

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL VS DIGITAL ADVERTISING IMPACTS ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

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1.1 Background of the Study

Advertising is a powerful tool used by organizations to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products and services. In traditional advertising, businesses have relied on media such as television, radio, newspapers, billboards and magazines to reach their target audience (Odigbo, Eze, Bassey & Samaila, 2024). However, the digital revolution has introduced a new wave of advertising through online platforms such as social media, search engines, and mobile apps, Odigbo, Eze, Bassey and Samaila (2024) added.

Advertising is an engaging way to share fresh and inspiring information with a specific audience (Rehman et al., 2019). Advertising today is advanced and unpredictable. It draws attention to the importance of understanding cultural differences, technological advances and social perspective to create successful advertising plans. It also highlights the need for advertisers to keep up with changes in consumers' preferences, by adapting and coming up with new ideas. The main idea is to show how advertising involves many varied aspects and requires a thorough understanding to succeed in the global market (Melgar & Elsner, 2016).

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2020), advertising plays a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. While traditional advertising is often seen as credible and authoritative due to its mass reach and longstanding presence, digital advertising offers interactivity, personalization, and data-driven insights (Belch & Belch, 2018, Eze, Odigbo & Imoke, 2022; Mbum et al., 2024; Akpan et al., 2024). The shift in consumer behavior, fueled by increased internet usage and mobile connectivity, has made digital platforms more attractive for advertisers seeking to engage users in real-time.

Despite the growing popularity of digital advertising, traditional advertising still commands a substantial share of the global advertising budget, particularly among brands targeting older demographics or rural populations. Therefore, a comparative analysis of these two forms of advertising and their respective impacts on consumer behavior is necessary to guide effective marketing strategies.

This study will provide practical insights for marketers and business owners on how to optimize advertising strategies. It will also contribute to academic literature on marketing communication and consumers' behavior in developing economies. By identifying which

advertising mode is more effective in developing countries, the study will also help firms allocate their resources more efficiently.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With businesses operating under tight budgets and increasing competition, selecting the most effective advertising strategy is critical. While digital advertising is praised for its cost-efficiency and precision targeting, it may not always be more effective than traditional methods in influencing consumer purchase behavior. The lack of consensus on which advertising form yields better results creates uncertainty for marketers. Thus, this study investigates the comparative impact of traditional and digital advertising on consumers' purchasing decisions.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study include

1. To assess the impact of traditional advertising on consumers' purchase behavior.
2. To evaluate the influence of digital advertising on consumers' purchasing decisions.
3. To compare the effectiveness of traditional and digital advertising in driving consumers' purchase-behavior.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. Does traditional advertising have significant influence on consumers' purchase behavior?
2. Do digital advertising have significant influence on consumers' buying decisions?
3. What is the comparative effect of traditional and digital advertising on consumers' purchase-behavior?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following null-hypotheses were tested in the study:

H₀₁: Traditional advertising have no significant influence on consumers' purchase behavior.

H₀₂: Digital advertising have no significant influence on consumers' buying decisions.

H₀₃: The comparative effect of traditional and digital advertising on consumers' purchase-behavior is not significant.

1.6 Literature Review

1.6.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this paper is on the AIDA advertising model propounded by E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898. The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) explains how advertising impacts consumer decision-making. It posits that advertising first grabs attention, then generates interest, builds desire, and finally prompts action. Both traditional and digital advertising aim to navigate consumers through these stages (Strong, 1925). On the other hand, the AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action)posits that advertising create awareness, captures attention, generates interest, stimulates desire, and ultimately leads to consumers' actions (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

1.6.2 Hierarchy of Effects Model This model outlines six stages in advertising effectiveness: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. Lavidge and Steiner (1961) suggest that different media types may influence these stages differently, making it a useful framework for comparing traditional and digital advertising.

1.6.3 Conceptual Review

Traditional advertising refers to conventional means of mass communication used to promote products and services, including television, radio, print media, and billboards. These platforms are effective in building brand awareness and reaching a broad audience. According to Wells et al. (2011), traditional media tend to establish credibility and trust due to their long-standing presence in society.

On the other hand, digital advertising encompasses all promotional efforts delivered through digital channels such as social media, websites, email, and mobile applications (Odigbo et al., 2024). It allows for real-time interaction, personalization, and performance tracking (Odigbo et al., 2024). Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) argue that digital advertising's strength lies in its ability to deliver highly targeted and measurable campaigns.

Consumers' purchase-behavior entails the process by which individuals decide what, when, where, and how to buy goods and services. It is influenced by psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors. Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) emphasize that advertising plays a critical role in shaping perceptions, attitudes, and intentions that lead to purchasing decisions.

1.6.4 Empirical Review

Studies comparing traditional and digital advertising show mixed results. For instance, Okazaki and Taylor (2013) found that digital advertising offers higher engagement rates, while traditional media are more trusted by older consumers. Similarly, Duffett (2017) observed that social media ads are more influential among young adults, but traditional TV ads remain effective for mass marketing.

A Nigerian study by Eze and Lee (2012) concluded that digital marketing is gaining ground rapidly, especially in urban centers. However, they noted that traditional media still plays a vital role in rural areas where internet penetration is low.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and semi-qualitative survey research design. The descriptive aspect enables the exploration of how consumers respond to advertising stimuli, while the comparative element helps in analyzing the differences between traditional and digital advertising in shaping consumer purchase behavior. This design is appropriate for examining patterns, relationships, and differences among the variables in a real-world setting.

1.7.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises consumers within selected urban centers who are regularly exposed to both traditional (TV, radio, newspapers, billboards) and digital (social media, email marketing, online search engines) advertising. The focus on urban consumers is due to their higher exposure to both types of media and their more varied purchasing behaviors.

1.7.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of 200 respondents was selected for the study. The sampling method employed is stratified random sampling, which ensures representation across key demographic groups—such as age, gender, and digital literacy. Each stratum was randomly sampled to ensure balance between users more exposed to traditional media and those more active on digital platforms.

1.7.4 Method of Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections:

Section A: Demographic Information.

Section B: Media Exposure and Ad Engagement.

Section C: Purchase Behavior and Advertising Influence

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with selected marketing professionals and advertising agency staff to gather qualitative insights on campaign effectiveness and consumer targeting.

1.7.5 Research Instruments

The main instruments for data collection were:

A questionnaire containing both closed- and open-ended questions.

An interview guide with flexible questions that allow for detailed expert responses. Both tools were designed to collect relevant data on consumers' exposure, preferences, and behavioral reactions to various forms of advertising.

1.7.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

To ensure validity, the instruments were subjected to expert review by lecturers in marketing and media studies. Feedback from these experts were used to refine the questions for clarity and relevance. A pilot test involving 20 respondents was conducted, and ambiguous questions were adjusted.

Reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient value of 0.81, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items.

1.7.7 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean). Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify recurring opinions, insights, and patterns relevant to advertising strategy effectiveness.

1.7.8 Data Presentation and Analysis

1.8.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic data of the respondents revealed that 55% of them were male and 45% female, showing fairly balanced representation. Most respondents (60%) were between 18–35 years, 25% between 36–50 years, while 15% were above 50 years. This suggests that the sample largely represents active consumers who are exposed to both traditional and digital advertising platforms.

In terms of education, 70% of respondents held tertiary qualifications, indicating a literate population capable of making informed consumer decisions. Occupationally, 40% were students, 30% employed, 20% self-employed, and 10% unemployed. This diversity reflects various income levels and spending habits.

1.8.2 Analysis of Research Question 1: What are the distinctive features of traditional and digital advertising?

Data showed that 65% of respondents described traditional advertising as "trustworthy" and "widespread," with high visibility through TV, radio, and billboards. Conversely, 80% viewed digital advertising as "interactive," "targeted," and "cost-effective." Respondents

emphasized that digital ads allow for personalization and feedback, unlike traditional formats.

1.8.3 Research Question 2: How does traditional advertising influence consumer purchase behavior?

Findings revealed that 60% of respondents reported being influenced by traditional media advertisements, particularly TV and radio ads. Many respondents noted that jingles, celebrity endorsements, and repetitive exposure enhanced recall and trust, leading to eventual purchases. This aligns with Kotler and Armstrong's (2020) assertion that traditional advertising builds brand credibility.

1.8.4 Research Question 3: How does digital advertising impact consumer buying decisions?

Results showed that 75% of respondents reported that digital ads influenced their buying choices—especially through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Respondents cited attractive visuals, influencer marketing, and product reviews as key factors that motivate them to try new products. Younger respondents, in particular, expressed greater trust in online recommendations than in television commercials.

1.8.5 Research Question 4: Which form of advertising is more effective in shaping consumer behavior?

The analysis found that 65% of respondents believed digital advertising is more effective due to its accessibility, interactivity, and ability to reach users in real time. However, 35% still preferred traditional advertising for its credibility and mass appeal. Interview results from marketing professionals supported this finding, noting that while traditional media builds brand authority, digital channels drive engagement and conversion.

1.9 Discussion of Findings

The results show that digital advertising plays an increasingly dominant role in consumer purchase decisions. This supports prior studies (Duffett, 2017; Okazaki & Taylor, 2013) which found that digital media generate higher engagement and faster responses. However, traditional advertising remains relevant, especially for mass reach and brand trust, consistent with Wells et al. (2011).

The findings further affirm the AIDA model's position that digital advertising captures attention and sustains interest through interactive formats, while traditional advertising stimulates desire and reinforces credibility. The dual importance of both forms suggests that integrated advertising strategies yield the best outcomes. The findings confirm that digital advertising has a stronger influence on consumers' purchase behavior compared to traditional advertising, particularly among younger and tech-savvy consumers.

1.10 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

1.10.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined the comparative impact of traditional and digital advertising on consumer purchase behavior. The outcome of the study revealed the following key findings:

1. Traditional advertising remains influential due to its credibility and wide audience reach.
2. Digital advertising provides interactivity, personalization, and measurable outcomes, which significantly shape modern consumer behavior.
3. Younger consumers are more responsive to digital media, while older consumers tend to trust traditional platforms.

4. The analysis also confirmed a significant difference in effectiveness, with digital advertising exerting a stronger impact on purchasing decisions.
5. An integrated advertising approach combining both media types yields optimal consumer response and brand performance.

1.10.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that while traditional advertising continues to serve as a foundation for credibility and brand recognition, digital advertising has revolutionized consumer engagement and purchasing behavior. The immediacy, measurability, and cost-effectiveness of digital platforms make them indispensable in contemporary marketing communication. Businesses that strategically blend both advertising types are likely to achieve greater brand loyalty, awareness, and sales growth.

1.10.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Nigerian firms should combine traditional and digital advertising to maximize reach, trust, and engagement, for enhanced return on investments.
2. Commercial and non-commercial organizations should allocate more budget to digital platforms due to their growing influence and data-driven advantages, for enhanced corporate performance.
3. Marketers should tailor contents based on demographic and psychographic factors to improve their relevance and conversions.
4. Companies should use analytics tools to assess their advertising performance and adjust their strategies in real time.
5. Commercial and non-commercial organizations should also train their staff in digital marketing skills, to enhance their digital marketing campaign designs and execution.

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