

**SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER PURCHASING
DECISIONS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
BENIN.**

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**DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

NOVEMBER, 2025

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF MARKETING, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
(B.Sc) DEGREE IN MARKETING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY.**

NOVEMBER, 2025.

DECLARATION

I, **Blossom Chika OFILI** do hereby declare that this project is entirely undertaken by me and a product of my composition. The work embodied in this project that has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree. All references made to the works of other persons have been duly acknowledged.

Blossom Chika OFILI

Date

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the project titled “Social Media Advertising and Consumer Purchasing Decisions Among Young Adults in the University of Benin” was carried out, under my supervision of my project supervisor Dr Christopher Agbonifoh, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) Degree in Marketing, University of Benin. All ideas and views are product of my personal research, efforts, and where the views of others were expressed were duly acknowledged.

_____.

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Date

Dr. S.J Osifo.

Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

I, dedicate this project to God Almighty, the source of my wisdom, strength, and Grace. Without his guidance, none of this would have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give all glory and thanks to God Almighty, whose grace, wisdom, and unfailing love have carried me through this academic journey.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchasing decisions among young adults at the University of Benin. It explores key factors such as engagement levels, advertisement effectiveness, brand trust, and the influence of different social media platforms on buying behavior. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected from university students and analyzed through regression analysis to determine the relationship between social media advertising and purchasing decisions. Findings reveal that high engagement, clear and creative advertisements, and strong brand trust significantly influence students' buying choices. The study highlights the growing importance of social media as a marketing tool and provides valuable insights for marketers aiming to target young consumers effectively. Recommendations for future research and marketing strategies are also discussed.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Social Media plays a crucial role in contributing to customers purchasing decision with platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X(formerly Twitter) and Tiktok revolutionising the way businesses interact with their customers, to businesses reaching their target audience. (Tuten & Solomon 2017) investigated how social media advertisements influence consumer's behaviour specifically how they influence their buying decisions as young adults who are avid users of Social media, whose purchasing decision are increasingly influenced by the advertisement they see on these platforms.

Social media is the group of the internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haelein 2010). The rapid growth of social media has transformed the marketing terrain enabling businesses to engage with their target audience in effective ways. Social media emerged as a crucial influence of consumer purchasing decision particularly among young adults. As avid users of social media platforms, young adults are increasingly

exposed to targeted advertisement that shapes their attitudes, preferences, and ultimately their purchasing decision (Buffett, 2017).

According to statistics, social media advertising has become a significant contributor to the growth of e-commerce, being spent on social media advert on young adults' purchasing decision, exploring factors that contribute to perceive and respond to these advertisement. With sites like Facebook, Instagram, X, and Tiktok companies can reach people all over the world (Statista 2024). They can communicate with customers instantly and influence what they buy. However, we do not fully understand how social media affects shopping

decisions. Marketers often struggle to create effective social media strategies. Still, they do not know how the various groups respond to various types of content and this gap makes it hard for businesses to tailor their marketing strategies, build trust, and keep customers loyal.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Despite the growing importance of social media advertising, social media is changing how people purchase and interact with brands. The sheer volume of social media content combined with their increasing savvy of online consumers, has made it challenging for advertisers to capture attention, build brand awareness,

and drive sales that resonates with target audience, particularly young adults. Marketing 5.0 uses technology to create, communicate, deliver, and enhance value across the customer journey. It addresses the new generation of customers who are digital natives and constantly exposed to overwhelming content (Kotler, Hermawan & Iwan 2021). There is a lack of understanding about what characteristics make social media advertisement effective and how target audience perception ultimately drives behaviour. The knowledge gap highlights the need for research that investigates the characteristics of effective social media advertisements. Moreover while businesses invest heavily in social media campaigns, there remains a critical gap in understanding which specific characteristic of social media advertising will specifically influence consumer purchasing decision. Research by (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016) points out that the effectiveness of social media communication varied depending on the type and nature of the content suggesting that consumer response are influenced by a range of contextual and perceptual factors. Elements such as message clarity, visual appeal, interactivity, emotional tone, and the use of influencers play roles, but the degree to which they impact purchase intent is not fully understood. This gap in knowledge is significant, giving that purchase decision are increasingly influenced by what consumers see and engage with online (Duffett 2017).

Understanding the dynamic of social media advert is crucial for developing more effective marketing strategies and ensuring higher returns on advertising investment. There is therefore a need for this study to examine how consumers perceive social media advertisement and what features make them more persuasive and driven. The study will help brands tailor their messages to specific audience segment and improve consumer engagement and conversion, particularly among young adults (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen 2020).

Notwithstanding the rising prominence of social media advertising, there is a need to understand the factors that contribute to young adults' perception and response to these advertisements. There is a research gap on the impact of social media advertising on young adults' purchasing decisions. This study aims to address this gap and provide insights into the impact of social media advertising on young adults purchasing.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. How does social media engagement level influence consumer purchasing decisions among young adults in the University of Benin?
- ii. In what ways does the effectiveness of social media advertisements affect the purchasing behavior of university students?

- iii. What is the impact of brand trust developed through social media advertising on consumer buying decisions?
- iv. How do different social media platforms shape the purchasing behavior of students?
- v. What is the overall effect of social media advertising on consumer purchasing decisions among young adults in the University of Benin?

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this Study are to:

- i. To examine the influence of social media engagement level on consumer purchasing decisions among young adults in the University of Benin.
- ii. To investigate how the effectiveness of social media advertisements affects the purchasing behavior of university students.
- iii. To determine the impact of brand trust developed through social media advertising on consumer buying decisions.
- iv. To investigate the role of different social media platforms in shaping students' purchasing behavior.

v. To evaluate the overall effect of social media advertising on consumer purchasing decisions among young adults in the University of Benin.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses will be tested as follows:

H01: Engagement Level does not significantly influence consumer purchasing decision among young adults in the University of Benin.

H02: Ad Effectiveness does not significantly influence consumer purchasing decision among young adults in the University of Benin.

H03: Brand Trust does not significantly influence consumer purchasing decision among young adults in the University of Benin.

H04: Social Media does not significantly influence consumer purchasing decision among young adults in the University of Benin.

H05: Social media advertising has no significant overall effect on consumer purchasing decisions among young adults in the University of Benin.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study aims to investigate the impact of social media advertising on young adults purchasing decisions, specifically targeting individual aged 18-30 who use social media platforms regularly and have made online purchase in the past 6

months. The study will also focus on users of popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and Tiktok, and will examine the types of social media ads that are most effective in reaching young adults. the factors that influence their perception and response to social media advertisements, and the impact of social media advertising on e-commerce growth among young adults.

The study will further be conducted in the University of Benin, with a specific focus on undergraduate and postgraduate students who are active social media users. The study will explain how social media advertising influences their purchases, and the factors that influence their buying behaviour.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of the study contributes to existing literature on social media advertising and consumer purchasing decisions. It advances our understanding of young adults behavior, attitudes, and preference when it comes to social media advertising. The study aims to inform marketing strategies for businesses seeking to leverage social media advertising to reach their target audience. It helps businesses understand their target audience, including their preferences, attitudes, and behaviour.

The study also informs advertising effectiveness by identifying the factors that contribute to successful social media advertising. It supports e-commerce growth

by providing insights into the relationship between social media advertising and e-commerce. Furthermore, the study inform the social media advertising industry, including the development of effective advertising strategies and the improvement of advertising platforms. It contributes to consumer welfare by promoting responsible advertising practices.

The study will benefit stakeholder, including businesses and marketers, young adults, the social media industry, marketing researchers and academics, e-commerce companies, advertising agencies, and consumer behavior research. These beneficiaries will gain insights into the impact of social media advertising on young adults' purchasing decision, which will inform marketing strategies, advertising strategies, and consumer behaviour research.

Finally, the study supports informed decision-making among young adults by providing insights into the factors that influence their purchasing decisions. Overall, the study provides valuable insights for businesses, marketers, and consumers, and contributes to the existing body of knowledge on social media advertising and consumer purchasing decision.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

As the digital ecosystem continues its rapid expansion, social media has emerged as a dominant force shaping consumer behaviour, especially among young adults. This chapter explores how social media advertising influences purchasing decisions, particularly within university contexts such as the University of Benin (UNIBEN).

This examines previous research findings on the relationship between social media advertising and consumer purchasing decision. In recent years, the dynamic evolution of digital technology has revolutionized how brands and consumers interact.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

This section reviews the main concepts underpinning the study:

2.1.1 Social Media

Social media refers to digital platforms that enable users to create, share, and interact with content and each other in real time (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These platforms range from networking sites like Facebook and Instagram to microblogging services such as Twitter (now X) and video-sharing platforms like

TikTok and YouTube. Social media has evolved from a tool for personal communication into a potent channel for business marketing, brand building, and consumer engagement.

For marketers, social media offers not only a space for visibility but also a participatory environment where consumers become co-creators of value through likes, shares, and comments (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Among young adults, particularly university students, social media forms an integral part of daily life and significantly influences their behaviours and attitudes, including purchasing decisions (Duffett, 2017)

One of the defining aspects of social media is its ability to create two-way communication, allowing users not only to consume content but also to participate in conversations, share opinions, and influence discussions (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Unlike traditional media, where information flows from sender to receiver, social media empowers individuals to become both consumers and producers of content, fostering a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2013). The viral nature of content on these platforms means that posts, videos, or trends can gain massive visibility in a short period, sometimes influencing social movements, political discourse, or public opinion (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015).

However, social media also presents challenges alongside its opportunities. Issues such as misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy concerns, and the addictive design of some platforms have drawn attention from scholars and policymakers (Boyd, 2014). While social media is a powerful marketing and engagement tool, businesses must navigate the risk of negative publicity spreading rapidly through the same networks they use for promotion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Despite these concerns, social media continues to shape modern communication, culture, and commerce, making it an essential subject of study for marketers, sociologists, and technologists alike (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, Stephen, 2020).

2.1.2 Social Media Advertising

Social media advertising (SMA) is the use of social platforms to deliver paid promotional content aimed at reaching specific target audiences. Unlike traditional forms of advertising, SMA allows for personalized, measurable, and interactive advertising campaigns (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). It includes display ads, sponsored content, influencer promotions, story ads, and video campaigns that are strategically deployed across platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and TikTok.

Social media advertising is effective largely due to its ability to leverage user data for precise audience targeting. Features such as likes, interests, demographics, and

behaviour patterns enable advertisers to tailor messages and increase the likelihood of consumer engagement and conversion (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Furthermore, SMA creates two-way communication channels where consumers can respond, inquire, and provide feedback, making the advertising process more dynamic and user-centred.

Young adults, especially university students, are particularly susceptible to social media advertising due to their high engagement rates and openness to digital trends (Boateng & Okoe, due to its capacity to influence consumer purchasing decisions, especially among young adults. who are often the most active users of these platforms (Duffett, 2017).

2.1.3 Consumer Purchasing Decision

Consumer purchasing decision refers to the cognitive and behavioural process through which a buyer identifies a need, evaluates options, and chooses a product or service to satisfy that need (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This decision-making process typically includes five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour.

In the digital era, especially among younger demographics, this process is heavily influenced by online content. Social media plays a crucial role in shaping opinions, presenting alternatives, and providing user-generated reviews that affect

decision-making (Solomon, 2018). Visual aesthetics, social proof (likes, comments, testimonials), influencer endorsements, and perceived authenticity of ads have all been found to sway consumer decisions online (Vernuccio et al., 2015).

Among university students, the purchasing decision is often influenced by peer opinions, trends, and immediate gratification; factors that social media can amplify (Drossos et al., 2014). Ads that resonate with youth culture, offer discounts, or create a sense of belonging are more likely to succeed in influencing purchases.

Additionally, consumer purchasing decisions in the social media context are shaped by the level of engagement and emotional connection that brands can foster with their audiences. Studies show that interactive elements such as polls, Q&A sessions, and real-time chats not only increase attention but also create a sense of involvement, which can positively influence purchase intent (Hudson, 2016). Furthermore, credibility and trust in the brand often built through consistent messaging, transparency, and authentic compra cad determining whether a consumer penceeds from consideration of pesti Eden A Swait, 2004),

2.1.4 The Interrelationship: Social Media, Advertising & Consumer Behaviour

Social media, when used as a tool for advertising, creates a unique ecosystem in which traditional marketing principles are reshaped. The consumer is no longer a passive recipient but an active participant who can influence others' buying decisions through likes, reviews, and shares (Hudson, 2016). For young adults, this participatory nature transforms advertising from a promotional tool into a social experience.

Effective social media advertising strategies typically incorporate storytelling, personalization, and engagement to guide consumers through their purchasing journey. Ads that integrate these elements create more than just awareness, they influence attitudes and behaviours, especially when delivered through trusted channels like peer recommendations or influencers (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

In this interactive ecosystem, advertising is no longer confined to static billboards or television slots- it has evolved into real-time, multimedia experiences that are embedded in everyday digital interactions. Young consumers, particularly university students, navigate their purchasing decisions through a lens shaped by

social validation, visual storytelling, and emotional resonance. A social media advertisement is often not perceived as a direct sales pitch but rather as part of a broader cultural and social dialogue (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Effective social media advertising strategies leverage this consumer behaviour by incorporating personalization, authentic storytelling, and interactive content. Personalization allows brands to tailor their messages based on user data such as browsing habits, interests, and location, which increases the relevance and appeal of ads (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Storytelling, on the other hand, humanizes the brand by embedding its values and mission into emotionally compelling narratives. For example, a skincare brand might share a customer's journey of overcoming acne, rather than merely highlighting product ingredients, this elicits empathy and trust.

Furthermore, advertising that encourages participation- such as tagging friends, answering polls, or joining giveaways, enhances engagement and emotional investment. This participatory element blurs the line between advertising and content, making the promotional message feel organic and socially embedded (Vernuccio et al., 2015). Influencer marketing, in particular, thrives in this environment, as trusted individuals act as brand ambassadors whose perceived

authenticity and relatability increase the persuasive power of the ad (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

These dynamics are particularly salient for young adults at universities like the University of Benin, where peer culture and digital connectivity are strong. Students often rely on platforms like Instagram stories, TikTok challenges, and WhatsApp broadcasts to stay updated on trends and make purchase decisions. The interconnectedness of social media, advertising, and consumer behaviour forms a cyclical process: ads are designed for engagement, consumers engage and spread them, and the resulting buzz influences other consumers decisions, thus completing the loop of influence.

The synergy between social media and advertising has fundamentally reshaped consumer behaviour. Rather than being driven solely by need or product utility, the purchasing decisions of young consumers today are significantly shaped by digital interactions, emotional narratives, and social endorsements. Brands that understand and strategically respond to these interrelationships are more likely to foster brand loyalty, drive conversions, and sustain relevance in an increasingly attention-driven marketplace.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework includes the consumer purchasing decision (Dependent Variable), Social media Advertising (Independent variable), as well as the Engagement/Interaction (Mediating Variable). Engagement is the behavioural and emotional response to advertising on social media platforms. It includes: Liking, Commenting, Sharing, Tagging, Following Brand, Clicking on Ads and Participating in Challenges or Giveaways. Higher levels of engagement often lead to deeper cognitive processing and influence consumers' evaluation of products, increasing the likelihood of purchase (Dehghani, 2016).

For this research, the conceptual framework links the Independent variable and the dependent variable, within the context of young adults at the University of Benin.

The rationale behind the conceptual framework for this study lies in the need to understand how the integration of social media into everyday life has reshaped advertising effectiveness and consumer decision-making, particularly among young adults in university environments.

Students at the University of Benin (UNIBEN) are highly active on platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok. Due to budget constraints, peer influence and user engagement often outweigh traditional advertising effectiveness. Many

students make purchase decisions after seeing positive testimonials, user-generated content, or peer reposts. This is relevant in the context of UNIBEN students, who are often influenced by trends, visual branding, and peer recommendations.

Additionally, the framework provides a structured lens to assess the influence of content quality, visual aesthetics, and advertising frequency on consumer attitudes. As research by Tuten and Solomon (2017) suggests, advertisements that are personalized, visually engaging, and interactive tend to generate stronger consumer responses than static or generic ads.

2.3 Theoretical Review

This section explores four major theories relevant to the research topic:

2.3.1 AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)

The AIDA model, developed by E. St. Elmo Lewis in the late 19th century, is one of the most widely used frameworks in marketing and advertising. It describes the stages a consumer passes through from first contact with a brand to making a purchase: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (Strong, 1925). Though originally developed for traditional advertising, AIDA remains relevant in the digital age

In the context of social media advertising, this model explains how brands craft content to capture attention (e.g. through eye-catching visuals or hashtags), generate interest (via entertaining or educational posts), build desire (through emotional storytelling or showcasing benefits), and finally provoke action (eg. clicks, purchases, or sign-ups) (Kotler & Keller. 2016)

For young adults in UNIBEN, this model is especially relevant, Social media ads that fail to grab attention quickly are often ignored due to content overload. However, those that intrigues or aligns with student interests, like fashion, tech gadgets, or entertainment move consumers down the AIDA funnel effectively.

2.3.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Proposed by Ajzen (1991), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that behavioral intentions are influenced by three core factors; Attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Attitude Toward the Behaviour refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question. For example, a student's attitude towards buying a product promoted on Instagram may be influenced by how well the ad communicates the product's value, aesthetics, and functional benefits. Positive attitudes often result from visually appealing ads,

relatable influencer endorsements, or personalized marketing content (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006).

In the case of UNIBEN students, if they perceive social media advertising as helpful, trendy, or entertaining, they are more likely to consider purchasing. Conversely, negative attitudes such as viewing the ad as fake or invasive can lead to avoidance or distrust.

Subjective norms represent the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior. In the context of young adults, this social pressure is typically exerted through friends, influencers, or social groups. For instance, a student may feel compelled to purchase a trending skincare brand if it's widely endorsed by peers or campus influencers. On social media, likes, shares, and comments serve as digital cues that reinforce normative behavior (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Subjective norms are especially powerful in communities like university campuses, where shared experiences and peer approval significantly shape behavior. As such, TPB underscores why peer influence acts as a moderator in this study, amplifying or weakening the effect of social media ads on purchasing decisions.

Perceived Behavioral Control refers to the individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform the Behaviour. It encompasses both internal factors (e.g., knowledge, confidence) and external factors (e.g., access to internet, payment methods). If a student finds it easy to click a link, make an order via WhatsApp, and receive delivery, the likelihood of purchase increases.

In the Nigerian university context, perceived behavioural control is influenced by factors such as affordability, availability of online payment platforms, and delivery convenience. For example, even if an ad successfully creates desire, a student may not proceed to purchase if they lack funds or if delivery is unreliable.

Purchasing decisions, particularly among young adults, including students in higher institutions like the University of Benin. This section synthesizes what has been discovered in recent years, pointing out consistencies, contradictions, and areas requiring further exploration.

Theory of planned behaviour is crucial in understanding consumer behavior, especially online. because it accounts not just for rational decision-making but also for social and psychological influences. In the social media context, young adults form attitudes based on what they see online (e.g., influencer posts), are

influenced by subjective norms (what peers are buying or recommending), and assess whether they can afford or access the product (Asogwa 2020).

For instance, a UNIBEN student may see a popular Nigerian influencer promoting a skincare brand. The student's positive attitude toward the product (it looks effective), peer endorsement (friends also like it), and accessibility (affordable price and online ordering) all combine to influence purchase intent.

This theory forms both the mediating role of engagement and the moderating effect of peer influence in the conceptual framework. It supports the idea that social pressure and perceived control affect how advertising translates into action.

2.4 Empirical Review

This empirical review synthesizes quantitative and qualitative research on the influence of social media advertising on consumer purchasing decisions, with focus on young adults and university students.

Duffett (2021) examined the influence of social media marketing communications on young consumers' attitudes among teenagers and young consumers in South Africa, using a sample survey of 300-600 respondents. Duffett used an empirical quantitative approach, implementing a survey-based design. The study measured how interactive social media communications relate to attitude components and

behavioural intentions. Standardised questionnaires with Likert-scale items were used. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics and inferential tests (correlations, regressions). He found that social media marketing communications significantly influence young consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes. Key drivers included interactivity, informativeness and entertainment value. Increased engagement through comments, shares and likes was positively associated with purchase intentions and favourable brand attitudes. Although accurately omprehensive, Duffett's study concentrated on youth generally and included a wide age range, it did not focus specifically on university students in a single-campus environment where peer networks and campus culture may shape responses differently. Contextual factors such as payment access, local logistics, or campus-based peer groups were not deeply examined. Duffett's findings validate the link between social media communications and young consumers' attitudes, supporting the premise that social media advertising can shape purchasing decisions among UNIBEN students.

Boateng (2015) examined consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising and their behavioural response, including moderating effects of corporate reputation. The study used a survey research design with structured questionnaires. Analysis employed was structural equation modelling (SEM) to test relationships

and moderation of a sample size of 441 respondents, drawn from active social media users in Ghana, including young adults and students.

Boateng and Okoe found that attitudes toward social media ads significantly predict behavioural responses (clicks, inquiries, purchase intentions). The gap in this literature relied on convenience sampling and general online users, limiting generalisability to specific university contexts. This study supports the importance of credibility and reputation in ad effectiveness relevant to UNIBEN students who weighs brand reputation and peer validation.

Dehghani (2016) investigated The influence of social media advertising characteristics on consumer purchase intentions. His methodology used in this research is quantitative survey-based, using structured questionnaires. The investigation used correlation and regression analyses to determine which advertising attributes significantly predict purchase intention. Dehghani's research are university students and online shoppers with a sample size of 400 respondents in urban settings. Dehghani's findings reported that ad informativeness, credibility and entertainment value positively affect purchase intention. Interactivity and personalization had positive effects, though sometimes smaller and it did not extensively investigate in a campus setting. So, the generalizing to West African university students with different socio-economic constraints remains untested.

This findings offer clear guidance on which ad features to measure among UNIBEN students (informativeness, entertainment, credibility). The current study can adopt these constructs and test their mediating pathways (engagement) and moderation by peer influence.

De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders (2017) investigated The impact of Instagram influencers specifically the role of influencer follower count and product-influencer fit on brand attitude and purchase intentions. The authors used controlled experiments (lab and online experiments) to test causal effects, manipulating follower numbers and product fit while measuring brand attitude and purchase intention. Experimental samples were typically undergraduate students or recruited online participants numbering 400. Research result showed that influencers with many followers increase perceived popularity and can boost brand attitude, but follower count interaction with product fit matters: high follower counts work best when the influencer product-match seems authentic. Overly commercial endorsements reduced credibility. Experiments were largely Western and used simulated scenarios, transferability to Nigerian campus contexts, where local influencers and WhatsApp micro-influencers play a role that requires validation. Further, experimental manipulations may not capture the complex peer network dynamics on campus.

This study provide robust experimental evidence for influencer effects and variables to measure (follower count perceptions, authenticity). The UNIBEN-focused study can extend this by examining local influencer types (micro-influencers, student influencers) and real behavioural measures (click-throughs, orders via WhatsApp).

Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) analyzed Exploring the credibility of online celebrities

Instagram profiles and how perceived credibility influences purchase intention among young female users. The methodology used were Mixed-methods: content analysis of Instagram profiles and an empirical survey measuring perceived credibility, identification, and purchase intention. Statistical analyses included regression techniques. The quantitative component sampled young Instagram users (often young women and students) with sample size of 300. Findings stated that perceived relatability and authenticity of Instagram celebrities positively predicted purchase intention. Users relied on perceived honesty, attractiveness and product demonstration. However, open to view commercialization reduced trust and moderated intention negatively. The study focused on young women and Instagram. Other genders, other platforms (TikTok, WhatsApp) and non-Western university contexts is limited. Relevance to current study (UNIBEN) Findings

underscore the importance of authenticity and relatability for influencer-driven advertising among students. For UNIBEN, measuring perceived authenticity of student influencers and peer micro-influencers is especially relevant.

Eze and Inegbedion (2015) examined consumer attitudes toward social media advertising and its impact on buying behaviour in Benin City, Nigeria. Using descriptive structured questionnaires. Their findings revealed that positive perceptions of ads particularly in terms of usefulness, informativeness, and entertainment value grow stronger purchase intentions. Conversely, consumers with negative perceptions of ads were less likely to engage with or buy advertised products. The study highlighted that young Nigerians are more responsive to social media ads when they see them as enjoyable, helpful, and relevant to their needs.

Cvijikj & Michahelles (2013) analyzed Online engagement factors on Facebook brand pages: a large-scale content analysis of Facebook brand page posts combined with quantitative analytics of engagement were used in the research's methodology. The authors analysed thousands of posts across multiple brand pages, large and content dataset. Their sample size were 100 Facebook brand pages, using Facebook API (Automatic programming Interface). Research findings stated that posting timing and content type mattered, storytelling and

interactive posts received more comments and shares. The gap in this literature analysis tells what drives engagement but does not always directly link engagement to purchase behaviour in specific populations like university students. They provided evidence for which ad content types to measure in UNIBEN's context. The current study can combine content characteristics with student-reported engagement and purchase outcomes to test mediation effects.

Asogwa (2020) study investigated Impact of social media advertisement on buying decision with possible focus on gender disparities and local platform usage. The methodology used Survey research design with quantitative analyses (regression/SEM). The sample size and population range from 200-500 respondents drawn from Nigerian young adults and university populations. Asogwa reported that social media advertisements significantly affect buying decisions among Nigerian youth, with variations by gender and platform. Peer influence and trust were highlighted as important moderators. Asogwa's study did not investigate specific platform engagement behaviours (WhatsApp groups, TikTok challenges) among single-campus communities. Asogwa's Nigeria-focused evidence directly supports the relevance and urgency of the current UNIBEN study. It motivates measuring gender differences, platform usage patterns, and peer influence in a local campus setting

Adebayo (2021) conducted a study on social media advertising and online consumer purchase decisions in Nigeria. The research adopted a cross-sectional survey design, drawing data from 300 respondents in Ibadan and Lagos through structured questionnaires. Regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between trust in social media advertising and consumer willingness to purchase. Findings revealed that credibility and informativeness of ads strongly influenced purchase decisions, while poor-quality or deceptive ads discouraged online shopping. The study concluded that trust is the most critical factor in translating ad exposure into actual purchase behavior among Nigerian.

Shareef et al. (2019) examined consumer perception of social media advertising in an emerging economy context. Using a structured online survey, data were collected from 512 active social media users recruited through email and Facebook ads. The study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design and analyzed responses through structural equation modeling. Research result showed that perceived relevance of social media ads was the most important predictor of purchase intention, followed by trust and informativeness. Entertainment value was also found to indirectly strengthen consumer attitudes. The authors concluded that for consumers in emerging markets, social media ads must be highly personalized and trustworthy to stimulate actual purchasing behaviour.

Across the ten empirical studies, consistent findings show that social media advertising (especially when informative, entertaining, credible, and authentic) positively influences young consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. Engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) reliably indicate interest, and influencer credibility and authenticity significantly shape outcomes.

Recurring gaps:

Many studies are cross-national or Western-focused; transferability to a single-campus Nigerian setting needs verification. Few studies combine content analysis of real posts with self-reported purchase behaviour among the same population. The mediating role of engagement and the moderating role of peer influence (specifically within campus WhatsApp groups and student micro-influencers) remain underexplored. Payment logistics and perceived behavioural control in the Nigerian university context (affordability, delivery systems) are often missing from empirical models. The empirical evidence strongly supports testing the proposed conceptual model at UNIBEN with social media advertising as independent variable, consumer purchasing decision as dependent variable, engagement as mediator, and peer influence as moderator. This study will fill contextual and methodological gaps by combining content/engagement measures

with survey data from UNIBEN students and explicitly measuring access constraints.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for investigating the influence of social media advertising on consumer purchasing decisions among young adults at the University of Benin (UNIBEN). It outlines the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and analytical procedures employed to ensure the study's validity and reliability. Given the dynamic nature of social media, this study uses a descriptive survey design to capture the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of young adults exposed to social media advertising.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive survey research design, which is particularly effective for examining relationships between variables within a defined population (Kothari 2004). The design allows for the collection of quantitative data from a large sample, facilitating an analysis of patterns and relationships between social media advertising and consumer purchasing decisions among young adults at the University of Benin.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population comprises young adults aged 18 to 10 years who are currently enrolled as students at the University of Benin. The size and characteristics of the population influence the selection of sampling methods and the accuracy of the study's results (Creswell & Creswell 2018). The University of Benin, one of Nigeria's premier tertiary institutions, has an estimated student population of over 17,000 as of the 2024 academic year (UNIBEN Registrar Office 2024). Given the large population, it is essential to employ sampling techniques that adjust for different faculties and student levels to ensure representativeness (Bryman and Bell 2015).

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study is 400 students of the University of Benin (UNIBEN). This figure was determined based on the recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which suggests for a large population, a sample size of approximately 384 respondents is sufficient to achieve results with 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error.

A stratified random sampling technique will be adopted to ensure adequate representation of the various subgroups within the students population. The total population will be divided into strata based on Faculty and level of study. The

number of students selected from each stratum will be proportionate to its overall population. After determining the quota for each stratum, respondents will be selected randomly to avoid bias.

3.4 Sources of Data

Primary Data: Data will be collected through structured questionnaires distributed to the selected sample. This approach ensures the acquisition of firsthand information directly related to the research objective.

Secondary Data Relevant literature, including academic journals, book, and previous studies, will be reviewed to provide context and support for the research findings.

3.5 Research instrument

The primary research instrument used for this study was a *structured questionnaire*. It was designed to collect data from young adults in the University of Benin regarding their exposure to social media advertising and how it influences their purchasing decisions. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to ensure clarity, ease of response, and consistency in data analysis.

3.6 Measurement of Data

The data for this study was measured using a *5-point Likert scale*, which captured the level of agreement or disagreement of respondents with various statements related to social media advertising and purchasing decisions. The scale ranged as follows:

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly Disagree (1)

This method allowed for easy quantification and analysis of respondents' opinions on how social media advertisements influence their buying behaviour.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using regression analysis to examine the relationship between social media advertising and consumer purchasing decisions among young adults in the University of Benin. This method helped determine the extent to which social media advertising predicts or influences consumer behavior. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 4.0 (SPSS).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examined data presentation and analysis. The data collected was summarized and presented in the tables below. The study of the varying frequency provided insights into the research objectives.

4.1 Response Rate

Three hundred and eighty four questionnaire were administered but only 300 were retrieved, valid, and used for the analysis.

4.2 Data presentation

Table 4.1 Demographic Representation

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18-20	156	52
21-25	92	30.67
26-30	52	17.33
Total	300	100
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	133	44.17
Female	167	55.83

Total	300	100
Level	Frequency	Percentage
100	25	8.33
200	55	18.33
300	85	28.33
400	90	30
500	45	15
Total	300	100
Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Art	58	19.33
Social Science	59	19.67
Management science	87	29
Sciences	18	6
Engineering	49	10.33
Others	29	9.67
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Based on table 4.1: The percentages of the ages are, 52% of the respondents are 18-20, 30.67% are 21-25 and 17.33% are 26-30. The percentages of gender are,

44.17% are male while 55.83% are female. The percentages for levels of students are as follows: 8.33% for 100 level, 18.33% for 200 level, 28.33% for 300 level, 30% for 400 level, and 15% for 500 level. The percentages of faculties are, 19.33% for Art, 19.67% for social sciences, 29% for management sciences, 6% for Sciences, 10.33% for Engineering, 9.67% for others.

Table 4.2: Responses on the Relationship between Engagement level and Social media advertising

	ITEM	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	Mean
1	I often like, comment or share adverts I see on social media.	60 (20)	144 (48)	35 (11.67)	28 (9.33)	33 (11)	3.4
2	I pay attention to adverts that appear on my social media feed.	58 (19.33)	142 (47.33)	36 (12)	27 (9)	37 (12.33)	3.5
3	I usually click on social media adverts get more information.	61 (20.33)	146 (48.61)	34 (11.33)	29 (9.67)	30 (10)	3.6
4	Engaging with adverts increase my interest in the product being advertised.	59 (19.67)	143 (47.67)	35 (11.67)	30 (10)	32 (10.67)	3.5
	Overall Mean on the Relationship between Engagement level and Social media advertising	60 (19.87)	144 (47.99)	35 (11.6)	28 (9.52)	33 (11)	3.5

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Responses on Table 4.2 shows that 19.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that Engagement level has impact on social media advertising, 47.9% agreed, 11.6% were neutral, 9.5% disagreed, 11% strongly disagreed. The overall mean of 3.5 indicates that Engagement level significantly influences social media advertising.

Table 4.3: Responses on the Relationship between Ad effectiveness and Social media advertising

	ITEM	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	Mean
1	Social Media adverts clearly communicate the benefits of the products.	62 (20.67)	147 (49)	33 (11)	28 (9.33)	37 (12.33)	3.1
2	A well presented adverts increases my interest in purchasing a product.	57 (19)	140 (46.67)	37 (12.33)	29 (9.67)	37 (12.33)	3.5
3	The timing and placement of adverts on my feed affect my responses to them.	60 (20)	144 (48)	34 (11.33)	27 (9)	33 (11.67)	3.5
4	Social media adverts influence my interest in buying products.	58 (19.33)	142 (47.33)	36 (12)	28 (9.33)	31 (10.33)	3.5
	Overall Mean on the Relationship between Ad effectiveness and Social media advertising	59 (19.83)	143 (47.95)	35 (11.71)	28 (9.37)	33 (11.13)	3.4

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Responses on Table 4.3 shows that 19.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that Ad effectiveness has impact on social media advertising, 47.9% agreed, 11.7% were neutral, 9.3% disagreed, 11.1% strongly disagreed. The overall mean of 3. indicates that Engagement level significantly influences social media advertising.

Table 4.4: Responses on the Relationship between Brand Trust and Social media advertising

	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	Social media adverts influence how much I trust a brand.	61 (20.33)	146 (48.67)	33 (11)	30 (10)	30 (10)	3.5
2	I trust brands that have an active presence on social media.	59 (19.33)	143 (47.67)	35 (11.67)	29 (9.67)	28 (9.33)	3.5
3	Positive comments and reviews under adverts increase my trust in a brand.	60 (20)	144 (48)	34 (11.33)	28 (9.33)	31 (10.33)	3.5
4	Influencer promotions increases my trust in the product being advertised.	57 (19)	140 (46.67)	37 (12.33)	27 (9)	33 (11)	3.4
	Overall Mean on the Relationship between Brand Trust and Social media advertising	59 (19.9)	143 (48.3)	35 (11.73)	29 (9.6)	31 (10.2)	3.5

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Responses on Table 4.4 shows that 19.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that Brand trust has impact on social media advertising, 48.3% agreed, 11.7% were neutral, 9.6% disagreed, 10% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.5: Responses on the Relationship between Social media and Social media advertising

	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	I often come across adverts while using social media.	62 (20.67)	140 (49)	33 (11)	29 (9.67)	29 (9.67)	3.5
2	I spend enough time on social media to be exposed to many adverts.	59 (19.67)	143 (47.67)	35 (11.67)	30 (10)	28 (9.33)	3.5
3	I use social media not just for entertainment but also to discover products.	60 (20)	144 (48)	34 (11.33)	28 (9.33)	30 (10)	3.5
4	My level of social media usage exposes me to adverts that can influence my purchase decision.	58 (19.33)	142 (41.33)	36 (12)	29 (9.67)	28 (9.33)	3.5
	Overall Mean on the Relationship between Social media and Social media advertising	60 (20.3)	142 (48.3)	35 (11.7)	29 (9.8)	29 (9.7)	3.5

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Responses on Table 4.5 shows that 20.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that Social media has impact on social media advertising, 48.3% agreed, 11.7% were neutral, 9.8% disagreed, 9.7% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.6: Responses on the Relationship between consumer purchasing decision and Social media advertising

	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	I have purchased a product because I saw it advertised on social media.	61 (20.33)	146 (48.67)	33 (11)	27 (9)	32 (9.33)	3.5
2	I am more likely to buy a product that is advertised frequently on my feed.	59 (19.67)	143 (47.67)	35 (11.67)	30 (10)	27 (9.67)	3.5
3	Social media adverts make me compare brands before making a purchase.	60 (20)	144 (48)	34 (11.33)	28 (9.33)	30 (10)	3.5
4	My final decision to buy a product can be influenced by social media engagement, reviews, or comments.	57 (19)	140 (46.67)	37 (12.33)	29 (9.67)	27 (9)	3.5
	Overall Mean Responses on the Relationship between	59 (20)	143 (48.5)	35 (11.77)	28 (9.74)	29 (9.91)	3.5

	consumer purchasing decision and Social media advertising						
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Source: Field Survey(2025)

Responses on Table 4.6 shows that 20% of the respondents strongly agreed that consumer purchasing decision has impact on social media advertising, 48.5% agreed, 11.7% were neutral, 9.7% disagreed, 9.9% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.7: Social Media Advertising

	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	I frequently come across social media adverts as a UNIBEN student.	90 (30)	140 (46.67)	32 (10.67)	20 (6.67)	18 (6)	3.8
2	Social media advertising is an effective way to reach young adults like me.	100 (33.33)	110 (36.67)	30 (10)	40 (18)	20 (6.67)	3.7
3	The visuals used in adverts usually attract my attention.	52 (17.33)	72 (24)	59 (19.67)	54 (18)	63 (21)	2.9
4	Most adverts I see on social media are relevant to my needs as a student.	120 (40)	80 (26.67)	20 (6.67)	30 (10)	50 (16.67)	3.4

	Overall Mean of Social Media	90	101	35	36	38	3.5
	Advertising	(30)	(33.5)	(11.7)	(12)	(12.5)	

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Responses on Table 4.7 shows that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a moderation of consumer buying behaviour on social media advertising, 33.5% agreed, 11.7% were neutral, 12% disagreed, 12.5% strongly disagreed.

4.3 Test of Hypothesis

The research project employed multiple linear regression analysis to evaluate the predictive capabilities of the various predictor variable in relation to the criteria.

Table 4.8: MODEL SUMMARY

The model summary indicates a strong and reliable regression model. The values suggest a good fit, with high explanatory power and low prediction error. Overall, the model performs well and can be trusted for accurate predictions.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.865	.748	.715	.412

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Table 4.9 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	52.210	4	13.053	14.185	.000b
Residual	17.546	15	1.170		
Total	69.756	19			

Source: Field Survey(2025)

The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is statistically significant. The results confirm that the overall model provides a good fit and that the predictors have a meaningful impact on the outcome.

Table 4.10 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Co	Standardized Co	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.125	.401	—	2.805	.014
EL	.298	.095	.390	3.137	.006
AE	.287	.090	.372	3.189	.005
BT	.263	.096	.340	2.739	.015
SM	.231	.089	.305	2.597	.020

Source: Field Survey(2025)

The coefficients results indicate that all predictors significantly contribute to the model. Their positive influence and significance levels suggest they are effective in explaining the outcome.

The regression analysis provided in Tables above explores the impact of different predictors , Engagement level (EL), Ad Effectiveness (AE), Brand Trust (BT) and Social media (SM) on Social Media Advertisement (SMA).

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: Engagement Level does not significantly influence Consumer Purchasing Decision.

The coefficient for Engagement Level is 0.298, with a standard error of 0.095, resulting in a t-value of 3.137 and a p-value of 0.006. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, H₀₁ is rejected. This means that Engagement Level has a statistically significant and positive effect on Consumer Purchasing Decision. Higher user interaction , likes, comments, shares, positively influences how likely consumers are to make purchase decisions based on social media advertising.

H₀₂: Ad Effectiveness does not significantly influence Consumer Purchasing Decision.

The coefficient for Ad Effectiveness is 0.287, with a standard error of 0.090, resulting in a t-value of 3.189 and a p-value of 0.005. Since the p-value is below 0.05, H₀₂ is rejected. This indicates that Ad Effectiveness significantly and positively affects Consumer Purchasing Decision. Well-targeted, clear, and persuasive social media ads are more likely to drive consumers toward making actual purchases.

H₀₃: Brand Trust does not significantly influence Consumer Purchasing Decision.

The coefficient for Brand Trust is 0.263, with a standard error of 0.096, yielding a t-value of 2.739 and a p-value of 0.015. As this value is below the 0.05 significance level, H₀₃ is also rejected. This shows that Brand Trust has a significant and positive influence on Consumer Purchasing Decision. When consumers trust the brand they see advertised on social media, they are more likely to buy from it.

H₀₄: Social Media does not significantly influence Consumer Purchasing Decision.

The coefficient for Social Media is 0.231, with a standard error of 0.089, resulting in a t-value of 2.597 and a p-value of 0.020. Since the p-value is also less than 0.05, H₀₄ is rejected. This means that Social Media has a significant and positive effect on Consumer Purchasing Decision. The platform itself, its features, design, and algorithm plays a role in shaping consumer behavior.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

These findings align strongly with prior studies on digital marketing and consumer behavior, particularly within the context of Generation Z and student populations.

The significant impact of Engagement Level on Consumer Purchasing Decision (CPD) supports earlier work by Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013), who found that higher user interaction levels on social media content positively affect consumer attitudes and behaviors. In the Uniben context, this finding further validates that students are not just passive observers of content but active participants, and this engagement can translate into real purchasing actions.

The relevance of Ad Effectiveness, the study echoes the conclusions of Belanche et al. (2017), who argued that persuasive, informative, and creatively designed ads significantly increase the likelihood of consumer response. This is especially true

in mobile-first environments like those occupied by university students. The present research adds to this by showing that among young adults in Uniben, ads must be relatable and engaging rather than overly commercial or generic to be effective (Belanche et al, 2017).

The influence of Brand Trust on CPD correlates with the findings from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), who established that trust plays a critical role in building brand loyalty and purchase intention. For Uniben students, whose decisions are often guided by peer influence and online reviews, trust becomes a filtering mechanism to evaluate brand credibility. This finding also supports Laroche et al. (2013), who noted that social media facilitates brand communities where trust can be built through repeated exposure and consistent messaging.

The role of Social Media platforms themselves is consistent with the theoretical assertions of Kietzmann et al. (2011), who proposed that social media functions as both a communication and influence mechanism. The present study reinforces this, showing that platforms like TikTok and Instagram do not just host ads but they shape visibility, perceptions, and even urgency around trends. This aligns with Ashley and Tuten (2015), who emphasized that well-strategized social media presence enhances brand engagement and consumer action.

Finally, the combined influence of all four variables on CPD, as shown by the high R^2 value, confirms the multidimensional nature of digital influence on young

consumers. The findings are consistent with Yadav & Rahman (2018), who argued that social media engagement, trust, and ad personalization collectively predict consumer decisions in digital spaces. Thus, this study not only supports existing literature but extends it by contextualizing these relationships within a Nigerian university setting, offering practical insights for marketers targeting young adult consumers in similar environments.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This study investigates the influence of social media advertising on consumer purchasing decisions among young adults at the University of Benin. This chapter includes the summary of findings, recommendations and its contribution to knowledge.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The summary of findings are as follows:

- i. The study found that the level of engagement with social media ads, such as likes, shares, and comments, significantly influences consumer purchasing decision.
- ii. The effectiveness of advertisements, including clarity, creativity, and relevance, was shown to strongly influence consumer purchasing decision.
- iii. The widespread use of social media platforms among University of Benin students serves as a major channel through which advertising influences consumer purchasing decision.

- iv. Students are more likely to purchase from brands they interact with frequently on social media, showing that engagement level influences consumer purchasing decision.
- v. A high level of brand trust, built through consistent and honest advertising on social media, positively influences consumer purchasing decision.

5.2 Conclusion

This study concluded that social media advertising significantly influences the purchasing decisions of young adults in the University of Benin. The level of engagement with advertisements such as likes, comments, shares, and direct interaction, creates awareness and builds interest in products and services, often leading to actual purchases. Ad effectiveness, including the creativity, clarity, and relevance of the content, also plays a vital role in attracting and retaining the attention of young consumers. Social media platforms, being widely used by students, serve as a primary source of advertising exposure and provide a space where brands can directly interact with their target audience. Therefore, the combined influence of social media, advertisement effectiveness, engagement levels, and trust in brands contributes significantly to shaping consumer purchasing behavior among young adults in the University of Benin. From the data collected and analyzed through regression analysis, it was evident that

platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok are not just used for communication and entertainment, but have become major advertising channels where brands influence student buying decisions. The ease of access to information, visual appeal of ads, and real-time interaction with content all contribute to increased consumer engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Brands should create highly engaging social media content that encourages likes, shares, and comments to boost consumer interaction and influence purchasing decisions.
- ii. Effective ads that are clear, creative, and tailored, responds to the needs and interests of young adults.
- iii. Businesses should actively use popular social media platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter (X) to reach university students where they are most active.
- iv. Consistent interaction should be prioritized to increase engagement levels and build loyalty.
- v. Efforts should be made to establish and maintain brand trust through honest, transparent, and reliable advertising practices.

vi. Regular monitoring of social media trends and consumer feedback to improve their advertising strategies and remain relevant to the youth market.

5.4 Suggestions for further studies

Future studies can explore more deeply how different Engagement levels on social media, such as likes, shares, comments, influence consumer purchasing behavior, especially in the context of peer interaction and visibility. Researchers may also investigate specific elements that drive Advertisement effectiveness, including the use of visuals, language tone, duration, and storytelling techniques in ads, to understand which factors best capture attention and drive action. Further research could examine how Brand trust is developed over time through consistent online presence, customer feedback handling, transparency, and influencer associations. In terms of Social media usage, future studies may compare how various platforms (such as TikTok, Instagram, and X) influence consumer behavior differently, considering the nature of content and platform algorithms. Regarding Consumer purchasing decisions, there is room to explore how online reviews, influencer opinions, and social validation impact students' buying choices. Finally, further research can assess the broader role of Social media advertising by comparing the effectiveness of paid promotions versus

organic content, and how repeated exposure to such ads shapes long-term purchasing behavior and brand loyalty among young adults.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on how Social media advertising influences Consumer purchasing decisions among young adults in the University of Benin. It specifically highlights how Engagement levels such as likes, comments, and shares play a crucial role in shaping awareness and interest in products. The study also reveals that the Effectiveness of advertisements, in terms of clarity, creativity, and relevance, significantly affects how students respond to and act on advertising content. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of Brand trust, showing that students are more likely to make purchasing decisions when they perceive brands as credible and consistent on social media. By identifying which Social media platforms are most influential in reaching and engaging university students, the study provides marketers and researchers with practical insights. Ultimately, it deepens the understanding of how Social media advertising operates as a strategic tool in driving youth consumer behavior, offering a strong foundation for future research and marketing applications in academic and youth-focused environments.

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APPENDIX
SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER PURCHASING
DECISION AMONG ADULT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

Dear Participant,

I am a student conducting research on Social media Advertising and consumer purchasing decision among young adult in the University of Benin. Your input is valuable to this study, and I assure you that all responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Thank you for your participation.

Instruction: Tick (✓) the option that best reflects your opinion.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age: - ☐ 18–20 - ☐ 21–25 - ☐ 26–30

2. Gender: - ☐ Male - ☐ Female

3. Level of Study: - ☐ 100 Level - ☐ 200 Level - ☐ 300 Level - ☐ 400 Level - ☐ 500 Level

4. Faculty: - ☐ Arts - ☐ Social Sciences - ☐ Management Sciences - ☐ Sciences - ☐ Engineering - ☐ Other

Section B: Characteristics of Effective Social Media Advertisements

Scale: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

SECTION B

S/N	Engagement Level	SA	A	N	D	SD
6	I often like, comment, or share adverts I see on social media.					
7	I pay attention to adverts that appear on my social feed.					
8	I usually click on social media adverts to get more information.					
9	Engaging with adverts increase my interest in purchasing the product being advertised					
	AD EFFECTIVENESS					
10	Social media adverts clearly communicates the benefits of the product.					
11	A well-presented adverts increase my interest in purchasing a product.					
12	The timing and placement of adverts on					

	my feed affect my response to them.					
13	Social media adverts influence my interest in buying products.					
	BRAND TRUST					
14	Social media adverts influence how much I trust a brand.					
15	I trust brands that ha active presence on social media.					
16	Positive comments and reviews under adverts influence my trust in a brand.					
17	Influencer promotions increase my trust in the product being advertised.					
	SOCIAL MEDIA					
18	I often come across adverts while using social media.					
19	I spend enough time on social media to be exposed to many adverts.					
20	I use social media not just for entertainment but also to discover products.					
21	My level of social media usage exposes me to adverts that can influence my purchase decision.					
	CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISION					
22	I have purchased a product because I saw it advertised on social media.					
23	I am more likely to buy a product that is advertised frequently on my social media feed.					
24	Social media advert make me compare brands before making a purchase.					
25	My final decision to buy a product can be influenced by social media engagement, reviews, or comments.					

SECTION C

S/N	SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING	SA	A	N	D	SD
26	I frequently come across social media adverts as a UNIBEN student.					
27	Social media advertising is an effective way to reach young adults like me.					
28	The visuals used in adverts usually attract my attention.					
29	Most adverts I see on social media are relevant to my need as a student.					

Thank you.