

The Mediating Role of Brand Knowledge on the Relationship between Internet Advertising and Consumer Buying Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the relationship between internet advertising and consumer buying behavior, focusing on the mediating role of brand knowledge. A cross-sectional design was adopted, with data collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire administered to a sample of 384 students from three degree-awarding institutions in Bauchi State. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, and five direct hypotheses were tested using SmartPLS. Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modeling, a variance-based structural equation modeling (SEM) technique, was employed, as it is widely used in business and social sciences. The study's findings revealed that the direct relationship between all dimensions of internet advertising and brand knowledge was both negative and significant. The results indicated an inverse relationship, where higher levels of internet advertising corresponded with higher levels of brand knowledge. However, the correlation between the four dimensions of internet advertising and brand knowledge varied. Based on the findings, the study recommends that companies using internet advertising should offer unique, personalized experiences to customers by conducting thorough customer analysis to tailor their advertisements effectively.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a growing need for knowledge and information regarding the online purchasing behavior of consumers due to radical change in e-commerce, which is also known as electronic commerce (Bhakar, 2020). In the current era, it becomes a dynamic concept of how organizations manage their customer relationships and what kind of marketing strategy should be adopted for the customer (Ahmad, 2022). Nowadays, the internet is not only used for information purposes but also as a platform for buying and selling goods and services between the buyer and seller (Danish et al., 2020).

Consumers buying behavior is focusing on how individuals make decisions to spend valuable resources (time, money and effort) on consumption related items. 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 to evaluate it after the purchase and the impact of such evaluation in future and how they dispose of it (Warner, 2020).

The Internet has brought many changes in the marketing world by combining many types of business models such as direct sales, affiliate marketing, product creation and marketing online. It is responsible for making the people all over the world benefit from media. Internet marketing has provisions for interactive learning as well as instant responses to queries. This makes Internet marketing unique. Social media, e-mail advertising, social media optimization and Blogs or weblogs form an integral part of internet marketing today. (addha, 2020).

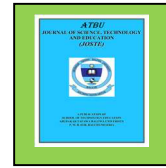
Internet advertising according to (McStay, 2020) is an expression used to refer to advertising that involves conglomeration of

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networks. For advertisers, the term 'online advertising' serves to cluster a range of types of media and strategies, including web, mobile, tablet, social, locative, wearable and other networked devices capable of contributing to advertising experiences.

Internet advertising has revolutionized business activities in this era of globalization. Internet has changed the face of transactions between individuals and organizations. Awobamise, (2020). In this era, individuals and organizations often utilize digital advertising to attract buyers all over the world for patronage. Placing adverts online is a lot like investing, for the e-advertisers, this return comes in the form of direct online sales. For the mobile apps developers users or in-app purchase Verhoef (2020).

The Internet has become a popular advertising platform because marketers found that the Internet possess greater flexibility and control over the advertising materials. Since the Internet can be used as an efficient marketing communication tool, both scholars and practitioners are interested in understanding how to take full advantage and maximizing the value of this communication medium (Rodgers & Thorson, 2020)

However, due probably to its infancy in the Nigerian media market, there has been relatively little knowledge and research on the relationship between internet advertising on consumer buying behaviour, more studies need to be done in the different areas of the country to aid generalization. Furthermore, while email advertising, content advertising, search engine advertising and social media advertising strategies have been heavily worked on by researchers, corporate website advertising and brand knowledge has sparsely been worked on. Consequently, companies are at risk of lost patronages, missing marketing opportunities, decline profits, and damaging image by relying on insufficient knowledge to make strategic internet marketing decision. No previous study exists to critically evaluate the relationship between internet advertising and customer buying behavior in tertiary institutions in Bauchi state, which

enhanced the validity of this research work (Srivastava and Chopra, 2016). This study also fulfills the gap in the previous related literature regarding internet advertising's impact on customer buying behavior and the mediating role of brand knowledge on their relationship.

The main objective of the study was to establish the relationship between internet advertising on consumer buying behaviour in Bauchi tertiary institutions.

The specific objectives were:

1. To determine the role of corporate website advertising on consumer behaviour in degree awarding institutions in Bauchi state
2. To assess the role of email advertising on consumer behaviour in degree awarding institutions in Bauchi state.
3. To examine the role of Search Engine optimization on consumer behaviour in degree awarding institutions in Bauchi state
4. To evaluate the role of blogging advertising on consumer behaviour in degree awarding institutions in Bauchi state
5. To determine whether brand knowledge mediates the relationship between internet advertising and consumer buying behavior in degree awarding institutions in Bauchi state

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Internet Advertising

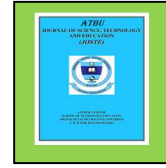
The concept "Internet advertising" is a form of promotion that uses the Internet and World Wide Web for the expressed purpose of delivering marketing messages to attract customers. Examples of online advertising include contextual ads on search engine results pages, banner ads, Rich Media Ads, Social network advertising, online classified advertising, advertising networks and e-mail marketing, including e-mail spam. Online video directories for brands are a good example of interactive advertising. In developing an advertising programme, one must always start by identifying the market needs and buyer motives and must make five major decisions commonly

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referred as 5M (mission, money message, media and measurement) of advertising. (Sajuyigbe, 2020)

Internet advertising incorporates new platforms and business opportunities for companies and brands, and significantly influences users' attitudes and intentions to purchase. Negative or positive observations of a product or service, which were previously limited to a small environment, spread on the internet and can impact millions of people (Fondevila-Gascón, 2020).

Types of Internet Advertising

In today's digital environment, digital advertising formats rapidly emerging and target consumers in different ways. Although digital advertising has many different types, the most basic and common five of them are as follows:

Banner Advertising: Banner advertising entails embedding an advertisement into a web page. The aim of the banners is to attract traffic to a online page by linking to the website of the advertiser. There are different kinds of banner applications and their occurrence can be different from animated and interactive. Banners differ in that the results for advertisement campaigns may be monitored real-time and may be targeted to the viewer's interests. Banner advertising offers several advantages. They are less expensive than traditional forms of advertising. When a consumer clicks on the advertising, the consumer's web browser goes directly to the advertiser's web pages where a variety of products and services may be presented (Li & Bukovac, 2020).

E-Mail Marketing: E-mail marketing messages are delivered using a range of approaches – such as web page in the mail box, product catalog, and newsletter – and depending on the chosen format, the e-retailer may elect to include a broad range of interactive features and hyperlinks in order to sustain prospective customers' attention.

Social Media Advertising: Social media had become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, and post-purchase communication and evaluation. Consumers are

more like to buy something that is recommended to them, rather than when it is marketed to them; this is even more likely when the recommendation comes from someone that they trust (Kunz, Hackworth and Osborne, 2020).

Mobile Advertising: The expansion of the use of all types of mobile devices, advancement in mobile technology and rapid increase in mobile penetration have established new delivery platforms to both marketers and advertisers. Consumer adoption of digital mobile telecommunications has in most countries been even faster than that of the Internet. Modern mobile applications and services linked to mobile phones, such as multimedia messaging (MMS), games, music, and digital photography, have emerged and are already being utilized by marketers and many organizations.

Corporate Website as means of Advertising

A corporate website is a website used by organizations to transmit information about their products or services. There is disagreement among marketers whether corporate websites should be considered as an advertising media, but in recent years there has been a growing consensus that it should. A study conducted by Singh and Dalal (2020) showed that companies websites can perform similar functions (to inform and to persuade) as other media network and should therefore legitimately be considered as an advertising medium.

Brand knowledge is defined by descriptive and evaluative brand-related information that it is individualistic inference about a brand stored in consumer memory. It comprises brand related notions, brand awareness, and brand image that correlating diverse information such as awareness, attributes, benefits, images, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and experiences to a brand constitutes brand knowledge and directly affect consumer responses (Keller, 2020, 2021).

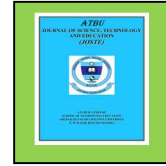
It is also indicated that brand knowledge is based on a constant communication with consumers that elicits real comprehension of the product or service (Richards et al., 2020). Therefore brand knowledge could

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comprehend both explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is objective and theoretical and can be asserted through many forms of media – documents, audiovisual equipment, computerised records, etc. – while implicit knowledge is mostly subjective, practical, and personal (Sharif, 2022). Brand Dimensions of brand knowledge knowledge is found to have a positive and direct effect on internet retailing by lowering the level of perceived risk (Chen and He, 2021) and brand extensions (Pitta and Katsanis, 2021).

Consumer Behaviour

According to Warner (2020), consumer behaviour is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society (Malcolm). Warner emphasized the consumption related behaviours are often undertaken collectively. Consumer buying behavior is regarded to be the sum of a customer's attitudes, preferences, intentions and decisions regarding the customer's behavior in the marketplace when buying a product or a service (Chang, Yan, and Eckman, 2020).

Underpinning Theory

This study will use Theory of Planned Behavior by Arjzen (1991) and will be supported by Technological Acceptance Model by Fred Davis (1986)

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory was developed by (Ajzen, 1991). Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) provides an explanation of the involuntary behaviour of individuals. It is possible to predict with high accuracy the intents to perform behaviour of varying kinds using the attitude one has towards the behaviour, subjective norms, perceived control of behaviour; and together, the intentions with perception of change in behavior accounts for a great variation in the actual behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitude towards behaviour and subjective norms

regarding engagement in behaviour are supposed to affect intentions.

Technological Acceptance Model

Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) was introduced by Fred Davis in 1986 and specifically tailored for modelling user acceptance of information systems. TAM is an adaptation of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Davis in 1989 (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). It is one of the most successful measurements for computer usage effectively among practitioners and academics. TAM attempts not only to predict but also provide an explanation to help researchers and practitioners identify why a particular system may be unacceptable and pursue appropriate steps.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework many be considered to be a design that identifies each of the series of logical steps or variables and interactions which, bridge the gap from the beginning to the end of the research process. According to Kombo and Tromp (2020), a concept is an abstract or general idea infeed or derived from specific instances. A conceptual framework is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. In this study, as shown in Figure 1.1 illustrates the conceptual framework which shows the relationships of the variable that are independent, mediating and dependent variables in this study include: Corporate website advertising, Email advertising, Search Engine Optimization and Blogging variables that are independent whereas brand knowledge is the mediator and Consumer Behavior being the variable that is dependent.

Internet Advertising Mediator Consumer Behavior

modeling (SEM) technique that is widely applied in business and social sciences. Regression

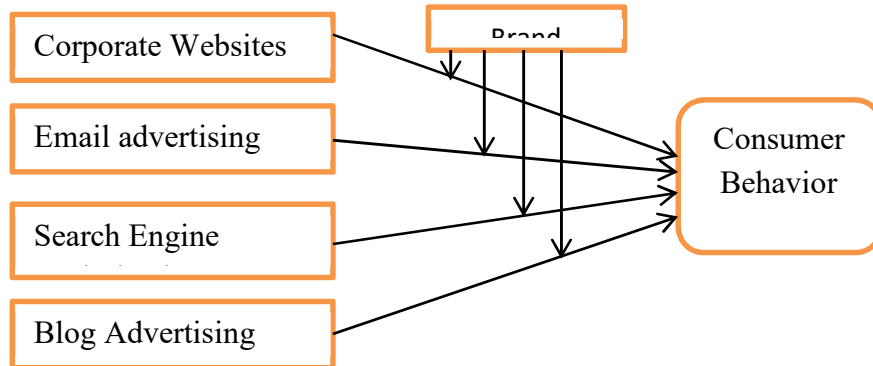


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework (Adapted from Anas, Mahrukh, Abdullah., et al 2022)

analysis is applied to the study aims at establishing if a variable (independent) predicts another variable (dependent)

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a cross-sectional survey research design using quantitative approach which involves the formulation of hypotheses and is subject to empirical testing (Neuman, 2006). The unit of analysis for this study is individual. The study used Neuman (2011) formula for determining sample sizes in large populations, normally above 10,000, to arrive at the sample size of 384 students. Also the study will use primary source of data collection. The researcher will use questionnaire as the research instrument and data analysis will be analyzed using SmartPLS. The Partial least squares (PLS) path modeling is a variance-based structural equation

RESULTS

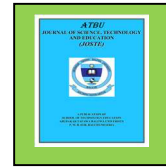
Measurement Model

The following tables illustrate appropriate presentation of results. It is important to note that many standards exist. SEM using SmartPLS was the preferred method for analysis within this study based on prior literature. The measurement model helps assess reliability and validity of the outer model. All the alpha values and CRs were higher than the recommended values of 0.700 for this study. The AVE and CRs were all higher, or close to 0.500 and 0.700, respectively, which corroborates convergent validity.

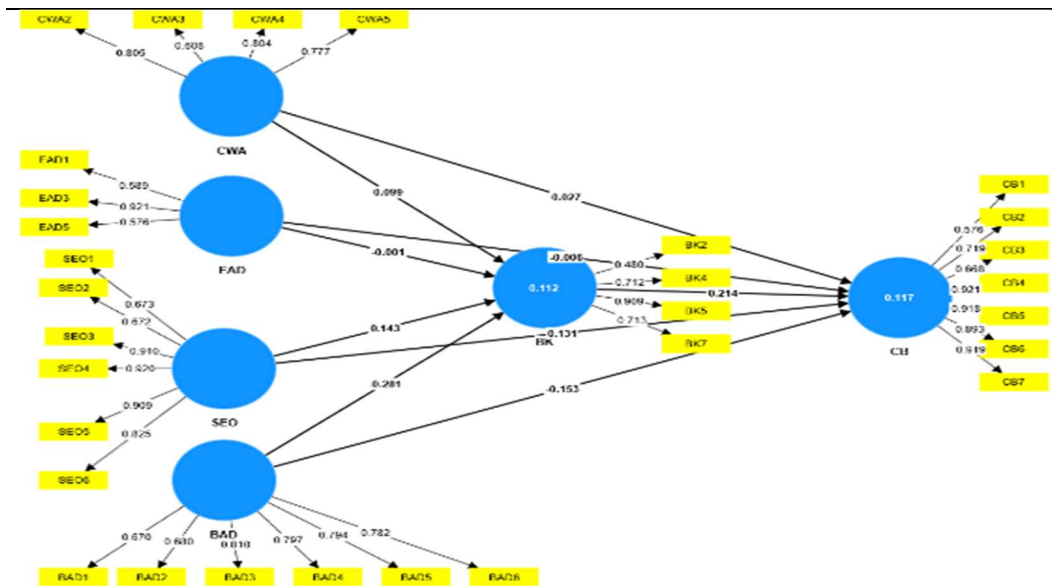
Table 1: Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR (rho_a)	AVE
Blog Advertising (BAD)	BAD1	0.670	0.853	0.873	0.574
	BAD2	0.680			
	BAD3	0.810			
	BAD4	0.797			
	BAD5	0.794			
	BAD6	0.782			
Brand Knowledge (BK)	BK2	0.480	0.724	0.909	0.518
	BK4	0.712			
	BK5	0.909			
	BK7	0.713			

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Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR (rho_a)	AVE
Consumer Behavior (CB)	CB1	0.576	0.926	0.946	0.661
	CB2	0.719			
	CB3	0.668			
	CB4	0.921			
	CB5	0.918			
	CB6	0.893			
	CB7	0.919			
Corporate Websites (CWA)	CWA2	0.805	0.756	0.802	0.567
	CWA3	0.608			
	CWA4	0.804			
	CWA5	0.777			
Email Advert (EAD)	EAD1	0.589	0.612	0.950	0.509
	EAD3	0.921			
	EAD5	0.576			
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	SEO1	0.673	0.905	0.943	0.681
	SEO2	0.672			
	SEO3	0.910			
	SEO4	0.920			
	SEO5	0.909			
	SEO6	0.825			



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The Fornell-Larcker criterion looks at the square root of the previously reported AVE per item. The top value should be higher than subsequent lower values within the same column. For example, the AVE Brand knowledge is 0.742. The square root of 0.742 is 0.825. This is the Fornell-Larcker criterion the variable brand awareness.

Discriminant validity was assessed by making sure the square of AVE was higher than correlations with other constructs beneath.

Table 2 below breaks out discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. Testing discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) requires that values be less than 0.85 per Fawad (2021) or less than 0.90 per Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). Only the intersection of the variables Informativeness and Brand Knowledge reports a value at or greater than 0.85. The value is not necessarily that much greater than 0.85. Table 11 below breaks out discriminant validity using the HTMT Criterion.

Table 2: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Constructs	BAD	BK	CB	CWA	EAD	SEO
BAD	0.758					
BK	-0.276	0.720				
CB	-0.213	0.281	0.813			
CWA	0.039	0.113	0.067	0.753		
EAD	0.427	-0.123	-0.105	0.087	0.713	
SEO	0.010	0.158	0.168	0.171	-0.077	0.825

Table 2.1: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

Constructs	BAD	BK	CB	CWA	EAD	SEO
BAD						
BK	0.283					
CB	0.190	0.273				
CWA	0.181	0.117	0.070			
EAD	0.588	0.127	0.124	0.254		
SEO	0.068	0.171	0.159	0.230	0.102	

Construct Descriptive

Construct descriptive statistics were computed using the software package SPSS. Descriptives needed to be featured by construct, not indicator. SmartPLS is great for SEM; however, does not give true means (it automatically zeroes out constructs). SPSS was used as a result. Descriptives were computed by first creating a construct consisting of averages for each indicator. For instance, the construct BA in Table 1 comprises of Brand knowledge Indicators.

The descriptive constructs came about by using the 'Compute Variable' option within SPSS. Once a construct was created, 102 then

descriptive statistics were accumulated using by going to 'Analyze', 'Descriptive Statistics' and selecting the construct(s) of interest within SPSS. Skewness is a measure of symmetry, or lack thereof. If skewness falls between -3 to +3 then it is considered okay. Kurtosis is another descriptive measurement of importance. Kurtosis looks at the measure of whether data is heavy-tailed when compared to normal distribution. Kurtosis is considered as good if between -10 to +10 (Gawali, 2021). No items were deleted due to low factor loadings as noted in the preceding narrative. Skewness and kurtosis are within acceptable boundaries

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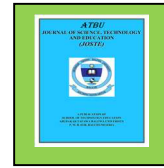


Table 3: Collinearity statistics (VIF)

Constructs	VIF	Interpretation
BAD -> BK	1.225	Accepted
BAD -> CB	1.314	Accepted
BK -> CB	1.126	Accepted
CWA -> BK	1.041	Accepted
CWA -> CB	1.052	Accepted
EAD -> BK	1.244	Accepted
EAD -> CB	1.244	Accepted
SEO -> BK	1.042	Accepted
SEO -> CB	1.065	Accepted

Table 4: f-square

Constructs	f-square	Interpretation
BAD -> BK	0.073	Moderate Effect
BAD -> CB	0.020	Weak Effect
BK -> CB	0.046	Moderate Effect
CWA -> BK	0.011	No Effect
CWA -> CB	0.001	No Effect
EAD -> BK	0.000	No Effect
EAD -> CB	0.000	No Effect
SEO -> BK	0.022	Weak Effect
SEO -> CB	0.018	No Effect

Table 5: PLS predict

Indicators	Q ² predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	PLS-SEM_MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE
BK2	-0.006	0.910	0.759	0.936	0.774
BK4	0.014	0.955	0.775	0.957	0.775
BK5	0.121	1.094	0.971	1.105	0.930
BK7	0.001	1.176	1.010	1.215	1.050
CB1	-0.013	0.933	0.760	0.950	0.767
CB2	0.005	1.098	0.930	1.132	0.961
CB3	-0.009	1.075	0.915	1.098	0.937
CB4	0.017	1.152	1.015	1.193	1.053
CB5	0.072	1.240	1.063	1.278	1.078
CB6	0.048	0.988	0.804	1.021	0.824
CB7	0.032	1.008	0.842	1.042	0.864

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Table 6: Importance-performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

Constructs	Importance	Performance
BAD	-0.214	67.359
BK	0.214	51.094
CWA	0.049	63.397
EAD	-0.006	63.113
SEO	0.161	70.762

Table 7: R Square

Construct	R-square	R-square adjusted	Interpretation
BK	0.112	0.102	Weak
CB	0.117	0.106	Weak

Structural Model Analysis

The structural model is evaluated by bootstrapping within SmartPLS to look at the relationship between constructs to assess hypotheses. Bootstrapping is a process that amplifies existing data to a specified number of

factors (Fawad, 2021). Bootstrapping was set to 5,000 for this study based on recommendations by Fawad (2021). No items needed to be removed due to low factor loadings as noted in the preceding narratives.

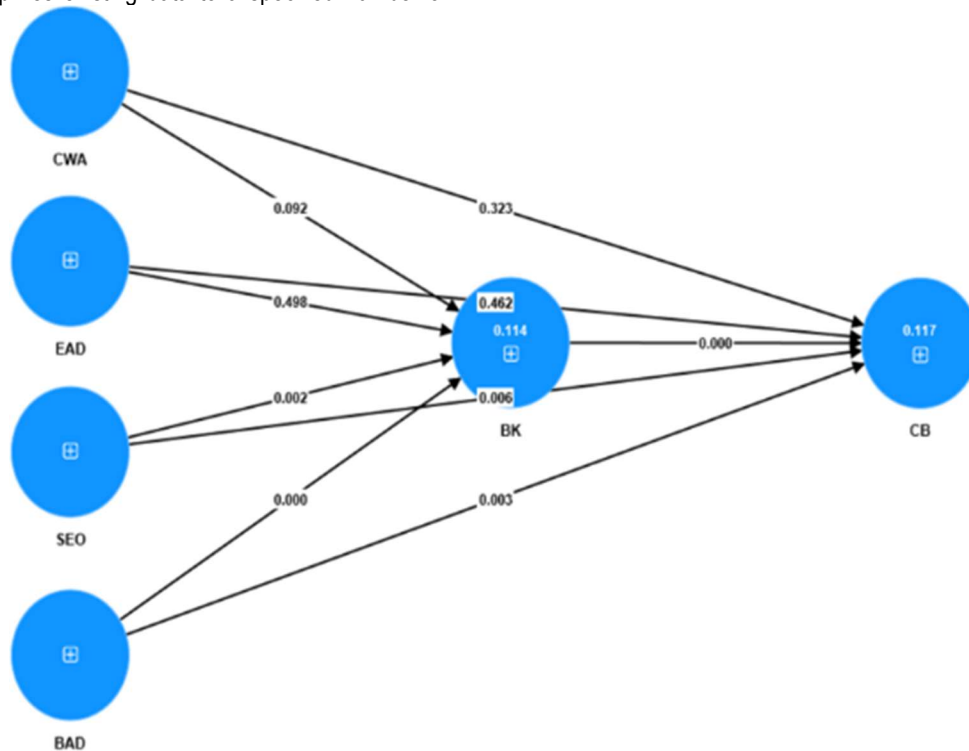


Figure 1.3 Structural Model Analysis

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Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate relationships look at the path coefficients, effect size and overall model coefficient of determination (R-squared, or R2). Bivariate relationships are considered significant within this study if the p-value is less than (0.67), moderate (>0.33) or weak (>0.19) (Chin, 1998). It is good to note that R2 values in the SEM model are the total combined effect of all predictors and not limited to a particular predictor in the relationship. If a R2 only from a specified predictor is desired, then a new model containing only the predictor of interest and DV is required. Such a case is typically only needed in additional analysis to take more of a deep dive into interaction effects from addition of other predictors. This is mainly used when examining a non-significant IV-DV unmediated relationship within a significant mediation model.

The analysis revealed that internet advertising had a negative and statistically insignificant direct effect on Consumer buying behaviour with a path coefficient (Beta value = 0.026; t value = 0.459; p= 0.323). This result indicated that hypothesis 1 is rejected. Hypothesis 1 reported negative relationship between Email advertising and Consumer Buying Behavior (Beta value = -0.019; t value = 2.747; p= 0.462).

Hypothesis 2 Accepted the proposed relationship between search engine advertising and Consumer Buying Behaviour (=0.137; t value

=2.534; p =0.006). Hypothesis 3 reinforced the projected relationship between Blog Advertising and Consumer Behaviour Behavior (= -0.151; t-value =12.817; p =0.003). H4: Corporate Web Advertising mediating the relationship between Brand Knowledge and Consumer buying behavior. Statistical analysis results indicate that the variable corporate web advertising has no significant mediating effect relationship between Brand knowledge and consumer buying behavior (p-value > 0.05). The null hypothesis is accepted. A strong correlation between Search engine optimization, brand knowledge and Consumer Buying Behavior (=0.032; t-value = 2.312; p = 0.010) Accepted H5.

According to the model, the squared multiple correlation (R2) coefficient for latent variables was tested to examine the variance of the latent variables. The squared multiple correlations (R2) result is shown in Table 4, indicating that the hypothesised model explained statistically significant variance for the endogenous variables. Results also showed that Brand knowledge has a significant role in mediating the relationship between Blog advertising and Consumer Buying behaviour with a path coefficient (Beta value= -0.057; t value = 3.346; p= 0.000). H6. The last hypothesis indicated that Brand knowledge do not has a significant effect between Email Advertising and consumer buying with a path coefficient (Beta value = -0.004; t value = 0.004; p= 0.498)

Table 8 Path Coefficient (Direct Effect)

S/N	Hypothesis	O	T statistics	P values	Decision
1.	CWA -> CB	0.026	0.459	0.323	Rejected
2.	EAD -> CB	-0.006	0.095	0.462	Rejected
3.	SEO -> CB	0.132	2.534	0.006	Accepted
4.	BAD -> CB	-0.152	2.747	0.003	Accepted

Table 9: Path Coefficient (Indirect Effect)

S/N	Hypothesis	O	T statistics	P values	Decision
1.	CWA -> BK -> CB	0.020	1.214	0.112	Rejected
2.	SEO -> BK -> CB	0.032	2.312	0.010	Accepted
3.	BAD -> BK -> CB	-0.059	3.346	0.000	Accepted

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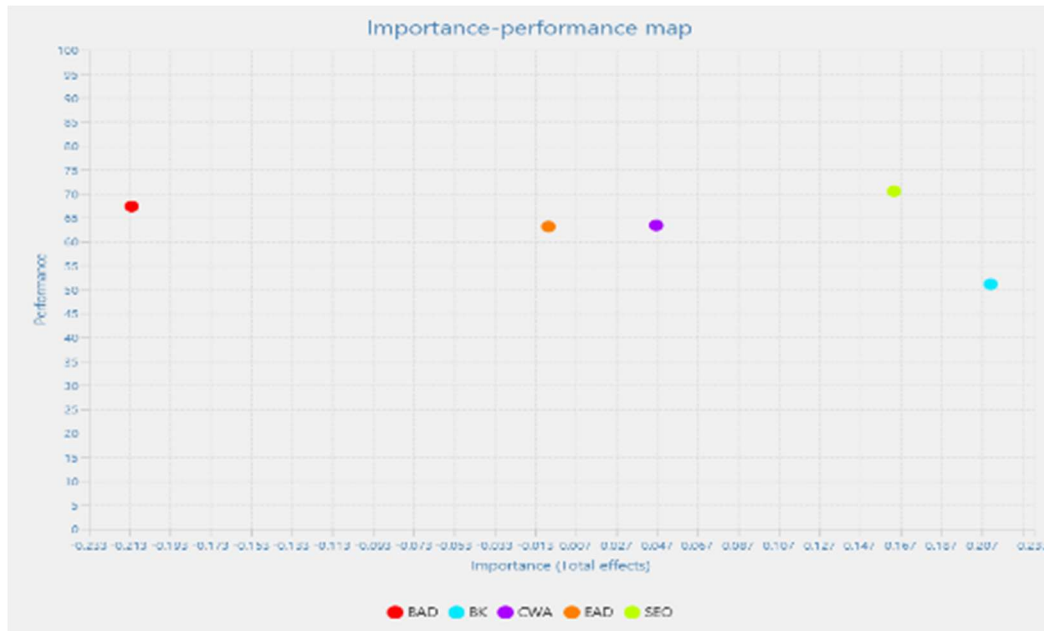
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4.	EAD -> BK -> CB	0.000	0.004	0.498	Rejected
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IPMA diagram below shows that search engine optimization in the right area of the importance-performance map have a high importance (0.167) and performance (70.166) for the target construct, Consumer buying behavior. Hence, it shows that search engine optimization is the most known channel of internet advertising and improve consumer buying behavior to enhance customer relationships. Blog advertising indicates a lower importance of (-0.213) and performance (68.728), also Corporate web advertising is the third lowest in the map with (0.047) and performance (64.821), Email

advertising is the fourth lowest importance in the map with (-0.013) and performance (62.802) and the least relatively important is brand knowledge in the importance-performance map, indicating a lower priority for Consumer Buying Behavior with (0.0207) and performance of (56.662).

Therefore, investing in the performance improvement of internet advertising construct that has minimal importance for the target construct (Consumer Buying Behavior) would not be logical since it would have little impact in improving the target construct (Hair et al., 2017).

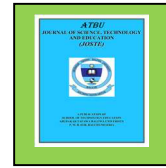


CONCLUSION

The current study analyzed the relationship between of internet advertising on consumer buying behavior with mediating effect of brand knowledge. The importance of the study is that the emergence of internet advertising is at its peak in the current business environment; therefore, it is crucial for organizations to understand the significance of internet advertising

from various perspectives. The study adopted a primary research method and collected data by circulating a questionnaire among the research population. The study collected data from 384 participants (students) customers who use internet means through social media in getting their products. PLS SEM was used to analyze the statistical data by applying different statistical techniques. The outcomes of the study reflect that

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internet advertising has a significant and positive impact on consumer buying behavior and brand knowledge in the study area. Additionally, the study examined the mediating relationship of brand knowledge with internet advertising tools (i.e Email, Corporate web, search engine and blog advertising) and consumer buying behavior.

The study concluded that internet advertising has a direct impact on customer satisfaction because brand knowledge acts as an intermediary. Internet advertising does not significantly affect customer buying behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that although internet advertising had low influence on consumer buying behavior it should still be used by marketers especially with regards to its potential to reach a large audience. This is affirmed by a majority of the respondents who confirmed encountering internet adverts and actively interacting with the adverts through internet advertising channels i.e social media, corporate web, search engine optimization, email and others internet means.

Marketers should also consider fine tuning and adding incentives to their internet adverts to provide unique information and experiences for their customers in order to influence consumer buying behavior through internet advertising.

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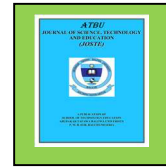
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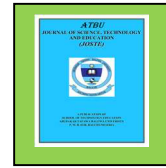
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