

Evaluation of Effect of Social Media Advertisements on Consumer Behaviour towards Organic Skincare Products

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Abstract

The study evaluated the effect of social media advertisements on consumer behaviour towards organic skincare products. Survey research design was adopted in the study, with questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The population of the study comprised the female undergraduate students of Renaissance University Ugbawka, Enugu State. The Australian Calculator for sample size determination was used to determine the sample size for the study. The findings of the study indicated that the respondents were highly exposed to social media advertisements on organic skincare products. The study also found that social media advertisements influenced the respondents' behaviour and attitude towards organic skincare products in different ways. The findings of the study equally revealed that, while social media advertisements provided sufficient information to guide the audience on the use of organic skincare products, the advertisements did not provide sufficient information on the side effects of the products. It is recommended that social media advertisements on organic skincare and other products should provide clear information on the side effects (if any) of the advertised products. Secondly, audience of social media advertisements should find out the side effects of the advertised products before making buying decisions.

Keywords: Social media, organic, skincare, advertisement, Renaissance University

Introduction

Advertising is crucial to society. It is important in business, politics, religion and other aspects of the society. Advertisers adopt different media of communication to pass their advertising messages to their respective audiences. The mainstream media like newspaper, magazine, radio and television held sway as the popular means of advertising before the advent of the Internet and social media.

With the growing popularity and ubiquity of the Internet and social media, advertisers now utilize online platforms to advertise their products and services. Sriram, Namitha and Kamath (2021) observe that traditional media have taken a few steps back since the advent of the internet and is only growing more irrelevant with time. Internet availability made social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube more widely used. Millions of internet users throughout the world now rely on social media. This situation has made the social media popular channels of advertising.

The influence or effect of social media advertising on consumer buying behaviour is an area of concern to contemporary media scholars. The credibility of social media has been seriously questioned. Does the perceived low credibility of the social media affect audience attitude to social media advertising? This is a point for critical consideration.

This study is an attempt to investigate the effect of social media advertisements on consumer behaviour towards organic skincare products. The growing interest in fashion and

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enhancement of beauty has made organic skincare products popular and highly demanded. The products are now among the most widely advertised product brands on the social media. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the influence of social media advertisements on consumers' behaviour towards the products.

Statement of Problem

The social media are now popular media of communication. The freedom of information and the near absence of gate-keeping in social media make the social media free-for-all information sharing platforms. Advertisements are also placed in the social media. Over time, the credibility and impact of social media messages have being questioned. The importance attached to social media information, including advertisements, by the audience is not clear. Organic skincare products are among the most popular products advertised in social media. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the effect of social media advertisements on consumers' behaviour towards organic skincare products.

Research Questions

The study answered the following questions:

1. To what extent are Renaissance University female undergraduate students exposed to social media advertisements on organic skincare products?
2. How do social media advertisements on organic skincare products influence the behaviour of Renaissance University female undergraduate students towards the products?
3. To what extent do social media advertisements provide information on the use of organic skincare products?
4. To what extent do social media advertisements provide information on side effects of organic skincare products?

Literature Review

Studies have identified the nature, types, effects and roles of advertising in society. Ozoh (2013) notes that, in performing its communication function, advertising provides consumers with the buying information they need. However, in performing the information role, advertising is expected to be responsible and provide only information that is completely honest, truthful and accurate.

With the advent and popularity of Internet and Internet-based social media platforms, online advertising has grown tremendously. Omeje (2018, p.112) states that "one major benefit of online advertising is the immediate publishing of information and content that is not limited by geography or time." according to him, another benefit of online advertising is the efficiency of the advertisers investment. Online advertising allows for the customization of advertisements, including content and posted websites.

Some studies have found that online advertising is more believable than traditional media advertising (McClure and Seock, 2020; Schlosser Shavitt and Kanfer, 1999). However, some other studies found that authenticity of online advertisements raise concern to consumers (Waller, 2006).

Mahesh and Thanushree (2020) adopted survey research design to investigate the impact of social media advertisement on consumer purchasing behaviour. The study found that Instagram and Youtube are the two main social media platforms people prefer the most to get information on products. From the regression analysis done in the study, it was evident that the online purchasing behavior of consumers influenced by social media is completely based on the availability of the product that they are looking for. If such products are availability is again checked if it is within the geographical area also being considered.

Sama (2019) examined the impact of media Advertisements on consumer behaviour, with a focus on the effects of television (TV), radio, newspapers, magazines and the Internet advertisements on awareness (AWR), interest (INT), conviction (CON), purchase (PUR) and post-purchase (PPUR) behaviour of consumers. The online survey method was utilized for data collection in the study. Data were collected from 529 respondents comprising students in India. Statistical tools such as Cronbach alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and Kruskal-Wallis (K-W) test were used to analyse the collected data. The results of the study indicate that newspapers advertisements affect all the five stages of CB. The impact of TV and the Internet for creating AWR, INT and CON among the consumers is statistically evident. The results also revealed that magazines and newspapers are effective media in influencing PUR and PPUR behaviour of consumers

Praavisha and Krishna (2013), cited in Mahesh and Thanushree (2020), studied the effect of social media on buying behaviour of youngsters in South Africa. A total of 150 students were studied. Findings of the study indicated that the respondents were more into modern social media purchasing than the traditional buying behaviour which also results in lower time usage.

Varghese and Agrawal (2021) examined the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior. The study found that, though personal attitude of played a part, social media advertisements influenced consumer buying behaviour.

Awan, Ismail, Majeed, and Ghazal (2016) investigated the effects of advertisement on consumer's buying behaviour with references to FMCGs in Southern Punjab-Pakistan. The study adopted survey research design with questionnaire as instrument for data collection. It found that advertisements have significant impact on consumers' buying behavior and their choices.

Bandara (2020) studied the impact of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior, with special reference to fast fashion industry. The study adopted descriptive quantitative research design and data was collected through a self-administrated questionnaire.

The Results of the study revealed that social media advertising positively influence consumer buying behaviour in the fast fashion industry.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the technological determinism theory. Hauer (2017, p.1) explains that "technological determinism is the belief that technology is the principal initiator of the society's transformation. The emergence of this theory is usually attributed to the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen, who formulated the causal link between the technology and the society." Hauer (2017) notes that the supporters of technological determinism believe that, any social changes are controlled by the technology, technological development, communications technology and media.

The proponents of the technological determinism theory hold that the society is influenced and shaped by technology and technological development. In order words, the society is technology-driven.

This theory is considered appropriate for the study because it helps to explain consumer behaviour and attitude towards products advertized on social media, in view of the ubiquity and overwhelming influence of the social media in the conduct of human affairs in contemporary times.

Research Design

Survey research design was adopted in the study because it created opportunity for the research to elicit relevant information for the study from the population of the study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection in the study. The population of

this study comprised the 215 female undergraduate students of Renaissance University, Ugbwaka, Enugu State. The Australian calculator for sample size determination was used for the determination of the sample size of 138 respondents for the study. The calculator has a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 0.05. Quota sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents. The choice of the quota sampling technique was made to ensure a fair representation of the Colleges and Departments of the University in the selected sample for the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 138 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 127 copies were retrieved. Data presentation and analysis in this section of the study are based on the 127 retrieved copies of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Respondents' Age Distribution

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-20	81	63.8	63.8	63.8
	21-25	43	33.9	33.9	97.6
	26-30	3	2.4	2.4	100
	31 and Above	0	0	0	100
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 indicates that 81 (63.8%) of the respondents were between the ages of 16 and 20 years; 43 (33.9%) of them were between 21 and 25 years old; While 3 (2.4%) were between 26 and 30 years old. None of the respondents was 31 years and above. This means that a huge majority of the respondents (97.7%) were between 16 and 25 years old.

Table 2: Respondents Marital Status

Marital Status		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	126	99.2	99.2	99.2
	Married	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

From table 2 above, 126 (99.2%) of the respondents were single; whereas one (0.8%) of them was married while none of the respondents was either widowed or divorced. This implies that a vast majority of the respondents were single.

Table 3: Respondents' Level of Exposure to Social Media Adverts on Organic Skincare Products

How would you rate your exposure to social media advertisement on Organic skincare?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very high	71	55.9	55.9	55.9
	High	31	24.4	24.4	80.3
	Undecided	14	11.0	11.0	91.3
	Low	6	4.7	4.7	96.1
	Very low	5	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

It is important to note that all the respondents had indicated that they were exposed to social media advertisements on organic skincare products, in their responses to a separate item in the questionnaire. From the data presented on table 3, 71 (55.9%) of the respondents rated their exposure to social media advertisements on organic skincare products "very high;" 31 (24.4%) of them rated their exposure "high;" 14 (11%) of them were undecided; 6 (4.7%) rated the exposure "low;" and 5 (3.9%) of them rated their exposure "very low." This analysis implies that most of the respondents were highly exposed to social media advertisements on organic skincare products.

Table 4: How Social Media Adverts Influence Audience Attitude to Organic Skincare Products

Social media adverts on Organic skincare influence your attitude towards the products?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	29	22.8	22.8	22.8
	Agree	57	44.9	44.9	67.7
	Undecided	21	16.5	16.5	84.3
	Disagree	16	12.6	12.6	96.9
	Strongly disagree	4	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 indicates that 29 (22.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that social media adverts on organic skincare influenced their attitude towards the products; 57 (44.9%) of them agreed; 21 (16.5%) were undecided; 16 (12.6%) of them disagreed and 4 (3.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed to the view that social media adverts on organic skincare influenced their attitude towards the products. This implies that social media adverts on organic skincare influenced the attitudes of a majority of the respondents towards the products.

Table 5: How Social Media Adverts Make Audience feel about Organic skincare products

How do the social media adverts make you feel about Organic skincare products?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Adverts make me like products	33	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Adverts make me hate the products	10	7.9	7.9	33.9
	Adverts make me desire to buy the products	69	54.3	54.3	88.2
	Adverts make me buy the products	14	11.0	11.0	99.2
	Undecided	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

From table 5 above, 33 (26%) of the respondents stated that social media adverts on organic skincare products made them like the products; 10 (7.9%) of them said that the adverts made them hate the products; 69 (54.3%) of them said that adverts made them desire to buy the products; 15 (11%) of them said that social media adverts on organic skincare products made them buy the products and 1(0.8%) of the respondent offered no opinion.

Table 6: Extent of Information in Social media Adverts on Use of Organic Skincare Products

Social media adverts on Organic skincare provide sufficient information to guide audience on the use of Organic skincare products.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	28	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Agree	63	49.6	49.6	71.7
	Undecided	14	11.0	11.0	82.7
	Disagree	16	12.6	12.6	95.3
	Strongly disagree	6	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

From table 6, 28 (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed that social media adverts on organic skincare products provided sufficient information to guide audience on the use of organic skincare products; 63 (49.6%) of them agreed; 14 (11%) of them offered no opinion;

16 (12.6%) of them disagreed, while 6(4.7%) of them strongly disagreed. The implication of this analysis is that most of the respondents expressed the opinion that social media adverts on organic skincare products provided enough information to guide the audience on the use of the products.

Table 7: Extent of Information on Side Effects of organic Skin Care Products

Social media advertisements on Organic skincare products do not provide sufficient information on the side effects of Organic skincare products.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	53	41.7	41.7	41.7
	Agree	43	33.9	33.9	75.6
	Undecided	13	10.2	10.2	85.8
	Disagree	16	12.6	12.6	98.4
	Strongly disagree	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

From table 7, 53 (41.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that social media advertisements on organic skincare products do not provide sufficient information on the side effects of organic skincare products; 43 (33.9%) of them agreed; 13 (10.2%) of them offered no opinion; 16 (12.6%) of them disagreed, whereas 2 (1.6%) of them strongly disagreed. This means that a majority of the respondents expressed the opinion that social media advertisements on organic skincare products do not provide sufficient information on the side effects of organic skincare products.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in this section according to the research questions in the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent are Renaissance University female undergraduate students exposed to social media advertisements on organic skincare products?

All the respondents indicated that they were exposed to social media advertisements on organic skincare products. From the data presented on table 3, 71 (55.9%) of the respondents rated their exposure to social media advertisements on organic skincare products “very high;” while 31 (24.4%) of them rated their exposure to the advertisements “high.” This analysis means that most of the respondents were highly exposed to social media advertisements on organic skincare products. It is, therefore, clear that advertisements on organic skincare products are popular social media contents among Renaissance University female undergraduate students.

Research Question 2: How do social media advertisements on organic skincare products influence the behaviour of Renaissance University female undergraduate students towards the products?

Data displayed on table 4 show that 29 (22.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that social media adverts on organic skincare influenced their attitude towards the products; 57 (44.9%)

of them agreed to that opinion. This analysis implies that most of the respondents were highly influenced by social media advertisements on organic skincare products. This high influence manifested in the attitude and behaviour of the respondents towards organic skincare products. From the data on table 5, 33 (26%) of the respondents stated that social media adverts on organic skincare products made them like the products; 10 (7.9%) of them said that the adverts made them hate the products; 69 (54.3%) of them said that adverts made them desire to buy the products; 15 (11%) of them said that social media adverts on organic skincare products made them buy the products and 1(0.8%) of the respondent offered no opinion. This simply means that social media advertisements on organic skincare products had some form of influence on all the respondents, except one of them that offered no opinion.

Research Question 3: To what extent do social media advertisements provide information on the use of organic skincare products?

Findings of the study show that social media advertisements on organic skincare products provide sufficient information to guide the audience on the use of the products. From table 6, 28 (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed that social media adverts on organic skincare products provided sufficient information to guide audience on the use of organic skincare products; 63 (49.6%) of them agreed to that view.

Research Question 4: To what extent do social media advertisements provide information on side effects of organic skincare products?

Findings of the study revealed that social media advertisements on organic skincare products do not provide sufficient information on the side effects of such products. From table 7, 53 (41.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that social media advertisements on organic skincare products do not provide sufficient information on the side effects of organic skincare products; 43 (33.9%) of them agreed to the same view. This means that people buy the products without knowing the possible, potential and actual side effects of the products.

Summary

This study evaluated the effect of social media advertisements on consumer behaviour towards organic skincare products. The study adopted survey research design, with questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The Australian calculator for sample size determination was applied to determine the sample size of 138 respondents from the 215 female undergraduate students of Renaissance University Ugbawka, Enugu State which formed the population of the study. The quota sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents that made up the sample size for the study. Out of the 138 copies of the questionnaire administered, 127 copies were retrieved. Data presentation and analysis in the study were based on the 127 copies of the questionnaire that were retrieved.

Findings of the study indicated that all the respondents were highly exposed to and influenced in various ways by social media advertisements on organic skincare products. The study equally revealed that while social media advertisements on organic skincare products provided sufficient information to guide the audience on the use of the products, the advertisements did not provide sufficient information on the side effects of the products.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have shown that social media advertisements influence audience perception and attitude/behaviour towards advertised products. The high level of exposure of the respondents to social media advertisements on organic skincare products implies that social media are now popular media for product advertisement.

The study also indicated that social media advertisements on organic skincare products provided sufficient information on the usage of the products, but did not provide clear information on the side effects of the products. This finding of the study shows the need for advertisers to, in addition to providing information on the usage and benefits of the products they advertise, provide clear information on the side effects (if any) of the advertised products.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study.

1. Advertisers should provide clear information on side effects (if any) of advertised products.
2. Audience of social media advertisements should inquire about possible side effects of advertised organic skincare products before making buying decisions.

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