



Digital Advertising Dynamics and Consumer Purchase Intention: A Comprehensive Analysis of Smartphone Users in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria

Article Record

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RECEIVED

2026-05-25

ACCEPTED

2026-06-04

ONLINE PUBLISHED

2026-06-25

PEER REVIEW

Double Blind

Abstract

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Online advertising

Purchase intention

Smartphones

Social media advertising

Consumer behavior

Email advertising

Nigeria

AI USE STATEMENT

No generative AI was used for analysis or results.

FUNDING

No external funding was declared for this work.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Not applicable for this article.

ETHICS

No ethics committee approval was required for this article type.

CONSENT

Not applicable for this article.

TRIAL REG.

Not applicable.

Crossref DOI: 10.34257/GJMBRE257577

How to Cite: Amidat et al. (2026). Digital Advertising Dynamics and Consumer Purchase Intention: A Comprehensive Analysis of Smartphone Users in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. Global Journal of Management and Business Research, 26(1), 50-56. DOI: 10.34257/GJMBRE257577

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Print ISSN 0975-5853



Online ISSN 2249-4588



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ARCHIVAL RECORD

Digital Advertising Dynamics and Consumer Purchase Intention: A Comprehensive Analysis of Smartphone Users in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The digital landscape in Nigeria has undergone a seismic shift, driven by increased internet penetration and a youthful, technologically inclined population. This research investigates the role of online advertising, specifically social media and email marketing on the purchase intentions of smartphone users in Ogbomoso, Oyo State. Adopting a descriptive research design, the study utilized a structured questionnaire to gather data from 100 active and intending smartphone users, representing diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The theoretical framework integrates the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to map the psychological pathways from ad exposure to behavioral intent. Empirical findings revealed a statistically significant influence of online advertising on purchase intention, supported by Analysis of Variance results ($F(17, 83) = 54.534, p < .001$). Social media advertising demonstrated a moderately positive and significant correlation ($r = .398, p = .004$) with consumer purchase behavior. Key moderating factors, including ad relevance, digital literacy, perceived credibility, and prior online shopping experience, were found to amplify the effectiveness of digital marketing interventions. The study concludes that while digital platforms are primary research channels, conversion in the Nigerian market is heavily mediated by trust and the "Nigerian Paradox," where high aspirations for premium devices meet significant economic constraints. Strategic recommendations emphasize the need for hyper-localization, transparent branding, and the optimization of mobile-first consumer journeys to capture the evolving Nigerian digital market.

Keywords: *Online advertising, Purchase intention, Smartphones, Social media advertising, Consumer behavior, Email advertising, Nigeria*

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DOI
10.34257/GJMBRE257577

1. Introduction

The global advancement of information technology has fundamentally restructured the business landscape, particularly within the field of marketing communication. In emerging economies like Nigeria, the transition from traditional media to digital platforms is not merely a trend but a comprehensive transformation of how value is communicated to consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Contemporary business development is rapid, forcing entrepreneurs to utilize social media and the internet to promote products and services in a crowded and competitive environment. In this context, businesses are challenged to create distinct characteristics that differentiate their brands from global and local competitors. This is particularly critical in the smartphone sector, where technology evolves exponentially and consumer demand is influenced by both functional needs and aspirational lifestyle markers (Martins et al., 2019).

Nigeria's smartphone market has emerged as one of the most vibrant in Africa, with shipments increasing by 25% in the fourth quarter of 2025. This growth is fueled by a transition from feature phones to entry-level and mid-tier smart devices, alongside expanding data usage across urban and semi-urban centers (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024; Okamgba, 2026).

Ogbomoso, a major city in Oyo State, serves as a vital case study for these trends. As a commercial hub and home to major tertiary institutions like Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), it possesses a unique demographic mix of students and residents from varied socio-economic backgrounds. This environment provides a rich context for understanding how digital advertising interventions shape purchase intentions, defined as the likelihood that a consumer will plan or be willing to purchase a product in the future (Ajzen, 2020; Martins et al., 2019).

Despite the proliferation of online advertising, there remains a critical need to understand its specific impact on the decision-making processes of consumers in local Nigerian markets. The emergence of Web 2.0 has allowed for dynamic interactivity on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, providing marketers with unprecedented opportunities to engage users. By early 2024, approximately 123 million Nigerians were accessing the internet, representing over 84% of the population, with 92.4% of these users accessing the web via mobile devices (NBS, 2024). However, the effectiveness of these platforms is often undermined by economic volatility, characterized by high inflation and currency depreciation, which erodes purchasing power (Sulaimon & Vorobyova, 2022). This "Nigerian Paradox" creates a situation

where consumers exhibit high intent for premium brands like Apple and Samsung but are often forced to choose affordable alternatives or explore the expanding grey market for refurbished devices.

This study aims to address the knowledge gap regarding the role of online advertising on the purchase intention of smartphone users in Ogbomoso. It specifically examines the influence of social media and email advertising, while identifying the key factors that moderate the relationship between digital exposure and buying behavior. By providing localized insights, this research contributes to the development of evidence-based marketing strategies that can navigate the complexities of the Nigerian digital ecosystem.

2. Literature review

The concept of online advertising, also referred to as internet or web advertising, involves utilizing various digital platforms to deliver promotional messages to targeted audiences (Durmaz, 2011). Unlike traditional media, online advertising is measurable, interactive, and can be custom-tailored to match individual user preferences based on their digital footprint. In the current era, online advertising has become the primary channel for commercial communication globally, offering businesses a cost-effective way to reach millions of potential customers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

2.1. Dimensions of online advertising and consumer impact

Online advertising encompasses several types, each serving distinct roles in the consumer's journey from awareness to purchase. Affiliate marketing involves earning commissions through tracking links, while display advertising uses banners on third-party sites to drive traffic. Search engine marketing (SEM) places advertisements within search results at the point of consumer intent, making it highly effective for conversion-oriented campaigns (Durmaz, 2011). Social media advertising, which continues to grow rapidly in emerging markets, leverages the interactive and visual nature of platforms such as Facebook and TikTok to enhance brand engagement and recall.

The impact of online advertising on consumer behavior is multifaceted. It is designed to differentiate products from competitors, strengthen brand positioning, and influence purchase decisions through repeated exposure and messaging consistency. In Nigeria, digital platforms play a central role in consumer information search and brand discovery, particularly through social media and search engines, which dominate online engagement patterns (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Consumers increasingly rely on digital channels to evaluate product alternatives, where electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), user reviews, and peer recommendations significantly shape purchase intentions (Durmaz, 2011). However, the effectiveness of online advertising is moderated by several challenges, including ad fatigue, privacy concerns, and increasing user resistance to intrusive advertising formats, which affect overall engagement and trust in digital campaigns (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

2.2. Purchase intention and the smartphone market

Purchase intention indicates the likelihood that consumers are willing and intend to purchase a certain product in the future (Martins et al., 2019). It is a vital index for evaluating consumer behavior and predicting actual buying decisions (Martins et al., 2019). In the smartphone market, this intention is shaped by

factors such as perceived value, product quality, brand trust, and social influence (James et al., 2024). Consumers are more likely to have a stronger intention when they react favorably to an advertisement, particularly one that creatively showcases product benefits and characteristics.

The Nigerian smartphone market exhibits a dual-demand structure, with significant consumption concentrated at both the entry-level and premium segments. This reflects a market where affordability and aspirational consumption coexist, shaping differentiated consumer expectations across income groups (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). This structure necessitates varied advertising strategies: rational appeals that emphasize functional benefits such as battery life, durability, and camera performance are typically effective in the entry-level segment, while emotional and symbolic appeals are more effective in the premium segment, where status and lifestyle positioning play a stronger role in consumer decision-making (Nwosu & Ogbu, 2025).

Brands such as Tecno, Infinix, and Itel dominate the mass market segment in Nigeria by leveraging digital advertising strategies that emphasize accessibility and functional value, while premium brands such as Apple rely more on symbolic positioning and lifestyle-oriented messaging rather than technical specification-driven advertising (Nwosu & Ogbu, 2025).

2.3. Theoretical framework

The analysis of digital advertising's role is grounded in several established behavioral theories that explain how persuasive messages are processed and converted into intentions.

2.3.1. Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

Proposed by Petty and Cacioppo, the ELM posits two routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. When a consumer is highly motivated and has the ability to process information, common among smartphone researchers the central route is activated. This involves a logical analysis of the ad's arguments, such as technical diagrams or comparative charts. Conversely, the peripheral route occurs when consumers are less motivated and influenced by cues like visual appeal, celebrity endorsements, or emotional storytelling (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). In the smartphone context, effective ads often cater to both routes by combining in-depth technical details with visually engaging content.

2.3.2. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The TPB suggests that behavioral intention is predicted by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020). Online advertising shapes these components by:

1. **Attitude:** Fostering positive beliefs about a brand's innovation and quality.
2. **Subjective Norms:** Utilizing influencers and user testimonials to create social validation and pressure to conform to digital trends.
3. **Perceived Behavioral Control:** Communicating promotions, financing options, or direct purchase links that increase the consumer's belief in their ability to acquire the device.

2.3.3. AIDA Model and Black Box Theory

The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) serves as a strategic roadmap for advertising content. It simulates the role of digital ads in first capturing attention through vivid social media

posts and then guiding the user through interest and desire before the final purchase action. This is complemented by the Black Box Theory, which posits that the consumer's mind is a "black box" where stimuli (like online ads) are processed alongside existing beliefs and environmental factors to produce a purchase response.

2.4. Empirical review of digital marketing in Nigeria

Empirical studies in Nigeria and similar emerging economies consistently support the positive link between digital marketing and purchase intention. Research found that social media platforms are central to the purchasing decisions of younger Nigerian consumers, particularly when ads utilize influencer content and promotional offers. This highlighted the dominance of video advertising, noting that engaging video ads on YouTube and Facebook have a high correlation with purchase intent when they showcase real-life usage or aspirational lifestyles. Furthermore, this emphasizes the "mobile-first imperative," where ads optimized for screen sizes and integrated with mobile wallets significantly boost conversion rates.

Recent data also indicates the rising importance of specialized review sites and consumer ratings. Research revealed that positive reviews regarding battery life and durability are key concerns for Nigerian users due to power infrastructure challenges significantly boosting consumer confidence. However, the literature also warns against "ad fatigue" and the erosion of trust caused by deceptive practices in the grey market, such as modified refurbished devices marketed as new (Nwosu, 2025). This highlights the necessity for digital advertisements to not only be persuasive but also demonstrably credible.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of online advertising on the purchase intention of smartphone users in Ogbomoso. Descriptive research is suitable for this study as it allows for the objective identification of trends and relationships between variables based on primary data.

3.1. Study area and population

The study area, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, was selected due to its status as a commercial hub with a diverse population, including a high concentration of university students and young professionals who are primary consumers of smartphones. The target population includes active and intending smartphone users, specifically ranging from age 18 to over 50 years, with varying levels of digital literacy and income. This population represents the core demographic targeted by global smartphone brands in Nigeria.

3.2. Sampling frame and size

The sampling frame consists of smartphone users in Ogbomoso categorized by age, gender, and frequency of digital platform usage. A sample size of 100 respondents was utilized for the study. A combination of stratified and simple random sampling techniques was employed to ensure representation across demographic segments, while convenience sampling facilitated the selection of participants based on their availability and willingness to participate.

3.3. Data collection and research instrument

Primary data were collected through an online structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. This method was chosen for

its efficiency in reaching a large number of respondents and its convenience for a digitally connected demographic. The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

1. **Socio-economic Characteristics:** Gender, age, marital status, education, and ethnicity.
2. **Digital Advertising Engagement:** Assessing exposure to and interaction with social media and email advertisements.
3. **Purchase Intention Metrics:** Likelihood of buying a smartphone based on digital stimuli.

The instrument used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree), to measure respondent perceptions. To ensure reliability and validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by academic experts and subjected to a pilot study.

3.4. Method of data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distributions, were used to summarize the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their perceptions of online advertising. Inferential analysis was conducted to test the research hypotheses:

- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** To examine the overall impact of online advertising variables on purchase intention.
- **Pearson Correlation Coefficient:** To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between social media advertising and consumer purchase behavior.
- **Regression Analysis:** To identify the specific influence of email advertising on buying decisions.

The data analysis was facilitated by statistical software (SPSS), ensuring accuracy in the interpretation of the results.

4. Results and Discussions

This section presents the empirical findings regarding the socio-economic profile of the respondents and the statistical influence of online advertising on their smartphone purchase intentions.

4.1. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 100 respondents, indicating a predominantly young, educated, and working-age population.

The data shows a balanced gender distribution, though males slightly outnumber females. The majority (75.5%) of the respondents fall within the 18–50 years age range, which aligns with the primary target demographic for smartphone manufacturers in Nigeria. Furthermore, the high level of tertiary education where over 89% hold an OND or higher suggests a sample that is both digitally literate and possessing significant purchasing potential.

4.2. Role of social media advertising on purchase intention

Table 2 shows respondents' perceptions of social media advertising, indicating its strong role as an informational and brand-building tool.

A clear majority (67.3%) agreed that social media ads provide sufficient information to support purchase decisions. Brand perception was also positively impacted, with over 61% acknowledging

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	55	55.1%
	Female	45	44.9%
Age	18 – 35 years	37	36.7%
	36 – 50 years	39	38.8%
	Above 50 years	24	24.5%
Marital Status	Single	22	22.4%
	Married	78	77.6%
Education	MSc/MBA	24	24.5%
	B.Sc./HND	33	32.7%
	OND	33	32.7%
	SSCE	10	10.2%
Ethnicity	Yoruba	83	83.0%
	Others	17	17.0%

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2025.

that advertising reinforces a favorable brand image. Trust emerged as a critical but variable factor, with 55.1% agreeing that confidence in ads affects their intent to buy, highlighting the sensitivity of the Ogbomoso market to ad credibility.

4.3. Influence of email advertising on purchase intention

Table 3 demonstrates that email advertising has significant effectiveness, particularly when personalization and clear promotional offers are involved.

Personalized email content was cited by 67.3% of respondents as a factor that heightens interest in smartphones. Additionally, 61.3% emphasized the importance of clarity and conciseness, suggesting that consumers prefer direct marketing that respects their time and data usage.

4.4. Moderating factors and hypothesis testing

The study analyzed several factors that moderate the relationship between online ads and purchase intention. Prior online shopping experience (61.2% agreement) and ad relevance (55.1%) were identified as the strongest moderators.

To test the first hypothesis:

“

H0₁: Online advertising has no significant impact on consumer purchase intention of smartphones.

The ANOVA results are presented in Table 4.

The ANOVA results ($F(17, 83) = 54.534, p < .001$) lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Online advertising, moderated by factors like literacy and credibility, has a statistically significant impact on smartphone purchase intentions in Ogbomoso.

To test the second hypothesis:

“

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between social media advertising and consumer purchase intention.

The Pearson correlation results are presented in Table 5.

The Pearson correlation ($r = .398, p = .004$) confirms a moderate, positive, and significant relationship between social media

advertising and purchase intention, supporting the alternative hypothesis.

4.5. Discussion of findings

The results of this investigation provide robust evidence that online advertising is a pivotal determinant of smartphone purchase intentions among consumers in Ogbomoso. These findings are consistent with contemporary digital marketing trends in Nigeria, where platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have transitioned from purely social tools to primary brand research and shopping destinations. The rejection of the null hypotheses indicates that the digital funnel from ad exposure to behavioral intent is active and measurable in this urban Nigerian context.

4.5.1. The Nigerian paradox and brand positioning

The empirical outcomes must be contextualized within the broader Nigerian economic landscape of 2020–2025. This period was marked by a “Nigerian Paradox”: a rising aspiration for premium, status-symbol devices (like Apple and high-end Samsung models) amidst severe economic volatility and currency depreciation (Nwosu, 2025). This paradox explains why “prior shopping experience” emerged as a dominant moderator (61.2%). In an environment where purchasing power is constrained, consumers rely heavily on past successful interactions and established brand credibility to mitigate the perceived risk of a major investment.

Strategic positioning in the Nigerian market is thus divided by the “dumbbell” growth pattern observed in 2025 shipments. For the entry-level segment, which grew by 57%, brands like Tecno and Xiaomi focus on rational appeals emphasizing battery life and camera durability in their digital ads (Nwosu & Ogbu, 2025). Conversely, the premium segment (growing by 52%) is driven by emotional and aspirational appeals. Apple’s reliance on lifestyle narratives and exclusivity aligns with the finding that 61.3% of respondents react positively to ads that create a “positive impression” rather than just providing technical specs.

4.5.2. The role of credibility and the grey market

The results highlighted ad credibility (51.1%) as a key moderating factor. In Nigeria, this is particularly relevant due to the proliferation of the grey market for refurbished or “UK-used” phones. Deceptive practices, such as the widely publicized 2023 modification scandal where older iPhone models were cosmetically altered and marketed as newer versions on social media, have made consumers more skeptical. Consequently, digital ads must go beyond persuasion; they must provide verifiable trust signals. This explains the moderate correlation of social media advertising ($r = .398$). While ads create awareness and interest, the final intention is often mediated by third-party validation, such as consumer reviews and micro-influencer testimonials, which are perceived as more authentic than traditional corporate messaging.

4.5.3. Digital literacy and the mobile-first imperative

The significance of digital literacy (53%) as a moderator aligns with recent scholarship suggesting that in “fragile” digital environments, literate consumers are more adept at navigating information asymmetry. As smartphone penetration in Nigeria reaches approximately 87% by 2025, the “modern consumer” has become technologically savvy, researching technical specifications before visiting a physical store. This underscores the “mobile-first imperative”: because 92.4% of Nigerian internet users are on mobile devices, ads that are not optimized for small screens or those that lack seamless integration with mobile payment systems will fail to convert intent into action.

Table 2. Respondents' perceptions of social media advertising

Social Media Advertising Perception	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Provides sufficient product information	36.7	30.6	8.2	14.3	10.2
Frequent exposure increases buying likelihood	30.6	22.4	26.5	16.3	4.1
Creates a positive brand impression	32.7	28.6	20.4	18.4	0.0
Interactive features influence intention	26.5	30.6	28.6	10.2	4.1
Trust in ads enhances purchase confidence	32.7	22.4	16.3	20.4	8.1

Source: Author's Computation, 2025.

Table 3. Influence of email advertising on purchase intention

Email Advertising Influence	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Personalization increases buying interest	36.7	30.6	8.2	14.3	10.2
Frequency enhances awareness/decisions	30.6	22.4	26.5	16.3	4.1
Clarity and conciseness improve likelihood	32.7	28.6	20.4	18.4	0.0
Promotional offers influence decisions	26.5	30.6	28.6	10.2	4.1
Visual appeal increases intent	32.7	22.4	16.3	20.4	8.1

Source: Author's Computation, 2025.

Table 4. Statistical test of Hypothesis One (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	33.361	17	6.672	54.534	.000
Residual	19.741	83	.459		
Total	53.102	100			

Source: Author's Computation, 2025.

Table 5. Statistical test of Hypothesis Two (Pearson Correlation)

Variable	Social Media Ad	Purchase Intention
Social Media Ad (r)	1	.398**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
N	100	100

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2025.

Furthermore, the rise of "social commerce" where users purchase products directly through Instagram or WhatsApp DMs, reflects the localized nature of the Ogbomoso market. For Nigerian SMEs and smartphone retailers, these platforms offer a low-cost, high-engagement alternative to traditional websites, fostering one-on-one relationships that enhance trust and repeat patronage.

5. Conclusion

This study has empirically demonstrated that online advertising significantly shapes the purchase intentions of smartphone users in Ogbomoso, Nigeria. The integration of social media and email marketing into the consumer's decision-making process is mediated by psychological constructs of trust, relevance, and digital self-efficacy. Statistical analysis confirms that while social media is a primary engine for brand discovery and awareness, its ability to drive final purchase intention depends on the brand's perceived credibility and the consumer's ability to critically evaluate digital content.

In the volatile Nigerian market, digital advertising does not function in isolation from economic realities. The "Nigerian Paradox" necessitates that brands balance aspirational emotional appeals with rational justifications of value and durability. The study highlights that the Ogbomoso consumer, largely comprises of educated youth, is highly responsive to personalized and inter-

active digital stimuli but remains cautious due to the prevalence of grey-market deceptions and economic constraints.

5.1. Recommendations for Marketing Practitioners

Based on the findings, the following strategic recommendations are proposed for smartphone manufacturers and retailers targeting the Nigerian urban market:

- 1. Prioritize Hyper-Localization:** Move beyond generic campaigns by utilizing local dialects (e.g., Pidgin or Yoruba) and culturally resonant storytelling. Evidence suggests that culturally aligned messaging significantly outperforms international templates in building brand affinity.
- 2. Foster Credibility through Micro-Influencers:** Shift marketing spends from mega-celebrities to micro-creators with genuine niche followings. These influencers are perceived as more trustworthy and relatable, providing the social proof necessary to validate purchase decisions in a skeptical market.
- 3. Optimize for a Mobile-First, Data-Efficient Journey:** Ensure all advertising content loads quickly and looks seamless on smartphones. Given high data costs in Nigeria, marketers should explore "zero-rated" content or data-efficient video formats to reach consumers without imposing a financial burden.

4. **Leverage Social Commerce and WhatsApp:** Integrate direct calls-to-action that leads to WhatsApp or social shops. For the Nigerian consumer, the ability to interact directly with a seller via familiar messaging apps reduces perceived risk and streamlines the path to purchase.
5. **Address the "Durability" Narrative:** Given the infrastructure challenges in Nigeria, emphasize "hard facts" like battery life, network compatibility, and ease of repairability in rational-tier ads. These factors remain top-of-mind for Nigerian users across all demographic segments.

By implementing these evidence-based strategies, smartphone brands can effectively navigate the complexities of the Nigerian digital landscape, converting online engagement into sustainable purchase intention and long-term brand loyalty.

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