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THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE ADVERTISEMENT ON CONSUMER BRAND PREFERENCE

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ABSTRACT
This paper looked at the influence of online advertisement on consumer brand preference. The objectives of the study were examined to determine the extent to which consumers are exposed to the online advertisement of brands of products and services, determine the attitude of consumers towards the online advertisement of brands of products and examine the extent to which consumers are influenced by their exposure and attitude towards online advertisement in their preference for brands of products. The study was anchored on Uses and Gratification and Persuasion Theories. A survey method with the use of a questionnaire was adopted to gather data from Federal Polytechnic Ede students. Purposive sampling techniques were used to gather data from 241 respondents. The result showed that the preference rate of brands of product among Federal Polytechnic Ede students is as a result of their exposure to the various online platforms. The study concluded that the use of the various online platforms by advertisers to display their products does not only provide mere information about the products but also goes a long way in influencing brand preferences by consumers. Also, it would be of great advantage for advertisers to note that a strong brand builds on quality will help to enhance customer's satisfaction and confidence in their preferences and purchasing decisions as well as provide value to the advertisers by enhancing competitive advantage.

Keyword: Online, advertisement, brand, consumer, preference and influence

INTRODUCTION

Online advertising has been regarded as a potent promotional tool for creating, building, and managing a brand. Martins (2018) observed that the advent of online advertising was influenced by the rapid rise of the internet as a medium for global connectivity and interactions that spans all aspects of life. In the opinion of Evans (2009), more advertisers are shifting advert spending on online technologies. For advertisers, reaching consumers is a priority, making them use any medium available, reliable, and effective. The Internet happens to be one of these mediums.

Hence, advertising is a form of communication that persuades the consumer for making a purchase decision and to provide information to the viewer. The concept of advertising came into existence with the Marketing Mix of 4 Ps that is Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Advertising is a component of the Promotional mix, which is to create awareness among the consumers about the products and services for making the purchase decision. According to Norris (2006), advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. With the economic and social effects advertising also covers two main functions which are the provision of information and persuasion.

In recent times advertising has become the most important form employ to promote products and services and it is used for communication as well. Thus, the evolution of the internet has provided new opportunities for globalization as well as the local region. This new technology refers to communication and information to be globalized. Even the internet and website provide convenient services to customers who can efficiently manage their resources. Nnoka (2015) said the internet plays a vital role in consumer buying decisions, the Internet has become the mainstream and for most parts, the offline world is mirrored by the online world.

Furthermore, online advertising is the form of promotion that uses the internet and the World Wide Web to deliver marketing messages to attract, retain, and enhance the customers. Ayanwale (2018) affirmed that a consumer can have ideas and information about a small business enterprise concerning large business enterprises regarding products and services. Focus on different trends of online advertising also has been done which results with the fact that online ads have become a challenge for the print ads as various online applications, social site help to lead towards the data instantly than other advertisement media existing. This is an attractive awareness-creating tool for the promotion of the business.

Therefore, advertisements are the most important factor in creating brand preference, however; many obstacles may restrain ad's effects on brand selection as observed by Ayanwale (2018). An organization's brand image can be as important as the goods or services it produces. A strong brand image is a powerful asset. A recognized and trusted brand identity makes people confident that the organization is dependable. Developing a corporate brand is important because a positive brand image will give consumers, and other interested stakeholders, confidence in the full range of products and activities associated with a particular company.

Notwithstanding, there have been several studies on the nature of online advertising Anusa (2016) generalized that online advertising has turned out to be one of the most preferred advert media of communication, entertainment for people with extreme potential for growth. Also, Gabriel (2016) stated that online advertising has experienced rapid growth during recent years due to its unique advantages for both consumers and retailers, such as shopping at round the clock facilities, decreasing dependence to store visits, saving travel costs, increasing market area, decreasing overhead expenses and access to multiple options which as a result of this aids at promoting global and local brands.

However, there are few studies on how online advertising promotes brand preference in the Nigerian market in the areas of purchase and patronage. Thus, this study would determine the influence of online advertisement on consumer brand preference

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Online media have been adopted by different people for different purposes. Some of the purposes are either to chat, share information, market, educate, entertain, or advertise products. Some authorities such as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) observed that traditional advertising is losing its influence on consumers. However, earlier scholars such as Dednne (2009), Goya, (2011), and Seema Hasan, (2003) have not paid attention to the use of the online platform for making purchasing decisions.

In the opinion of Nnaane (2011) the rapid evolution of the internet across countries of the world today has inspired many businesses to advertising strategies to invite millions of active users of the networks to their products. The author observed that Nigeria is not exempted from this growing phenomenon, adding that businesses in the country now strive to replicate those online dealings and transaction patterns that are practice abroad. Examples of online advertisers in Nigeria include; Jumia, Konga, Dealdey, 3stiches, Taafoo, Buyright, etc.

Furthermore, several researchers (Anderson, 2009; Goya, 2011; Jinco, 2011) had addressed the uses of online platforms for various purposes, including advertising and marketing of products and services. They have overlooked the aspect where the online advertisement of products can influence consumer preference or choice for a particular brand of product over another. That is, how advert messages placed on the various online platforms can make consumers develop a strong liking for a brand of product to the extent of purchasing it.

The above reasoning raised curiosity as regards the influence of online advertisement on consumer brand preference. Research in this area is significant because it would facilitate more understanding of the influence and patronage of online advertising on consumers. Therefore, this study aims at examining the extent to which online advertisement influences consumer's preference for brands of various products and services.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the extent to which consumers are exposed to the online advertisements of brands of products and services.
2. To determine the attitude of consumers towards the online advertisement of brands of products.
3. To examine the extent to which consumers are influenced by their exposure and attitude towards online advertisement in their preference for brands of products

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- **USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY**

This study is anchored on the uses and gratification theory. This theory posits that individuals will seek out specific media outlets to fulfill their needs and wants. The theory was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Micheal Gurevitch in 1974. Uses and Gratification Theory focuses on media use. According to Gruzd at el, (2011) the Uses and Gratification Theory assumes that the audience is conceived as active, in the mass communication process, many initiatives in linking need gratification and media choice lie within the audience members themselves and that value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience operations are explored on their terms.

Folarin (2002) also stated that the theory is concerned with what people do with the mass media, instead of what mass media do to the people. Folarin (2002) observed that when an audience actively seeks out media, they are typically seeking it to gratify a need. Based on the idea and concepts discussed, Folarin (2002) stated that media users make choices based on prior motivation gotten from the media chosen.
This theory depends on the socio mental communication tradition and concentrates on a mass media scale. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, this theory posits that consumers are in control of selecting the media outlets that meet their needs and wants to attain fulfillment. Since the world is a global village, uses and gratification theory has been connected to online advertising as a result of its tendency of versatility, consistent access, and alternatives to access content, this field is growing with new research on the inspirations driving utilizing this kind of advertising. All in all, advertisers utilize online advertising for the accompanying uses and satisfactions.

Therefore, this theory explicitly gives insight into how consumers actively influence their choice of media and how they selectively choose, attend to, perceive, and retain the media messages based on needs and beliefs which makes it relevant to the thrust of this research work. According to Katz et al (1974), as cited by Roberts (2015), the Uses and Gratifications theory is based on the assumptions that: the audience is active, the media choice lies with the audience member, all mediums compete with other sources of need/goal fulfillment, mass media goals can be found in the message of the source, and cultural value judgments should not be taken into consideration as the audience explores their own opinions. By directly applying these assumptions to this study, a few observations relevant to this study can be made. First, the average online user is active as he/she has willingly created an account, and is a member of the platform. Next, the user chooses any online platforms as a means to fulfill his/her wants and goals over other sources. Essentially, the online user can visit any site (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.) for a unique purpose. It could be the need to connect interpersonally with friends, the need to promote a business or product, that is advertising, or the need to patronize a product.

- **PERSUASION THEORY**

Another theory that will form the basis for this study is the Persuasion theory. Persuasion Theory was propounded by Hugh Rank in 1976. Persuasion theory attempt to influence a person's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behavior. Nicole Vila (2014) observed that

persuasion attempts to change minds or get people to act. Nicole Vila (2013) explained that persuasive messages are used to influence the receivers rather than merely providing information and letting the receiver make up his/her mind.
DeFleur (1970), explained that people tend to evaluate persuasive messages according to how the message fit or fail to fit into their own cognitive (meaningful) pattern. DeFleur (1970), explained that a message that fits into the consumer's pattern ensures a balance in his internal state, while one that does not fit causes internal inconsistency. To restore internal balance, according to the author, the receiver has to change his attitude towards the subject matter or the source.

Folarin (2002), asserts that persuasion is the process whereby an attempt is made to induce changes in attitude processes through the involvement of a person's cognitive and affective processes. According to Folarin (2002), there are two theoretical models associated with persuasion: the psychodynamic model and the socio-cultural model. The author posited that the psychodynamic model is based on the individual Differences Perspective and it holds that for a persuasive message to be considered effective, it must succeed in altering the psychological functioning of the recipient (s) in a way that he or she will respond overtly with models of behavior desired or suggested by the communicator. The psychological motivations, according to Folarin (2002), are used as intervening variables between the message stimulus and audience response which include hunger, sexual urges, status drives, and opinion. The socio-cultural model, as noted by Folarin (2002), derives from the social categories perspective and social relations perspective. In the author's opinion, the model seeks to explain how variables such as organizational membership, work roles, reference groups, cultural norms, and primary group norms exercise social control and help to shape and channel people's overt action in ways that depart from internal psychological dispositions.
DeFleur (1970), explained that people tend to evaluate persuasive messages according to how the message fit or fail to fit into their own cognitive (meaningful) pattern. DeFleur (1970), stressed that a receiver who holds a mild opinion on the pertinent topic may change his attitude towards the topic, whereas a receiver who holds a strong opinion on the topic is more likely to change his attitude towards the source.

Therefore, concerning the relevance to the present study, this theory explains how persuasive messages (advertisements) are used by advertisers to change consumer's attitudes, behavior and influence their purchasing decisions which is an aspect this research work attempts to address. The theory also explains that advertisers build brands by shaping people's attitudes, beliefs, and feelings towards the products, to have them act in favour by purchasing the brands. Persuasive messages are mostly used by advertisers to influence and change the attitude and behavior of consumers to buy certain brands especially the different brands of mobile phones advertised on online platforms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kimefeld and Watt (2011), researched the "perception of youths towards online advertisement". The purpose of the study was to examine the American youth's perception of online advertisements. The major question they sought to answer was: "what do

American youths think or make of online advertising as an advert medium choice available to them for shopping? The study adopted the uses and gratification theory and employed the survey research method as 250 copies of questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents (undergraduates in the University of California Los Angeles). From the findings of the study, it was found out that online advertising exposes the youths to new and existing products. Thus, the study concluded that youths prefer online advertising to other advertising forms. The study recommends that all products purchased online should be insured by reputable insurance companies. This will encourage people to purchase what they see advertised on the web through online purchase, as the insurance companies would be made to compensate for products delivered in bad condition. Kimelfeld and Watt (2001)'s study is relevant to this study because the study aims at examining the exposure of consumers towards the online advertisement of various brands of product which is one of the objectives of this study.

Another study was carried out by Abdullahi (2015) on online shopping policy: problems and prospects "A case study of the residents of Kano State Northern Nigeria and residents of Lagos State of Nigeria". The study aimed to examine the place of online advertising in the shopping behavior of the respondents which were the residents of Gwale, Nasarawa in Kano, and Ibeju-Lekki and Apapa in Lagos. The study was anchored on the Individual Difference Theory and adopted the survey research method. The field interviews were carried out in Lagos and Kano states as 200 questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents. From the findings of the study, the majority of the respondents agreed that online advertising influences them to shop online. The researcher concluded that rather than complicate the shopping behavior of `Nigerians, online shopping has eased the stress of going out and struggling for what to buy. The study recommended that companies should pay more attention to online advertising as a medium of advertisement because a majority of Nigerians are now depending on the internet for shopping.
Abdullahi's (2012) study is relevant to this study because the study was aimed at examining the place of online advertising in the preference for brands of the product by the respondents which is one of the objectives of this study.

Similarly, Ogbede (2012) carried out a study on the "influence of web advertising on consumer behavior". The purpose of the study was to find out the disposition of consumers towards web advertising in Maiduguri Metropolis. The study was anchored on the Uses and Gratification Theory. The study adopted a survey research method as 150 questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents (residents of Gambori, Gwange, and Bolori) in Maiduguri. From the findings of the study, the majority of the respondents have a positive disposition towards online advertising. The study concluded that the influence of online advertising on consumers over other forms of advertising will continue to increase in many years to come because of its interactive nature, the global platform it presents to companies that advertised on it, and the opportunities it offers to consumers to make an inquiry and purchase online. The study recommends that regulatory agencies should be established by the government to register and regulate the activities of companies in Nigeria who are involved in providing goods and services via the internet. This way, the problem of fraud will be eliminated or brought to a bearable minimum. Ogbede's (2012) study, is relevant to this study because the study aimed at examining the influence of online

advertising on consumers over other forms of advertising which also constitute part of the objectives of this study.

Mohammed (2014) carried out a study on "online advertising and consumer interest: challenges and prospects". The study was anchored on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select online users in Agbor, Delta state. The purpose of the study was to find out the challenges consumers encountered while patronizing products and services seen advertised online. The study adopted a survey research method as 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to selected respondents in Agbor-nta, Ekuku-Agbor, and Oki, in Agbor, Delta State. From the finding of the study, the majority of respondents encountered challenges while patronizing online products and services. The study concluded that the problem of online advertising is a global phenomenon. The study recommends that the government should place sanctions in form of fines on companies who do not provide services as advertised online to their customers. The study also recommends that incentives should be given to companies in form of tax holidays for providing services as advertised online. The study carried out by Mohammed (2014) is relevant to this study because it aimed at examining the interest of consumers towards online advertising as well as the various challenges consumers encounter while patronizing online goods and services which is one aspect this study intend to address.

- **BRAND**

Jin and Weber (2013) proposed that brands served primarily as a way for customers to identify and recognize goods and their manufacturer. The focus of brand value creation was on individual goods whereby firms used brands to show ownership and take responsibility for their goods. This in turn helped customers identify and recognize a firm's goods on sight. Thus, brands are viewed as images that firms create to enable customers to both differentiate a brand from its competitors and identify the needs a brand promises to satisfy (Jin & Weber, 2013). Another aspect of a brand is that it is strongly believed by academics and practitioners that brand reputation is becoming increasingly important. Brands should have a positive reputation to be successful and therefore profitable, (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). On the other hand, Schmitt (2012) describes a comprehensive model of five brand-related processes: identifying, experiencing, integrating, signaling, and connecting with the brand.
Hence, the personal experience of using a brand can be of assorted shapes from the personal experience of using an indistinguishable product without the brand (Sheena &Naresh, 2012). Brands can form relations with other brands. Brands can be anthropomorphized, and many of them are appreciated as cultural symbols. Finally, consumers can organize communities around brands. Consumers know and experience these characteristics about brands and respond to them.

- **CONSUMER PREFERENCES**

The goal of the investigation of consumer behavior is to discover patterns of consumers' attitudes in their decision to buy or to ignore a product. (Matsatsinis, Samaras, 2000). Consumers' preferences for products or brands arise from the combination of many different factors. Some factors come from features of the product itself (e.g., price,

durability), while others are attributes of consumers themselves (e.g., goals, attitudes, discretionary income), (Venkatraman, Clithero, Fitzsimons, and Huettel, 2012). Häubl (2015) proposed that consumers often make choices in settings where some alternatives are known and additional alternatives can be unveiled through search. When choosing from a set of alternatives, the manner in which each of these was discovered should be irrelevant from a normative standpoint. A substantial body of prior work examines consumer choice from pre-determined sets of alternatives. As a result, much is known about the influence of choice set composition and decision context on choice (Ge, Brigden, and Häubl, 2015). Additionally, consumer characteristics such as patriotism, protectionism, and social-economic conservatism are affecting their choices (Spillan & Harcar, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

A field survey questionnaire was employed to collect data from Federal Polytechnic Ede students. Questionnaires were purposively distributed asking respondents to participate in the survey. The survey ran from 17th-19th December 2020 and involved 241 respondents from 250 students in all departments of the Polytechnic.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The research was conducted to examine the influence of online advertisement on consumer brand preference. Three research objectives were generated to validate the findings of this research. The result of these findings is organized in a tabular form to show the frequencies derived from the 250 copies of questionnaires administered personally to the respondents. 250 copies of the questionnaire were distributed through the respondents while 241 copies were retrieved. However, 9 copies representing 4% of the questionnaire were not properly filled because respondents have no idea about the subject matter under investigation. Therefore, the data analysis was based on the correctly filled copies of the questionnaire. Thus, 241 copies representing 96% of the questionnaire were analyzed. The missing copies are 9 representing 4% of the questionnaire administered.

RESULT

Table 1: The extent to which consumers are exposed to the online advertisement of brands of products and services

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	I see the advertisement for my brand of products every day and it reinforces my conviction about the brand's quality	64 (20.5%)	130(54%)	10 (4.1%)	17 (7.1%)	20 (8.3%)	**241 (100%)**

2	I became aware of my brand of products after seeing the advertisement online.	90 (37.3%)	81 (33.6%)	30 (12.5%)	25 (10.4%)	15 (6.2%)	**241 (100%)**
3	After I have seen an advertisement for my brand online, it influences my purchase of the product.	110 (45.6%)	80 (33.2%)	15 (6.2%)	19 (7.9%)	17 (7.1%)	**241 (100%)**
4	I frequently come across the advertisement for my brand of products whenever I am using my social media platforms	30 (12.5%)	50 (20.7%)	21 (8.7%)	87 (36.1%)	53 (22%)	**241 (100%)**

The table above shows the extent to which consumers are exposed to the online advertisements of brands of products and services. The variables were measured using a Likert scale statement.

Concerning the Likert scale statement*; "*I see the advertisement of my brand of products every day and it reinforces my conviction about the brand's quality*"*. 64 (20.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 130 (54%) agreed, 10 (4.1%) did not decide, 17 (7.1%) disagreed while 20 (8.3%) strongly disagreed. This means that a significant population of the respondents agreed that their exposure to the advertisement of their brands of products convinces them about the quality of the brand.
Regarding the Likert scale statement; *"*I became aware of my brand of products after seeing the advertisement online*"*. 90 (37.3%) respondents strongly agreed, 81 (33.6%) agreed, 30 (12.5%) were undecided, 25 (10.4%) disagreed and 15 (6.2%) strongly disagreed. The findings suggest that majority of the students became aware of their brand products after seeing the advertisement online.
In relation to the Likert scale statement; *"After I have seen an advertisement for my brand online, it influences my purchase of the product"*. 110 (45.6%) respondents strongly agreed, 80 (15%) agreed, 15 (6.2%) did not decide, 19 (7.9%) disagreed while 17 (7.1%) strongly disagreed. The result suggests that the majority of the respondents strongly acclaim that their influence to purchase a brand is as a result of their exposure to such a brand online.

About the Likert scale statement; *"I frequently come across the advertisement of my brand of products whenever I am using my social media platforms*." 30 (12.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 50 (20.7%) agreed, 21 (8.7%) undecided, 87 (36.1%) disagreed while 53 (22%) strongly disagreed. This means that the majority of the respondents frequently come across the brand of their preferred brands on social media platforms.
Thus, from the foregoing findings, it could be deduced that the majority of Federal Polytechnic Ede students are exposed to the online advertisement of various brands of products which influences their purchase of the product.

Table 2: Attitude of consumers towards the online advertisement of brands of products.

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	After I have seen the advertisement of my brand, the selling claims in the advertisement for my brand of product online convince me about the function and features of the brand	75 (31.1%)	66 (27.4%)	30 (12.5%)	43 (17.8%)	27 (11.2%)	**241 (100%)**

2	In my opinion, advertising product online to attract consumer brand preference is not necessary	8 (7.5%)	15 (6.2%)	8 (3.3%)	80 (33.2%)	120 (49.8%)	**241 (100%)**
3	I prefer a product advertised on television and newspaper to online	30 (12.5%)	25 (10.5%)	15 (6.2.%)	76 (31.5%)	95 (39.4%)	**241 (100%)**
4	I prefer my brand of products because of its advertisements that I see regularly on social media	70 (29%)	71 (29.5%)	27 (11.2%)	43 (17.8%)	30 (12.5%)	**241 (100%)**
5	I like the advertisement for my brand of products on social media and it reinforces my positive feelings about the quality of the brands.	81 (33.6%)	90 (37.3%)	30 (12.5%)	15 (6.2%)	25 (10.4%)	**241 (100%)**

With respect to the Likert scale statement; *"After I have seen the advertisement of my brand, the selling claims in the advertisement of my brand of product online convince me about the function and features of the brand"*. 75 (31.1%) respondents strongly agreed, 66 (27.4%) agreed, 30 (12.5%) undecided, 43 (17.8%) disagreed while 27 (11.2%) strongly disagreed. This shows that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that the selling claims in the advertisement of their brand of products convince them about the functions and attributes of the brand after seeing it on social media.
To the Likert scale statement; *"In my opinion, advertising product online to attract consumer brand preference is not necessary"*. 8 (7.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 15 (6.2%) agreed, 8 (3.3%) did not decide, 80 (33.2%) disagreed while 120 (49.8%) strongly disagreed. The result suggests that the majority of the respondents feel advertising a product online to attract consumers' brand preferences is necessary.
Concerning the Likert scale statement; *"I prefer product advertisement on television and newspaper to online"*. 30 (12.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 25 (10.5%) agreed, 15 (6.2%) were undecided, 76 (31.5%) disagreed, and 95 (39.4%) strongly disagreed. This means that majority of the respondents prefer advertisement on social media more than other mediums.

For the Likert scale statement; *"*I prefer my brand of products because of its advertisements that I see regularly on social media*"*. 70 (29%) respondents strongly agreed, 71 (29.5%) agreed, 27 (11.2%) did not decide, 43 (17.8%) disagreed and 30 (12.5%) strongly disagreed. It means that the respondent's preference for a particular brand is a result of their exposure to such a brand on social media.
To the Likert scale statement; *"I like the advertisement of my brand of products on social media and it reinforces my positive feelings about the quality of the brands.*. 81 (33.6%) respondents strongly agreed, 90 (37.3%) agreed, 30 (12.5%) did not decide, 15 (6.2%) disagreed and 25 (10.4%) strongly disagreed. This suggests that the majority of the respondents have positive feelings about their brand of products because of the advertisement of such a brand on social media.
Conclusively, it can be deduced that a significant majority of respondents have a strong liking or positive attitude for the advertisement of their brand's products online which reinforces their positive feelings about the quality of the brand.

Table 3: Extent to which consumers are influenced by their exposure and attitude towards online advertisement in their preference for brands of products

Table 3 that follows states that with respect to the Likert scale statement; *"It is the quality*

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	It is the quality of the brand rather than its advertisement online that is responsible for my choice of products	19 (7.9%)	86 (35.7%)	10 (4.1%)	22 (9.1%)	104 (43.2%)	**241 100%**
2	It is the price, not the advertisement that is responsible for my choice of products	50 (2.07%)	53 (22%)	21 (8.7%)	87 (36.1%)	30 (12.5%)	**241 100%**
3	I believe online media advertisement is responsible for my preference for a particular brand of products	87 (36.1%)	103 (42.7%)	7 (2.9%)	20 (8.3%)	24 (10%)	**241 100%**
4	I believe my exposure to online media advertisement of products influences my choice of brand	130 (54%)	64 (26.5%)	10 (4.1%)	17 (7.1%)	20 (8.3%)	**241 100%**
5	online advertisement is not responsible for my choice of brand of products but the trust I have for the advertiser that has grown overtime	94 (39%)	29 (12%)	5 (2.1%)	66 (27.4%)	47 (19.5%)	**241 100%**

of the brand rather than its advertisement online that is responsible for my choice of products". 19 (7.9%) respondents strongly agreed, 86 (35.7%) agreed, 10 (4.1%) were undecided, 22 (9.1%) disagreed while 104 (43.2%) strongly disagreed. This simply means that a significant majority of the respondents believe that it is the online advertisement of their brands is responsible for their preferences irrespective of the brands quality

For the Likert scale statement; *"It is the price, not the advertisement that is responsible for my choice of products".* 50 (20.7%) respondents strongly agreed, 53(22%) agreed, 21 (8.7%) did not decide, 87 (36.1%) disagreed while 30 (12.5%) strongly disagreed. It suggests that the majority of the respondents agreed that the advertisement of their brands of products is responsible for their preferences rather than the price. About the Likert scale statement; *"I believe online media advertisement is responsible for my preference of a particular brand of products"*.87 (36.1%) respondents strongly agreed, 103 (42.7%) agreed, 7 (2.9%) did not decide, 20 (8.3%) disagreed while 24 (10%) strongly disagreed. This means that a significant majority of the respondent's preference for a particular brand is a result of the advertisement of their brand on social media.

Regarding the Likert scale statement; *"I believe my exposure to online media advertisement of products influences my choice of the brand"*.130 (54%) respondents strongly agreed, 64 (26.5%) agreed, 10 (4.1%) were undecided, 17 (7.1%) disagreed while 20 (8.3%) strongly disagreed. The result shows that the majority of the respondent's exposure to the online advertisement of their brands influences their choice of brand.

To the Likert scale statement; *"online advertisement is not responsible for my choice of brand of products but the trust I have for the advertiser that has grown over time"*.94 (39%) respondents strongly agreed, 29 (12%) agreed, 5 (2.1%) were undecided, 66 (27.4%) disagreed while 47 (19.5%) strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondent's acclaim that the trust they have for the advertiser of their brand is what influences their preference for a particular brand.

In conclusion, findings from the above table indicate that respondents attest to the fact that their exposure to the online advertisement of brands influences their attitude and choice for a particular brand of products.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Table one indicated that the majority of respondents are exposed to the online advertisement of their brands of products because of their regular visit to the various online platforms which influences their purchase of the various brands of products. It is evident from the foregoing that the use of online platforms in advertising serves crucial roles in advertising as well as generates a lot of publicity for products. It is strongly believed that brand exposure is a powerful tool that expedites brand recall and influences purchase. This is in agreement with Kimefeld and Watt (2001), which found out that online advertising exposes the youths to new and existing products. The findings revealed that youths prefer online advertising to other advertising forms. Similarly, it can also be deduced from the views expressed that respondents are exposed to online advertisement compared to the traditional form of advertisement which is in line with Uses and Gratification theory which is premised on the fact that people choose a particular media because of the gratification/ satisfaction they get from such media. The theory further explains that media users are not just passive receivers of the media messages, but active receivers of the message, because people selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain the media messages based on their needs and beliefs. Folarin (2002) observes that rather than positioning individuals as passive consumers of media, uses and gratification theory explores how individuals deliberately seek out a particular media to fulfill certain needs or goals. It is on the strength of this observation that advertisers need to be aware that it is essential to understand the complex processes underlying online advertising. They also need to be constantly aware that online advertisement may produce an acceptable and satisfactory result only when it is used appropriately.

Furthermore, table two showed that respondents have a strong liking for the advertisement of their brands which reinforces their positive feelings about the quality of their brands of products. This is in line with Ayanwale (2005), who asserts that the primary objective of an advertisement is to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes, and buying behavior of a product. Similarly, the finding of this study is in agreement with the persuasion theory which explains that the essence of persuasion or persuasive messages is to influence a person's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behavior. Folarin (2002), asserts that persuasion is the process whereby an attempt is made to induce changes in attitude processes through the involvement of a person's cognitive and affective processes. Also, the findings of this study are in agreement with Ogbede (2012) which discovered that the majority of the consumers have a positive disposition towards online advertising and that the influence of online advertising on consumers over other forms of advertising will continue to increase in many years to come because of its interactive nature. However, concerning the findings of this study, persuasive messages (advertisements) are a tool used by advertisers to change consumer's attitudes, behavior, and influence their purchasing decisions. Since online users are using several online formats (blogs, podcasts, Instagram, YouTube, and wikis) to communicate, and share ideas about a given product, service, or brand and contact other consumers, advertisers should employ the use of persuasive

communication (advertisements) to catch consumer's interests using these online platforms.

Finally, table three revealed that the respondent's exposure to the online advertisement of brands of products influences their attitude and preferences for a particular brand of products because they believe that online advertisement plays a part in their choice of brand. This finding is contrary to Henry and Akpan (2007) who observe that customers have a brand preference towards an established brand during the brand's long presence in the market and they tend to show little brand preference towards a particular brand when they are exposed to a new or unfamiliar product category. The findings of this study are however in agreement with DeFleur (1970), who explains that people tend to evaluate persuasive messages according to how the message fits or fails to fit into their own cognitive (meaningful) pattern. Also, the findings of this study are inconsistent with Persuasion theory Hugh Rank (1976) that says that persuasion attempts to change minds or get people to act because not all advertisement of products influences or changes the attitude of a consumer especially when he/she is obsessed about a particular brand of products.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research study explores the influence of online advertisement on consumer brand preference. However, from the findings of this study, it is observed that the preference rate of brands of product among Federal Polytechnic Ede students is a result of their exposure to the various online platforms. Similarly, the general conclusion that can also be drawn from this study is that the use of the various online platforms by advertisers to display their products does not only provide mere information about the products but also goes a long way in influencing brand preferences by consumers. Also, it would be of great advantage for advertisers to note that a strong brand builds on quality will help to enhance customer satisfaction and confidence in their preferences and purchasing decisions as well as provide value to the advertisers by enhancing competitive advantage. Furthermore, from the findings of this study, it was observed that respondents choose products based on brand, hence, advertisers must take advantage of this medium to create persuasive messages that will help promote their product as well as leave a long-lasting impression in the mind of the consumers.

Therefore this study recommends that advertising companies should find out what stimulates consumers towards online advertisement and examine what kind of advertising messages would influence their attitude and behavior. Secondly, advertisers should adopt good advertising strategies and appealing brand designs to improve sales and lead to better performance.

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