PEER INFLUENCE AND PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENT AS PREDICTORS OF SMARTPHONE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR.

CHINE, B. C.,
Department Of Psychology
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

&

BERNARD, CHUKWUKELUO CHINE,
Department of Psychology,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State
bernardchine16@gmail.com

&

CHIAMAKA, O. JOE AKUNNE
Department of Psychology,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State

&

CYNTHIA UDEZE
Department of Psychology,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State

Abstract

This study examined peer influence and product advisement as predictors of smartphone consumer buying behaviour among post graduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in Anambra State.Peer influence and product advertisement have been associated theoretically as having the potential for predicting consumers' buying behaviour. One hundred and thirty-nine participants served in the study. Questionnaire was used to collect the data. Consumer buying behaviour scale peer relation scale and advertisement scale were used to weight the responses of the sample. Pearson product moment correction and simple regression analysis statistics served in the analysis of the data. The result of the first hypothesis showed that product advertisement significantly predicted smartphone consumers' buying behaviour. The result of second hypothesis showed equally that peer influence significantly predicted smartphone consumers' behaviour ($\beta = .249, p < .01; r^2 = .30$). The implication is that product advertisement and peer influence are very important in influencing consumers' buying behaviour and therefore need to be encouraged byproducers and marketers of products especially smartphone.

Keywords: Peer influence, Product advertisement, and Consumers' buying behaviour.

Introduction

Consumer buying behaviour as the name suggests, points to the attitude and motivation of a consumer towards purchasing a product or products. He/she buys and uses a product for a particular purpose. As a result of consumers' attitude towards these products, sellers or dealers in such products and even the firms

that produce them use various means and channels to perused and attract prospective customers or consumers to patronize. Sit, Ooi, Lin, & Chang(2009) put it succinctly thus: "Obviously, companies that understand consumer- oriented approach will better position their products in the market". Place, and will stand the chance of gaining and retaining more customers, with this, they will enjoy a fair market share in today's competitive market. Similarly, Reichheld and Sasser as cited in Goh, Jaing, Hak & Tee(2016) observed that several studies have found that knowledge and understanding of consumer buying behaviour is essential for raising not only firms profit margin, but also for sustainability of nowadays competitive global market. People or consumer may display different buying behaviour patterns towards different stocks/products of their interest. The buying behaviour of customers who patronize smartphone attracts the focus of this study. Smartphone is one of the latest cell phone that serve not only as improved communication gadget, but serve additional function of internet application. Consequently, a significant number of people use it for social business transactions. For examples, facebook, smartphone, Twitter and Whatsapp are all provided by smartphone which of course command attraction for customers. According to Mackenzie as cited in Malviya and Thankur (2013) smartphone in some instances, has assumed the function of the computer. Mackenaie observed further that it can be put into a wider use such as paying for stock, browsing, financial transactions. buying and selling product. Osuagwu as cited in Ayodele and Ifeanychukwu (2016) observed that Nigeria provides the fastest growing smartphone market penetration and only second in position to South Africa in Africa.

One of Nigeria print media, for example, reported increasing smartphone circulation in Nigeria in the year 2012 as from 47 percent to 63 percent. Elsewhere, it was observed that currently smartphone has almost flooded Nigeria cell phone market and that consumers are very careful and selective of the brand they purchase.

One important area firms or manufacturing companies expend some of their resources is on advertisement. The underlying reason for advertisement is to create awareness on the prospective customers and to communicate the capability of the product to give them both anticipated and unanticipated satisfaction and satisfactoriness. Moreover, advertisement changes the perception, emotion, motivation and attitude of consumers towards their product especially, when probably such consumers tend to be confused and undecided about patronizing the product. Rehman, Nawaz, Khan & Hyder (2014) pointed out that not just advertising but effective advertising enables companies to differentiate the product from others in the competitive market. In the same Vein, Zia(2016) contends that advertising changes the decision of customers to the product by catching their mind or interest, it is believed that advertising messages are designed to influence the prospective consumers beliefs, attitudes, emotional reactions and choices towards, the product (Goldsmith and Lafferty, 2002). Different smartphone manufacturing organizations advertise their product (smartphone) through different media such as television, billboard, newspaper, magazine and so on. Advertisement experts believed after watching advertisement a good number of times, consumers are motivated to give a trial to the product. Having obtained a good experience, the consumer may develop likeness to the product and lead to subsequent decision to try the purchase again. Kuo, Hu & Yang (2013) contend that consumers who repeat buying of a particular product or brand are unlikely to switch to other brand or product in spite of offer of cheaper price by other competitors. Naizi and Hujra, 2012, Rehman et. al., (2014) found a positive correlation between advertisement and consumer buying behaviour in line with findings conducted in developed countries.

It is possible that advertising of a particular product may have more impact on a particular group such as age mates, social class or peer group, socio-economic group etc more than others. It is not unlikely that smartphone advertisement may weld such influence on peer group relation. By a peer group, it is meant individuals who have certain values or characteristics in common. These may include socio-economic status, occupation, education, age and family background. In certain circumstances, peers may be used as a reference group or collect brand information from the peers and finally influence product selection and even shopping behaviour (Schiffman and Kanuik, 1978; Lachance, Beaudion & Robitaille, 2003). Goh, Jiang, Hak & Tee (2016) noted that more often than not, some individuals purchase a brand in vogue in order to

impress their peers and also attract recognition and respect. This could be said to be case in the possession of smartphone among peers of young age mates or schoolmates in Nigeria. Possession of smartphone by such people indicate their currency with the latest development around the world.

Peer relation and product advertisement as predictors of consumer buying behaviour of smartphone users are relatively new area of knowledge that demand attention from social sciences and management perspectives. Little research efforts in the past tended to focus attention on these variables either singly or jointly with other variables of concerned to the investigator/s. For examples, Goh, Jaing, Hak & Tee (2016) in their study of consumer buying behaviour found that understanding consumer buying behaviour, increase a firm's profitability.

Ayodele and Ifeanyichukwu (2016) carried out a study in the South-East Nigeria of consumer buying behaviour of smartphone in respect of price, brand name and product feature, found significant relationship. Similarly, choice of a smartphone as a brand appeared to be influenced by peer group (Goh, et al. 2016). Again, Goh et al (2016) observed that studies on peer relation and consumer buying behaviour relationship have been extensive with findings across countries inconsistent. However, none of such studies has made effort to investigate possible influence of peer group relation and advertisement on buying behaviour of smartphone users, hence this study. Furthermore, most of research efforts on anticipated influence of peer relation on buying behaviour of consumer with other variables either as independent or dependent variables were done outside Nigeria's shores and may lack applicability in Nigeria. Following these antecedents the study therefore, focused on the determination of the relationship between peer group relation and consumer buying behaviour of smartphone user in Awka urban: and second the determination of the relationship between advertisement and buying behaviour of smart phone users in Awka urban.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework.

It is essential sometimes to review the conceptual definitions of the independent and dependent variables of the study. This is supposed to enable a clearer understanding of the variables and by extension the concept of the study variable consumer buying behaviour, peer group relation (independent variables) and product advertisement (dependent variables).

Some writers see consumer buying behaviour as the attitude or behaviour consumers manifest while searching and purchasing good or service. (Ehigie, Alarap & Chine, 2015). Adegoke (2015) defines consumer behaviour or buying behaviour as the behaviour consumers display while they search for, purchasing, using, evaluating and finally disposing of products and services which they believe will satisfy their need. There are five stages that guide buying behaviour decision as suggested by Kotler and Armstrong (2010), and Katiyar and Katiyar (2014). The five stage are need recognition, information search, and evaluation of alternative, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour. Briefly, the first in stage need recognition concerns consumer realization that he has need for the product in question. Moreover, the need is stimulated either by internal or external stimulus. The second stage, information search, is concerned with the search for credible source of information. It is believed that this happens only where a consumer perceives or feels that the need is most likely to be satisfied by the purchase and consumption of the product. Nevertheless, the degree of search according to Kotler and Keller (2016) depends on the level of motivation often obtained through advertisement, or information from friends, peer and important others. Evaluation of alternatives or assessing values focuses the information obtained to evaluate different brands of the same product category or family (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). For example, some electronic or print media advertisement may highlight features of a particular smartphone which differentiates it from similar brands.

In purchase decision stages the consumer is expected to make actual purchase decision. This stage may be guided by environmental factors such as culture, family, peer and social influence or personal factors such as needs, awareness of brand identity and attitude towards such identity. Moreover, psychological factors that play indispensable role in purchase decision include recognition, emotion, perception and motivation. Finally, post purchase evaluation, is guided by the experience of past outcome as either satisfactory or repulsive. If the former, it will invariably lead in repeat purchase but if the latter, avoidance buying behaviour may be manifested.

Advertisement has been conceptualized by some authorities in advertisement. For instance, advertising is conceptualized as one element of the marketing function (Kotler 2000; Shenge 2007; Stanton 1981). Ehigie and Babalola (1995) see advertising as any form of visual, oral or audio-visual communication about goods or services in which the sender attempts to motivate the receiver into purchase action as favourable response or feedback. Another undoubtly concept of advertisement is that associated with Bovee (1992). Here, according to Bovee (1992), advertising is regarded as "the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products services or idea by identified sponsors through the various media". The following outstanding word were identified in Bovee (1992) as conceptualization of advertising by Taflinger (1996): Non-personal, communication, information, paid for, persuasive, products, services, or ideas, identified sponsor. These variables make advertising by organizations concerned to make their product desirable to the consumers.

A peer is seen as a person who socially equal to other persons in terms of social and economic status age, rank and sometimes family background. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007; Hawking, Motherbaugh, & Best, 2006), a peer relation occurs if a set of persons with similar values and attitudes serve as basis or frame work for his/her current behaviour. This group or set of persons may be referred to as a person's reference group. Peer relation in this context will used interchangeably with peer influence. According to Bristol and Mangleburg (2005), peer influence stands for the extent peers exert influence on the attitudes thoughts and action of an individual. For instance peer influence varies on the extent of its effect on the buying behaviour and decision to purchase different product (Bearden and Etzel (1982).

Three theories of consumer buying behaviour considered very relevant to this study are reviewed. They are theory of planned behaviour, economic theory and the attention, interest, Desire and Action (AIDA) theory of product Advertising.

Ajzen (1991) propounded the theory of planned behaviour. This theory believes that the individual's intention to perform a given behaviour is motivated by a logical or reasons action. This is because the individual wants to establish justification for his/her action(Chine & Nnedum, 2018). In other words, because the consumer is rational, he/she would like to buy a product that satisfies his/her need. Moreover, the theory assumes that consumers weigh their buying decision to make sure that such decision fetch them maximum satisfaction. Consequently, they prioritize their needs and plan given the information they must have evaluated as regards their buying behaviour. Following buying decision process, consumer goes through six cognitive process stages according to this theory and each of the six stages involves planning. For examples, the consumer goes through planning and reasoning, identifies a need, then search for information, evaluates obtained based on his/her need, makes purchase decision that is in tandem with his/her reasoning or conviction: and finally he/she may decide either to continue or discontinue to patronize the product based on experience.

However, the theory fails to recognize that some of the consumer buying behaviour may be stimulated by emotion, peer influence and cultural factors or considerations that defile rationality. Again, snob appeal according to some economists may be the underlying factor and not rationality.-

Economic theory believes and also assumes that man is logical, rational and is guided rationally in every economic decision he/she makes. By extension a consumer is aware of all available consumer alternatives open to him/her, weighs such option correctly and adequately in order to decide on most adequate and beneficial course of action to take(Schiffman and Ksnuk, 2007). Nevertheless, Simon (1997) contended that these processes or steps are never feasible and realistic view point about human buying behaviour; he argued that consumer more often than not do not have enough information, motivation or ample time to make adequate or what he called "perfect" decision. Moreover, such decision may be bereft of rationality and are influenced by social factors(Chine&Nnedum,2018); that consumers often seek satisfaction instead of optimum choices (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). This theory hinges on the following assumptions:

- i) Objectives are known and agreed upon
- ii) Existence and nature of problems known
- iii) Criteria for best decision are agreed upon and best alternatives selected
- iv) Decision made will optimize the decision objectives and

v) Complete knowledge of the situation is known (Chovwen, 2015). The contention of Simon (1997) about this economic theory of buying behaviour is very germane and need not be taken with a pinch of salt.

The theory of trying was put forward by Bagozzi and Warshaw, (1990). This theory assumes that a consumer tries to carry out a behaviour or act it out, but not interested in a specific behaviour. The theory as a matter of fact is interested in such factors or antecedents of behaviour as subjective norms, attitude exhibited while trying, attitudes towards expectations for failure. Following the viewpoints of these researchers, (as cited by Chovwen, 2015), intention to try is the key precursor to trying. According to Bogozzi and Kimmel (2002) Chine and Nnedum (2018), consumers rather than having behavioural intentions, have behaviour goals in a lot of situations, and consequently are compelled by circumstance to expend effort and make guided effort to obtained or fulfill their goals. In his work, "Failing to Try" Gould (1997) suggested that consumer are believed to either fail to see or ignorant of their options or make conscious effort not to consumer (Chovwen 2015; Schiffman and Komik, 2007). For instance, if a new product is released into the market through advertisement, the product is introduced to consumers, who may subsequently decide to try the product (Chine, Nnedum& Ike, 2018). Theory trying therefore implies probability which is unlikely to create certainly about a new product and possibly ensuring satisfaction to the would be consumers.

The attention, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA) theory of product advertising. This theory suggests a number of psychological steps a customer consciously or unconsciously passes through in order to make a purchase (Bovee and Thill, 1992). Karlsson (2007) acknowledged strong (1925) proposed AIDA by observing that AIDA stands as a behavioural model. The model according to Karlson(2007) is intended to ensure that advertising/advertisement creates awareness, develops interest and enables the customer to desire and subsequently act or respond (Hackely, 2005). The various point of views held by Hackely (2005), Karlsson (2007), and Strong (1925) on advertisement explain the important of advertising on the customers and eventual decision to make positive approach to the product by purchasing it or manifest favourable buying behaviour. According to Butterfield (1997), it more often than not affects our thinking unconsciously. Based on Strong (1925) AIDA model perspective, the following stages make an advertisement effective:

- i) Get attention
- ii) Leads to interest in the product
- iii) Desire to possess and/or use the product and
- iv) Ultimately generates response or action

It is believed that these four stages are equally important for that reason successful advertisement according to Shenge (2015) must be designed so that the customer more often than not goes through all four stages. Although there are some criticisms about, the AIDA advertising theory by experts of various orientation. According to Shenge (2015), the critics observed that there was no evidence to butterss the claim that customer behave in a rational, linear manner. Again, the experts pointed out that the model did not consider the role of contextual factor, environment and mediation (Shenge, 2015) in spurring effective advertisement. According to Shenge (2015), more global attention or effort is currently focused on two main behavioural response awareness and interest. However, Brierley, (2002), argued that the implication is that four stages are not of equal importance; and to be meaningful or successful, the advertised must of necessity investigate further the behavioural stages or phases.

There are many empirical findings on the independent and dependent variables of this study. For instance, on the probability of advertisement predicting consumer buying behaviour, Fitima and Lodhi (2015) carried out a study on the impact of advertisement on buying behaviour of consumer using cosmetic industry in Karachi, India. The participants were made up of 200 male and female cosmetic consumers. The result indicated a significant positive correlation between advertisement and consumer buying behaviour using pearson product moment correlation statistic (r = .76). Moreover, the data were subjected to simple regression analysis to see if advertisement or awareness of the existence of the cosmetics can lead to the buying behaviour of its consumers. The result obtained indicated that awareness or advertisement of the

cosmetics has significant effect on consumer buying behaviour of the product (β =.60, P<.05) and it influenced increase in consumer buying behaviour by 39%.

In a similar study, Rehman, Nawaz, Khan and Hyder (2014) investigated the influence of advertising on buying behaviour of smartphone consumers in rural areas in Pakistan. Participants were made up of students, teachers and professionals who were 416 in number. Pearson product moment correlation statistic was employed to analyses the data. The result obtained showed a significant negative correlation between factor of rural area (educational level and buying power) and consumer behaviour (r = -.64); and significant positive correlation between advertisement and consumer buying behaviour of smartphone (r = .74, P<.05). The negative correlation obtained in the rural area was attributed by Rehman et. al (2014) to high ratio of unemployment and positive correlation was attributed to awareness brought about by advertisement to the consumers of smartphone.

Zia (2016) investigated the relationship between factors of advertisement and consumer buying behaviour of 150 employees of smartphone users in an industry in Pakistan. A significant positive Pearson product moment correlation was obtained (r = .62). Simple linear regression analysis demonstrated that advertisement predicted smartphone buying behaviour of the participants by 43.5% as reflected by R^2 value (adjusted).

A study of peer influence as correlate of smartphone buying behaviour was carried out by Makgosa and Mohube (2007) in Bostwana. One hundred and one (101) University undergraduate students served as participants; the participants were made up of 80 males and 21 females. The data obtained was subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson product – moment correlation statistic. They found that peer influence had no significant influence on smartphone consumers buying behaviour. Chiders and Rao (1992) investigated the impact of peer influence on smartphone consumer buying behaviour in Thailand. Three hundred employees of rice industry served as participants. Eighty percent of the sample were males and the remaining 20% were females. Using simple correlation statistic, no significant correlation(r=.36) was found between peer influence and smartphone consumer buying behaviour. However, a similar study conducted by Chang and Chuang (2005) using government workers in Thailand obtained a contrary result. Two hundred and fifty worker served as participants. There were 200 males and fifty females with a mean age of 25 years and minimum educational qualification of high school. the result obtained showed a significant positive correlation of (r=.66). That is, it indicated a significant relationship between peer influence and smartphone consumer buying behaviour.

It is therefore hypothesized as follows:

- 1. Product advertisement would significantly predict smartphone consumer buying behaviour among post graduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- 2. Peer relation would significantly predict smartphone consumer buying behaviour of post graduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

METHOD PARTICIPANTS

A total of 139 participants drawn randomly from post graduate students, faculty of the social sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka served in the study. The departments that make up the faculty include: Psychology, Sociology/Anthropology, Political Science, Mass Communication and Economics. Equal number of participant were drawn from each department except department of Psychology which has one participant over other department. That is, each department has 27 participants. While only the department of Psychology as 28 participants. Moreover, participants were made up of 75 males and 64 females. The age of the sample ranged between 22 years and 40 years with a mean age of 28.64 years and standard deviation of 1.12. the educational qualification as post graduate students were either B.Sc or M.Sc. B.Sc student participant were 100 (one hundred) and M.Sc student participants were 39 (Thirty-nine). Only 20 participants were married, that is 14 females and 6 males.

Three instruments were employed for the study: consumer buying behaviour scalt, peer relation scale and advertisement scale.

Consumer buying scale developed by Goh, Jiang, Hak and Tee (2016) was adopted for the study. It is a 20-item scale with 5-point response of strongly agree 5; agree 4; neutral 3; disagree 2; and strongly disagree 1. It has no reverse items. It has a predictive validity of 0.82 and reliability of cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.85. Test retest reliability of 0.73 cronbach alpha coefficient was obtained after three weeks interval.

Peer relation scale developed by Hydson (1982) was adopted as instrument for gathering the data. The scale has 25 items and unidimensional and therefore has no reverse score items. It has likert response format of strongly agree 5; disagree 4; neutral 3; disagree 2; strongly disagree 1. The scale has a validity of 0.65 and reliability of 0.71 using cronbach alpha statistic. However, a three week interval using test retest method, gave a crobach alpha coefficient of 0.66. Advertisement scale developed by Obermiller(1998) was employed to collect the data. It is a 9 - items scale and uses response format of likert-type; for example, strongly agree is 5; agree 4; netural 3; disagree 2; and strongly disagree 1.

Procedure

One hundred and fifty copies of questionnaires were administered on the participants during their common elective courses in their various departments. The questionnaires contained the names of five different brands of smartphones which students or youths are frequently associated with and also boost their self – esteem. The brands were: Infinix, I-tel, Tenco and Blackberry. Permission was obtained from the lecturer while the lecture was in progress. The participants were advised to give an honest supply of the information demanded in the questionnaires and assured of the confidentiality of such information. They were allowed to bring back the questionnaires after two days. This was believed would make them relaxed and supply the information needed freely. At the expiration of two days, the copies of the questionnaires were retrieved. Eleven out of the 150 copies were rejected because some were wrongly answered and some incompletely answered or filled.Only 139 copies of the questionnaires were retained for analysis of the data.

Design and Statistics

The design was cross-sectional survey and statistics used were simple correlation and regression analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21.

RESULTS

The two hypotheses formulated for this study were tested;

Table 1: Shows the regression analysis of the hypothesis that product advertisement would predict smartphone consumer buying behaviour among post graduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Variables	N		Mean	SD	β	r^2	P	Sig
Advertisement	139	4.0	.70		.215	.29	.003	0.000
Consumer buying behaviour (CBB)	139	3.24	1.31					

As indicated in Table 1 above, the result of the regression analysis showed that advertisement was a significant predictor of consumer buying behaviour of smartphone (β = .215, p<.01) and r^2 = .29. This implied that advertisement influence on consumer behaviour was up to 29% among other unknown variables. That is 29% variance in consumer buying behaviour was associated or accounted for by advertisement. The hypothesis was therefore confirmed.

Table 2: shows the regression analysis of the hypothesis that peer relation would significantly predict smart phone consumer buying behaviour among post graduate student

	Mean	SD	ρ	r ²	Р	Sig
Advertisement 139 4.0	.70					
Consumer buying		.249	.304	.002	.000	
behaviour (CBB) 139	2.98	1.31				

The result as indicated in Table 2, showed that peer relation significantly predicted consumer buying behaviour of smartphone among post graduate students (β = .249, P<.01) The hypothesis was as a result confirmed. Moreover, the r^2 = .304 showed that 30.4% variance in consumer buying behaviour was accounted for by peer relation influence.

Discussion

This study was concerned with peer influence and product advertisement as predictors of smartphone consumers buying behaviour among post graduate student of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. First, it was hypothesized that product advertisement would significantly predict smartphone consumer buying behaviour among post graduate students. The hypothesis was confirmed. The findings were in line with Naizi, Siddiqui, Shah & Hunjra (2012) findings of significant relationship between product advertisement and consumer buying behaviour. This suggest that consumer buying behaviour of smartphone is a function of product advertisement. The advertisement could be from any or some of the important media such as social media, print and electronic media. Moreover vicarious experience might explain why some consumers of smartphone were attracted and interest stimulated to having one. Fitima and Lodln (2015) rightly contend that advertising appeals to the mind of the consumer, after his/her belief, perception and attitude towards the product. Advertisement serves as a means of whetting consumer appetite to a product that is being advertised. The finding or result of this hypothesis appears to gives credence to the planned behaviour proposed by Ajzen (1991). The theory is of strong view that consumers planned that purchase of a product in order to satisfy their need.

This is demonstrated by the significant relationship between product advertisement and consumer buying behaviour or as is indicated by the correlation and regression analysis.

Second, it was hypothesized that peer relation would significantly predict smartphone consumer buying behaviour among post graduate students. The hypothesis was confirmed. That is it confirmed that is, it confirmed that peer relation significantly predict smartphone buying behaviour among post graduate students. Moreover simple regression analysis equally confirmed the hypothesis. This findings lend credence to Chang and Chuang (2005) who found a significant relationship between peer influence and consumer buying behaviour. Similarly, Hawking, Mothersbaugh and Best (2006) findings were in line with the findings of this study. That is, Hawkins et al (2006) found that consumer were always influenced by their social group or peers in the decision on whether to buying a product or not. Nevertheless, the findings of Childers and Rao (1992) appears to contrast with the Hawkins et. al. (2006) and Chang and Chuang (2005) position. As a matter of fact, Childers and Rao (1992) as a result of their study in Thailand, found that peer influence on consumer buying behaviour did not show significant impact or account less on buying behaviour. Again, Childers and Rao (1992) was interestingly supported by Makgosa and Mohube (2007) findings. The outcome of their study in Boswana on the university undergraduate students found that peer influence had no significant influence on consumer purchase intention. The implication of these findings suggest that peer influence does not always account for consumer buying behaviour. Perhaps, one's family socio-economic status, religious orientation and individual life style and one's scale of needs or preferences.

In conclusion, the results of the study have shown peers and advertisement could significantly predict smartphone consumer buying behaviour. However, the impact of peer influence on smart phone

consumer buying behaviour may not always be positive because of some personal attributes, economic and social factors.

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