictor of buying online; in the present sample, the information that young consumers gather appears to come largely from the advertisements themselves rather than from systematic comparison or peer advice. It also qualifies assumptions that social recommendation is the main driver of social media purchasing. One possible explanation lies in the income profile of the sample, since most respondents earned modest monthly incomes and rated special offers and discounts, rather than peer opinion, as the most influential factor in their readiness to shop online (Table 3). Another is that comparison on social media is genuinely more difficult than on dedicated shopping sites, because advertisements are scattered across accounts and platforms. Both explanations remain tentative, as the design does not allow them to be tested.

The fourth finding, high acceptance, is in line with research reporting that social media sites shape consumers' buying behaviour in Nigeria (Abdulraheem & Imouokhome, 2021). The high willingness to recommend online shops and the strong interest in buying online show that respondents are not only receptive to advertisements but are prepared to pass on their experiences, which extends the reach of advertising through word of mouth. The browser-versus-buyer distinction discussed by Swaminathan et al. (1999) is useful here. Respondents rated convenience, special offers, tracking, simplicity, and selection highly, which suggests that the shopping environment is meeting the conditions under which browsing becomes buying. At the same time, willingness was only moderate for intending to buy online "if given the chance" and for preferring social media markets to offline stores. Interest in online buying has therefore not yet fully become a preference for it, and some consumers appear

to keep offline shopping as an alternative, possibly because of concerns about delivery, authenticity, or payment that the study did not measure.

The demographic profile of the sample provides context for these findings. The respondents were young, mostly urban, and educated beyond secondary level, with modest monthly incomes. Such consumers are likely to have reliable access to mobile data and smartphones, which would explain the high levels of use and exposure, and they are likely to be sensitive to price, which would explain the prominence of discounts and special offers. The findings should not be assumed to hold for rural or older consumers, whose connectivity, income, and trust in online sellers may differ.

Seen through the conceptual framework introduced earlier, the results describe a chain that is strong at both ends and weaker in the middle. Presence on platforms and awareness of advertisements are high at the start of the chain, and acceptance of advertisements and shopping is high at the end. The link between them, the use of information sources to evaluate options, is only moderate. This suggests that, for many young consumers, advertisements may move directly from exposure to acceptance with relatively little comparison in between, which may be good news for sellers in the short term but also leaves consumers exposed to poorly informed purchases. It underlines the importance of credible information and honest advertising for the long-term health of online markets.

The spread of responses also needs to be acknowledged. Several items had standard deviations above 1.40, which shows that attitudes were far from uniform. The statement that social media advertisement strongly influences young consumers' buying behaviour should therefore be read as a description of the majority tendency in this sample and not as a claim that applies to all young Nigerian consumers.

Implications

Implications for Businesses

Firms selling to young Nigerian consumers have good reason to maintain an active presence on social media, since their audience is online for much of the day, regularly notices vendor advertisements, and holds favourable attitudes towards buying. Price promotions, discounts, and special offers were the strongest motivators in the sample and should feature prominently in campaigns. Because convenience, order tracking, and a simple purchase process were also rated highly, firms should invest in smooth ordering and delivery communication. The weak use of comparison and peer recommendation points to an opportunity: businesses that make comparison easy, for example through clear product information, visible prices, and genuine customer reviews, may fill a gap that currently limits the usefulness of social media as a decision tool. Advertising spread across several platforms is likely to reach more of this audience than a single-platform strategy.

Implications for Policy

For policy makers concerned with electronic commerce, the results show that young consumers already treat social media as a marketplace. This supports policies that encourage trustworthy online trading, such as clear rules on product authenticity, delivery, and complaint handling, so that moderate preference for online over offline shopping can grow on a secure foundation. It also supports efforts to widen digital skills among small traders who use social media to reach customers, since the growth of Nigerian businesses in wider markets depends partly on how well they use these channels.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample was small ($n = 120$) and drawn mainly from urban respondents, so the results cannot be generalised to all young Nigerian consumers, particularly those in rural areas. Second, the data are self-reported and may reflect social desirability or imprecise estimates of exposure and time spent online. Third, the design is descriptive: it shows levels and patterns but cannot establish that advertisement caused any change in buying behaviour. Fourth, the standard deviations for several items were large, and the grouping of items into three sets, although supported by high reliability in the pilot test, was not examined through factor analysis. Finally, the age categories used in the questionnaire overlapped at 30 years, and the question on purpose of use produced more responses than respondents, which suggests that some respondents selected more than one option.

Future research could use larger and more geographically varied samples, including rural consumers and different regions of Nigeria. Inferential techniques such as regression or structural equation modelling could test whether exposure to advertisements, trust, and information habits predict actual purchase behaviour. Comparative studies across platforms or product categories would show whether the patterns observed here vary with the type of purchase. Qualitative interviews could also explore why comparison and peer recommendation play a limited role, and whether concerns about authenticity and delivery explain the moderate preference for online over offline shopping.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how social media advertisement relates to the buying behaviour of young consumers in Nigeria through a descriptive survey of 120 respondents. Young consumers were heavy users of social media, they were highly aware of advertisements placed by Nigerian vendors, they used a range of information sources but only to a moderate degree, and they showed a high level of acceptance of social media advertisements and shopping. These results support the conclusion that social media advertisement has a strong influence on young consumers' buying behaviour, with the qualification that this influence operates more through exposure, convenience, and special offers than through comparison or peer recommendation. Nigerian businesses that wish to compete in an increasingly digital market can therefore benefit from adopting social media advertising, while building the trust and information tools that would convert strong interest into lasting preference for online shopping.

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