

**PERCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES OF UNIBEN STUDENTS TOWARDS DIGITAL
ADVERTISING**

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**A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
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FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF B.A IN MASS
COMMUNICATION.**

JANUARY, 2025

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is a product of my research work efforts, undertaken under the supervision of Dr. Mrs C.E. Obaje. It has not been presented for the award of any degree in any university. All sources have been duly distinguished and appropriately acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work by Joyce Ofeh Ibatuemoh (ART2000673) has been read and approved as meeting the requirement of the University of Benin, for the award of Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A), in Mass Communication.

Dr. Mrs C.E. Obaje
Project Supervisor

Date

Dr. Daniel Ekharefo
Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother Mrs. Ibatuemoh for her unconditional love and support.

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My profound appreciation goes to God Almighty, who made it possible for me to complete this work. I wish to extend my utmost gratitude to my project supervisor Dr. Mrs C.E. Obaje, who worked tirelessly to ensure that this work becomes a success through thorough supervision and words of encouragement. I pray God blesses her earnestly.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perception and responses of UNIBEN students towards digital advertising. The objectives of the study includes investigating the responses of UNIBEN students to different types of digital advertising. It employed a cross sectional survey research design as it allows data to be collected from a diverse population at a specific time using market response theory. The population of the study is 892 students in the department of Mass Communication in the University of Benin, Nigeria. The sample size was 269 students from hundred level to four hundred level in the department. The instrument used to collect data is questionnaire which was subjected to face and content validity, and the Cronbach method of reliability. The data was analyzed using simple frequency and percentage tables. Findings revealed that students in UNIBEN have positive perceptions towards digital advertising, students respond differently to the various digital media with social media being the most engaging platform and television/radio lagging significantly in audience interaction. The main factors that influence students' perception and response to digital advertising are quality and design of advertisements, source or brand reputation and special offers. The findings also revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female students' perception and responses towards digital advertising. Recommendations of the study includes that advertisers should explore knowledge of what form of digital advertising is more acceptable to their target audience, and companies advertising in student dominated areas should employ more resources in social media ads than in television and radio.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Advertising refers to the communication and promotion of products, services, ideas, or brands to a target audience to influence their behaviour or attitudes. This is a method of communication used to persuade an the target audience produce certain reaction, usually concerning a commercial offering, such as an item for sale or a service, and this is a crucial element in the marketing mix, playing a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing purchasing decisions. Even more profound than influencing our consumption behaviour, advertising can shape our aspirations (Jaffe, 2015). Advertisement embodies all the activities required in presenting to an audience, this can be orally or visual, it can be an openly sponsored information about a product, an idea, or organization that is shared through at least one media platform and is sponsored identified (Neupane, 2019). Digital advertising is simply marketing through online channels, such as websites, streaming content, and more. Digital ads span media formats, including text, image, audio, and video. It is a marketing strategy employed by businesses, organizations, or individuals to create awareness, generate interest, and ultimately persuade consumers to purchase a product, adopt a service, support a cause, or change their perception about a particular offering. In today's competitive market, advertisers strive to create effective messages that resonate with their target audience. However, the effectiveness of advertising depends on how well it is perceived by the target audience.

Perception deals with our sensory observation of the universe. It refers to the act of utilizing our sense organs to identify concepts and it is through our experiences that we get

information about the things around us. Perception can be seen as a complex concept because one cannot perceive things exactly the same way as any other person, as our perceptions are moulded by our previous experiences, our feelings, and our level of understanding (Jhangiani, 2022).

The link between perceptions and advertising has been investigated by numerous researchers as advertising is crucial in influencing consumer behaviour, and it has the ability to mold consumer perceptions, their attitudes, and their purchase decisions (Smith, 2019; Jones et al., 2020). The introduction of new media has significantly impacted human information dissemination. Therefore, the new media has to a significant extent (re)written history and has impacts on traditional concepts. Adverts are designed to introduce new products and re-introduce old products to target consumers with the single aim of influencing them to buy (Ogidi and Utulu, 2016).

The evolution of advertising within the university environment reflects broader shifts in media consumption patterns and communication technologies. Traditionally, universities relied on conventional advertising channels such as print media, outdoor signage, and campus bulletin boards to reach their target audience. However, with the advent of digital technologies and the proliferation of online platforms, universities have increasingly embraced digital advertising channels, including social media, university websites, email newsletters, and mobile apps, to engage with students and enhance their campus experience. The increasing use of social media has led to a major shift in the approach to pursuing consumer brand awareness and making connections between brand awareness and intention to buy (Putter, 2017).

In Nigeria, a large population of the younger generation can be found within the educational system which includes primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Universities are the most sought-after type of tertiary education with a large population of students when compared to other types of tertiary education. Nigerian universities accounts for about 1.8 million undergraduate students, and 242 thousand postgraduate students (Sasu, 2022). The University of Benin is a premier institution in Nigeria, with a large student population that represents a diverse range of backgrounds, interests, and preferences. In the context of higher education, institutions like University of Benin (UNIBEN), advertising serves as a fundamental tool for communication, informing students about various services, events, and opportunities available within the university community and beyond. Understanding how UNIBEN students perceive and respond to advertising within the university environment is essential for both academic institutions and advertisers to tailor their communication strategies effectively.

The University of Benin is said to have a population of over sixty thousand students, with the majority of them being young individuals with different socio-demographic characteristics, cultural backgrounds, academic interests, and media consumption habits to influence their receptivity to advertising messages and their likelihood of engaging with different advertising channels. The proliferation of digital media platforms and the rise of online advertising present both opportunities and challenges for advertisers targeting UNIBEN students. While digital advertising provides unprecedented reach and possibilities, it also raises concerns about information overload, ad avoidance, and privacy issues among tech-savvy students who are adept at filtering out irrelevant or intrusive advertising content.

Against this backdrop, there is a compelling need for empirical research to examine how UNIBEN students perceive and respond to digital advertising across various channels.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In today's evolving advertising landscape, understanding the relationship between audience perception and a method of advertising is important for designing impactful communication strategies. Within University of Benin (UNIBEN), there are students of different backgrounds, interests, and preferences. Despite the amount of advertising messages flooding their daily lives, a void persists in our understanding of the different perceptions and responses of UNIBEN students towards these stimuli. Therefore, navigating the complex nature of consumer psychology within UNIBEN community necessitates a comprehensive exploration of various factors shaping their attitudes and behaviours towards advertising. From cultural influences to individual values and socio-economic contexts, several dynamic forces converge to mould students' perceptions of advertising content and their subsequent responses. However, despite the prevalence of advertising messages in their daily lives, there is a gap in knowledge regarding how UNIBEN students perceive and respond to advertising stimuli.

Furthermore, the issue of trust looms large in the realm of advertising, with scepticism towards commercial messages on the rise, probing into the extent of trust UNIBEN students place in advertising content is imperative. Unpacking the intricate dynamics of trust can illuminate the factors that influence students' receptivity to digital advertising messages and, consequently, their purchasing decisions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the perception and response of UNIBEN students towards advertising. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to investigate;

1. The perceptions of UNIBEN students towards digital advertising.
2. The responses of UNIBEN students to different types of digital advertising.
3. The factors that influence UNIBEN students' perception and response to digital advertising.
4. The difference in perception and response between male and female students in UNIBEN towards advertising.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of UNIBEN students towards digital advertising in general?
2. How do UNIBEN students respond to different types of digital advertising?
3. What factors influence UNIBEN students' perception and response to digital advertising?
4. What is the difference between male and female students' perceptions and responses towards advertising?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on advertising effectiveness, providing insights into the perceptions and responses of UNIBEN students towards advertising. The findings will be useful to advertisers, marketers, students, the school, and researchers seeking to understand this demographic and develop effective advertising strategies to target them.

Understanding how UNIBEN students perceive and respond to advertising can provide valuable insights for advertising companies targeting this demographic. It can help them tailor their advertising strategies to better resonate with this specific audience, potentially leading to more effective campaigns and increased sales or brand engagement.

The findings from this study can benefit UNIBEN students by raising their awareness about the persuasive techniques used in advertising and how they influence consumer behaviour. It can empower students to make more informed decisions as consumers and develop critical thinking skills to evaluate advertising messages critically.

UNIBEN can use the findings from this study to come up with certain policies regarding advertising on campus. Understanding how students perceive advertising can help the school determine what types of advertisements are appropriate for its environment and whether any regulations or guidelines need to be implemented to ensure that advertising aligns with the values and interests of the student body.

Researchers studying advertising, consumer behaviour, or communication can benefit from insights gained from this study. It can contribute to the body of knowledge in these fields and serve as a basis for further research. Additionally, researchers may uncover trends or patterns in student perceptions and responses that have broader implications beyond the UNIBEN context, leading to insights applicable to other demographics or settings.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on UNIBEN students and explores their perceptions and responses to advertising. While the findings may be generalizable to other university students, they may not be representative of all consumers. This study is therefore limited to only students in the University of Benin, Nigeria. This population was selected because of the researcher's interest.

The type of advertising in this study is limited to digital media within the university which includes electronic media such as television and radio sets, email marketing, search engines, websites, and social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and X (previously called Twitter). Also, the factors employed in this study with the potential to influence students' perceptions and responses to advertising are age, income, social interests, and educational level. This study also covers gender about the perceptions of UNIBEN students about advertising.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The limitations of this study includes:

1. The questionnaire was distributed electronically through email and online platforms such as WhatsApp. This implies that students who could not access the forms online were out of the sample of the study.
2. The only instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, interviews were not conducted to get more insights from the respondents.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Perception: Perception refers to the process by which individuals interpret and make sense of sensory information from the environment.

Response: response refers to whatever constitutes a reply or reaction to something. As in the case of this study, advertising.

Advertising: Advertising is a form of communication that aims to persuade, inform, or influence an audience towards taking a specific action, typically promoting goods, services, ideas, or brands.

Digital Advertising: This is the marketing of products or services via the Internet and electronic means.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews existing literature on perception and responses towards advertising. This literature review provides an in-depth overview of the leading theories and research conducted in this area and highlights gaps in current knowledge and research.

2.1 The concept of advertising

The Economic Times (2024) defined advertising as a means of transferring information to those who use their products or services. Advertisements are simply messages sponsored by people with intention to persuade or inform a target audience who receive them, and in today's world, advertisers use every possible medium to pass their messages. They do this through the use of television, print (newspapers, hard copy posters, magazines, journals, etc), radio, blogs, websites, online banners, direct selling, e-mails, competitions, , clothes, events, sounds, visuals, and even people (endorsements). The advertising industry comprises various teams which includes those that design the advertisements, media personnel that execute the advertisements, and others group of individuals such as editors, critics, brand managers, researchers, content creators, and more. Any company that intends to advertise its products or services reaches out to an advertising agency. The company informs the agency about its brand, its ideals and values, their target audience, and so on. The agencies come up with the ideas and concepts to create the visuals, text, layouts, and themes to communicate with the user. Upon approval from the client, the advertisement goes on air, as per the bookings done by the agency's media buying unit.

Knezovic (2024) defines an advertisement as an instrument utilized in advertising and marketing to promote or sell a product, service, or idea. It enables companies to inform potential clients or costumers, but there's usually more to advertisement than just attention seeking. Advertisements are designed to convey messages, stir curiosity, and leave a lasting impression. They are created to persuade and influence, and when executed properly, they are a mixture of science and art that reaches people on various levels. Advertisements enables products or services get certain level of exposure to potential customers. Knezovic (2024) stressed that advertising provides visibility, which is important in today's competitive market, where capturing and maintaining the attention of consumer can be really challenging. They participate in constructing and maintaining a brand's identity and reputation. Through consistent advertising a company can build a connection with its target audience, and shape how the public perceive and engage with their product. Good advertisements stand out as they are easy to remember, they are engaging, and effective.

Asemah (2021) defines advertising as a means of communication with the users of a product, and Asemah, Akase and Nkwam- Uwaoma (2023) avers that advertising is a worldwide business activity today. It is any paid, non-personal communication which is designed to communicate in an appealing and creative manner, through the use of the mass media. This implies that advertising is an industry with potentials for both the advertising agents and the company whose products are being advertised. It can be any paid, non-personal presentation of products, goods, services or ideas by a specific sponsor to induce sales from the audience. Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi, and Ezegwu (2023) refers to advertising as a coordinated series of messages and activities that are designed to achieve specific marketing objectives, it is a strategic and planned effort to promote a product, service, brand, or organization to

potential consumers within a defined period of time. Asemah and Edogoh (2014) states that "advertising is targeted messages that communicate information from a company to individual and groups of consumers. This medium allows companies to draw consumers to the company's goods and services". There are different types or methods applied in advertising and the target audience can be of any demography, and in this paper, the target is university students. The types of advertising can be separated into traditional type and digital type of advertising.

Knezovic (2024) mentioned that the traditional types of advertisement have been around for decades, long before digital advertising was introduced. They include print media such as newspapers and magazines, billboard on highways, and physical mail in mailboxes. However, digital advertising have gained popularity in recent years and are said to be more cost-effective. In this literature, we focus on print media as an example of traditional advertising.

2.2 The evolution of the advertising industry

The advertising industry has grown over the past century. Initially, things were simple; advertisements told us about products and features. As the world evolved, so did the competition. Billboards, radio, and television sets compete for potential customers' attention, and more brands started producing similar products, attempting to provide solutions to the same problems and address the same needs. To have an advantage, advertising industries had to reposition their focus from the 'what' to the 'why.' Creating stories behind their goods and services linking it to the emotions of consumers, it became an issue of how the product makes the consumer feel. A typical example is the case Coca-Cola in 1984, which became famous for the advertisement 'have a Coke and smile' with Mean Joe Green. As the tussle for

consumers' money and attention became stronger, advertising has become more fixed on the brand than the product. Other examples include how Michael Jordan dares us to be legendary, and how Google exposes us to how inspirational one can be through communal search. Yet neither of them talks about a single feature or benefit of their product, they did not mention anything about the fit of the shoe, or about the speed of the search engine. Therefore, it's all about creating a connection between the brand, and how it makes us feel (Jaffe, 2015).

Eilders (2016) mentioned that print media is the oldest and most widely used form of mass media, and because it does not require the users to be able to handle some sort of sophisticated technical infrastructure. Yet, Stephen (2022) highlighted that print media is usually overlooked in today's digital age, and many companies ignore print media referring to it as "out of date" and "unimportant." This implies that most companies have moved from the use of print media to the use of digital media for advertising. Social media changed the entire scene, and has made many companies adjust from sending monologues to engaging in conversation, and creating a relationship between their brands and consumers. This evolution has made brands more human in the process, as they focus on creating conversations around shared values.

2.3 Digital media

Digital media refers to any form of media created, displayed, edited, and distributed using electronic devices. Common examples include video games, websites, social networks, and online advertising. While digital media has become an integral part of everyday life, many companies remain hesitant to shift from traditional print advertising to digital media. However, with the rapid advancement of technology, it is hard to overlook the profound influence digital media has on our lives. It is transforming how we educate, entertain, publish,

and communicate on a daily basis. As a result, the role of digital media in transitioning businesses from the industrial age to the information age is undeniable. This shift has led businesses to adapt to digital platforms, replacing traditional methods of writing with pen and paper with digital devices (Preston, 2024). Abraham (2020) contrasts digital media with print media, noting that digital media is encoded in machine-readable formats. The impact of digital media on society and culture is vast and multifaceted, and in conjunction with the internet and personal computers, it has revolutionized industries such as entertainment, publishing, journalism, commerce, public relations, education, and policy.

Digital marketing refers to the promotion of products or services through digital platforms and channels (Adeyemo, 2023). Digital advertising is the form of marketing conducted online, encompassing platforms such as websites, streaming content, and more. Digital ads can appear in various formats, including text, images, audio, or video. Digital advertising supports a range of business goals across the marketing funnel, including building brand awareness, engaging customers, launching new products, and boosting repeat sales. One key reason digital ads are crucial for any business's marketing strategy is that consumers are increasingly spending time online through computers, smartphones, and smart devices. The average American household has access to over 10 connected devices. Digital marketing enables businesses to reach their audience wherever they are. Consumers make purchasing decisions at any time, whether during work or leisure. Digital ads can reach them while they are browsing for products online, watching a TV show, visiting a popular website, or on social media. Even if they don't purchase immediately, encountering ads in these contexts can increase brand recall when they are ready to make a purchase.

Research has indicated that businesses have moved their advertising focus from television to digital media. Digital advertising on the internet and mobile devices has surpassed traditional media advertising, generating higher advertising spending in 2013 than television ads. It is believed that digital advertising offers a more effective way to reach potential customers in a global market (Fuxman, Elifoglu, Chao, & Tiger, 2014).

2.4 Concept of perception

Perception refers to the psychological processes through which individuals interpret sensory experiences derived from their five senses, leading to either positive or negative perceptions. Erin and Maharani (2018) define perception as involving stages of selection, interpretation, and reaction. Ghadirian, Ayub, and Salehi (2017) describe it as a process of actions aimed at gathering information, which is often shaped by environmental factors. Arifin, Fuady, and Kuswarno (2017) emphasize that perception is the process of inferring information about objects, events, or relationships by interpreting messages.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that perception arises from an individual's experiences and emotions. It is the reaction each person has through their sensory processes and serves as the lens through which we interpret and make sense of the world around us. Perception is a complex cognitive process that includes selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory information to understand our surroundings. While it may appear to objectively reflect reality, perception is actually highly subjective and influenced by various factors, such as past experiences, cultural background, emotions, and cognitive biases. Perception also involves a selective attention process, where we focus on certain stimuli (Gans, 2023).

Siregar, Talib, and Muhayyang (2023) noted that perception can be either positive or negative. A positive perception views all information, whether familiar or unfamiliar, in a favorable light, whereas a negative perception presents information (whether known or unknown) in an unfavorable or inappropriate way in relation to the perceived object. Perception is influenced by both personal and situational factors (Arifin, Fuady & Kuswarno, 2017). Internal factors include emotions, attitudes, desires or hopes, focus, the learning process, physical condition, mental health issues, values, needs, and interests and motivations. External or situational factors encompass family background, acquired information, knowledge, intensity, size, resistance, repetition and movement, as well as new versus familiar objects or the alienation of an object.

2.5 Perception of students towards advertising

Businesses have always sought new ways to promote their products. Companies are now focusing on emotion-driven advertising rather than relying solely on facts to appeal to their target audiences. Mobile companies, for example, have communicated with customers personally through text messages (SMS) to inform them about their services. The extent to which advertising influences people is still up for debate. Therefore, understanding consumer attitudes toward advertising is crucial for advertisers. In particular, the attitudes of university students, a key market segment, are of significant interest to marketing researchers. Advertising campaigns, such as mobile ads, have sometimes been specifically designed for students, with positive results (Rahman, 2016).

Unlike traditional and internet-based advertisements, mobile advertising has unique features, such as personalization, which can greatly improve its effectiveness. For instance,

mobile ads can be tailored to better meet a consumer's needs and foster stronger customer relationships, unlike many traditional media commercials (Durmaz and Özer, 2019). University students are also part of this consumer group. In this regard, Okoro and Oroka (2023) found that Business Education undergraduates have a strong perception of e-advertising for goods and services, and there is a significant connection between students' perceptions and the effectiveness of e-advertising.

As young people prepare for leadership roles, it is important for them to develop social and moral values that will shape them into individuals capable of leading societal progress (George, 2014). Commercial influences are increasingly affecting students' experiences. For example, academic institutions, such as colleges, are progressively being used as platforms for advertising and marketing. Kaur (2014) suggests that young people today have a strong connection with media and advertising. Consumers often choose one brand over another for a particular product, and repeated exposure to ads for the favored product reinforces these purchasing behaviors. Advertising encourages young people to buy more cars, gadgets, clothing, and unhealthy food they don't necessarily need.

Critics argue that advertising manipulates consumers by appealing to their emotions and promising enhanced status, social acceptance, and attractiveness. Students need to develop a set of social values and standards to guide their behavior, particularly when it comes to impulsive buying triggered by advertising (Gorodetskaya, 2015). This contrasts with the findings of Costa (2014), who concluded that advertisements do not significantly influence students' spending patterns or buying behavior. In fact, the overall impact of

advertising on students is positive, with students exhibiting a favorable attitude and behavior towards advertising.

2.6 Purchasing power

Consumer purchasing decisions are a complex process that is, to some extent, influenced by purchasing power. Purchasing power refers to the ability of an individual consumer or a specific market to buy certain amounts of goods and services. Generally, high purchasing power indicates that consumers have higher incomes relative to the supply and prices of available goods. According to Aghazageh, Hughghi, and Ebrahimi (2016), consumer purchasing power relates to consumer behavior, which involves the decision-making processes and actions of individuals when buying and using products. They further argued that a consumer's reaction to a company's product or service significantly affects their purchasing power. Additionally, customers typically do not spend much time researching a product; instead, they quickly evaluate it based on memories and cues such as the brand name (Hansen & Christensen, 2015).

Purchasing ability can change if product prices fluctuate or if inflation rises or falls. Higher real income, which is income that is adjusted for inflation, leads to greater purchasing power. For consumer purchasing power to increase for a particular product or service, awareness of that product in the market plays a crucial role. This is one of the reasons why companies advertise their products and services. Marketing to university students provides brands with a unique opportunity to build loyalty with a group that is highly influential and at a stage where they are forming long-term purchasing habits. University students have significant influence over trends and a growing buying power. Their preferences can shape

the market and influence future consumer behaviors. Effectively engaging with them can lead to both immediate rewards and long-lasting relationships, as these young consumers develop brand loyalty that will continue after their university years. Using data and insights is key to crafting marketing strategies that connect with university students. By understanding student preferences and offering tailored experiences—such as branded playing cards—companies can harness the power of this demographic (Hutler, 2024).

2.7 Empirical Review

Costa (2014) examined the effects of advertising on students through an empirical investigation involving students from Goa. The research aimed to evaluate and compare how TV advertisements affect students' purchasing habits and spending behaviors, as well as their attitudes and reactions toward advertising. For this study, data was gathered from 2108 students across various regions of Goa. In total, data collection involved visits to 41 schools, 32 higher secondary institutions, and 17 colleges associated with the University. To interpret the data, several statistical methods were employed based on the study's objectives and needs, including Chi-square tests, independent sample t-tests, and ANOVA. The findings of the research led to the following conclusions: (1) Advertisements do not have a significant impact on students' spending habits and purchasing behaviors, (2) the overall effect of advertising on students is deemed positive, (3) students generally hold a favorable attitude towards advertising, and (4) students' behaviors regarding advertising are also positively inclined.

Rahman (2016) examined the perceptions of university students regarding advertising in Dhaka City, Bangladesh. This research focuses on how university students in Dhaka view advertising. Data were gathered from a randomly chosen sample of 200 students from both private and public universities within the city. Participants were asked to complete a self-

administered questionnaire featuring 20 statements related to advertising. R-mode factor analysis and frequency distribution methods were utilized to analyze the data. The findings indicate that students hold positive views on the economic benefits of advertising. However, they express negative opinions concerning the ethical and social implications of advertising. The students advocate for increased regulations to govern advertising practices. The study suggests that advertisers should create factor-oriented, entertainment-driven ads that incorporate emotional messaging while respecting Bangladesh's cultural traditions. Furthermore, advertising agencies should develop effective messaging strategies to connect with consumers. Additionally, the research provides a valuable reference point for future studies in this area.

Miklošík, Štarchoň, Vokounová, and Korčoková (2020) examined the prospects of television advertising aimed at young Slovak audiences. Integrated marketing communication strategies demonstrate how online searches and various media—such as smartphones, television, and social platforms—affect consumer choices. Young consumers, commonly identified as generations Y and Z, exhibit distinct differences from earlier generations regarding their consumption of multimedia content and their views on TV advertising. This paper sheds light on these behaviors, including the actions taken in response to television ads. Findings from a quantitative research study conducted with a group of 135 university students in Slovakia utilized a six-component model for explaining behavior. The findings indicate that incorporating television advertisements into the communication strategy targeting these young consumers can still be advantageous. Investments in TV advertising initiatives could yield positive returns. Advertisers and their agencies must acknowledge the significance of high search visibility within this framework. In this context, the messages presented in TV

advertisements have the capability to sway the purchasing decisions of young consumers. By achieving high rankings for pertinent brand, product, and campaign-related keywords, communication campaigns can become genuinely integrated. Therefore, the element of search visibility directly impacts the effectiveness of marketing communications, leading to improved business outcomes. Recommendations for optimizing the execution of communication campaigns that feature TV advertising should focus on these consumers, informed by insights into their attitudes towards and consumption of TV ads, along with their subsequent behaviors.

Soti (2022) investigated the effect of advertising on consumer behavior in India. The main aim of the study was to explore how advertising affects consumer behavior, particularly directing attention on the various aspects of consumer behavior that advertising strategies impact. There was a gap in research addressing how digital and social media advertising influence consumer behavior, an increasingly important issue in today's digital era. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to offer a thorough understanding of how advertising affects consumer behavior. The results showed that advertising significantly influences consumer behavior. The analysis found a positive link between exposure to advertising, consumer attitudes, and purchase intentions, highlighting the persuasive effect of advertising in shaping consumer perceptions and guiding their decision-making. In conclusion, this study adds to the existing literature on advertising's impact on consumer behavior and offers valuable insights for both practitioners and researchers.

Abubakar & Achuku (2023) investigated the impact of advertising on consumer purchasing behavior regarding new products at Ajinomoto Foods Nigeria Limited, located in

Katsina, Nigeria. The research focused on how advertising influences consumer behavior toward new products like Delidawa and Madish, based on a sample of 550 participants from various streets in Katsina. A cross-sectional survey research design was used, employing structured questionnaires administered at a specific time. Both descriptive and multiple regression analysis techniques were applied to interpret the data. The key findings showed that television advertising positively and significantly influenced consumer buying behavior, radio advertising had a negative but significant effect, and outdoor advertising had no significant impact on the consumer behavior for Delidawa and Madish products in Katsina. The study concluded that television advertising is effective in raising product awareness, generating consumer interest, and stimulating demand. However, it noted that other factors, such as price, product quality, income level, and taste, also significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. The researchers recommended that Ajinomoto Foods Nigeria Ltd increase the frequency of television ads to improve consumer buying behavior for their new products. A limitation of the study was the lack of investigation into how factors like customer age or occupation might affect their responses to digital advertising tools.

Okoro and Oroka (2023) explored the views of Business Education undergraduates in South-South Nigerian universities regarding e-advertising of goods and services. The study focused on examining how these undergraduates perceive e-advertising. It was guided by a research question and a hypothesis. The research employed a descriptive survey design, with a sample of 370 participants randomly selected from a population of 661. A validity and reliability test was conducted for the questionnaire which was used to collect data, which were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research question. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient at a 0.05 significance level.

The findings indicated that Business Education undergraduates had a high perception of e-advertising, and a significant relationship was found between their perceptions and the effectiveness of e-advertising. Based on these results, the study recommended that business owners incorporate e-advertising into their operations to boost productivity and profitability.

Wilfred (2023) investigated the exposure and responsiveness of undergraduates in University of Benin to Piggyvest targeted online advertising. The study aimed to assess how much these undergraduates were exposed to and how they responded to Piggyvest's online advertisements. A survey method was used to collect data from 400 undergraduates at the University of Benin, employing a three-stage sampling procedure: simple random, stratified, and simple sampling. The study was grounded in the perception and attitude change theories. It became essential due to the technological advancements that have transformed many aspects of human activity, particularly the use of the Internet for advertising goods and services and fostering customer trust. Online platforms like Piggyvest use targeted advertising to engage specific audiences. Therefore, it was important to examine the exposure and responsiveness of customers to these advertisements. The findings revealed that Piggyvest enjoys a high level of awareness and consideration among University of Benin undergraduates, and that its online advertisements are effective. Based on these results, the study recommended that Piggyvest continue to invest in online advertising, with an emphasis on incorporating motion pictures alongside text.

2.8 Theoretical framework:

Market response theory:

Market Response Theory, also referred to as Marketing Mix Modeling or Econometric Modeling, is a quantitative method used to assess the effect of different marketing activities on sales or other performance indicators. Proposed by Vakratsas and Amble (1999), the theory suggests that marketing actions—such as advertising spending, pricing strategies, distribution channels, and promotional efforts—affect consumer behavior, which in turn impacts organizational performance.

Market response theory posits a direct connection between advertising and consumer buying behavior, typically measured by sales, market share, and brand preference. It does not account for intermediate effects that may occur at the consumer level, such as brand loyalty developed through repeated purchases, rather than psychological tendencies of individuals. The theory has two components: aggregate and individual. The aggregate aspect focuses on the relationship between market data, such as advertising spend or audience reach, and brand sales or market share. The individual component examines the choice of brand or the number of exposures needed to influence individual or household purchasing behavior (Nichifor, 2014). The theory operates on several assumptions:

- Consumer demand is shaped by marketing efforts, which can be quantified and analyzed.
- Marketing activities have a direct causal effect on consumer behavior and organizational outcomes.
- The theory also assumes that external factors, such as competitor actions, economic conditions, and other events, can influence market response but can be controlled or factored into the analysis.

Therefore, the marketing response theory is applied in this study to determine how students in UNIBEN perceive advertising, a marketing strategy and how they respond to them. Here, various companies can optimize marketing resource allocation, forecast sales, evaluate the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, and guide strategic decision-making concerning this specific demography. The theory is also employed in this study to gain insights into consumer (student) behaviour and market dynamics.

2.9 Summary of literature review

This literature review focuses on the perception and responses towards advertising among students, particularly at the University of Benin (UNIBEN). It begins by defining advertising as a communication tool used by companies to reach and influence consumers through various media channels such as television, print, radio, and other platforms. The evolution of the advertising industry is highlighted, noting shifts from traditional print media to digital formats, driven by advancements in technology and changes in consumers' perceptions.

The concept of perception is explored in depth, emphasizing its role in shaping how individuals interpret and react to advertising messages. Perception is described as a complex cognitive process influenced by personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, emotions, and cognitive biases. This section underscores the subjective nature of perception and its impact on consumer behaviour towards advertisements.

Knowing that there is a large population of students, the literature review further examines how students perceive advertising, emphasizing their attitudes and responses towards different types of advertisements. It discusses the influence of advertising on consumer behaviour, including purchasing decisions and brand preferences among

particularly university students. The review acknowledges both positive and negative perceptions towards advertising, highlighting studies that explore the effectiveness and ethical implications of advertising strategies targeting this demographic.

The theoretical framework, Market Response Theory (MRT), is introduced to analyze how advertising efforts influence consumer behaviour and organizational performance. MRT posits that marketing activities, such as advertising expenditures and promotional strategies, directly impact consumer demand and market outcomes. It provides a quantitative approach to understanding the relationship between advertising investments and consumer responses.

This empirical study provides a comprehensive review of literature on advertising perception and responses, focusing on the evolving landscape from traditional to digital media. It explores how Market Response Theory (MRT) can be applied to analyze the influence of advertising on consumer behaviour, emphasizing the subjective nature of perception and its impact on purchasing decisions among university students. The study highlights the importance of understanding students' attitudes towards digital advertising and the effectiveness of different strategies in engaging this demographic, particularly at the University of Benin (UNIBEN). By integrating MRT principles, the study aims to uncover insights that can guide marketers in optimizing digital advertising campaigns to effectively resonate with and influence students' perceptions and responses towards advertisements.

The reviewed empirical studies offer comprehensive insights into various aspects of advertising and consumer behaviour, providing a valuable context for understanding Uniben students' perceptions and responses towards digital advertising. Costa (2014) found that while TV advertisements did not significantly affect buying behaviour, students generally held positive attitudes towards advertising. Rahman (2016) highlighted that students in Dhaka had

mixed views, appreciating the economic benefits but expressing concerns about ethical aspects. Miklošik et al. (2020) emphasized the enduring relevance of TV ads in influencing young consumers' purchasing decisions, leveraging high search visibility and integrated marketing communication. Soti (2022) underscored advertising's significant impact on consumer behavior, correlating exposure with positive consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Abubakar & Achuku (2023) revealed the differential effects of TV, radio, and outdoor advertising on consumer buying behavior, while Okoro and Oroka (2023) demonstrated high perceptions and positive correlations of effectiveness regarding e-advertising among business education undergraduates in South-South Nigeria. Finally, Wilfred (2023) focused on the effectiveness of targeted online advertising among UNIBEN undergraduates, suggesting a high level of awareness and effectiveness, particularly with platforms like Piggyvest. These studies collectively highlight the diverse factors influencing consumer responses to advertising, ranging from medium-specific impacts to socio-cultural considerations. Understanding these insights is crucial for effectively gauging how UNIBEN students perceive and respond to digital advertising strategies, emphasizing the need for targeted and culturally resonant approaches in this demographic.

Overall, the literature review identifies gaps in current research and highlights the need for further exploration into how advertising strategies can effectively engage and influence university students, particularly those at UNIBEN. It sets the stage for the subsequent chapters by providing a comprehensive overview of existing theories, empirical studies, and the evolving landscape of advertising practices in digital media.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology employed to investigate the perceptions and responses of University of Benin (UNIBEN) students towards advertising. The chapter begins with an overview of the research design, the study population, the sample size of the study, a description of the instrument, the validity and reliability of the instrument, method data collection methods, and method data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design

The research adopted a quantitative approach to gathering systematic data on the perceptions and responses of UNIBEN students towards advertising. A cross-sectional survey design was selected as it allows data to be collected from a diverse group of students at a single point in time. The diverse group of students include students from 100 to 400 levels of the Department of Mass Communication. Also, the cross-sectional survey method is most suitable for the study because the researcher gathered opinions on students' perceptions towards advertising at a specific time.

3.3 Population

The population of interest for this study consists of undergraduate students studying Mass Communication at the University of Benin. The total of population includes all 892 students from 100 to 400 level as at the 2023/2024 session.

3.4 Sample Size

Using Andrew Fisher's formula, a total of 269 students were selected to be used as the sample size of the study. The sample size was randomly selected from the general population

and consists of students from 100 to 400 levels in the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Benin, Nigeria

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{(Z\text{-score})^2 \times \text{StdDev} (1\text{-StdDev})}{(\text{Confidence interval})^2}$$

Where standard deviation (StdDev) = 0.5

z-score based on population = 1.65

confidence interval = 0.05

$$\text{sample size} = \frac{1.65^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

Sample size = 269

3.5 Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from different levels of the department in the university. The population of the study is 892 students, and the amount questionnaires assigned to each level was based on the population of that particular level. Hundred level had a total of 220 students of the population, which is 24.6% of the population. Therefore, they made up 24.6% of the of the sample size of 269, which is 66, and 66 copies of the questionnaires were randomly assigned to hundred level students. The same technique was employed for other levels, and the breakdown of sample size for each level can be seen in the table below.

Table 1 showing breakdown of sample size across levels

| Level | Population | Sample Size |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 100L | 220 | 66 |
| 200L | 243 | 73 |
| 300L | 181 | 55 |
| 400L | 248 | 75 |
| Total | 892 | 269 |

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection in this study is the questionnaire. This is because it is most suitable for the investigation and makes it easy to reach out to the entire sample size of the study. The questionnaire comprised of sections A-D. Section A contains demographic data of respondents, section B contains items assessing the perceptions of UNIBEN students towards digital advertising, section C contains items assessing the responses of UNIBEN students to different types of digital advertising, and section D contains items that assess the factors that influence UNIBEN students' perception and response to advertising. All items on the instrument are structured.

3.7 Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity to determine the extent to which the instrument is relevant to the subject of the study. The instrument was subjected to vetting, correction, and approval by the supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Mass Communication in UNIBEN.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

The Cronbach method of reliability was conducted on a pilot study and a suitable reliability coefficient was obtained to determine the extent to which the instrument is consistent with the study.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using structured questionnaires distributed electronically through email and online platforms such as WhatsApp. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on various aspects including students' perceptions of different digital advertising channels, their attitudes towards advertisements, and their responses to advertising messages.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was conducted via techniques such as simple frequency and percentage tables. These tables are useful for providing basic descriptive statistics. They give an overview of the distribution of perceptions and responses of the students without requiring complex analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the result of data analysis and answer to the research questions as well as the research hypotheses. 269 copies of questionnaires were sent out, and all of the 269 copies were returned with responses from respondents.

4.1 Data Presentation

Table 2: showing how often students encounter digital advertisements while using the internet

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Very frequently | 158 | 58.6 |
| Frequently | 90 | 33.3 |
| Occasionally | 21 | 8.1 |
| Rarely | 0 | 0.0 |
| Never | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 269 | 100 |

Table 2 shows that majority of students (158 individuals, 58.6%) report encountering digital advertisements very frequently while using the internet. This suggests that a significant portion of students is regularly exposed to online ads during their browsing or internet activities. A large group of students (90 individuals, 33.3%) encounters digital ads frequently, indicating that they come across advertisements on a regular basis but not as often as those in the "very frequently" category. A smaller group of students (21 individuals, 8.1%) experiences digital advertisements occasionally, meaning they see ads from time to time, but

not consistently or on a regular basis. No students reported encountering digital ads rarely, suggesting that digital ads are a common experience for everyone in the sample. Similarly, no students indicated that they never encounter digital advertisements, meaning every student in the survey is exposed to them at least occasionally.

Table 3: students’ perception on digital media as a positive tool for advertising in general

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly agree | 160 | 59.6 |
| Agree | 98 | 36.4 |
| Undecided | 11 | 4.0% |
| Disagree | 0 | 0.0 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 269 | 100 |

Table 3 shows that majority of students (160 individuals, 59.6%) strongly agree that digital media is a positive tool for advertising. This indicates that more than half of the students believe digital platforms are effective and beneficial for advertising purposes. A significant portion of students (98 individuals, 36.4%) agree that digital media is a positive advertising tool. While they may not feel as strongly as those who "strongly agree," they still view digital media positively for advertising. A small group of students (11 individuals, 4.0%) remain undecided, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. These students might be unsure about the effectiveness or benefits of digital media in advertising. No student disagreed with the idea that digital media is a positive advertising tool, indicating no significant opposition to the concept in this group.

Table 4: How digital advertising affects students' awareness of products and services

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Very much | 174 | 64.7 |
| Somewhat | 60 | 22.2% |
| Neutral | 30 | 11.1% |
| Not much | 5 | 2% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 269 | 100 |

Table 4 indicates that 64.6% of students believe digital media affects their awareness of a product very much, 22.2% believe it somewhat affects their awareness of products and services, 11.1% are neutral while 2% claim that digital advertising does not affect their awareness of products and services.

Table 5: How students rate the credibility of information provided in digital advertisements

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Very credible | 46 | 17.2 |
| Credible | 109 | 40.4 |
| Neutral | 103 | 38.4 |
| Not credible | 11 | 4 |
| Total | 269 | 100 |

Table 5 shows that a smaller portion of students (46 individuals, 17.2%) view the information in digital advertisements as very credible. This indicates that only a minority of students strongly trust the information presented in these ads. A larger group (109 individuals, 40.4%) find the information in digital advertisements credible. This suggests that a significant portion of students believe that the information provided in ads is generally trustworthy, although perhaps not entirely convincing. A substantial portion of students (103 individuals, 38.4%) have a neutral stance, neither trusting nor distrusting the information in digital ads. This indicates uncertainty or indifference regarding the credibility of the information presented. A small group of students (11 individuals, 4%) rated the information as not credible, suggesting that a few students feel the information in digital ads is unreliable or untrustworthy.

Table 6: Platforms students’ frequently encounter digital advertisements

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Social Media | 239 | 88.9 |
| Search Engines | 16 | 6.1 |
| Websites/Blogs | 13 | 5.0 |
| TV/radio set | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 268 | 100 |

Table 6 indicates that a vast majority of students (239 individuals, 88.9%) report encountering digital advertisements on social media platforms. This indicates that social media is the dominant platform for digital ads, highlighting its pervasive role in students' online experiences. It reflects how platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and others are commonly used for advertising. A smaller portion of students (16 individuals, 6.1%)

encounter digital ads on search engines (such as Google or Bing). This suggests that while ads in search results are common, they are far less frequent than those on social media platforms. An even smaller group of students (13 individuals, 5.0%) report seeing digital ads on websites or blogs. This indicates that ads on websites and blogs, while still a source of digital advertising, are less frequent compared to social media and search engines. No students indicated encountering digital advertisements on TV or radio sets, which is expected as digital advertisements are primarily associated with online platforms rather than traditional broadcast media in this context.

Table 7: How UNIBEN students respond to different types of digital advertising

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Social Media ads | 236 | 87.9 |
| Search Engines ads | 5 | 2.0 |
| Display/banner on Websites | 5 | 2.0 |
| TV/radio set | 22 | 8.1 |
| Total | 268 | 100 |

Table 7 shows that a significant majority of students (236 individuals, 87.9%) respond to social media ads. This shows that social media ads are by far the most effective or noticed form of digital advertising for UNIBEN students, which aligns with global trends where platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are prime spaces for targeted ads. A significant majority of students (236 individuals, 87.9%) respond to social media ads. This shows that social media ads are by far the most effective or noticed form of digital advertising for UNIBEN students, which aligns with global trends where platforms like Instagram,

Facebook, and Twitter are prime spaces for targeted ads. Similarly, only 2.0% (5 students) respond to display/banner ads on websites. This suggests that display ads are not a prominent form of digital advertising that students engage with, indicating they may not find them as noticeable or impactful compared to other types of ads. A small group of students (22 individuals, 8.1%) respond to ads on TV/radio sets. While TV and radio are traditional media, the relatively low percentage reflects the diminishing role of these platforms for digital advertising, especially when compared to more interactive or targeted digital platforms.

Chart 1: showing how students respond to the different types of digital advertising

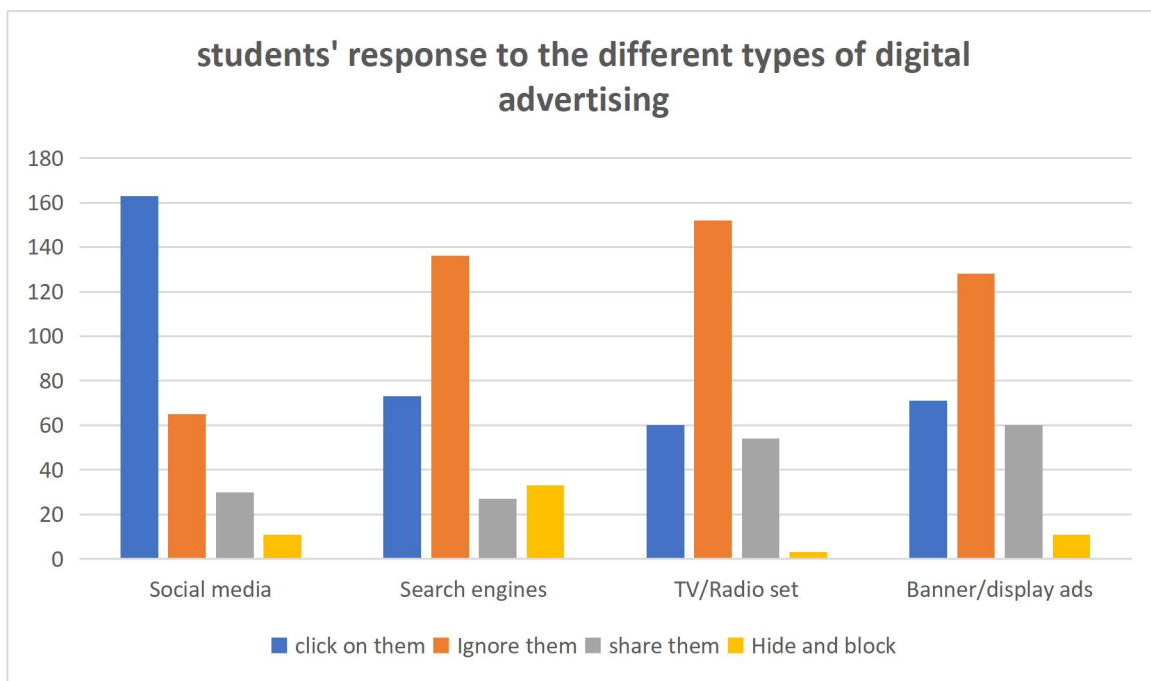


Chart 1 shows that 163 out of 269 respondents click on social media adverts, 65 of them ignore, 30 share them and 11 are most likely to hide and block them. On search engines, 73 of the respondents click on them, 163 of them ignore them, 27 share the ads, and 33 of them are more likely to hide and block them. On TV/radio sets, 60 of the respondents are likely to engage in such adverts, and 152 of them are more likely to ignore such information. Special offers or discounts influence 43.4, 54 of them share, and 3 of them are likely to block

them. On Banner/display ads, 71 respondents click on them, 128 ignore them, 60 share them, and 11 hide and block them.

Table 8: Factors that most influence students' perception of digital advertising

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Relevance to personal interests | 199 | 74.1 |
| Quality and design of the ad | 133 | 49.5 |
| Frequency of exposure | 79 | 29.3 |
| Source or brand reputation | 136 | 50.5 |
| Special offers or discounts | 117 | 43.4 |
| Ethical considerations | 60 | 22.2 |
| Total | 724 | 100 |

Table 8 shows that the factor that most influences students' perception is how relevant the ad is to their personal interests. With 74.1% of students finding this important, it's clear that students prefer ads tailored to their needs or preferences. Advertisers should focus on targeting and personalizing ads to cater to the specific interests of students to maximize effectiveness. Almost half of the respondents (49.5%) emphasized the importance of the quality and design of the ad. A visually appealing ad with high-quality production can make a strong impression on viewers. A lower percentage (29.3%) of respondents felt that the frequency of exposure to an ad played a significant role. This could indicate that overexposure might not lead to better results, and there is an optimal frequency beyond which additional exposure has diminishing returns. Over half of the respondents (50.5%) considered the reputation of the source or brand when engaging with an ad. This shows that trust in the brand

influences the effectiveness of advertisements. Special offers or discounts were important to 43.4% of respondents, suggesting that price promotions are a strong motivator in consumer decision-making. Ethical considerations were the least important factor, with only 22.2% of respondents indicating that ethics played a role in their engagement with ads. While important, ethical concerns seem to influence fewer consumers compared to other factors like relevance or design.

Table 9: Factors that influence students’ response to digital advertising the most

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Personal relevance of the ad | 123 | 71.7 |
| Timing of the ad | 84 | 31.3 |
| Type of advertisement | 128 | 47.5 |
| Previous experience with the brand | 93 | 34.4 |
| Recommendations | 111 | 41.1 |
| Ad placement and visibility | 33 | 12.1 |

Table 9 indicates that a significant majority of respondents (71.7%) consider the personal relevance of the ad as a key factor. This indicates that ads that align with the consumer’s needs, preferences, or current interests are far more likely to resonate with the audience. 31.3% of respondents consider the timing of the ad important. This suggests that while timing is a factor, it does not have the same level of importance as personal relevance. The timing may refer to when the ad is seen (e.g., during a specific time of day or season), which can impact its effectiveness. 34.4% of respondents are influenced by their previous experience with the brand. Positive experiences with a brand can make consumers more receptive to its ads, while negative experiences can lead to distrust or disinterest. 41.1% of

respondents value recommendations when responding to ads. This could refer to peer recommendations, reviews, or influencer endorsements, which are powerful drivers of consumer behaviour. A smaller percentage (12.1%) of respondents think ad placement and visibility is a key factor. While visibility is important for ensuring the ad is seen, it seems less crucial compared to other factors such as personal relevance or type of ad.

Table 10: Importance of privacy of data in shaping students’ response to digital advertising

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Very important | 144 | 53.5 |
| Important | 82 | 30.3 |
| Neutral | 38 | 14.1 |
| Not important | 5 | 2.1 |
| Not important at all | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 269 | 100 |

Table 10 shows that a majority of the respondents (53.5%) consider privacy of data to be very important. This suggests that the privacy is highly regarded or prioritized by more than half of the people surveyed. Another 30.3% consider it important, but not to the same extent as "very important". This shows that the privacy of data is still seen as relatively significant, but not at the highest level. 14.1% of the respondents are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree on the importance of privacy. Only 2% of respondents believe that privacy of data is not important. This represents a small minority who think the factor doesn't matter much, and no respondents considered this factor to be "not important at all".

Table 11: Male Students' perception on if advertisements target different genders differently

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes, significantly | 0 | 0.0 |
| Yes, somewhat | 36 | 33.3 |
| No, not really | 72 | 66.7 |
| No, not at all | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 108 | 100 |

Table 11 shows that 33.3% (36 out of 108) of male students think digital advertisements target genders differently while 66.7% (72) of them believe that advertisements do not really target genders differently. This is in contrast with responses from female students where 44.4% think that advertisements significantly target different genders while 55.6% believe that advertisement somehow target different genders differently. This implies that a total of 33.3% of male students think advertisements target genders differently while a total of 100% of female students believe the same.

Table 12: How male students feel about advertisements that use stereotypical gender roles

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Very acceptable | 0 | 0.0 |
| Somewhat acceptable | 90 | 83.3 |
| Somewhat unacceptable | 0 | 0.0 |
| Somewhat unacceptable | 18 | 16.7 |
| Total | 108 | 100 |

The majority of male students (83.3%) find advertisements that use stereotypical gender roles to be somewhat acceptable. This shows a general tolerance or acceptance, though not enthusiastic approval, of gender stereotypical in ads. Only a small percentage (16.7%) of male students consider these ads to be somewhat unacceptable. This indicates that while there is some opposition to the use of stereotypical gender roles, it is not widespread. No respondents considered the ads to be very acceptable or completely unacceptable, suggesting that the reactions are largely moderate.

Table 13: Male students’ perception on gender-specific advertisements being more persuasive than gender-neutral ones

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes, definitely | 0 | 0.0 |
| Yes, somewhat | 18 | 16.7 |
| No, not really | 90 | 83.3 |
| No, not at all | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 108 | 100 |

Table 13 indicates that 83.3% (90) of male students feel that it is somehow acceptable for advertisements to use stereotypical gender roles while 16.7% (18) of them believe it is very unacceptable. 44.4% of female students believe that it is very acceptable for advertisements that use stereotypical gender roles 11.1% believe it is somewhat acceptable, meanwhile, 33.3% are neutral on the case of advertisements using stereotypical gender roles. This implies that majority of male students believe that it is acceptable for advertisements to use stereotypical gender roles and majority of female students also believe it is acceptable.

Table 14: Female students’ perception on if advertisements target different genders differently

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes, significantly | 67 | 44.4 |
| Yes, somewhat | 84 | 55.6 |
| No, not really | 0 | 0.0 |
| No, not at all | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 151 | 100 |

Table 14 shows that a combined 100% of female students believe that advertisements target genders differently in some way, either significantly (44.4%) or somewhat (55.6%). There is no disagreement in this perception, as no one selected the options indicating that advertisements treat genders the same. The majority of female students (55.6%) believe the differences are somewhat significant, indicating that they feel gender-targeted advertisements do occur, but the differences may not always be drastic or very noticeable. A significant portion (44.4%) believes the gender-targeting is significant, which suggests that they perceive a more pronounced differentiation in how genders are addressed or represented in advertisements. There is no dissent: 0% of female students believe that advertisements treat genders the same or do not differentiate between them at all.

Table 15: How female students feel about advertisements that use stereotypical gender roles

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Very acceptable | 67 | 44.4 |
| Somewhat acceptable | 17 | 11.1 |
| Neutral | 50 | 33.3 |
| Somewhat unacceptable | 17 | 11.1 |
| Total | 151 | 100 |

Table 15 shows that 44.4% of female students think that advertisements with stereotypical gender roles are very acceptable. A smaller group, 33.3%, is neutral, neither fully condemning nor supporting advertisements that use gender stereotypes. This indicates that many female students may not feel strongly about the issue, or they may see it as a more complex matter that doesn't warrant a strong opinion. 11.1% find these advertisements somewhat acceptable, meaning they are more tolerant of them but still recognize there might be issues with how gender roles are depicted. Another 11.1% consider the use of stereotypical gender roles in advertisements to be somewhat unacceptable, suggesting that while they disapprove of it, it doesn't completely deter them from engaging with the advertisement.

Table 16: Female students perception on gender-specific advertisements being more persuasive than gender-neutral ones

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes, definitely | 67 | 44.4 |
| Yes, somewhat | 84 | 55.6 |
| No, not really | 0 | 0.0 |
| No, not at all | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 151 | 100 |

Table 15 indicates that there is unanimous agreement among female students that advertisements target genders differently. The data shows that the perception is divided between those who think the differences are definite (44.4%) and those who feel the differences are somewhat noticeable (55.6%). This suggests that all female students believe there is some form of gender-targeted advertising, with most perceiving it as somewhat differentiated but not extreme. No respondents felt that there was no gender-targeted advertising, which shows that the idea of gender-specific targeting in advertisements is universally recognized.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings, the majority of students (91.9%) report encountering digital advertisements either very frequently (58.6%) or frequently (33.3%) while using the internet. This high exposure shows that digital advertising is an essential part of the online experience for students, this suggests that advertisers may need to develop methods that relate harmoniously with this target audience to capitalize on their online presence. Among the respondents, 96% either strongly agree (59.6%) or agree (36.4%) that digital media is an

effective advertising tool. This strong endorsement emphasizes the belief among students that digital media can effectively deliver marketing messages. The data also exposes the fact that 86.8% of students feel that digital media significantly imparts their awareness of products and services. This perception is linked with the high rate of encounters with digital ads, indicating that consistent exposure to such content plays a crucial role in shaping consumer awareness. While a majority (57.6%) of respondents regard the information provided in digital advertisements as credible (17.2% very credible and 40.4% credible), a notable 38.4% remain neutral, and 4% consider it not credible. This variation in perceived credibility highlights the need for advertisers to ensure that their content is trustworthy and well-substantiated to build and maintain consumer confidence. The data reveals that 88.9% of respondents frequently encounter digital advertisements on social media, far surpassing encounters on other platforms like search engines (6.1%) and websites/blogs (5%). This preference suggests that social media is a dominant arena for digital advertising in the University of Benin, likely due to its interactive nature and ability to target specific demographics effectively. Interestingly, no respondents reported encountering digital advertisements on media like TV or radio, reinforcing the shift towards digital platforms in advertising strategies. This is similar to the case mentioned by Rao and Kalyani (2022) that people do not have to rely on the TV to get their daily dose of news it can all be obtained from a social networking site. Also, the analysis indicates that students in University of Benin are not only frequently exposed to digital advertisements but also view digital media as an effective tool for increasing product awareness. This is in line with studies conducted by Kircova and Cinar (2017) which reveals the impact of digital marketing in Universities. While a majority finds the information credible, a significant portion remains neutral, suggesting room for improvement in building

trust. Advertisers should focus on social media platforms to maximize reach and impact, aligning their strategies with the preferences and perceptions of the student demographic.

The analysis presented in Table 7, and Chart 1 provides compelling insights into the engagement levels of respondents with various advertising platforms. A significant amount of respondents indicate that they find social media advertising the most engaging, highlighting the effectiveness of these platforms in capturing audience attention. This preference underscores the shift in advertising focus from traditional media to digital channels, particularly among younger demographics. The data reveals stark differences in engagement levels across various media. While 163 respondents (approximately 60.6%) click on social media ads, only 60 (22.3%) engage with TV/radio advertisements. The pronounced disparity suggests that social media is not only the most engaging medium but also a vital channel for advertisers aiming to reach and influence their target audience. In contrast, traditional media platforms like TV and radio struggle to capture similar engagement, with a majority of respondents (152) choosing to ignore them. The responses regarding behavioural engagement with ads illustrate varying levels of interaction. For social media advertisements, the majority click on them, while a notable number also share the content (30 respondents). This sharing behaviour indicates a level of endorsement or interest that could enhance the reach of these advertisements, as shared content can tap into personal networks. Conversely, the high number of ignored ads on search engines (163) suggests that even though they are visible, they may not resonate with the audience as effectively as social media ads. Special offers or discounts have a significant impact, influencing 43.4% of respondents. This statistic reinforces the idea that incentives can drive engagement and consumer action, suggesting that advertisers should consider promotional strategies to enhance the effectiveness of their

campaigns. The fact that 54 respondents share these offers further emphasizes the potential for viral marketing when incentives are involved. The engagement statistics for display/banner ads reveal that, while 71 respondents click on these ads, a considerable 128 respondents choose to ignore them. This low engagement rate indicates that display advertising may not be as effective in capturing attention. The ability to share such ads (60 respondents) suggests some level of engagement, but the high ignore rate signals that advertisers may need to re-evaluate their strategies to make these ads more compelling. Therefore, the analysis illustrates that students in University of Benin respond differently to the various digital media, with social media being the most engaging platform for advertising, and television/radio lagging significantly in audience interaction.

The analysis reveals critical insights into the factors that shape respondents' perceptions of advertisements, highlighting the importance of relevance, quality, and brand reputation. A significant 76.8% of respondents indicated that the relevance of the advertisement to their interests heavily influences their perception. This finding underscores the necessity for advertisers to tailor their messages to align with the interests and preferences of their target audience. When advertisements resonate personally, they are more likely to capture attention and foster a positive response. The quality and design of advertisements were cited by 49.5% of respondents as influential factors. This suggests that aesthetically pleasing and well-crafted ads not only attract attention but also enhance credibility. The influence of source or brand reputation, acknowledged by 50.5% of respondents, indicates that trust plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions. This is in agreement with Bernarto et al (2020) who mentioned that brand trust had a positive effect on brand loyalty. Advertisements from reputable brands are likely to be perceived more positively, highlighting the importance

of brand equity in advertising strategies. While 29.3% of respondents noted that the frequency of exposure affects their perception. The fact that special offers or discounts influence 43.4% of respondents indicates that financial incentives can drive engagement and response, confirming that discounts affect consumers' perception and response towards a product (Hariati and Hariani, 2022). This aligns with common marketing strategies that capitalize on consumer behaviour, suggesting that promotional tactics enhance engagement. Ethical considerations impact 22% of respondents, and advertisers should be mindful of ethical implications in their campaigns to build trust and loyalty among their audience. Therefore, the analysis emphasizes the numerous nature of advertising perception, where relevance, quality, brand reputation, frequency of exposure, special offers, and ethical considerations all play significant roles. Yet, the main factors that influence UNIBEN students' perception and response to digital advertising are the quality and design of advertisements, source or brand reputation, and special offers or discounts.

Tables 11-16 provide valuable insights into perceptions regarding gender-targeted advertising and the use of gender stereotypes within these advertisements. 33.3% of male students think that advertisements target genders differently compared to 100% of female students who hold the same view. This suggests that most male students think it's okay for advertisements to rely on traditional gender roles, and similarly, the majority of female learners also think it's okay. Also, most male learners think that ads targeting genders are less effective than ads that don't specify gender, whereas most female learners (55.6%) disagree.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study is on the perception and responses of UNIBEN students towards digital advertising. It employed the cross-sectional survey research design and administered questionnaires to mass communication students in the University of Benin to determine how they perceive and respond to digital advertising. Four research questions guided the study. This study employed the market response theory which is used to analyze the impact of various marketing activities. The data collected were analyzed using simple frequency and percentage tables.

The findings of the study include;

1. Students in UNIBEN have positive perceptions towards digital advertising, admitting that digital media is an effective advertising tool.
2. Students in University of Benin respond differently to the various digital media, with social media being the most engaging platform for advertising, and television/radio lagging significantly in audience interaction.
3. The main factors that influence UNIBEN students' perception and response to digital advertising are the quality and design of advertisements, source or brand reputation, and special offers or discounts.
4. There is a significant difference between male and female students' perceptions and responses towards advertising.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the perceptions and responses of UNIBEN students towards digital advertising. The findings indicate that students generally hold positive views regarding the effectiveness of digital media as an advertising tool. Their engagement varies across different platforms, with social media emerging as the most interactive and appealing medium, while traditional formats like television and radio fall short in audience engagement. Moreover, the study identified key factors that shape these perceptions and responses, including the quality and design of advertisements, the reputation of the brand, and the attractiveness of special offers or discounts. Notably, gender differences were observed, suggesting that male and female students respond distinctly to digital advertising, which could inform targeted marketing strategies.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of understanding student demographics and preferences in crafting effective digital advertising campaigns. By leveraging these insights, marketers can enhance their outreach and engagement efforts within this demographic, ensuring that advertising strategies resonate more profoundly with the intended audience. Future studies could further explore the implications of these findings and expand on the nuances of student responses to evolving digital advertising trends.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation are made;

1. Advertisers should explore knowledge of what form of digital advertising is more acceptable to their target audience
2. Companies advertising in student dominated areas should employ more resources in social media ads than in television and radio.

3. Advertising firms should apply knowledge of gender-difference which occur in their target areas while putting up advertisement.

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APPENDIX I

Faculty of Arts

Department of Mass Communication

University of Benin

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a student of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin, undergoing studies to obtain a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication.

I am conducting research on the Perceptions and Responses of University of Benin Students Towards Digital Advertising, and therefore solicit your response to the items on the questionnaire.

Yours faithfully

Joyce Ibatuemoh

Questionnaire on Perceptions and Responses of UNIBEN Students Towards Digital Advertising

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your personal experiences and opinions. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender: Male - Female
2. Age: 17-20 21-24 25-28 29 and above
3. Level of Study: 100 Level 200 Level 300 Level 400 Level

Section B: Perceptions of Digital Advertising

1. How often do you encounter digital advertisements while using the internet?
 Very frequently
 Frequently
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Never
2. Digital media is a positive tool for advertising in general?
 Strongly agree
 Agree
 undecided
 Strongly disagree
 disagree

3. How does digital advertising affect your awareness of products and services?
- Very much
 - Somewhat
 - Neutral
 - Not much
 - Not at all
4. How would you rate the credibility of information provided in digital advertisements?
- Very credible
 - Credible
 - Neutral
 - Not credible
 - Not credible at all
5. On which platforms do you most frequently encounter digital advertisements?
- Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
 - Search Engines (e.g., Google, Bing)
 - Websites/Blogs
 - TV/radio set

Section C: Responses to Different Types of Digital Advertising

1. What type of digital advertising do you find most engaging?
- Social media ads
 - TV/radio set
 - Search engine ads
 - Display/banner ads on websites

2. How do you usually respond to the following types of digital advertising?

Social media advertising

Click on them

Ignore them

Share them

Hide or block them

TV/Radio set:

Pay more attention to them

Ignore them

Share them

Hide or block them

Search engine ads

Click on them

Ignore them

Share them

Hide or block them

Display/banner ads

Click on them

Ignore them

Share them

Hide or block the

Section D: Factors Influencing Perception and Response

1. What factors most influence your perception of digital advertising? (Select all that apply)
 - Relevance to personal interests
 - Quality and design of the ad
 - Frequency of exposure
 - Source or brand reputation
 - Special offers or discounts
 - Ethical considerations (e.g., data privacy)

2. What factors most influence your response to digital advertising? (Select all that apply)
 - Personal relevance of the ad
 - Timing of the ad
 - Type of advertisement (e.g., video, banner)
 - Previous experience with the brand
 - Recommendations from friends or influencers
 - Ad placement and visibility

3. How important is the privacy of your data in shaping your response to digital advertising?
 - Very important
 - Important
 - Neutral
 - Not important
 - Not important at all

Section E: Gender Differences in Perception and Response

1. Do you think advertisements target different genders differently?
 - Yes, significantly
 - Yes, somewhat
 - No, not really
 - No, not at all

2. How do you feel about advertisements that use stereotypical gender roles?
 - Very acceptable
 - Somewhat acceptable
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat unacceptable
 - Very unacceptable

3. Do you think gender-specific advertisements are more persuasive than gender-neutral ones?
 - Yes, definitely
 - Yes, somewhat
 - No, not really
 - No, not at all