



How Mainstream and Social Media Advertising Exposure Shape Brand Choice: The Mediating Role of Attitudes Towards Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effect of mainstream media advertisement, social media advertisement and attitudes towards advertisement on brand selection. It also looks into the mediating effect of attitude towards advertising on media exposure and brand choice. A survey-based design and structural equation modelling were used to study the interaction of these factors and its effects on consumers' behaviour. The structural model outcomes revealed that social media advertising and attitudes towards advertising had the strongest impacts on the brand choice, while the traditional media advertising was a significant predictor. The combined variance of the three constructs was 43% of the variance in brand choice. Furthermore, the attitude towards advertising was significantly influenced by advertising in both mainstream and social media with greater influence by social media. The results of the research showed that the exposure to mainstream media has a positive effect on the exposure to social media, which means that there is a complementarity between the two types of media. The findings indicated that advertising views partially mediated the relationship between advertising exposure and brand selection as found in the research through the mediation process. The results shows that although social media has a more meaningful impact due to its interactive and personalised nature, traditional media also plays an important supportive role. The practical implications are discussed and future research directions are explored.

Keywords: Mainstream media advertising, social media advertising, brand choice, attitude towards advertising, PLS-SEM.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is one part of the marketing communication mix which has long been recognised as having a strong impact on consumer perception, evaluation and selection of brands. Traditional media including TV, radio and print media have historically dominated the advertising industry and they have a large reach and are well known, creating consumer awareness and confidence (Shahu, 2020; Siddiqui, 2014). Research shows that traditional mass media advertising has a significant impact on brand choice and consumer purchase decisions due to repetition,

credibility and the mass media audiences' participation (Nysveen et al., 2005). Digital media has revolutionized the advertising industry and has provided a means to interact with customers and to personalise the communication process. Social media advertising allows for a two-way street to flow between brands and consumers, featuring informativeness, entertainment, credibility and customisation, which enhances consumers' brand relationships (Lee et al., 2016).

Further, the social media facilitates electronic word of mouth and influencers marketing,

which boosts consumer attitudes and buying intentions (Chetioui et al., 2020; Panggati et al., 2023). Unlike traditional advertising that focuses on message dissemination, social media advertising is about building interaction with the consumer, interest and loyalty to a brand. Social media marketing enables companies to interact with their customers, allowing two-way communication, and offers qualities like legitimacy and customisation which boosts the relationship between companies and customers (Lee et al., 2016). While traditional advertising primarily conveys messages, social media advertising is more about creating experiences and building loyalty and engagement.

But advertising is far from happening in a vacuum, as many of these advances exist. The research showed that mass media and social media complement each other, i.e. mass media create awareness and credibility, while the social media continue the effect through involvement, personalization and peer recognition (Odun et al., 2016; Pop et al., 2023). In the meantime, researchers have begun to give consumer attitudes and brand-related factors greater significance as the mediating elements. The attitude towards the advertisement affects the brand attitude which further affects the behavior of the customers (Sallam et al., 2016). The effects of the brand such as awareness, image and affection are found to be mediators between the advertisement exposure and buying decision (Hanaysha et al., 2025; Efendioğlu & Durmaz, 2022).

However, there is still limited empirical integration that takes place on various perspectives. Most of the literature consulted focuses on traditional versus online advertising, but has not empirically evaluated how they interact in a dual explanatory model. There is limited research that systematically explores the relationships between media advertising, social media advertising, consumer sentiment and brand performance to gain insights into the combined impact on buying intention. Other than this, privacy issues and the pertinence of ads in social media draw more attention to the issue of ad effectiveness, but these issues are dealt with separately from a wider framework (Zhu et al., 2016).

In this context, the present study confirms a model incorporating the main stream media and social media advertisements, consumer attitudes and brand choice. This kind of dual approach can solve the problem of the need for research that can reflect the multifaceted and interdependent nature of the influence of advertisement in a fragmented media environment. While there have been several studies that investigate how Somali consumers use media, there have been no studies that focus on the relationship between media consumption and advertising and how the consumption and perception of ads affect their behaviour. Accordingly, the present study's purpose is to provide a better understanding of the relationship between advertising and consumer choice among Somali people by integrating the advertising in mass media and advertising in social media in a single conceptual framework that will provide insight in developing integrated cross-platform advertising.

Problem statement

Although the social media advertising market is booming, traditional media still remain a significant part of today's marketing communication landscape. But there is few empirical evidence about the effect of the combination of mainstream and social media advertising on consumers' brand choices, especially in emerging markets like Somalia. Previous research has tended to focus on traditional and social media advertising in isolation, while the roles of these types of advertisements in recent times or the psychological processes that impact consumer buying decisions have received minimal attention. Substantively, there has been limited research that has adopted Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) to analyze direct and indirect relationship between mainstream and social media advertising and brand choice, with attitude towards advertising (AAD) as the mediating variable. To fill this gap the present study examines the effect of mainstream media, social media and attitude towards advertising on brand choice, and the mediation of attitude towards advertising in the S-O-R model.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of advertising in marketing strategy has always been seen as an integral part of the strategy, affecting the attitude of customers, the direction and outcomes of brands, and the

decisions made by customers in buying. In the last two decades, the world of advertising has completely changed with the evolution of digital media giving advertising audiences a different channel to focus on than TV, print and radio: social media and other interactive media. In doing so, this shift has led to growing academic interest in understanding the synergistic and additive impacts of traditional and digital advertising on consumer attitude, ratings and buying intentions. Traditional media is still relevant since it can create a lot of exposure and credibility. According to literature, TV advertising is still a good channel for mass media and to persuade consumers of their decision making (Shahu, 2020; Siddiqui, 2014). Television continues to hold its ground and its influence grows with new technologies in certain regions, especially where mass media penetration is high, in households.

While traditional media such as radio and posters help create this legitimacy, as they establish commonness and belief (Nysveen et al., 2005), conventional advertising is well known for its limitations. According to Odun et al. (2016), mass media have reach and believability while the internet has interaction and measurement. Pradhan et al. (2023) found that while the TV still remains influential in brand selection in urban India, there is a growing trend to assess products through electronic media amongst the younger cohorts. The results show that traditional advertising is not out of the picture but that it is increasingly used as a complimentary channel of communication to social media advertising. Social media has revolutionized advertising by providing a more personalized and engaging experience. Unlike traditional media, social media advertisements can reach audiences, engage audiences, and customize messages, all of which are vital to the process of persuading with social media (Lee et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it is essential to use influencers in social media marketing, as they are trusted intermediaries between businesses and consumers. Chetoui et al., (2020) have identified that influencers' credibility, expertise, and likability are critical factors that drive brand attitudes as well as purchase intentions. The advantages persisted even amid crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as influencer endorsements continued to enhance brand attitudes and advertising effectiveness

(Panggati et al., 2023). Additional studies highlight platform and cultural factors that also influence these dynamics. Pop et al. (2023) revealed that the impact of hedonic motives was more influential than the impact of utilitarian motives on attitudes toward mobile applications based on fashion, and attitudes also affected purchasing intentions. Hu and Zhu (2022) found that the positive effect of social media use on purchase intention was moderated by cultural intelligence, while the negative effect of cultural distance was moderated by the same. Taken together, these findings confirm that the impact of social media ads is not uniformly effective and that it is dependent upon the culture, context and platform of the social media platform.

Moreover, it has been identified that a clear relationship exists between advertising and brand effects such as awareness, image, affection and loyalty. Efendioğlu et al. (2022) argued that social media ads boost brand recognition and strengthen bonds that help build brand equity. According to Pourkabirian et al. (2021), eWOM in social networks is a key factor in reaching brand perceptions, as it is a way of creating a new interaction between consumers and businesses. Contextual and generational shifts have been emphasized by other studies. Loncha et al. (2021) illustrated that Generation Z consumers prioritise social media experiences above traditional advertising. This is supported by research on influencers, which shows that positive attitudes toward influencers result in good brands sentiments (Chetoui et al., 2020). The emotional components of branding are growing in importance, as Hanaysha et al. (2025) found that perceived value of social media advertising increased the brand affection in retail, and Gumparathi et al. (2020) identified brand love as a growing phenomenon that is driven by advertising, interaction, and brand experience.

It is consistently stated in the literature that the pathway to the literature is integrated, with traditional media providing reach and credibility, social media providing engagement and personalisation, attitudes serving as a mediating variable between the two, and outcomes of a brand having a cognitive and emotional dimension. Although this approach is strongly supported, there is a lack of research to fully investigate the Somali consumers'

attitude and opinion, which makes it difficult to understand the link between advertising exposure and brand choice in the unique Somali media, cultural and market setting.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

3.1. Theoretical Model

The current study is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory developed by Mehrabian and Russel (1974) as cited in Herzallah et al. (2025). This theory, which passes through three stages, suggests that the consumers are not directly affected by outside factors. Rather, it is the external environment (stimuli) that affects the internal psychology (organism) of customers, which affects their behaviour to the outside (responses). That is, external advertising communication (media exposure) influences consumers' perceptions, beliefs and attitudes prior to consumers making their purchase decisions.

The S-O-R model was widely employed in various aspects of social commerce (Herzallah et al., 2025; Hongsuchon et al., 2025), e-commerce (Chaudhuri et al., 2026), social media marketing (Aggarwal & Mittal, 2022), social media influencer (Yaqub et al., 2023), and mobile social media (Li et al., 2025). All these studies have demonstrated that the S-O-R model is a strong theoretical model for predicting consumer behaviour. These studies showed that there is a significant amount of variance in behavioural responses explained across different contexts of use.

The usefulness of the S-O-R model in terms of consumers' behavioural responses is continually demonstrated by recent studies. For instance, Chaudhuri et al. (2026) employed this model to predict visual design elements in an e-commerce environment. They found that these elements influence consumers' psychological states (image appeal and product perception), which in turn influenced their behavioural responses (willingness to pay). Moreover, Hongsuchon et al. (2025) applied the S-O-R model to predict social media influencer-driven impulse buying and found empirical evidence for it. A recent systematic literature review (Kıymalıoğlu et al., 2024) has concluded that the S-O-R model is widely adopted to predict various consumers' behavioural responses. Others have employed the S-O-R model to gauge various contexts related to the

social commerce environment, suggesting that the model is appropriate for accounting for substantial variance in behavioural outcomes (Aggarwal & Mittal, 2022; Herzallah et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2024; Kıymalıoğlu et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025; Yaqub et al., 2023).

Based on the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence discussed above, the current study adopts the S-O-R model as a guiding framework to determine the impact of mainstream and social media advertising on social media users' attitudes towards advertising, which ultimately influence their brand choice. To apply this model, this study uses both mainstream and social media advertising as external stimuli, with attitude towards social media advertising as the organism (internal psychological states), and brand choice as the consumer response.

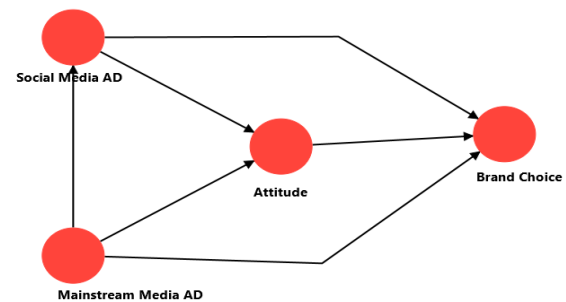


Figure 1: Hypothesised Model

3.2. Advertising in Mainstream Media and Brand Choice

Throughout the decades, conventional media advertising has long been the cornerstone of marketing communication with television, radio and print advertisements impacting customer perceptions and brand evaluations. Awareness, familiarity, and recognition are all aspects that directly impact consumers decision making process, which advertising literature suggests is improved when consumers are exposed to it regularly through conventional media (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999; Wang et al., 2023). Traditional advertising has been found to enhance brand credibility because of its perceived authority and trustworthiness from established platforms (Belch & Belch, 2021). Traditional advertising for many consumers, particularly in emerging markets, is associated with credibility and legitimacy, suggesting that the brand is not new and not a suspect source. In post-conflict developing markets like Somalia, when the main stream is seen,

consumers often equate mainstream with product quality and brand reliability.

The effectiveness of mainstream advertising in influencing brand choice is based on academics' theories that it can reach a variety of audiences with a unified communication. Mainstream advertising plays a role in building consumer decision-making through immediate brand awareness and establishing the brand connection over time (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In spite of the digital age, TV and print media marketing still has a role in shaping consumer preferences as both mediums increase the firms mental availability (Sharp, 2010). There is mixed evidence in recent times. The results of the studies above show that there are different results, specifically the study conducted by Wang et al. (2025) found that traditional media exposure can strengthen the purchase intention, while the study conducted by Istijanto and Purusottama (2023) found that traditional media communication did not significantly affect brand attitude. So it is not a guaranteed effect, but still possible when the mainstream visibility still conveys credibility. In light of these contradicting results, this hypothesis is posited:

H1: Mainstream media advertising positively influences brand choice.

3.3. Social Media Advertising and Brand Choice

Social media advertising relies on interaction, customisation, and peer endorsements, which differ from traditional platforms that rely on persuasion through messages. Unlike traditional platforms, social media advertising leverages engagement, personalization, and peer recommendation to drive customer decisions. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a significant factor in the persuasive impact of social media ads. Chetioui et al., (2021) found that Facebook ads and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) had synergic impact on purchase intent in a collectivistic market, pointing to the relational and social nature of digital ads.

Social media advertising should exert a stronger effect because it places brands in interactive, peer-visible and personalised spaces rather than merely delivering messages. Numerous studies validate the efficacy of social advertising in enhancing purchase outcomes.

Akar and Dalgic (2018) emphasised that online social connections directly influence purchase intentions, illustrating that consumers' integration into social networks enhances the effect of advertising on brand choice. The significant influence of social media advertising on brand choice is also consistent with Bhat and Jain (2023), who reported that new media advertising positively affects consumers' buying behaviour.

Recent studies also support the role of social media as a stimulus affecting consumers' behavioural outcomes. Kumar et al. (2024) established that digital platforms enhance customer trust and favourable brand perceptions, hence amplifying sensitivity to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and reinforcing brand selection. These findings indicate that social advertising exerts a more significant direct influence on brand selection. Chen et al. (2023) showed that credibility and emotional appeal in social media ads strengthen advertising attitude and purchase intention, while Hanaysha and Alhyasat (2025) linked interactivity, entertainment, informativeness and relevance to perceived value and brand love. Still, Kothari et al. (2025) found no direct effect of social media advertising effectiveness on purchase intention when credibility and trust were considered. The path is plausible, but context-sensitive. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Social media advertising positively influences brand choice.

3.4. Perception of Advertising and Brand Choice

Attitude towards advertising is the psychological hinge in this model. The attitude-toward-the-ad tradition argues that advertising does not work through exposure alone; it works when consumers evaluate the message favourably (MacKenzie et al., 1986). When consumers cultivate a favourable attitude towards advertising, they extend those assessments to the brand, thereby affecting brand selection. Conversely, adverse attitudes reduce the effectiveness of advertising messages irrespective of product quality (Mo et al., 2023; Wijaya & Heruwasto, 2024).

Empirical research substantiates the role of attitude in brand selection. Lee and Hong

(2016) also provided a clear example that showed that innovative and emotion arousing social advertisements can positively shape attitudes that ultimately predict behavioural engagement and purchasing likelihood. Kumar et al. (2024) demonstrated that attitude is a mediating variable between eWOM and purchase intention via brand image and brand attitude.

Theoretically, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) helps to understand the relationship between attitude and customer behavior. The positive attitude can be an assessment of the central route (based on strong arguments and relevance) or a peripheral route (based on amusement and enjoyment) and both have a positive influence on brand adoption. Attitude has been found to be an important factor in the consumer decision-making process in various studies conducted in both traditional and digital environments (Calder & Malthouse, 2008; Ahmed et al., 2018). Additionally, this mechanism has recently been confirmed by studies. Advertising attitude was found to be a strong predictor of purchase intention by Chen et al. (2023), and Thein (2025) revealed that attitude towards social media advertising was a strong predictor of purchase intention. When the consumers come back with a positive response to the advertising, the choice of the brand should improve. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: Attitude toward advertising positively influences brand choice.

3.5. Advertising in Mainstream Media and Perceptions of Advertising

Media is well involved in shaping consumer perception of a brand and influences the brand choice. Exposure to television or print-advertisements in the norm, repeated, creates favourable attitudes toward advertising (Aad), which increase the perception of legitimacy, professionalism and quality (Shavitt et al., 2004). Consumers frequently link mainstream campaigns with credibility, so increasing their receptiveness to advertising messages in general. Recent studies also further supported this notion. Wang et al. (2025), for example, demonstrated the positive effect of traditional media on the credibility-related persuasion process. However, the evidence is not conclusive. In an Indonesian cosmetics context,

traditional media communication was not able to predict brand attitude, as revealed by Istijanto and Purusottama (2023). Mainstream visibility however, may continue to be a legitimacy cue for Somali consumers, whereas trusted traditional platforms may continue to be part of daily media use.

Moreover, mainstream ads are often crafted to resonate with broad audiences by highlighting cultural norms and collective experiences, thereby increasing the likelihood of a positive attitude toward the advertisement. Mainstream platforms strongly influence consumers' impressions of advertising by linking it to entertainment and high-quality production (Bettiga & Noci, 2024; Hornikx et al., 2023). Considering these notions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Mainstream media advertising positively influences attitudes towards advertising.

3.6. Social Media Advertising and Perception of Advertising

Social media advertising is expected to shape attitudes more directly because consumers evaluate not only the message, but also its relevance, entertainment value, interactivity and credibility. Ducoffe's (1996) advertising value model remains useful, but recent evidence sharpens it. Chen et al. (2023) found credibility and emotional appeal to be more influential than informativeness and irritation in shaping advertising attitude, while Balroo (2023) showed that usefulness and entertainment improved purchase intention through attitude towards social media ads. Panggati et al. (2023) proved that trust in online influencers maximises attitude, illustrating how credibility and social proof enhance consumer attitudes towards online advertisements. Personalisation is a key element in this communication. Lina and Setiyanto (2021) provided evidence that personalised ads enhance perceived ad value, thereby generating positive attitudes toward advertising.

Social media's collaborative and participative nature also increases attitudes towards advertising. Chetoui et al. (2021) suggested that electronic word-of-mouth on Facebook enhanced advertising efficacy by fostering more positive sentiments. The interactive nature of social media not only educates and

entertains but also fosters a favourable attitude, which subsequently influences brand selection. Consequently, we propose this hypothesis:

H5: Social media advertising positively influences attitudes towards advertising.

3.7: Advertising in Mainstream Media and Social Media

The interplay between conventional and social media advertising is becoming increasingly synergistic rather than adversarial. Cross-channel strategies often motivate customers who encounter traditional advertisements to engage with firms on social media platforms. Television advertisements often use hashtags or invitations to follow the business on Instagram or Facebook (Wang et al., 2025).

Mainstream and social media advertising should not be treated as competing silos. Contemporary campaigns often use traditional media to create reach and recognition, while digital platforms extend the message through search, sharing and interaction. Cross-media evidence supports this complementarity: Sanz-Blas et al. (2025) showed that combined media exposure offers a stronger assessment of advertising effectiveness across ad attitudes, brand image and purchase intentions. Wang et al. (2025) likewise found that both traditional and social media exposure operate through credibility-related routes. This complementarity indicates that mainstream advertising frequently serves as a conduit for social media participation, enhancing and prolonging exposure. As consumers increasingly embrace multi-screen behaviours, the convergence of conventional and digital media enhances the overall effectiveness of advertising efforts. Consequently, we propose that:

H6: Mainstream media advertising positively influences exposure to social media advertising.

3.8: Mediating role of Attitude Towards Advertising

Ultimately, attitude toward advertising is posited to mediate the relationship between advertising exposure and brand selection. The proposed mediation is theoretically necessary, not decorative. If advertising exposure influences brand choice solely through repeated visibility, the model's explanatory

power remains limited. The attitude-toward-the-ad literature argues that exposure becomes persuasive when translated into favourable evaluation (MacKenzie et al., 1986). Recent findings support this route: Balroo (2023) reported full mediation of attitude between social media ad attributes and purchase intention, and Thein (2025) found attitude towards social media advertising to be a substantial mediator of fashion purchase intention. Attitude should therefore transmit part of the effect of both media forms on brand choice. Sallam and Algamash (2016) and Kumar et al. (2024) empirically demonstrated that attitude mediates the influence of advertising exposure, encompassing both conventional and digital formats, on purchase intentions.

ATT-AD has particular significance in digital contexts. Panggati et al. (2023) similarly established that brand attitude mediates the impact of influencer-based advertising on purchase intentions, hence strengthening the mediating role of attitude towards advertising. As such, this study proposes that exposure to both conventional and social media advertising indirectly influences brand choice through attitude, with a more pronounced impact from social media advertising. This suggests that advertising not only directly influences selection but also cultivates positive attitudes that enhance customers' propensity to choose the promoted brand. Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

H7: The attitude toward advertising mediates the association between exposure to media advertising (both mainstream and social) and brand choice.

4. METHODS

4.1. Sampling Procedure and Design

The primary objective of this study is to investigate factors predicting brand choice. In particular, this study examines how exposure to both new and traditional media advertising influences attitudes towards advertising and brand choice. Using a quantitative research approach, this study employs a survey design to collect data from respondents. Surveys are cost-effective data collection tools, and they are 'excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population' (Babbie, 2011, p. 270). This study employed structural equation modelling with SmartPLS software

(Ringle et al., 2024) to evaluate the proposed theoretical model. The SmartPLS software is one of the most frequently employed software programs to perform PLS-SEM analyses (Hair et al., 2021). The target population of this study was Somali consumers exposed to both new and traditional media platforms, intending to assess the factors that determine their behavioural response to advertising. Using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling, this study employed a self-administered online questionnaire through Google Forms to solicit data from the respondents.

4.2. Measures of Study Constructs

The hypothesised conceptual model of this study comprised four key constructs: exposure to mainstream media advertising, exposure to social media advertising, attitude towards advertising, and brand choice. It was theorised that exposure to media (both new and traditional) positively predicts respondents' brand choice. This prediction can also be made indirectly through attitude, which is in turn positively associated with brand choice. Constructs of exposure to mainstream media advertisement (Media-AD) and exposure to social media advertisement (SM-AD) were measured using seven indicators. Five of these indicators were adapted from a recent study by Timori (2022). One indicator from *Media-AD* and two indicators from *SM-AD* were self-developed to better suit the study's context. Attitude towards advertising was measured using four items adapted from MacKenzie & Lutz (1989). Yang et al. (2013) has provided early validation for these items, which were used in subsequent studies. Finally, brand choice, which is the endogenous variable in this study, is measured with six items adopted from the recent literature (Timori, 2022). These indicators were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree.

4.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study adopted a non-probability sampling strategy, combining snowball and convenience sampling techniques to collect data to test the proposed conceptual model. This kind of sampling strategy can help the researchers maximise participation and reach a diverse audience across various social and professional networks. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire items were approved by the

Institutional Review Board at Qatar University (QU-IRB). The data were collected from 252 Somali consumers through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The current sample size of 252 is adequate to estimate the structural model, as it exceeds the commonly recommended threshold of 200 cases for SEM (Kline, 2011).

The collected responses were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for screening, reliability testing, descriptive statistics, and testing of assumptions. A partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software was employed to test the hypothesised relationships among the study constructs. SEM was selected for its ability to simultaneously assess the measurement and structural models, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed framework. It also enables researchers to estimate complex relationships among multiple exogenous and endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2021). A two-step approach was followed in this study: first, evaluate the measurement model; second, assess the structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed before interpreting the structural model. Firstly, the construct's reliability was evaluated using both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α). All constructs in this study have achieved higher reliability scores for both CR and Cronbach's alpha, indicating that the indicators measuring these constructs are internally consistent (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2011). The scores for the reliability for both indices ranged from 0.81 to 0.88, suggesting that they are very good and adequately represent the underlying constructs (Kline, 2011). Secondly, convergent validity was assessed using two criteria, namely factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). Thus, this study revealed that all factor loadings were statistically significant and found to be acceptable (Chin, 1998). The results suggested that some indicators were slightly below the indicated threshold. However, they were retained because they contribute to the overall constructs in terms of reliability and AVE. The AVE is the second criterion for evaluating convergent validity for all

Table 1: Convergent Validity and Reliability

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading*	CR	α^{**}	AVE
Mainstream Media Advertising	Media-AD4	0.66	0.85	0.81	0.65
	Media-AD5	0.80			
	Media-AD6	0.85			
	Media-AD7	0.89			
Social Media Advertising	SM-AD1	0.72	0.82	0.81	0.51
	SM-AD3	0.69			
	SM-AD4	0.65			
	SM-AD5	0.70			
	SM-AD6	0.81			
	SM-AD7	0.69			
Attitude Towards Advertising	ATT1	0.87	0.88	0.88	0.73
	ATT2	0.86			
	ATT3	0.88			
	ATT4	0.82			
Brand Choice	Brand1	0.75	0.86	0.85	0.58
	Brand2	0.75			
	Brand3	0.82			
	Brand4	0.73			
	Brand5	0.80			
	Brand6	0.71			

* significant at $p < .001$. ** Cronbach's alpha coefficient, CR= Composite Reliability, AVE: average variance extracted.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity -Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	ATT	Brand	Media-AD
Attitude towards Advertising (ATT)			
Brand Choice (Brand)	0.64		
Mainstream Media Advertising (Media-AD)	0.62	0.64	
Social Media Advertising (SM-AD)	0.70	0.69	0.76

constructs and is found to be higher than 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014). Consequently, this study has established both construct reliability and convergent validity.

Thirdly, the discriminant validity, which refers to 'the extent to which the construct is empirically distinct from other constructs or, in other words, the construct measures what it is intended to measure' (Hair et al., 2014, p. 112), was evaluated using the latest method (HTMT) as recently suggested in the literature (Henseler et al., 2015). To establish this method, the HTMT values for each construct should be lower than 0.80. As shown in Table 2, all HTMT scores ranged from 0.62 to 0.76, indicating that discriminant validity was sufficiently established in this study. Accordingly, the researchers moved to interpret the structural model and test the proposed hypotheses.

5.2. Structural Model

As the measurement validity and reliability in this study were empirically established, the interpretation and testing of the structural model are now possible. Table 3 and Figure 1 present the results of the structural model. As suggested in the literature, this study employs a 5000-subsample bootstrapping to establish the significance of the proposed associations (Hair et al., 2011; Méndez-Suárez, 2021).

The results suggested that mainstream media advertising, social media advertising, and attitude towards advertising collectively contributed about 43% of the variance ($R^2 = .43$) in brand choice as perceived by the study participants. As well, both mainstream media advertising and social media advertising constructs have explained 40% of the variance ($R^2 = .40$) in attitude towards advertising. In

comparison, mainstream media advertising and social media advertising alone have accounted for 40% of the variance in social media advertising ($R^2 = .40$). These contributions are considered moderate (Chin, 1998).

First, the structural results suggested that brand choice was significantly and positively predicted by exposure to social media advertising ($\beta = 0.28$, $t = 3.85$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher exposure to social media advertising positively influences consumers' brand choice. This provides empirical support for H2.

Second, the construct of attitude towards advertising ($\beta = 0.28$, $t = 4.10$, $p < 0.01$) was found to exert a positive and statistically significant impact on brand choice. This result suggests that consumers who have a positive attitude towards advertising are more likely to choose the advertised brand. Thus, H3 was supported by the data.

Third, Exposure to mainstream media, such as newspapers, television, and radio, was another significant contributor to brand choice among the study participants ($\beta = 0.21$, $t = 3.48$, $p < 0.01$). Although this coefficient is weaker than the exposure to social media and consumers' attitudes, it remains meaningful because it is statistically significant. Despite the growing significance and influence of digital platforms, traditional channels continue to shape consumers' decisions towards advertised products and services. Hence, the data provided sufficient support for the H1.

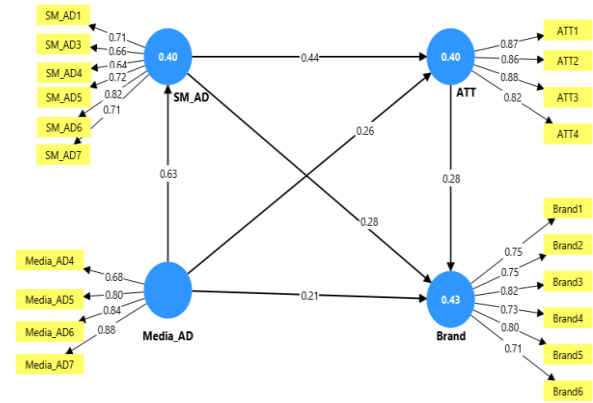


Figure 2: Structural Model Showing the Proposed Path Coefficients

Fourth, Exposure to both mainstream media ($\beta = 0.26$, $t = 4.20$, $p < 0.01$) and social media ($\beta = 0.44$, $t = 6.26$, $p < 0.01$) has a significant and positive influence on consumers' overall attitudes towards advertising. This suggests that these exposures play an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions of advertisements, with exposure to social media being a more substantial contributor than exposure to mainstream media. The surplus of social media over traditional media can be related to the peer-driven, interactive and personalised features available on social media platforms. Consequently, H4 and H5 were supported by the data.

Fifth, this study has also examined how exposure to mainstream media advertising may contribute to exposure to social media advertising. This study has found empirical support for this notion ($\beta = 0.63$, $t = 14.38$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, H6 was supported. It is noteworthy that the effect was substantial and statistically significant, indicating that individuals regularly exposed to traditional media

Table 3: Path Coefficients of the Proposed Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Exogenous Variables	→	Endogenous Variables	Beta	T values	P values	Decision
H1	Mainstream Media Advertising	→	Brand Choice	0.21	3.48	0.00	Supported
H2	Social Media Advertising	→	Brand Choice	0.28	3.85	0.00	Supported
H3	Attitude Towards Advertising	→	Brand Choice	0.28	4.10	0.00	Supported
H4	Mainstream Media Advertising	→	Attitude	0.26	4.20	0.00	Supported
H5	Social Media Advertising	→	Attitude	0.44	6.26	0.00	Supported
H6	Mainstream Media Advertising	→	Social Media Advertising	0.63	14.38	0.00	Supported

advertising are more likely to encounter or engage with advertising on social media platforms. A possible explanation for this result is that some traditional media, such as television, may suggest to their audiences that they follow the advertised brand's social media accounts.

Finally, this study examined the mediating effect of attitude towards advertising, in which exposure to social media advertising indirectly and positively explained brand choice ($\beta = 0.12$, $t = 3.48$, $p < 0.01$) through attitude. At the same time, exposure to mainstream media has also, albeit weakly and indirectly, positively predicted brand choice via attitude ($\beta = 0.07$, $t = 2.72$, $p = 0.01$). Hence, H7 was supported. This indicates that part of the effect of exposure to both mainstream and social media on brand choice is mediated by attitudes towards advertising. It may also imply that media (both traditional and new) not only directly contribute to brand choice but also do so indirectly by fostering favourable feelings towards the advertising, which in turn increases the likelihood of choosing the advertised brand.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This study's findings provide significant insights into the impact of various advertising modalities on brand selection and facilitate comparisons with prior studies. The findings indicated that social media advertising had a substantial and favourable impact on brand selection, aligning with research that underscores the growing influence of digital platforms on consumer choices. Chetioui et al. (2021) found that Facebook advertising and electronic word of mouth significantly increase purchase intention. In contrast, Lee and Hong (2016) found that informativeness, inventiveness, and emotional appeal in social media advertising significantly increase user engagement and brand selection. Contrary to previous studies highlighting the mainstream media's dominant role in advertising impact (Belch & Belch, 2021; Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999; Wang et al., 2023), the current findings echo the shift towards social media's interactive, peer-to-peer, and customised ethos, which plays a more influential role in consumer behaviour.

The study also suggested a significant positive association between attitudes toward advertising and brand choice. This result

corroborates classical theories of ad effectiveness (Ducoffe, 1996; MacKenzie et al., 1986), which hold that positive assessments of commercials result in positive brand-related consequences. Sallam and Algammash (2016) provide the same evidence, showing that positive attitudes towards advertisements play an important role in brand perception and purchase intention. This study's inclusion of the mediating role of attitude toward advertising corroborates the view that the impact of advertising extends beyond short-term behavioural effects, influencing consumers' psychological attitudes, consistent with Calder and Malthouse (2008) and the recent evidence by Panggati et al. (2023).

This study showed that, while social media has the greater influence, advertisements in mainstream media continue to shape brand choice. It appears that the advertisements that are perceived to be credible and have the largest reach, in this case television and print/radio advertisements (Istijanto & Purusottama, 2023; Wang et al., 2025), have the greatest influence. It was also shown that exposure to mass media advertisements increases exposure to social media advertisements. This indicates that mass media and social media advertisements are complementary (Harizi & Trebicka, 2023). Offline and online integration of marketing channels, which was shown to improve customer engagement (Dinner et al., 2014) and effectiveness of cross-channel communication (Dinner et al., 2014) was also an improvement reported in this study.

This study also demonstrated that both mainstream and social media advertisements influence consumers' advertising attitudes and that social media, again, has the greater influence. This aligns with the findings of Lina and Setiyanto (2021), which demonstrated the role of social media advertising in enhancing attitudes towards advertising value. Moreover, mainstream media platforms contribute to favourable consumer perceptions of advertising by delivering professionally produced and entertaining content, which enhances the perceived credibility and quality of advertising messages (Bettiga & Noci, 2024; Hornikx et al., 2023). In contrast, the findings of this study contradict those of Kothari et al. (2025), who found that social media advertising effectiveness has no direct impact on purchase

intention when credibility and trust were considered.

The mediation analysis further demonstrated that attitudes toward advertising constitute a significant mechanism through which media advertising exposure influences brand choice. Moreover, the indirect effect was stronger for social media advertising than for mainstream media advertising. Kumar et al. (2024) showed that digital platforms create positive brand perceptions and strengthen trust among customers. This narrows brand choices to more favorable options. From the analysis, the present study infers the more powerful effects of social media as compared to traditional media. This is predominantly because social media is more interactive and personalized. The present study also supports that advertising, therefore, will have a primary effect on overriding direct/off-setting consumer brand choice with a favorable brand perspective of the advertisement.

Advertising on social media and the resultant favorable consumer sentiments toward advertising have a direct effect on consumer brand choice. Advertising through traditional media channels continues to have a direct complementary/subordinate effect on consumer brand choice. These findings are strongly aligned with other studies that have shown that, despite the predominance of social media in advertising, traditional media channels are still influential because of their credibility, larger reach, better audience contact, and greater persuasive ability (Wang et al., 2025). Furthermore, the results extend the integrated marketing communication literature by supporting the view that traditional and social media function as complementary rather than competing channels, and that combining both enhances overall communication effectiveness and consumer engagement (Harizi & Trebicka, 2023).

The mediating research ultimately established that attitudes toward advertising serve as a significant conduit through which media exposure influences brand choice, with the indirect effect more pronounced for social media advertising than for mainstream media. This result aligns with the work of Kumar et al. (2024), which shows that brand attitude mediates the influence of electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intention, particularly on

third-party websites. The current study validates the notion that advertising affects consumer decision-making, both directly and indirectly, by creating positive attitudes towards the ad itself.

The findings indicate that social media advertising and positive attitudes toward advertising both significantly impact brand choice, but conventional media have a legitimate, complementary function to fulfil. The findings add to the literature by indicating that advertisers need not discard traditional media but can instead blend them with social media to achieve optimal effect, thereby substantiating the concept of media complementarity in consumer decision-making (Harizi & Trebicka, 2023; Sanz-Blas et al., 2025).

7. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyse the effects of mainstream and social media advertising, as well as attitudes toward advertising, on brand choice. The findings indicated that all three variables significantly influence brand choice, with social media advertising and attitudes toward advertising exerting more substantial influence than traditional media. The findings of the current research shed light on the interaction of traditional and social media advertising. They show that exposure to traditional media creates a greater probability of a consumer interacting with advertising on digital media platforms. Exposure to traditional and social media advertising creates a particular advertising mindset. This mindset influences a consumer's brand preference directly and indirectly through the social and traditional media exposure framework. The study results significantly expand the understanding of consumer advertising psychology. The results of this research are important at both theoretical and managerial levels.

8. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS:

This study contributes to the advertising literature by confirming the timeless relevance of traditional media and proves that social media has more influence than traditional media, especially with positive attitudes towards advertising. The study offers empirical evidence for the S-O-R model since the attitudes towards the advertisements were found to be an important psychological connection between ad exposure and brand

choice. Specifically, it was demonstrated that the main stream media advertising and social media advertising (stimuli) impact consumers' attitudes towards advertising (organism) which in turn influence their brand choice (response). The results corroborate the core tenet of the S-O-R model that external marketing stimuli influence behaviour not only directly, but also indirectly, through people's psychological reactions. The results of this study corroborate previous studies on social commerce in different context areas (Herzallah et al., 2025; Hongsuchon et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2024; Kıymalıoğlu et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025; Yaqub et al., 2023).

9. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study hold important managerial implications for advertisers, brand managers and marketing practitioners in emerging markets like Somalia's. The results of the study show that these practitioners should not rely on a single medium but should have cross media strategies. In spite of the dominance of digital media, conventional channels continue to be effective platforms for establishing brand recognition and credibility, thanks to their widespread reach and established reputation. But social media provides more interactivity, customisation and peer-to-peer engagement, all of which have an impact on brand selection. It's time for marketers and brand managers to focus on increasing the value and relevance of the ads they place to make for positive attitudes and successful campaigns. New, informative and relevant advertising messages can lead to optimal short-term behavioural reactions and long-term brand loyalty based on the customer's expectations (Bui et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023).

The evidence from this study supports the view that successful advertising strategies require integration and balance. With mainstream media's authority, social media's interactivity, and the development of positive attitudes toward advertising, businesses can optimise their impact on customer decision-making in an increasingly complex media landscape. Both social and mainstream media advertising affect consumer attitudes towards advertising, with social media advertising having a more significant impact. This is consistent with the findings of Lina and Setiyanto (2021) that social media advertising enhances attitudes towards

advertising value, and with Zhu and Chang (2016), who demonstrated the significance of ad relevance in reducing privacy concerns and promoting acceptance of personalised adverts. The prominent impact of social media in this study can be attributed to its greater levels of interaction and personalisation than conventional media.

10. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish a causal relationship among study constructs. Second, the data were collected using non-random sampling, which may limit its generalizability and external validity. Third, the study depended on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability biases. Finally, although the proposed model includes key advertising-related variables, other variables that may influence brand choice, such as privacy concerns, trust, cultural orientation and product-related variables, were not examined. Therefore, future research should validate the proposed model in different cultural and demographic settings to assess its generalizability and external validity. Longitudinal research is also recommended to provide insight into the evolving interrelationships between social and traditional media and their influence on consumer behaviour over time. Furthermore, future research should investigate moderating variables, such as privacy concerns, trust, or cultural orientation, that may influence the magnitude of the correlations reported in the current research.

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