

Influence of Aquafina's Social Media Advertisements on the Buying Behaviour of Lead City University Undergraduates

Waheed Bayo Busari, Ph. D, Tosin Clementina Oghara

Department of Mass Communication & Media Technology, Lead City University, Ibadan

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2024.912039>

Received: 10 December 2024; Accepted: 14 December 2024; Published: 15 January 2025

ABSTRACT

Social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organisations to implement advertising and marketing campaigns. With the advent of the Internet and the development of Web 2.0, there is a palpable shift in the control of communication and of course, advertising. The study examined the influence of influence of Aquafina social media advert on Lead City undergraduates buying behaviour. The theory of reasoned action and elaboration likelihood model provided the theoretical framework for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted, and 388 respondents were randomly selected to form the sample. A self-structured questionnaire was used to gather the data. The collected data were presented and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results obtained revealed that majority of respondents were minimally exposed to Aquafina contents on their social media timelines. The study revealed that majority of respondents purchased Aquafina products because of their perceived quality, highlighting the importance of product quality in driving purchasing decisions... Findings further revealed that majority of respondent do not find Aquafina's social media adverts appealing and engaging, indicating a lack of effectiveness in capturing audience attention. It was further revealed tha majority of respondents believed that the price of the product do not influence their decision to buy Aquafina, indicating that price sensitivity is a significant factor affecting purchasing decisions. The study concluded that social media platforms play a pivotal role in shaping consumer engagement and brand perception. Findings revealed that most respondents purchased Aquafina independently of external factors, while many chose it for its quality. The study recommends that Aquafina should increase the frequency and targeting precision of its social media advertisements to ensure wider and more consistent reach across all user segments.

Keywords: Social media advertisement, Advertising, Marketing, Internet, Online advertising

INTRODUCTION

Consumer buying behavior refers to the actions and decisions that come into play when a customer wants to purchase goods or services. Researchers, businesses, and marketers study consumer behavior to understand what influences a consumer's shopping preferences and selection of products and services (Smith, 2020). Multiple factors affect consumer behavior, including economic status, beliefs and values, culture, personality, age, and education (Jones & Taylor, 2019). Findings on consumer buying behavior are used to develop methods and products that will boost company performance and sales (Brown et al., 2018).

Social media advertising is the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites (Johnson, 2021). Social media advertising campaigns usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. Traditional campaigning approaches are overshadowed not only by the rise of social media but also due to increasing difficulty in creating outstanding campaigns in a highly competitive market (Miller & Davis, 2020). The impact of social media can be seen in television advertisements, which now sign off with pleas for consumers to visit their websites, Facebook, or X page with the promise of an exciting online experience, fun incentives, and a sense of community that people want to engage with (Clark, 2021).

Consumers within Nigeria have been largely exposed to traditional advertising forms as the main media used

by advertisers to provide information. However, over the years, marketing strategies have evolved with technology, leading to the internet creating unprecedented opportunities for digital marketers to connect with customers, create an immersive digital environment, influence and drive purchases, fuel new growth, and capture new market share (Adewale & Yusuf, 2023). The growth of social media advertising is both globally and locally outpacing offline advertising (Global Marketing Insights, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

The pervasive presence of social media advertising has raised concerns about its profound impact on consumer buying behavior. Users are constantly exposed to targeted and personalized ads, which can manipulate their purchasing decisions by aligning closely with their interests and preferences. Traditional advertising, including TV, radio, and print media, has been a cornerstone of marketing, targeting large audiences with broad, one-directional messages. While effective in building brand presence, it often lacks the precision and personalization that modern consumers demand and offers limited opportunities for interaction or feedback.

Social media advertising represents a significant advancement with highly targeted, personalized content enabled by advanced algorithms. It allows direct brand-consumer interaction and real-time feedback response. However, the constant exposure can lead to impulsive buying, reduced consumer autonomy, and reliance on social proof like user reviews. The interactive nature of social media blurs the line between genuine engagement and strategic persuasion, posing challenges for consumer decision-making. Hence, this study examines the influence of Aquafina social media advert on Lead City undergraduates buying behaviour.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of exposure of Lead City University undergraduates to Aquafina social media advertisement?
2. What are the factors that influence Lead City University undergraduates buying behaviour of Aquafina?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer buying behavior refers to the actions and decisions that come into play when a customer wants to purchase goods or services. Researchers, businesses, and marketers study consumer behavior to understand what influences a consumer's shopping preferences and selection of products and services (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Multiple factors affect consumer behavior, including economic status, beliefs and values, culture, personality, age, and education (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Findings on consumer behavior are used to develop methods and products that will boost company performance and sales (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2020).

Consumer buying behavior also focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend valuable resources, such as time, money, and effort, on consumption-related items (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2018). This includes what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase, the impact of such evaluation on future decisions, and how they dispose of it (Solomon, 2020).

Social Media Advertising

Social media advertising refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media advertising campaigns often center on creating content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it within their social networks (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Traditional campaigning approaches have been overshadowed, not only by the rise of social media but also by the increasing difficulty in creating outstanding campaigns in a highly competitive market (Chaffey & Smith, 2022).

The impact of social media can be observed in television advertisements that sign off with a call for consumers to visit their websites, Facebook, or X pages, promising an exciting online experience, fun incentives, and a sense of community that encourages engagement (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Social media has become a platform easily accessible to anyone with internet access, fostering increased communication for organizations, which often enhances brand awareness and customer service (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). Furthermore, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organizations to implement advertising and marketing campaigns effectively (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Benefits of Social Media Advertising

The benefits inherent in using social media advertising for businesses can be summarised under the following points;

i. Cost Effective: unlike traditional media that cost almost an arm and a leg to advertise with, social media provides a platform for businesses to advertise at any budget, even free. According to research, the advent of social media has added great impetus to human communication; this is because the technology is participatory, interactive and cost-effective. Authors state that the financial barriers to social media marketing are quite low compared to others.

ii. Strong Customer Relationship: social media also gives you an opportunity to gain valuable information about what your customers are interested in and how they behave, via social listening. For example, you can monitor user comments to see what people think of your business directly. Social media is a place where brands can act like people do and this is important because people like doing business with other people; not with companies. It helps brands build “Know, Like and Trust” factor.

iii. Highly Targeted: Advertising on traditional media is not as targeted when compared to social media advertising, on social media like *Facebook*, you create your audience specifics for instance their age, interests, income level/occupation, religious affinity, gender, relationship status and even location and *Facebook* mirrors these criteria and matches your adverts to people that meet the criteria. Advertisements on sites such as *Facebook* are “geo-targeted” according to specific criteria, to reach the correct audience.

iv. Wider Reach: Social media advertising can help businesses reach a wider array of audience locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. The business bound on social media has no walls. Social media advertising can strategically position a business to reach audience anywhere and everywhere in the world. Because the internet has made the world a “global village” fulfilling the McLuhanian prophesy.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action was postulated by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1960. This theory emphasizes the importance of pre-existing attitudes in the decision-making process (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). At its core, the theory posits that consumers act on behavior based on their intention to create or receive a specific outcome. Consumers are seen as rational actors who make decisions in their best interests (Ajzen, 1991). According to the theory, specificity is critical in decision-making; a consumer only takes a specific action when an equally specific result is expected. Moreover, from the time a consumer decides to act until the action is completed, they retain the ability to change their mind and take a different course of action (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988).

Advertisers can derive several key insights from the Theory of Reasoned Action. First, when marketing a product, it is essential to associate the purchase with a positive and specific result (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). For example, Axe Body Spray effectively utilized this concept by linking its product to increased desirability among women. Second, the theory underscores the importance of moving consumers swiftly through the sales pipeline. Delays between initial intention and action completion give consumers ample time to reconsider their decision or question the expected outcome of the purchase (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992).

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The the population of the study comprised undergraduate students of Lead City University, Ibadan. The total number of students that made up the population of study was 12, 972. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents.

However, sample for this research was determined by using the Taro Yamane formula.

$$n = N / 1 + N (e)^2$$

$$n = 12972 / 1 + 12972 (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 12972 / 1 + 12972 * 0.0025$$

$$n = 12972 / 1 + 33.43$$

$$n = 12972 / 33.43$$

$$n = 388$$

Sample for the study was 388

Presentation and Analysis of Results

After collection, the data was coded before being analysed. Percentages are used for the descriptive analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS v.20) was used to analyse the data obtained for the study

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=355)

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	154	43.4
	Female	201	56.6
Age	15-20yrs	80	22.5
	21-25yrs	115	32.4
	26yrs and above	160	45.1
Religion	Christianity	181	51
	Islam	102	28.7
	Others	72	20.3
Level of Study	100	50	14.1
	200	66	18.6
	300	97	27.3
	400	99	27.9
	500	43	12.1
	Total	355	100

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

The table shows the information of respondents based on gender. The male respondents were 154(43.4%) while the female respondents were 201(56.6%). This implies that majority of respondents were females.

Also the table reveals that 80 (22.5%) are within the age bracket of 15-20 years while 115 (32.4%) falls within 21-25years. A further look at the table discloses that 160 (45.1%) of the respondents were 26 and above.

It also discloses that 181 (51%) were Christians while 102 (28.7%) were Islam. A further look at the table discloses that 72(20.3%) of the respondents were other religion.

The table further reveals that 50 (14.1%) were in 100 level, 66 (18.6%) were in 200 level, 97 (27.3%) were in 300 level. A further look at the table discloses that 99 (27.9%) of the respondents were in 400 level while 43 (12.1%) were in 500 level.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the level of exposure of Lead City University undergraduates to Aquafina social media advertisements (N=355)

Variables	Level of Agreement (n=355)					
	HE	ME	NSE	NAE	Mean	SD
I always see Aquafina contents on my social media timeline	85 24.1%	100 28.3%	82 23.3%	86 24.4%	2.8	2.6
Aquafina promoted contents appears in my feeds at least once in a week	54 15.5%	120 33.8%	117 33.0%	62 17.7%	3.2	2.9
I have never seen Aquafina ad on social media	128 36%	80 22.7%	22 6.6%	124 34.9%	2.3	2.1
Contents on Aquafina are often shared to my social media pages	30 8.9%	92 26.0%	41 11.9%	191 53.5%	3.2	2.9
I do see posts of Aquafina content everyday	118 33.2%	131 36.8%	54 15.5%	50 14.4%	3.2	3.3
I rarely come across Aquafina ads on social media platforms	109 30.7%	74 21.1%	61 17.5%	109 30.7%	2.7	2.2
Ads of Aquafina haven't popped up on my social media timelines or feed	17 5.3%	52 15%	93 26.3%	192 53.7%	2.7	2.2
i come across Aquafina ads on social media platforms on daily basis	10 3.3%	20 6.1%	121 34.1%	202 56.5%	2.7	2.2
Grand Mean					2.9	2.7

Source: Field Survey (2024)

(HE= Highly exposed, ME= Minimally exposed, NSE= Not so exposed , NAE = Not all exposed)

The data provided offered insights into respondents' levels of exposure to Aquafina content on social media (n=355). Regarding the visibility of Aquafina content on social media timelines, 24.1% of respondents reported being highly exposed (HE), while 28.3% were minimally exposed (ME). A similar proportion, 23.3%, felt not so exposed (NSE), and 24.4% indicated they were not at all exposed (NAE). The mean score was 2.8, with a standard deviation (SD) of 2.6, suggesting moderate but varied exposure to Aquafina content. When asked about Aquafina-promoted content appearing in their feeds at least once a week, 15.5% of respondents reported high exposure, 33.8% minimal exposure, 33.0% were not so exposed, and 17.7% reported no exposure at all. The mean score of 3.2 and SD of 2.9 reflected a moderate frequency of encountering Aquafina content. A significant 36% of respondents indicated that they had never seen an Aquafina ad on social media, while 22.7% were minimally exposed. A smaller percentage, 6.6%, reported being not so exposed, and 34.9% said they were not exposed at all. The mean score of 2.3 and SD of 2.1 pointed to low overall exposure to Aquafina advertisements. In terms of content sharing, only 8.9% of respondents stated that Aquafina content was often shared to their social media pages, while 26.0% reported minimal exposure to such content. Additionally, 11.9% were not so exposed, and a majority, 53.5%, reported no exposure at all. The mean score was 3.2, with an SD of 2.9, indicating that content sharing of Aquafina was relatively infrequent. When asked if they saw Aquafina content daily, 33.2% of respondents reported high exposure, 36.8% minimal exposure, 15.5% were not so exposed, and 14.4% indicated no exposure at all. The mean score of 3.2 and SD of 3.3 reflected a moderate level of daily visibility. Regarding the frequency of coming across Aquafina ads, 30.7% of respondents stated they rarely encountered them, while 21.1% were minimally exposed, 17.5% were not so exposed, and another 30.7% reported no exposure at all. The mean score of 2.7 and SD of 2.2 pointed to infrequent ad appearances. A smaller proportion, 5.3%, indicated that ads for Aquafina had never appeared on their social media timelines or feeds. Meanwhile, 15% were minimally exposed, 26.3% were not so exposed, and a significant 53.7% reported no exposure at all. The mean score of 2.7 and SD of 2.2 suggested limited visibility of Aquafina ads for many respondents. Finally, when asked if they encountered Aquafina ads daily on social media platforms, only 3.3% of respondents reported high exposure, 6.1% minimal exposure, 34.1% were not so exposed, and a majority, 56.5%, reported no exposure at all. The mean score of 2.7 and SD of 2.2 indicated that daily encounters with Aquafina ads were rare among the respondents.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis of the factors that influence Lead City University undergraduates buying behaviour of Aquafina table water (N=355)

Variables	Level of Agreement (n=355)					
	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
Nothing influence my decision to buy Aquafina	125 35.2%	119 33.5%	76 21.6%	33 9.7%	3.0	2.6
I purchase Aquafina product because of the quality	116 32.7%	88 24.9%	50 14.4%	99 28%	3.2	2.8
Aquafina brand aligns with my values	107 30.2%	67 19.1%	92 26.0%	87 24.7%	3.5	2.4
I make my purchasing decisions based on it's affordability	97 27.4%	104 29.4%	38 11.0%	45 13.0%	2.7	2.4
Aquafina advert on social media plays a significant role	118 33.2%	53 15.0%	73 20.8%	111 31.3%	2.3	2.5
It is the price of the product that influences my decision to buy	54	82	103	114	2.8	3.0

	15.5%	23.3%	29.1%	32.1%		
Aquafina brand resonates with my beliefs	78	80	86	109	3.0	3.2
	22.2%	22.7%	24.4%	30.7%		
My decision to purchase Aquafina is mostly because of convenience	114	75	86	78	3.0	3.2
	32.2%	21.3%	24.4%	22.2%		
Grand mean					2.9	2.7

Source: Field Survey (2024)

(SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, SD= Strongly disagree, D= Disagree)

The data provided reflected respondents' level of agreement regarding factors influencing their decision to purchase Aquafina products (n=355). When asked if nothing influenced their decision to buy Aquafina, 35.2% strongly agreed (SA) and 33.5% agreed (A), while 21.6% disagreed (D), and 9.7% strongly disagreed (SD). The mean score of 3.0 and a standard deviation (SD) of 2.6 suggested a moderate level of agreement, with a notable portion of respondents feeling independent in their purchasing decisions. Regarding the quality of Aquafina being a key purchasing factor, 32.7% strongly agreed, 24.9% agreed, 14.4% disagreed, and 28% strongly disagreed. The mean score was 3.2, with an SD of 2.8, indicating that quality played a significant role for many, although there were varying opinions on its importance. When considering whether Aquafina's brand aligned with their values, 30.2% strongly agreed, 19.1% agreed, 26% disagreed, and 24.7% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.5 and SD of 2.4 reflected that brand alignment with personal values was moderately influential but with a range of perspectives among respondents. In terms of affordability driving purchasing decisions, 27.4% strongly agreed and 29.4% agreed, while 11% disagreed and 13% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.7 and SD of 2.4 indicated that affordability was a factor for many respondents, though not overwhelmingly so. When asked about the impact of Aquafina advertisements on social media, 33.2% strongly agreed, 15% agreed, 20.8% disagreed, and 31.3% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.3 and SD of 2.5 suggested that social media advertising had a mixed influence, with a substantial proportion of respondents downplaying its significance. Price was also a key factor for some, with 15.5% strongly agreeing and 23.3% agreeing that it influenced their purchasing decisions. However, 29.1% disagreed, and 32.1% strongly disagreed, leading to a mean score of 2.8 and an SD of 3.0. This indicated that while price mattered, it was not the decisive factor for many respondents. The data also showed that 22.2% strongly agreed and 22.7% agreed that the Aquafina brand resonated with their beliefs. Meanwhile, 24.4% disagreed, and 30.7% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.0 and SD of 3.2 highlighted that brand resonance was important to some, though not universally so. Finally, convenience emerged as a notable factor, with 32.2% strongly agreeing and 21.3% agreeing that it influenced their purchasing decisions. Another 24.4% disagreed, and 22.2% strongly disagreed. The mean score of 3.0 and SD of 3.2 suggested that convenience played a significant but not overwhelming role in respondents' decisions to buy Aquafina products.

DISCUSSION OF FINDING

Research Question One: What is the level of exposure of Lead City University undergraduates to Aquafina social media advertisements?

The majority of respondents, 28.3%, indicated that they were minimally exposed to Aquafina content on their social media timelines. Additionally, 33.8% of respondents noted that Aquafina-promoted content appeared in their feeds at least once a week, suggesting a regular but not overwhelming presence. Interestingly, 36% of respondents claimed they had never seen an Aquafina ad on social media, showing a significant gap in visibility for the brand. Similarly, 53.5% of respondents stated that Aquafina content was never shared on their social media pages, indicating limited user engagement with the brand's content. When asked about daily posts, 36.8% of respondents reported being minimally exposed to Aquafina content every day. For rare encounters with Aquafina ads, 30.7% of respondents indicated both high exposure and no exposure, demonstrating a split

in ad visibility across the sample. A substantial 53.7% of respondents said that Aquafina ads had not appeared on their social media timelines or feeds. Finally, 56.5% of respondents mentioned that they never came across Aquafina ads on social media platforms on a daily basis, further emphasizing the brand's low visibility among this group.

Research Question Two: What are the factors that influence Lead City University undergraduates buying behaviour of Aquafina table water?

The majority of respondents, 35.2%, strongly agreed that nothing influenced their decision to buy Aquafina. This suggests that a significant portion of respondents believed their choice was independent of external factors. Regarding quality, 32.7% of respondents strongly agreed that they purchased Aquafina because of its quality, indicating that product quality played a crucial role in their purchasing decisions. When asked if the Aquafina brand aligned with their values, 30.2% of respondents strongly agreed, showing that the brand's values resonated with a notable segment of the population. In terms of affordability, 29.4% of respondents agreed that they made purchasing decisions based on Aquafina's affordability, highlighting that price was an important consideration. For the influence of social media advertisements, 33.2% of respondents strongly agreed that Aquafina ads played a significant role in their purchasing decisions, indicating the impact of social media marketing. However, 32.1% of respondents strongly disagreed that price influenced their decision to buy Aquafina, suggesting that for many, factors other than price were more important. Regarding brand resonance, 30.7% of respondents strongly disagreed that Aquafina resonated with their beliefs, indicating a disconnect between the brand and some consumers' values. Lastly, 32.2% of respondents strongly agreed that convenience was a major factor in their decision to purchase Aquafina, showing that ease of access or use was an important consideration for many.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Aquafina has low visibility and engagement on social media among Lead City University undergraduates. However, product quality, social media advertisements, and convenience significantly influence their purchasing decisions. Affordability and alignment with personal values also play a role, though some respondents reported a disconnect with the brand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Aquafina should increase the frequency and targeting precision of its social media advertisements to ensure wider and more consistent reach across all user segments.
2. Aquafina should create more engaging and shareable content to encourage users to interact with and share its posts on their own social media profiles.
3. Aquafina should partner with influencers and brand ambassadors who align with its brand values to promote the product on social media.

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