

## **Moderating Effect of Income on the Relationship between Social Media Advertisement and Consumer Buying Behavior: A Pilot Study**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The use of social media platforms for advertising has grown exponentially in recent years, providing businesses with an effective tool to reach and engage with consumers. However, the effectiveness of social media advertisements and their impact on consumer buying behavior may vary depending on individuals' income levels. Understanding the moderating effect of income on the relationship between social media advertisement and consumer behavior is crucial for marketers to develop targeted and effective advertising strategies. The paper explored a small sample data on the moderating effect of income on the relationship between social media advertisement and consumer buying behavior in the Federal University Dutse. Instrument's validity, reliability and subsequently the data normality were examined through panel of experts and also by analyzing small sample data with the aid of SPSS version 22 software. Results showed that the instrument is reliable and the data for preliminary study exhibit reasonable normality. The research explored and validated the instrument of the various constructs of social media advertisement – informativeness, entertainment, credibility and interactivity.*

**KEYWORDS:** informativeness, entertainment, credibility, interactivity, social media advertisement, consumer buying behavior.

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## INTRODUCTION

With the widespread adoption of social media platforms, companies have increasingly turned to social media advertisement as a means to promote their products and influence consumer behavior. Social media advertisements offer unique features such as interactivity, entertainment value, credibility, and informativeness, which can potentially impact consumers' buying decisions. These features contribute to the persuasive nature of social media advertisements, as they provide consumers with information, entertainment, and opportunities for engagement. However, the impact of social media advertisement on consumer buying behavior is not uniform across different income groups. Income is an important socioeconomic factor that influences consumer behavior, including purchasing decisions, accordingly, individuals with higher income levels may have different needs, preferences, and motivations compared to those with lower income levels. They may also exhibit different levels of responsiveness to social media advertisements.

The customer is an integral element of every organization and that is why he is often referred to as a king. This assertion suggests that knowing the customer and knowing the behavior of the customer as well, is important for the success of the organization. Therefore, in order to a customer, and know how a customer behaves in a certain way towards a product, organizations need to understand the factors that affect or influence consumer buying behavior. These factors include economic factors such as income and expenditure pattern, price of products, price of complementary products, substitute goods and elasticity of demand; psychological perception, attitudes and learning (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong, 2005). More so, consumer behavior is affected by social and cultural factors that affect individuals' buying decision and determines the kind of product they buy (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Furthermore, advertisement has always been known as one of the key factors that affect consumer's decision-making process (Haider, 2018). Advertisement is defined as a paid form of exposure or promotion by some sponsor that reaches through various traditional media such as television, newspaper, commercial radio advertisement, magazine, mail, outdoor advertising or modern media such as social media, websites and text messages (Ahmed & Ashfaq, 2013).

Historically, organizations relied on traditional media such as television, radio, newspaper, etc. to advertise their products, but with the advent of the internet and widespread usage of smartphones and other gadgets like android tablets and iPads that have access to the internet, organizations are now moving into online advertisement with social media advertisement as one of the major channels adopted by these organizations to reach their target customers. This is evident in the fact that the world social media advertising spending stood at \$230 billion in 2022 and it is expected to surpass \$300 billion mark by 2024 (Volume of social media advertising, 2023). In Nigeria alone,

social media advertisement expenditure is projected to reach \$111.20million by the end of 2023. (Social Media Advertising – Nigeria, 2023).

This humongous spendings on online advertisement and particularly social media advertisement, is not unrelated to the fact that there is widespread use of social media sites worldwide. For instance, according to Ruby (2023), of the 8 billion people there are in the world, 4.9billion are using social media with Facebook being the most popular social media site having 2.95 billion members. Additionally, as of January 2023, Nigeria had 31.6 million active social media users with WhatsApp as the most popular platform used in the country having close to 95 percent of users followed by Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (Sasu, 2023).

Another reason why organizations are opting to advertise via social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube etc. is that these applications provide businesses with cheaper and faster ways to engage with customers, advertise and interact with them and as well get both positive and negative feedbacks with which they can utilize to improve their products and stay abreast of competition. For instance, Alkemi (2020) asserts that social media is more economical and faster than traditional media advertisements. He added that, it is less time consuming and at the same time marketers, can find out exactly how many times their marketing messages are clicked, how many impressions they made, how many times their post is shared as well as it gives room for revision of contents.

Despite the many advantages of social media advertisement however, in Nigeria, there are issues that become hurdles for it to achieve its full potential. For instance, in Nigeria even with the rising acceptance of social media, there is still low internet infrastructure, high level of illiteracy, cultural barrier, security issues, inadequate regulatory framework, and so forth, all of which have led to the low internet penetration in the country as well as lack of trust and skepticism in relation to products advertised on the internet (Igwe, Alaba & Abass, 2020).

In accordance with the goals of this study, the paper postulates that informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and interactivity are the social media advertisement features that may positively influence consumer purchasing behavior and increase the effectiveness of the advertisements (Harshini, 2015; Ahmad 2020; Warsame, Mohammed, Elamir & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Alalwan 2018; Yasmeeen & Khalid, 2016). The level of informativeness relates to how well the advertisement can inform customers about the goods or services so they can make wiser purchasing decisions. The ability of the advertisement to amuse and satisfy the target audience is referred to as entertainment. Credibility refers to the ability of the advert to provide honest and open information by offering testimonials and scores from other consumers. Interactivity, on the other hand, refers to a special characteristic of digital advertising that enables two-way dialogue between the advertiser and potential clients.

Similarly, income refers to money received for work or through investment on a regular basis. It is the sum of all wages, salaries, profits, interest payments, rents and other forms of earnings. (Ahmed, Khan & Samad, 2016). Scientific evidence provides theoretical support for the possible moderating effect of income on the relationship between social media advertisement and consumer buying behavior. For instance, Ahmed et al. (2016) stressed that there exists a positive relationship between income and buying behavior.

Previous studies have explored the effects of social media advertisement on consumer behavior (Ertemel & Ammoura, 2016; Sama, 2019; Kumaradeepan, 2020; Al Akayleh, 2021; Marschall, 2022) to mention a few. Even though understanding how income interacts with the key variables of informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and interactivity in the context of social media advertisement can provide valuable insights into consumer behavior dynamics, yet, there's a dearth of literature which has specifically examined the moderating effect of income on the relationship between social media advertisement and consumer behavior in Nigeria and elsewhere. This study to the best of our knowledge is the first attempt to do so in Nigeria and elsewhere. Similarly, despite the growing importance of social media advertising as a marketing tool, there is still a dearth of researches that explore how income influences the effectiveness of social media advertisements in shaping consumer behavior. This knowledge gap hampers marketers' ability to develop targeted and effective advertising strategies that account for income-based differences in consumer responsiveness. The current ongoing study will add to the literature on the subject matter and contribute to more knowledge on the area.

Thus, it is against this background that the paper assesses the relationship between social media advertisement and consumer buying behavior and as well, measures the moderating effect of income in the relationship between the two variables (social media advertisement and consumer buying behavior) on the postgraduate students of Federal University Dutse, with the hope that the study will bridge a gap in the current literature by contributing to existing knowledge in the area of social media advertisement and consumer buying behavior. It is also a part of the ongoing project that a pilot study is considered worthwhile.

A pilot test is compared to "a dress rehearsal" when a small-scale trial of the study is carried out before the full-scale study (Gay, et al., 2006). So, in order to accomplish specific goals, a pilot test was conducted for this study. First, to evaluate the study's instrument's reliability and validity. Second, to gain understanding of the genuine circumstances surrounding the study itself. Because of this, the study would be able to foresee and address probable issues throughout the actual investigation. The validity and reliability of the instrument are among the primary concerns of the pilot test. The degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure rather than anything else determines whether it is valid. On the other hand, a measure's reliability describes how error-free and hence consistent and stable a tool is throughout time as well as among the different scale items (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

In order to achieve the above objectives, the paper presents the findings of a pilot study on the moderating role of income in the relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior in the setting of postgraduate students at the Federal University of Dutse in Jigawa State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A few samples of postgraduate students at Federal University Dutse were chosen at random because this study is a pilot test for an ongoing project. This is consistent with Malhotra's (2008) proposal that, while the sample size for pre-tests is often small—ranging from 15 to 30 respondents—it should be significantly expanded if the test has multiple stages.

As a result, 63 copies of the questionnaires were individually delivered, and 56 of them were returned, 4 of which were incomplete and were therefore disregarded for analysis. Two questionnaires were submitted after the cutoff date and were therefore excluded from the pilot analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the most often used inter-item consistency reliability test, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2010). Therefore, the Cronbach alpha test is used in this study to assess the instrument's internal consistency. The SPSS version 22 for Windows program was used to examine the data.

The draft of the questionnaire was initially sent to experts and regular responders for face and content validity prior to distribution. The whole process was completed within the period of five weeks in the months April/May 2023.

### **Instrumentation and Measurement of Variables**

A questionnaire will be used to gather important data for this study. The survey consists of closed-ended, multiple-choice questions. Likert-type scales are thought to be more relevant and reliable because the majority of the questionnaire's items are meant to gauge the respondents' views and attitudes (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Miller, 1991). The instrument uses a 5-point Likert-type rating scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to measure the essential research variables. The recommendations of Krosnick and Fabrigar (1997) were taken into consideration when choosing the 5-point itemized scale. They argued that the range of scale between 5 and above is established to be more reliable than otherwise. This is because a scale with more points enables the respondents to express their stand precisely and comfortably.

The study can also distinguish more subtly between different people's attitudes about the same thing using this scale. Based on the observation made by Krosnick and Fabrigar (1997) that pushing participants to respond in a certain manner could lead to an increase in measurement error, a scale with a mid-point is selected. According to Schuman and Presser (1981), adding middle

alternatives to a scale strengthens correlations between opinions. Similar to this, Krosnick and Fabrigar (1997) discovered that when a midpoint is included in a scale, the effects of interviewer bias tend to diminish and data quality tends to enhance.

The key variables contained in the study are: income, informativeness of social media advertisement, entertainment of social media advertisement, credibility of social media advertisement, interactivity of social media advertisement and consumer buying behavior. In any case, all the latent variables will be measured using multiple items. Accordingly, the instrument will consist of four sections. Section 1 will consist of eight items measuring demographic variables of the respondents; gender, age, marital status, current course of study, employment status, monthly income, social media account and most used social media application. Section 2 will consist of five items measuring consumer buying behavior. Section 3 will consist of ten items measuring social media advertisement. A five-point Likert scale (anchored at 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) will be used. The justification for using it stems from the argument that it is apparently less confusing and allows for an increase in the response rate (Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Bouranta, et al., 2009). Similarly, sensitive questions are not included in order to attract high response rate (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

## **Results of Validity and Reliability Tests**

### **Content and Face Validity**

Content and face validity ensures that the measure consists of an adequate and representative set of items that tap a particular concept. To put it another way, it entails a methodical evaluation of the scale's capability to measure what it is intended to measure. In order to determine if the questions used to measure a concept are appropriate, content validity requires interviewing a small sample of typical respondents and/or a panel of experts (Hair, et al., 2007; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Based on the aforementioned, a draft of the study's instrument was given to experts to receive comments on the suitability, substance, layout, and appropriateness of the items that are intended to evaluate the investigated components. To this end, a number of questions were re-worded/re-phrased in order to measure the constructs appropriately and also to be understandable to the potential respondents.

This process of obtaining expert opinions was finished in less than one week. The study developed an upgraded or revised version of the instrument after taking into account the experts' observations, which were finally used for the pilot test.

### **Reliability Test**

Although several kinds of reliability tests are frequently performed, the internal consistency reliability test is the most used technique (Litwin, 1995). It refers to how well elements "hang together as a set" and can measure the same idea on their own to the extent that they are correlated

with one another. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the most often used test of inter-item consistency dependability, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2010). Thus, the Cronbach alpha test is used in this study to assess the instrument's internal consistency. All of the measures had good reliability standards, with values ranging from 0.823 to 0.882, according to analysis of the data using SPSS version 22 for Windows. This meets the standards provided by Hair, et al. (2007) for an instrument to have a coefficient of at least 0.70. The reliability test results are shown in Table 2 (See Appendix). The table shows that the results of the pilot test show that the Cronbach's alpha values for the investigated constructions are all above 0.70. Since all of the constructs are trustworthy as a result, nothing needed to be deleted.

Furthermore, it is evident from Table 3 that the male respondents (64%) are more than the female (36%). This is in line with the trend of Nigerian population where male enrolment in school surpasses that of female. Given that this study is conducted in a university, gender distribution is thus, justifiable. More so, Table 4 shows the respondents' have varying levels of income which makes them suitable for the study as part of the objectives of the research is to assess the moderating effect of income on the relationship between the IVs and the DV. All respondents report having at least one social media account as can be seen in Table 5 and this also stress the suitability of the respondents as the study is focused on buying behavior of consumers in relation to social media advertisement. Table 6 shows the social media application most frequently used by the respondents is Facebook and this is also in agreement with findings of Ruby (2023) whose findings revealed Facebook as the most popular social media site in the world.

### **Data Distribution**

Most of the inferential statistical techniques require the fulfilment of normality assumption (Pallant, 2001; Tabacknich & Fidell, 2007). The standard description of normal data is that which is symmetrical, bell-shaped, with a larger distribution of scores in the centre and a smaller distribution at the extremes. Skewness and kurtosis readings can be used to test for normality. Kurtosis reveals the degree to which the data is peak or flat, whereas skewness refers to symmetry (Tabacknich & Fidell, 2007). As shown in Table 1, the data can be characterized as reasonably normal based on the values of skewness and kurtosis. For instance, none of the items' skewness are greater than 3.0 and range from -0.013 to -1.521 for all of them. Kurtosis scores fall between -0.088 to 3.190, which is far below the threshold of 10 (George & Mallery, 2010).

### **CONCLUSION**

The primary purpose of this study is to pre-test the validity and reliability of the instrument to be utilized in an ongoing project that will aid the effective assessment of a larger investigation on the moderating effect of income on the relationship between social media advertisement and consumer buying behavior, with a focus on the variables of informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and interactivity. Therefore, the study's conclusion corresponds to its objective, which at this point is

primarily statistical in nature. After the main study is completed, the managerial implications of the variables under investigation will be completely revealed. The study examined the pilot test's small-scale data that had been gathered. After doing both content and face validity checks, some items were reworded, and two items were eliminated due to their extreme similarity to other questions.

Furthermore, the inter-item reliability test revealed that all the items were reliable with Cronbach Alpha well above the benchmark of 0.70. Finally, normality test using skewness and kurtosis shows that the data as a whole is reasonably normal.

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**Appendix**

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
I try to buy products advertised on social media	50	1	5	-.635	.337	-.810	.662
When there is choice, I choose products advertised on social media	50	1	5	-.330	.337	-1.268	.662
I make every effort to buy products advertised on social media	49	1	5	-.412	.340	-.973	.668
I have switched products or brands because of social media adverts	50	1	5	-.439	.337	-.869	.662
I have convinced members of my family or friends to buy products advertised on social media	50	1	5	-.727	.337	-.482	.662
Social media advertisement is a good source of up to date product information	50	1	5	-.842	.337	.783	.662
Social media advertisement provides timely information	50	1	5	-.837	.337	1.231	.662
Social media advertisement makes product information immediately accessible	50	1	5	-.645	.337	.478	.662
Social media advertisement is a good source of product information	50	1	5	-1.028	.337	.592	.662
Social media advertisement is a convinient source of product information	50	1	5	-1.367	.337	2.403	.662
Social media advertisement supplies relevant product information	50	1	5	-1.395	.337	2.326	.662
Social media advertisement is Enjoyable	50	1	5	-1.521	.337	3.190	.662
Social media advertisement is entertaining	50	1	5	-1.283	.337	2.995	.662
Social media advertisement is fun to use	50	1	5	-.854	.337	.911	.662
Social media advertisement is pleasing	50	2	5	-.346	.337	-.524	.662
Social media advertisement is exciting	50	2	5	-.660	.337	.746	.662
Social media advertisement is trustworthy	50	1	5	-.013	.337	.088	.662
Social media advertisement is believable	50	1	5	.090	.337	-.738	.662
Social media advertisement is credible	50	1	5	-.257	.337	-.175	.662
Social media advertisement is effective in gathering viewers feedback	50	1	5	-1.189	.337	2.029	.662
Social media advertisement makes me feel like it want to listen to its viewers	50	1	5	-.822	.337	1.046	.662
Social media advertisement encourages viewers to offer feedback	50	1	5	-1.063	.337	1.549	.662
Social media advertisement gives viewers opportunity to talk back	50	1	5	-1.098	.337	2.048	.662
Valid N (listwise)	49						

Survey 2023

**Table 2: Reliability Test**

S/N	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Informativeness	0.891
2	Entertainment	0.833
3	Credibility	0.827
4	Interactivity	0.862
5	Consumer Buying Behavior	0.881

**Table 3: Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	32	64.0	64.0	64.0
Female	18	36.0	36.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4: Monthly Income**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below N30,000	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
N30,000-N80,000	10	20.0	20.0	32.0
N81,000-N130,000	21	42.0	42.0	74.0
N131,000-N180,000	6	12.0	12.0	86.0
Above 181,000	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5: Do you have a social media account?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	49	98.0	98.0	98.0
4	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 6: Tick any of the social media application you mostly use**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Facebook	30	60.0	60.0	60.0
Youtube	1	2.0	2.0	62.0
Instagram	4	8.0	8.0	70.0
Whatsapp	13	26.0	26.0	96.0
Others	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 7: Age**

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	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 25-35	18	36.0	36.0	36.0
36-45	23	46.0	46.0	82.0
46-55	8	16.0	16.0	98.0
56 and above	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 8: Marital Status**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
Married	39	78.0	78.0	96.0
Rather not say	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 9: Current Course of Study**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Post Graduate Diploma	17	34.0	34.0	34.0
Academic Masters	8	16.0	16.0	50.0
Professional Masters	21	42.0	42.0	92.0
PhD	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

**Table 10: Employment Status**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Employed	37	74.0	74.0	74.0
Unemployed	11	22.0	22.0	96.0
Retired	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
4	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	