



**EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK ADVERTISING ON PURCHASING  
DECISIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A STUDY OF UNIMAC, ACCRA**

**BY**

**EVELYN ASARE-AYEH**

**(MAPRM24035)**

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ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UniMAC) IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MA IN PUBLIC  
RELATIONS WITH MARKETING.**

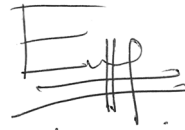
**DECEMBER 2025**

**DECLARATION**

**DECLARATION BY STUDENT(S)**

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

EVELYN ASARE-AYEH      MAPRM24035



29/12/2025

Student(s)

Index number(s)

Signature(s)

Date

**CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR**

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication UniMAC-IJ.

ALBERT ADJEI ANANI-BOSSMAN, PhD



Supervisor

Signature(s)

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is lovingly dedicated to the Almighty God, whose grace and strength have sustained me throughout this academic journey. I also dedicate it to my family, whose encouragement, patience, and unwavering belief in my potential have been my greatest motivation. To all individuals who continuously strive for excellence despite challenges, this research stands as a reminder that perseverance yields fulfilment.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined how Facebook advertising influences the purchasing decisions of undergraduate students at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), Accra, while also assessing students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements and their perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform. A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed. Using stratified random sampling by institute and year of study, data were collected from 314 undergraduates (Levels 100–400) with active Facebook accounts. A structured self-administered questionnaire captured demographics, attitudes toward Facebook advertising, antecedent factors (credibility, relevance, design, peer influence, and promotions), purchasing decisions, and perceptions of Facebook as an advertising medium. Items were measured on Likert-type scales adapted from validated instruments and refined to fit the UniMAC context. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, Pearson correlations, and multiple linear regression models.

Findings indicate that students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements are mixed but slightly positive overall. Regression results show that attitudes are shaped mainly by platform perceptions, credibility, and ad design, with relevance, peer influence, and promotional incentives contributing smaller but significant effects; demographic characteristics and Facebook usage time were not significant predictors. Facebook advertising exerted a moderate but meaningful influence on purchasing decisions, with promotional incentives emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by attitude, platform perceptions, peer influence, and relevance. Students' perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform were moderately positive but divided. Overall, Facebook remains a viable channel for reaching UniMAC students, but effectiveness depends on credibility, design quality, relevance, and value-focused incentives.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background to The Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of The Problem.....	3
1.3 Research Objectives .....	5
1.4 Research Questions .....	5
1.5 Significance of The Study.....	6
1.6 Scope and Limitation of The Study.....	7
1.7 Organization of The Study .....	8
1.8 Operational Definitions .....	9
CHATER TWO .....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
2.1 Introduction .....	11

2.2 Theoretical Framework .....	12
2.2.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) .....	12
2.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).....	13
2.3 Conceptual Definitions (advertising, social media ads, Facebook ads).....	15
2.4 Factors Influencing Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Decisions in Social Media Advertising.....	17
2.4.1 Ad Design and Creative Quality.....	17
2.4.2 Relevance and Personalization .....	18
2.4.3 Social Proof and Peer Influence .....	18
2.4.4 Credibility and Trust.....	19
2.4.5 Integrated Evidence on Purchase Behavior .....	19
2.5 Empirical Studies .....	20
2.5.1 Evidence from International Studies .....	20
2.5.2 Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa.....	20
2.5.3 Evidence from Ghana .....	21
2.5.4 Synthesis and Identified Gaps .....	21
2.8 Proposed Conceptual Framework .....	22
2.9 Chapter Summary.....	24
CHAPTER THREE .....	25
METHODOLOGY .....	25

Introduction .....	25
Research Design.....	25
Study Area.....	26
Population .....	27
Sample and Sample Procedure.....	28
Research Instrument.....	30
Data Collection Procedure .....	31
Data Analysis .....	31
CHAPTER FOUR.....	33
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	33
4.0 Introduction .....	33
4.1 Demographic Findings .....	33
4.2 Research Question One: UniMAC Students’ Attitudes toward Facebook Advertisements	35
4.3 Research Question Two: Factors Influencing Students’ Attitudes toward Facebook Advertisements.....	38
4.4 Research Question Three: Influence of Facebook Advertisements on Purchasing Decisions .....	43
4.5 Research Question Four: Perceptions of Facebook as an Advertising Platform.....	49
4.6 Discussion .....	52
CHAPTER FIVE .....	56

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	56
5.0 Introduction .....	56
5.1 Summary .....	56
5.2 Key Findings .....	57
5.3 Conclusion.....	58
5.4 Recommendations .....	59
5.5 Suggestions for Future Studies.....	61
REFERENCES .....	63
APPENDIX A.....	70
QUESTIONNAIRE .....	70
APPENDIX B .....	74
INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	74
APPENDIX C .....	75
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION .....	75

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 314) .....	35
Table 2: Descriptive statistics for students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements.....	36
Table 3: Distribution of responses on attitude items toward Facebook advertisements.....	37
Table 4: Overall attitude categories based on the Attitude scale (N = 314) .....	38
Table 5: Correlation between attitude toward Facebook ads and antecedent factors .....	40
Table 6: Multiple regression predicting attitude toward Facebook advertisements (N = 314) ....	42
Table 7: Correlations between purchase decision and key Facebook advertising variables .....	45
Table 8: Multiple regression predicting purchase decisions from Facebook advertising variables .....	46
Table 9: Descriptive statistics for perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform (N = 314) .....	50
Table 10: Distribution of responses on Platform Perception items (N = 314) .....	51
Table 11: Overall categories of platform perception (N = 314) .....	52

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to The Study

In the 21st century, digital technologies have fundamentally redefined how individuals communicate, interact, and engage with commercial content. At the forefront of this transformation is digital marketing, particularly through social media platforms, which allow brands to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and speak directly to consumers. Unlike traditional advertising — which is generally one-way and impersonal — digital media facilitates two-way communication, allowing consumers to interact with content, leave feedback, and share with their networks. As a result, advertising today is no longer merely about information dissemination but also about engagement, personalization, and social proof (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Among the various social media platforms, Facebook stands out due to its massive global reach and targeted advertising capabilities. With over 2.9 billion monthly active users globally as of 2024, Facebook offers businesses a unique opportunity to access consumers across diverse demographics (Statista, 2024). Facebook Ads are designed to utilize user data — including location, interests, online behavior, and demographics — to ensure that marketing messages are shown to the most relevant audiences. The platform has also shifted toward mobile-first usage, responding to the global trend of increased smartphone adoption. This development has made Facebook advertising even more influential, particularly in regions where mobile phones are the primary means of internet access (Asemah et al., 2023).

This trend is particularly pronounced in Africa, where mobile internet use has overtaken desktop internet use in many countries. According to recent studies, African consumers — especially young people — increasingly rely on social media for product discovery, brand engagement, and

even direct purchases (Boateng & Okoe, 2015). In Ghana, Facebook remains the most widely used platform, with more than 10 million users as of December 2024 (Statista, 2024). This widespread usage has turned Facebook into a dominant channel for digital advertising in the country. Businesses — from multinational corporations to local entrepreneurs — increasingly rely on it to promote products, run campaigns, and engage with Ghanaian consumers.

One of the most significant and digitally active groups within this ecosystem is tertiary-level students. University students are often early adopters of technology and social media, making them critical to understanding broader patterns in digital consumer behavior. They represent an attractive target market because they are developing brand preferences, have a degree of financial independence, and are highly responsive to peer influence and online content (Duffett, 2017).

More importantly, university students consume digital content differently from older generations. They are less influenced by traditional mass media and more responsive to interactive, peer-validated, and visually engaging content often found on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. With rising mobile penetration and affordable internet access — driven by student-targeted mobile data bundles and digital literacy programs — Ghanaian students have become immersed in the digital space. Consequently, their purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by the advertisements they see on social platforms.

Despite this transformation, there remains a limited understanding of how Facebook advertisements affect the purchasing decisions of tertiary students in Ghana. While several studies in Nigeria and South Africa have explored this link, the Ghanaian context remains under-researched (Akpan & Nwankpa, 2015); (Okeke et al., 2021). Moreover, there is little research focusing specifically on the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), despite its

student body being highly active on social media and representative of Ghana's broader digital youth culture.

Given that Ghana's economy is becoming increasingly digitized, and as brands shift their advertising spend from traditional to digital platforms, it is essential to understand how specific demographics — like tertiary students — interpret and respond to digital advertising. Questions remain: Do students perceive Facebook advertisements as credible? Do these ads influence their purchasing decisions, or are they ignored? What factors shape their attitudes — ad design, peer recommendations, frequency, or perceived relevance?

Additionally, the growing interest in student-oriented advertising by institutions (e.g., for admissions, events, product promotions) makes it imperative for both academia and industry stakeholders to understand this relationship more deeply. If businesses and educational institutions wish to harness the power of digital media effectively, they must first understand how the most digitally connected audience — university students — interact with social media advertising.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this critical research gap by investigating how Facebook advertising influences purchasing decisions among students at UniMAC in Accra. The findings will not only contribute to digital marketing literature in Ghana but also offer practical insights for advertisers, social media managers, educational institutions, and policy-makers seeking to leverage Facebook advertising in engaging student audiences more effectively.

## **1.2 Statement of The Problem**

The emergence of the internet and the proliferation of social media platforms have radically altered how businesses engage with consumers. Among these platforms, Facebook stands out for its user base and advertising capabilities, offering marketers a powerful tool for reaching specific

audiences with precision and interactivity. With features such as targeted ads, sponsored posts, and integrated e-commerce options, Facebook has become a major channel through which purchase decisions are influenced globally (Ogunsola & Mohammed, 2022).

In Ghana, Facebook usage is on the rise, particularly among youth and tertiary students, who form a digitally connected, mobile-first generation. This demographic is increasingly targeted by digital advertisers due to their high levels of engagement and emerging purchasing power (Wang et al., 2014). However, despite the popularity of Facebook advertising in the Ghanaian digital marketing landscape, there remains limited empirical evidence about how it actually influences students' purchasing decisions.

Existing African studies have established that Facebook advertisements do influence purchasing behaviour, especially when they incorporate social proof, convenience, and relevance to the consumer (Duffett, 2015; Ogunsola & Mohammed, 2022). In contrast, Ghana-specific studies suggest mixed responses. For example, while some research shows that students engage actively with Facebook ads, others indicate that certain ad formats (like pop-ups) are perceived as intrusive or ineffective (Wang et al., 2014).

This presents a clear research gap. With most studies focused on Nigeria or South Africa, and with Ghanaian student populations underrepresented in the literature, it is difficult to draw context-specific conclusions. Consequently, businesses, universities, and policy-makers may be deploying Facebook ads without a robust understanding of their actual influence on young Ghanaian consumers.

This study, therefore, aims to examine the extent to which Facebook advertising influences purchasing decisions among UniMAC students in Accra, thereby filling a crucial academic and practical knowledge gap.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of Facebook advertising on the purchasing decisions of students at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), Accra.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine UniMAC students' attitudes toward Facebook advertising.
2. Identify the factors that shape these attitudes.
3. Determine the extent to which Facebook advertisements influence their purchasing decisions.
4. Explore UniMAC students' general perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

In line with the objectives outlined above, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are UniMAC students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements?
2. What factors influence UniMAC students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements?
3. To what extent do Facebook advertisements affect the purchasing decisions of UniMAC students?
4. How do UniMAC students perceive the effectiveness and relevance of Facebook as an advertising platform?

## **1.5 Significance of The Study**

This study holds relevance across academic, practical, and institutional domains. From an academic perspective, it contributes to the growing body of literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior in Ghana. While existing research has explored Facebook advertising in other African contexts, there remains a gap in studies focused specifically on Ghanaian university students—a tech-savvy and economically active demographic. The findings of this study will provide empirical data that can guide future academic inquiries and help validate or challenge existing marketing theories in the digital advertising space.

Practically, the study offers valuable insights for advertisers, digital marketers, communication strategists, and advertising agencies operating in Ghana. Understanding how tertiary students respond to Facebook advertisements can help these stakeholders refine their ad strategies, improve message relevance, optimize campaign timing, and enhance audience targeting. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the findings may offer affordable and data-backed guidance on reaching student markets more effectively via social media platforms.

Institutionally, the research is particularly relevant to the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC). The study can inform the university's communication strategies, particularly for promoting admissions, campus activities, and academic programs through social media. Furthermore, social media managers and content creators within UniMAC can leverage the insights to enhance student engagement and tailor messages that resonate with their audience's digital behavior. The study may also help the university explore Facebook as a platform for behavioral change communication and digital advocacy initiatives aimed at students.

Overall, the findings will support both theory and practice in understanding the role of Facebook advertising in influencing the purchasing behaviors of a key segment in Ghana's evolving digital economy.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of The Study**

This study focuses on examining the influence of Facebook advertising on the purchasing decisions of students at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), Accra, with particular emphasis on students at the main campus located along the Tetteh Quarshie–Madina Road, near the Okponglo roundabout. The choice of this location is based on its accessibility and concentration of the target population—tertiary-level students who are active social media users and likely to interact with Facebook advertisements.

The scope of the study is limited to Facebook as the advertising platform of interest. Other social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter (X), or TikTok are excluded, in order to maintain a focused analysis of Facebook's unique advertising mechanisms and their influence. Additionally, the study targets only tertiary students enrolled at UniMAC, thereby excluding secondary school students, non-students, and students from other universities or institutions. As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to all demographic groups or geographic regions beyond the UniMAC student population.

Several limitations may affect the study. First, the use of self-reported data—through questionnaires or interviews—may introduce response bias, as participants might overstate or understate their attitudes or purchasing behaviors. Second, given that the study is platform-specific and focused only on Facebook, its conclusions may not reflect broader social media advertising trends. Third, the research is cross-sectional in design, capturing data at a single point in time,

which may not account for changes in advertising influence over time or during different academic periods.

### **1.7 Organization of The Study**

This research study is organized into five interconnected chapters that provide a structured and logical presentation of the investigation. Each chapter plays a specific role in addressing the research objectives and answering the research questions. Chapter One introduces the study by presenting the background and context of the research, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and limitations. This chapter sets the foundation for the entire work by establishing the rationale and direction of the study.

Chapter Two is devoted to the review of related literature. It explores relevant theoretical frameworks, previous empirical studies, and conceptual discussions on Facebook advertising, consumer behavior, and digital marketing. The chapter critically examines existing knowledge, identifies research gaps, and provides the theoretical and conceptual lenses through which the study is conducted. Chapter Three discusses the methodology used to carry out the study. It outlines the research design, target population, sampling methods, data collection techniques, research instruments, and procedures for data analysis. This chapter also provides justifications for the chosen methods to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings.

Chapter Four presents and analyzes the data collected from the field. It includes descriptive and inferential analyses, with interpretations of key findings in relation to the study objectives. The results are discussed using appropriate tables, charts, and narrative explanations to draw meaningful insights from the data. Chapter Five provides a summary of the main findings, draws conclusions, and offers practical recommendations based on the results. It also discusses the

study's limitations and proposes areas for future research. The chapter concludes the study by highlighting its contributions to both academic literature and practical application.

## **1.8 Operational Definitions**

### **1. Facebook Advertising**

Operational Definition: Facebook advertising refers to paid promotional content delivered to users through Facebook's advertising platform, which includes features such as audience targeting, sponsored posts, and algorithm-driven content delivery (Duffett, 2015),

### **2. Consumer Purchasing Decision**

Operational Definition: A consumer purchasing decision is the process by which a consumer identifies a need, evaluates options, and selects a product or service for purchase (Ogunsola and Mohammed, 2022).

### **3. Advertising Attitude**

Operational Definition: Advertising attitude refers to an individual's overall evaluation—favorable or unfavorable—of a specific advertisement or group of advertisements (Florenthal, 2019).

### **4. Social Media Engagement**

Operational Definition: Social media engagement refers to the degree of interaction, participation, and responsiveness a user shows toward content on social platforms, including likes, shares, comments, and click-throughs (Pragash et al., 2021).

### **5. Perceived Credibility**

Operational Definition: Perceived credibility is the extent to which users believe an advertisement is trustworthy, reliable, and truthful (Vu & Tran, 2023)

### **6. Brand Awareness**

Operational Definition: Brand awareness refers to the extent to which a consumer can recognize or recall a brand as a result of exposure to advertising or marketing stimuli (Ajike et al., 2024)

## 7. Relevance of Advertisement

Operational Definition: Advertisement relevance is the degree to which a user perceives an ad to be personally applicable, aligned with their needs, preferences, or lifestyle (Nibir et al., 2024)

## **CHATER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The rise of social media has reshaped how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products, moving persuasion from one-to-many broadcasting toward networked, interactive environments (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). Within this ecosystem, Facebook remains pivotal for youth audiences, enabling precise targeting, measurable campaign outcomes, and scalable social proof mechanisms (Duffett, 2017; Florenthal, 2019). Understanding how Facebook advertising shapes students' attitudes and purchasing decisions requires grounding in contemporary persuasion and consumer-decision theories, while accounting for algorithmic targeting, peer influence, and mobile-first usage patterns.

This chapter proceeds as follows: first, it outlines the theoretical foundations relevant to social media persuasion and attitude formation; second, it defines and clarifies key constructs used in Facebook advertising research; third, it reviews empirical evidence on the links among ad design, relevance, credibility, peer influence, attitude, and purchasing behavior; and finally, it synthesizes gaps and implications to motivate the study's hypotheses and analytical approach.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study grounds its conceptual model in two complementary theories—the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)—to explain how Facebook advertising shapes students’ attitudes and, ultimately, purchasing decisions. ELM clarifies the mechanisms of persuasion in feed-based, mobile environments; TPB explains how attitudes and social pressures translate into behavioral outcomes. Taken together, they provide a coherent account of why ad design, relevance, peer influence, and credibility should affect attitude formation and how that attitude, in turn, influences purchasing.

### **2.2.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**

ELM posits that persuasion follows either a central route, characterized by careful scrutiny of message arguments, or a peripheral route, driven by heuristic cues such as visuals, endorsements, or source signals when motivation or ability to process is low (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The social media feed intensifies conditions conducive to peripheral processing: rapid scrolling, limited attention, and dense visual competition. Under such conditions, creative elements—color, layout, motion, and message clarity—operate as salient heuristics that can generate favorable affect with minimal cognitive effort. At the same time, the platform’s targeting capabilities increase perceived relevance; when an ad is judged “for me,” motivation and involvement rise, shifting some users toward central processing in which argument quality and informational value weigh more heavily. In this sense, relevance functions as a bridge between routes, potentiating deeper elaboration while exerting its own positive cueing effect. Peer signals—visible likes, comments, and shares—supply social proof that can shortcut deliberation by implying consensus or approval among similar others. Credibility, conveyed through brand reputation, verified accounts, and consistent messaging, reduces resistance and can either serve as a peripheral cue or lower the threshold for

central engagement. Within the present model, therefore, ad design (primarily peripheral), relevance (central/peripheral), peer influence (peripheral), and credibility (peripheral with gateway effects) are theorized to shape attitude toward Facebook advertising directly.

### **2.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

TPB complements this processing account by specifying how attitudes convert into behavioural intentions and actions. Building on the Theory of Reasoned Action, TPB proposes that intention—the immediate antecedent to behaviour—arises from attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991). In a social media commerce context, attitude toward the ad and associated offer encapsulates evaluative judgments formed through the ELM routes; subjective norms are instantiated by peers' visible reactions and endorsements within the platform; and perceived control is reflected in signals of transactional ease, availability, and risk mitigation (e.g., clear pricing, delivery assurances, frictionless checkout). Peer influence thus operates as a normative pressure that can reinforce favorable attitudes or offset weak attitudes by signaling expected behavior in one's reference group. Crucially, TPB furnishes the theoretical basis for the mediating role of attitude in the pathway from antecedent advertising features to purchasing decision: once attitude is formed, it is the proximate driver of intention and purchase, with normative cues amplifying its impact when peer approval is salient.

Integrating ELM and TPB yields a structured explanation of the study's mediation hypothesis. The antecedents—ad design, relevance, peer influence, and credibility—are expected to influence purchasing decisions predominantly through their effects on attitude. When relevance is high and the user elaborates centrally, strong arguments and clear informational value consolidate a durable, predictive attitude that more reliably translates into purchasing. When involvement is lower,

persuasive influence may still accrue via peripheral cues; in these cases, attitude is shaped more by aesthetics, endorsements, and credibility heuristics and may be more context sensitive. Peer influence bridges the two theories: as a peripheral cue, it affects attitude formation; as a subjective norm, it also increases perceived social pressure to act, potentially strengthening the link from attitude to behaviour. Credibility likewise performs dual functions by attenuating persuasion knowledge-driven resistance and enhancing the perceived legitimacy of both the message and the recommended action.

This integrated framework also clarifies boundary conditions and expected heterogeneity. High involvement topics, clear utilitarian benefits, or personally relevant offers should increase central processing, thereby strengthening the attitude-behaviour relationship. Conversely, entertainment-oriented browsing and low-stakes offers may privilege peripheral routes, making outcomes more contingent on design quality, visible social proof, and source trust. The framework accommodates these contingencies without losing parsimony: the four antecedents shape attitude; attitude mediates their influence on purchasing; and peer influence contributes both as a cue to attitude and as a normative force consistent with TPB.

In sum, ELM provides the micro-level account of how platform-specific cues and relevance shape attitude in dynamic, attention-constrained feeds, while TPB supplies the macro-level account of how that attitude, together with perceived norms and control, culminates in purchasing behaviour. Mapping these theories directly onto the study variables justifies the proposed measurement model (distinct constructs for ad design, relevance, peer influence, credibility, attitude, and purchasing) and the structural tests of direct and indirect effects. The resulting framework is theoretically coherent and empirically testable, aligning the study's research questions with clear expectations about where persuasive influence originates and how it is transmitted to consumer action.

## **2.3 Conceptual Definitions (advertising, social media ads, Facebook ads)**

### **2.3.1 Advertising and Social Media Advertising**

Advertising is commonly defined as paid, non-personal communication from an identified sponsor intended to inform and persuade audiences (Belch & Belch, 2021; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Scholarship traces a shift from mass, one-to-many messaging to interactive, data-rich environments where users co-create meaning and distribute content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). Social media advertising is thus distinguished by precision targeting, observable social cues (likes, comments, shares), and opportunities for engagement beyond exposure (Tuten & Solomon, 2017; Voorveld et al., 2018). This study adopts these features as the broader context for examining student responses to platform-embedded ads.

### **2.3.2 Facebook Advertising**

Conceptually, Facebook advertising is a subset of social media advertising in which persuasive messages are embedded within Facebook's social graph and feed architecture, making exposure inseparable from social interaction and peer visibility (Duffett, 2017; Florenthal, 2019). Scholarly work highlights three themes: advanced targeting that elevates perceived relevance, interactive affordances that invite engagement, and persistent youth usage that sustains reach (Appel et al., 2020; Duffett, 2017). Facebook advertisements are viewed as socially situated stimuli whose effects depend on design, credibility, perceived fit, and peer cues—core antecedents in the study's model.

### 2.3.3 Study Variables

**Attitude toward Facebook Ads.** Attitude toward advertisement is a learned, evaluative response to advertising stimuli, typically operationalized via favorability, liking, or positivity scales and linked to downstream brand or behavior outcomes (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Brown & Stayman, 1992). In TPB, attitude is a principal determinant of intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The study treat attitude as the mediator through which ad features translate into purchasing decisions in the student context.

**Ad Design.** Ad design refers to the aesthetic and structural qualities—visual salience, layout, clarity, and creative execution—that shape processing ease and affective response (Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010; Belch & Belch, 2021). In fast-scrolling feeds, design often functions as a peripheral cue that captures attention and seeds favorable affect (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This model posits that stronger design improves attitudes toward Facebook ads.

**Perceived Relevance.** Relevance is the perceived personal fit or usefulness of an ad to one’s needs and goals, frequently enhanced by targeting and personalization (Yoon & Kim, 2001; Appel et al., 2020). Within ELM, relevance raises involvement and encourages central processing, strengthening persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It is expected that higher perceived relevance will positively influence attitudes.

**Peer Influence.** Peer influence reflects perceived social approval and behavioral expectations conveyed by friends’ endorsements and visible engagement—an instantiation of social proof and subjective norms (Cialdini, 2007; Ajzen, 1991). In social media, these cues can shortcut deliberation and legitimize responses to ads (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). We theorize that peer influence both elevates attitudes and reinforces the attitude–purchase linkage.

**Credibility.** Credibility encompasses perceptions of source expertise and trustworthiness, extending to brand and platform signals in digital settings (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990). Credible ads reduce resistance and can facilitate either heuristic acceptance or deeper consideration (Friestad & Wright, 1994). We expect perceived credibility to improve attitudes toward Facebook ads.

**Purchasing Decision.** The purchasing decision is conceptualized as the enactment of buying behavior (or proximal intention), downstream of attitude and norms (Ajzen, 1991; Kotler & Keller, 2016). In social environments, seamless paths and social validation can convert favorable attitudes into action (Appel et al., 2020). It serves as this study's ultimate outcome variable.

## **2.4 Factors Influencing Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Decisions in Social Media**

### **Advertising**

Research on social media advertising has identified several factors that shape how consumers perceive, evaluate, and respond to online brand messages. Studies have shown that advertising design, message relevance, peer influence, and source credibility play critical roles in determining users' attitudes toward advertisements and their eventual purchase decisions. These factors reflect both the persuasive strength of message content and the social dynamics of digital environments such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The following subsections synthesize existing studies on each of these variables, highlighting global, regional, and Ghanaian insights that inform the conceptual framework of this study.

#### **2.4.1 Ad Design and Creative Quality**

Visual execution consistently predicts early-stage responses in feed environments. High aesthetic quality, clarity, and diagnostic visuals increase attention and liking, which translate into more

favorable ad and brand attitudes (Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010; de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). Motion and vivid imagery elevate engagement but can backfire when perceived as intrusive or click-bait (Wang et al., 2014). Across platforms, creative that couples visual appeal with clear value propositions outperforms purely aesthetic executions, indicating design works best as a cue that also enables comprehension. For the present study, ad design is expected to exert a positive effect on attitude in mobile feeds.

#### **2.4.2 Relevance and Personalization**

Perceived relevance—via targeting or tailoring—raises involvement and strengthens persuasion, improving attitudes and intentions (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020; Duffett, 2017). Yet the personalization–privacy calculus shows diminishing returns when data use feels opaque or excessive, eroding trust and prompting avoidance (Awad & Krishnan, 2006). Evidence suggests contextual fit (timing, category, goal congruence) moderates effects, with utilitarian offers benefiting most from precise matching. Accordingly, relevance should increase attitude, conditional on credible and transparent targeting signals.

#### **2.4.3 Social Proof and Peer Influence**

Observable likes, comments, and shares operate as heuristics that reduce uncertainty and signal popularity, elevating ad evaluations and click-through (Cialdini, 2007; Florenthal, 2019). Peer endorsements are especially persuasive for youth segments, where conformity pressures and identity signaling are salient (Duffett, 2017). However, inflated or inauthentic metrics trigger skepticism, consistent with persuasion-knowledge accounts. Thus, peer influence is expected to raise attitude and reinforce the attitude–purchase pathway, contingent on authenticity.

#### **2.4.4 Credibility and Trust**

Source credibility—expertise and trustworthiness—remains central in digital contexts, with brand reputation and platform cues shaping acceptance (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990). Studies show credible sources dampen perceptions of intrusiveness and enable deeper processing; conversely, unfamiliar brands or sensational formats elicit resistance (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Wang et al., 2014). Peer and brand credibility can be additive, particularly when endorsements align with reputable senders. We therefore anticipate credibility to improve attitude and indirectly support purchase.

#### **2.4.5 Integrated Evidence on Purchase Behavior**

Research that models multiple antecedents finds that creative quality and relevance increase engagement and purchase intention, with peer cues amplifying effects and credibility moderating acceptance (de Vries et al., 2012; Duffett, 2017; Florenthal, 2019). Path analyses frequently show attitude toward the ad mediating links from design, relevance, and social proof to purchase intention/behavior, in line with ELM–TPB mechanisms. Gaps persist for student populations in emerging contexts and for disentangling direct versus indirect effects under different involvement levels. These gaps motivate the present model testing ad design, relevance, peer influence, and credibility → attitude → purchasing decision.

## **2.5 Empirical Studies**

### **2.5.1 Evidence from International Studies**

Across platforms, creative quality and message–audience fit consistently predict favorable responses to social media advertising. De Vries, Gensler, and Leeﬂang (2012) show that visually diagnostic, engaging posts increase interactions and downstream persuasion. Duffett (2017) finds that on Facebook, creative execution—visual appeal, clarity, and message fit—improves attention, attitude, and purchase intention among student cohorts. Studies in Asian contexts similarly report that gratification-aligned content (information, deals, entertainment) raises engagement and intention, whereas intrusiveness depresses ad liking and recall (Pragash, Fong, Ng, Kok, & Liew, 2021; Wang, Ampiah, Xu, & Wang, 2014). Research with university samples indicates that relevance and peer cues (likes, comments, endorsements) mediate the route from exposure to intention, with trust concerns moderating effects (Nibir, Saha, & Islam, 2024; Vu & Tran, 2023). Syntheses emphasize fast-scroll, mobile-first processing, elevating heuristic cues and personalization as determinants of attitude and purchase-related outcomes (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020).

### **2.5.2 Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa**

Studies with African student populations echo these patterns. Duffett (2017) reports that Facebook creative quality and message–audience fit predict purchase intention among Generation Y. Author-led analyses further show that convenience, price savings, and peer endorsement strengthen ad effects on decision outcomes, while credibility concerns temper efficacy (Ogunsola & Mohammed, 2022; Akpan & Nwankpa, 2015). These findings map directly onto the present

model: ad design, relevance, and peer influence bolster attitude, with credibility conditioning acceptance.

### **2.5.3 Evidence from Ghana**

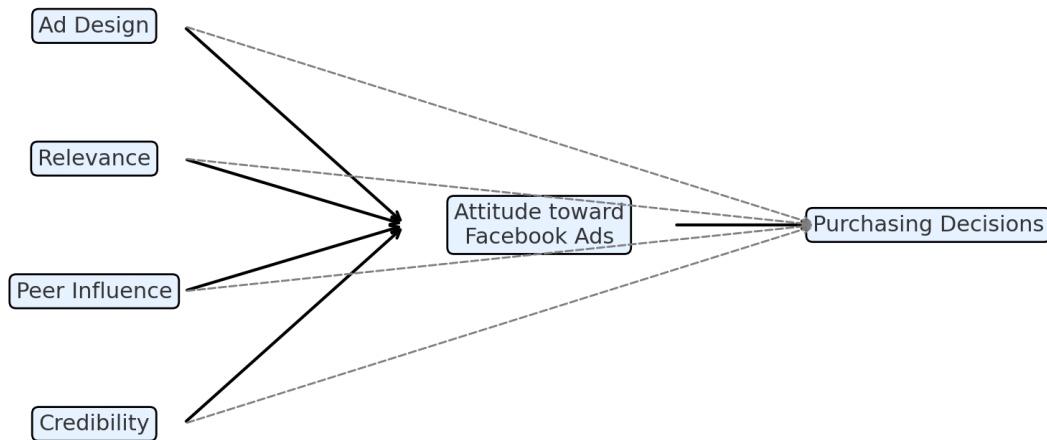
Ghana-specific empirical work is comparatively limited. Boateng and Okoe (2015) document that corporate reputation (credibility) and message–consumer fit (relevance) shape attitudes toward social media advertising, with implications for intention. Beyond this, peer-reviewed, student-focused quantitative tests of integrated antecedent models on Facebook remain scarce. This paucity—particularly for university samples—constitutes a clear gap the present study addresses.

### **2.5.4 Synthesis and Identified Gaps**

Across contexts, four antecedents repeatedly emerge—ad design, relevance/personalization, peer influence/social proof, and credibility—as predictors of attitude, which in turn relates to purchase intention/behavior. However, three gaps persist: (1) few studies estimate integrated, confirmatory models that validate the four-factor structure and test mediation (attitude) with bootstrapped indirect effects; (2) credibility often appears as a secondary moderator without rigorous measurement validation; and (3) Ghanaian student samples are underrepresented in multivariate designs. The present research directly addresses these gaps by confirming the measurement model (CFA), estimating direct and indirect paths consistent with ELM–TPB, and providing a Ghana-based, student-focused test of ad design, relevance, peer influence, and credibility → attitude → purchasing decision.

## 2.8 Proposed Conceptual Framework

### Conceptual Framework: Influence of Facebook Advertising on Purchasing Decisions



Guided by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the framework posits that four exogenous antecedents—Ad Design, Perceived Relevance, Peer Influence, and Credibility—shape Attitude toward Facebook advertising, which in turn drives Purchasing Decision. Attitude is therefore positioned as the primary mediator linking advertising antecedents to behavioral outcomes.

Theoretical grounding. ELM explains how users process ads via central and peripheral routes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Ad Design and Peer Influence function predominantly as peripheral cues (visual salience; social proof), while Relevance can elevate involvement, encouraging central processing; Credibility operates as a cue that also lowers resistance, facilitating deeper elaboration. TPB specifies that Attitude (alongside norms and perceived control) predicts intentions and

behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In this model, Peer Influence reflects subjective norms and contributes to Attitude formation; Attitude transmits antecedent effects to Purchasing Decision.

Construct linkages.

- Ad Design → Attitude → Purchasing. High-quality, clear creative increases favorable evaluations in attention-scarce feeds (ELM-peripheral; can ease central processing).
- Relevance → Attitude → Purchasing. Personal fit heightens involvement and perceived utility, strengthening persuasive impact (bridge from peripheral to central).
- Peer Influence → Attitude → Purchasing. Observable likes/comments/shares signal normative approval and reduce uncertainty (social proof; TPB norms).
- Credibility → Attitude → Purchasing. Trusted sources and brand signals reduce skepticism and enhance acceptance (source credibility within ELM; supports TPB pathways).

Direct versus indirect effects. The core expectation is indirect effects via Attitude for all four antecedents. Limited direct paths to Purchasing are plausible where design clarifies value or relevance aligns with immediate need, but these are secondary to the mediated pathway.

Boundary conditions. Effects are likely stronger under mobile, fast-scroll conditions (amplifying Ad Design and Peer cues) and when perceived relevance elevates elaboration, strengthening the Attitude–behavior link. Credibility may be especially consequential for lesser-known brands.

Framework contribution. This model (i) integrates ELM’s processing mechanisms with TPB’s attitude–behavior linkage, (ii) organizes four widely cited antecedents into a single, mediational structure, and (iii) addresses gaps in prior work by specifying clear roles for Attitude (mediator) and Peer Influence (normative cue feeding Attitude). The framework directly guides the study’s

objectives and hypotheses concerning the direct antecedent → Attitude paths and the indirect antecedent → Purchasing effects transmitted through Attitude.

## **2.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter has articulated theoretical grounding, clarified core concepts, summarized empirical evidence across contexts, identified Ghana-specific gaps, and proposed a testable conceptual framework tailored to UniMAC students. This framework underpins the methodology and guides the analysis reported in subsequent chapters.

The revised chapter demonstrates significant improvement in addressing the major structural and theoretical issues identified in the original version. There are significant changes that transform this from a problematic literature review into a much more focused and coherent academic chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology adopted to examine how Facebook advertising influences purchasing decisions among UniMAC students. It outlines the research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection, and analysis methods. A descriptive survey design was selected to capture quantitative data on students' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours and the approach, supported by stratified random sampling and a structured questionnaire.

#### **Research Design**

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for quantitatively examining how Facebook advertising influences students' purchasing decisions. The descriptive survey approach enables the systematic collection of data from a defined population to describe attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours, and to establish relationships among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In marketing and consumer behaviour research, survey designs are widely used because they allow researchers to capture large amounts of self-reported data efficiently and to generalize findings to the target population (Saunders et al., 2019).

In line with prior digital marketing studies (Duffett, 2017; Boateng & Okoe, 2015), this design facilitated the use of a structured questionnaire to gather information on students' attitudes, perceptions of advertising credibility and relevance, and purchasing behaviours. The choice of a quantitative approach is justified because it allows for statistical analysis—such as correlation and regression—to determine the strength and direction of relationships between Facebook advertising and consumer decision-making (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, the descriptive survey design provided a

robust framework for addressing the research objectives while ensuring validity, reliability, and replicability of results.

### **Study Area**

This study was conducted at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC) in Accra, Ghana. UniMAC was selected primarily for practical considerations. Situated in the capital, the university provides reliable access to a diverse cross-section of tertiary students drawn from various regions and socioeconomic backgrounds, enabling efficient recruitment and data collection within the target population. Equally important, the student body reflects broader patterns observed across Ghanaian universities: undergraduates are predominantly digitally active youth and heavy users of social media, including Facebook—the platform central to this inquiry into the advertising–purchase pathway (Statista, 2024; Datareportal, 2025). Locating the study at UniMAC therefore aligned the sampling frame with the behaviors most relevant to examining how Facebook advertising relates to student purchasing decisions, while also facilitating feasible fieldwork logistics in an urban academic setting.

The selection of UniMAC does not imply that its students are substantively different from other tertiary students in Ghana. Rather, UniMAC functions as a representative site where digitally engaged university students can be accessed efficiently for empirical investigation. Framing the site choice in this way maintains alignment between the research problem—Facebook advertising and purchasing decisions among tertiary students—and the operational requirements of sampling and data collection, without attributing any unique institutional characteristics to the university beyond its accessibility and the typical social media usage patterns of its student population (Statista, 2024; Datareportal, 2025).

## **Population**

The target population for this study comprises undergraduate students enrolled in tertiary institutions in Ghana, with the accessible study population drawn from students at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), Accra. This population is appropriate for three reasons. First, Ghanaian university students are among the most active social media users in the country and typically access the internet via mobile devices; within this demographic, Facebook remains a dominant platform for information, interaction, and product discovery (Datareportal, 2025; Statista, 2024). Second, tertiary students constitute a relevant consumer segment for advertising research: they tend to be early adopters of technology, display heightened brand consciousness, participate in economically meaningful purchasing through personal spending and family support, and are strongly influenced by peer networks (Duffett, 2017). Third, despite their evident importance as digital consumers, Ghanaian tertiary students are understudied in the social media advertising literature, and this study responds to that gap by examining how Facebook advertising relates to their purchasing decisions.

Consistent with the research objectives, inclusion prioritized students with active Facebook accounts so that participants could meaningfully report exposure to and perceptions of platform-based advertising. Importantly, the selection of UniMAC as the site from which the sample was drawn does not imply that its students are unique relative to other Ghanaian tertiary students; rather, UniMAC provides a practical and representative setting in which the broader target population—digitally engaged undergraduates—can be efficiently accessed (Datareportal, 2025; Statista, 2024; Duffett, 2017).

## **Sample and Sample Procedure**

Sampling is the systematic process of selecting a subset of individuals from a defined population in order to make inferences about that larger population. As explained by Fowler (2014), sampling enables researchers to obtain reliable estimates with known precision without surveying every population member. Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) stress that sampling is essential in empirical studies because full enumeration is often impractical and unnecessary. In the context of the present study, conducting a census of all Ghanaian tertiary students would be cost-intensive, time-consuming, and logistically unmanageable; therefore, the researcher adopted a structured probability sampling approach that ensured representativeness while maintaining feasibility.

Sampling approaches generally fall into probability and non-probability categories. While non-probability methods (e.g., convenience, quota, purposive) offer ease of access, they lack measurable sampling error and limit inferential power (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Since the present study seeks findings with strong external validity and replicability, the researcher employed a probability sampling design. Specifically, stratified random sampling was chosen because it enhances precision when the population includes identifiable subgroups that may differ systematically (Cochran, 1977; Fowler, 2014). Stratification also facilitates meaningful subgroup comparisons, a feature particularly relevant for this study given the likely variation in digital engagement across academic institutes and year levels.

A critical component of probability sampling is the sampling frame, defined as the operational list from which the sample is drawn. According to Dillman et al. (2014), a sampling frame must accurately enumerate all eligible units; otherwise, coverage error arises, threatening external validity. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) emphasize that a well-constructed frame increases the likelihood that every member of the target population has a known, non-zero chance of

selection. Because the objective of this study is to generalize findings about the influence of Facebook advertising exposure on purchasing decisions among tertiary students, establishing a clear and complete sampling frame is essential for ensuring defensible and unbiased population estimates.

The sampling frame for this study consisted of all undergraduate students of the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC) who maintained active Facebook accounts—an inclusion criterion aligned with the study variables. Postgraduate students, administrative staff, and other non-student affiliates were excluded. Guided by the institutional structure, the researcher stratified the frame by academic institute (three constituent institutes) and year level (Levels 100–400), producing twelve homogeneous strata. Stratification by these variables follows Saunders et al.'s (2019) recommendation to use natural organizational divisions that influence behavioral patterns relevant to the study.

Within each stratum, students were selected through simple random sampling. Official enrollment lists, filtered to those who self-report active Facebook use, served as the within-stratum sampling lists. Each eligible student was assigned a random number, and a random number generator was used to select the required sample for each stratum. In cases where selected students were unreachable or declined to participate, the researcher invited the next student in the random sequence while documenting response outcomes to monitor potential non-response bias (Dillman et al., 2014).

Using Cochran's (1977) formula for proportions at 95% confidence, 5% margin of error, and  $p = 0.50$  gave an initial  $n_0 = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5}{0.05^2} \approx 384$ . Applying the finite population correction for UniMAC's undergraduate population  $N \approx 4,000$ :

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \left(\frac{n_0 - 1}{N}\right)} = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{383}{4000}} = \frac{384}{1.09575} \approx 350.6 \Rightarrow 351.$$

To compensate for an anticipated 15% non-response rate, the sample target was increased to 404 participants. The final sample was proportionally allocated across the 12 strata based on each stratum's share of the accessible population, consistent with best-practice guidelines for stratified sampling (Fowler, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019).

### **Research Instrument**

The study employed a structured questionnaire as the main research instrument. Questionnaires are widely used in quantitative research because they allow for the collection of standardized data from large populations, enabling statistical analysis and comparability across respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). A self-administered format was adopted to ensure efficiency and reduce interviewer bias.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A captured demographic information such as age, gender, year of study, and daily social media usage. Section B assessed students' attitudes toward Facebook advertising, using Likert-scale items (e.g., "I find Facebook advertisements informative"). Section C examined the factors influencing these attitudes, including credibility, relevance, ad design, and peer influence. Section D measured the influence of Facebook advertising on purchasing decisions, focusing on intention to purchase and past purchase behaviors. Section E captured students' overall perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform, including its effectiveness and relevance. Items in the questionnaire were adapted from prior validated studies (Duffett, 2017; Boateng & Okoe, 2015) and modified for the Ghanaian

student context. The instrument was piloted with a small sample of UniMAC students to test clarity, reliability, and validity before full administration.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data for this study was collected through the administration of a self-administered structured questionnaire to undergraduate students of UniMAC. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance and permission were sought from the university's administration to ensure compliance with institutional requirements. Informed consent was also obtained from participants, with assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A stratified random sampling technique guided the distribution, with questionnaires proportionally allocated across schools and year levels to ensure representativeness. Trained research assistants administered the questionnaires in lecture halls, libraries, and student gathering areas, thereby maximizing accessibility and participation (Saunders et al., 2019). Respondents were given adequate time to complete the instrument, and the research team was available to provide clarification when necessary. To enhance response rates and minimize bias, data collection was scheduled at times that did not interfere with examinations or major academic activities. Completed questionnaires were checked immediately for completeness before acceptance. The collected data was then coded and prepared for statistical analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

This study adopts a confirmatory analytic strategy aligned with the Chapter 2 framework: Ad Design, Relevance, Peer Influence, and Credibility shape Attitude toward Facebook advertising, which influences Purchasing Decision. Data was coded in SPSS. Screening was done to assess completeness, missingness, outliers, distributional assumptions, and potential common method

bias. Descriptives (frequencies, percentages, means, SDs) address RQ1; group differences for RQ4 use t-tests/ANOVA with effect sizes and  $\alpha = .05$ .

Measurement was validated via CFA (AMOS/SEM): reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ,  $CR \geq .70$ ), convergent validity (loadings,  $AVE \geq .50$ ), discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker, HTMT), and global fit ( $\chi^2/df$ , CFI/TLI, RMSEA, SRMR). If measures are newly adapted, any EFA is confined to a pilot; the main study is confirmatory. For RQ2, Attitude was regressed on the four antecedents (controls as needed). Diagnostics included linearity, homoscedasticity, residual normality, and multicollinearity ( $VIF < 5$ ). Standardized  $\beta$ ,  $\Delta R^2$ , and 95% CIs were reported.

For RQ3, hierarchical modeling tested (a) direct effects of the antecedents on Purchasing Decision and (b) mediation via Attitude using bias-corrected bootstrap indirect effects (e.g., 5,000 resamples; PROCESS Model 4 or SEM). Total, direct ( $c'$ ), and indirect ( $ab$ ) effects were presented with confidence intervals, classifying mediation as full, partial, or none. Outputs included a measurement table (loadings,  $\alpha$ , CR, AVE), validity evidence, fit indices, correlation matrix, and path/regression tables emphasizing effect sizes and precision.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the empirical results of the study. The chapter first presents the results for each research question. Subsequently, a discussion of the findings with insights from literature is presented. For each research question, the chapter reports the relevant descriptive, correlational and regression results, and then discusses the findings in relation to existing literature.

#### 4.1 Demographic Findings

This section presents a descriptive summary of the respondents' demographic characteristics in the UniMAC Facebook advertising dataset ( $n = 314$ ). The purpose is to provide context about who participated in the study, including their gender, age group, year of study, faculty/department affiliation, and typical daily time spent on Facebook. The analysis is reported using frequencies ( $n$ ) and percentages (%).

In terms of gender, the sample was fairly balanced, with a slightly higher proportion of females ( $n = 164$ ; 52.2%) than males ( $n = 150$ ; 47.8%). Regarding age group, nearly half of the respondents were aged 20–24 years ( $n = 154$ ; 49.0%), followed by Under 20 ( $n = 74$ ; 23.6%), 25–29 ( $n = 57$ ; 18.2%), and 30+ ( $n = 29$ ; 9.2%), suggesting that the dataset is dominated by younger undergraduate-aged participants. For the year of study, the highest representation came from Level 100 ( $n = 106$ ; 33.8%) and Level 200 ( $n = 91$ ; 29.0%), with smaller proportions in Level 300 ( $n = 67$ ; 21.3%) and Level 400 ( $n = 50$ ; 15.9%). This distribution indicates stronger participation from lower-level students compared to final-year cohorts.

With respect to faculty/department, respondents were drawn from seven departments. The largest single group came from Communication Studies (n = 54; 17.2%), followed by Public Relations (n = 49; 15.6%), Journalism & Media Studies (n = 48; 15.3%), Film & Television (n = 46; 14.6%), and Advertising & Marketing (n = 45; 14.3%). The smallest proportions were recorded for Digital Media & Design (n = 36; 11.5%) and Performing Arts (n = 36; 11.5%), though these categories still contributed meaningful representation to the sample.

Finally, regarding daily Facebook usage time, most respondents reported using Facebook for 1–2 hours per day (n = 109; 34.7%) or 3–4 hours per day (n = 94; 29.9%). Smaller groups reported 5+ hours (n = 62; 19.7%) and Less than 1 hour (n = 49; 15.6%). Overall, the usage profile suggests that a large proportion of respondents are moderate-to-heavy daily users of Facebook, which is relevant for interpreting their exposure to Facebook advertising.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 314)**

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	164	52.2
	Male	150	47.8
Age group	Under 20	74	23.6
	20–24	154	49.0
	25–29	57	18.2
	30+	29	9.2
	Year of study	Level 100	106
	Level 200	91	29.0
	Level 300	67	21.3
	Level 400	50	15.9
Faculty/Department	Communication Studies	54	17.2
	Public Relations	49	15.6
	Journalism & Media Studies	48	15.3
	Film & Television	46	14.6
	Advertising & Marketing	45	14.3
	Digital Media & Design	36	11.5
	Performing Arts	36	11.5
Daily Facebook time	Less than 1 hour	49	15.6
	1–2 hours	109	34.7
	3–4 hours	94	29.9
	5+ hours	62	19.7

## 4.2 Research Question One: UniMAC Students' Attitudes toward Facebook

### Advertisements

Students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements were measured using four Likert-scale items (ATT1–ATT4) rated from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). A composite Attitude scale score was computed as the mean of the four items. The internal consistency of the scale was acceptable (Cronbach's  $\alpha \approx .84$ ), indicating that the items reliably measure a single underlying construct of attitude toward Facebook advertisements.

### 4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics for Attitude Items and Scale

As shown in Table 4.1, the mean scores for the individual items range from 3.09 to 3.20 on a 5-point scale. This indicates that, on average, students' responses are slightly above the neutral midpoint (3.00). The item with the highest mean is the global statement "Overall, I have a positive attitude toward Facebook advertisements" (M = 3.20, SD = 1.44), followed closely by the item on attention capture (M = 3.20, SD = 1.40).

The composite Attitude scale has a mean of 3.16 (SD = 1.19), suggesting that UniMAC students, on average, exhibit a moderately positive attitude toward Facebook advertisements. The standard deviations (ranging from 1.40 to 1.47 for the items, and 1.19 for the scale) and the full observed range of scores (1–5) indicate substantial variability in students' attitudes.

**Table 2:** *Descriptive statistics for students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements*

Item / Scale	Mean	SD	Min	Max
ATT1 – Facebook ads are informative	3.09	1.47	1.0	5.0
ATT2 – I enjoy viewing Facebook ads	3.15	1.45	1.0	5.0
ATT3 – Facebook ads capture my attention	3.20	1.40	1.0	5.0
ATT4 – Overall, I have a positive attitude...	3.20	1.44	1.0	5.0
Attitude scale (mean of ATT1–ATT4)	3.16	1.19	1.0	5.0

### 4.2.2 Distribution of Responses on Attitude Items

To further understand the pattern of responses, the 5-point Likert options were grouped into three categories for each item:

- Disagree = 1–2
- Neutral = 3

- Agree = 4–5

Results in Table 4.2 show that, for all four items, approximately one-third to two-fifths of students fall in the Disagree category (1–2). At the same time, a slightly larger proportion, around 43–48%, fall in the Agree category (4–5), while about one-fifth of students consistently select the neutral option (3).

The highest proportion of agreement is observed on the global attitude item (ATT4), where 47.5% of students agree or strongly agree that they have a positive overall attitude toward Facebook advertisements, compared to 34.1% who disagree. The pattern is similar for enjoyment (ATT2) and attention capture (ATT3), where agreement levels are somewhat higher than disagreement levels. These findings suggest that, although a sizeable minority of students hold negative views, a slightly larger group expresses favourable attitudes toward Facebook ads.

**Table 3:** *Distribution of responses on attitude items toward Facebook advertisements*

Item	Disagree 1–2 n (%)	Neutral 3 n (%)	Agree 4–5 n (%)
ATT1 – Facebook ads are informative	121 (38.5%)	59 (18.8%)	134 (42.7%)
ATT2 – I enjoy viewing Facebook ads	115 (36.6%)	57 (18.2%)	142 (45.2%)
ATT3 – Facebook ads capture my attention	105 (33.4%)	64 (20.4%)	145 (46.2%)
ATT4 – Overall, I have a positive attitude...	107 (34.1%)	58 (18.5%)	149 (47.5%)

#### 4.2.3 Overall Attitude Categories Based on the Composite Scale

For additional clarity, the composite Attitude scale scores were categorised into three groups. The negative attitude was measured at a mean of  $< 3.00$ , neutral attitude was measured at mean of  $= 3.00$  and positive attitude measured at a  $> 3.00$ . Table 4.3 summarises the distribution of students across these categories. As shown in Table 4.3, about half of the students (51.9%) fall into the positive attitude category, indicating attitudes above the neutral point. Approximately 43.0% of

respondents report negative attitudes, while 5.1% are exactly neutral. This distribution reinforces the earlier descriptive findings: UniMAC students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements are mixed but lean slightly positive overall.

In summary, although Facebook advertisements are not universally embraced, they are generally viewed somewhat favourably by a slight majority of students, with a substantial minority expressing negative attitudes. This nuanced attitudinal profile provides an important foundation for interpreting the factors that influence these attitudes (Research Question Two) and how they relate to purchasing decisions (Research Question Three).

**Table 4:** Overall attitude categories based on the Attitude scale ( $N = 314$ )

Attitude category	Criteria	n	%
Negative attitude	Attitude mean < 3.00	135	43.0%
Neutral attitude	Attitude mean = 3.00	16	5.1%
Positive attitude	Attitude mean > 3.00	163	51.9%

### 4.3 Research Question Two: Factors Influencing Students' Attitudes toward Facebook Advertisements

In this section, students' Attitude toward Facebook advertisements (ATT\_Mean) is treated as the dependent variable. The following antecedent factors, each measured as a composite Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*), were used as independent variables:

- Credibility of Facebook ads (CRED\_Mean; 4 items)
- Relevance of ads (REL\_Mean; 4 items)
- Peer influence (PEER\_Mean; 4 items)

- Ad design and quality (DES\_Mean; 4 items)
- Promotional incentives (PROMO\_Mean; 3 items)
- Platform perceptions (PLAT\_Mean; 4 items)

All scales showed good internal consistency:

- Attitude ( $\alpha = .842$ ), Credibility ( $\alpha = .866$ ), Relevance ( $\alpha = .855$ ), Peer influence ( $\alpha = .847$ ), Design ( $\alpha = .869$ ), Promotions ( $\alpha = .826$ ), Platform perceptions ( $\alpha = .853$ ).

In addition, demographic and usage variables (Gender, Year of study, FB daily time) were included as control variables in the regression analysis.

#### **4.3.1 Preliminary Correlations between Attitude and Antecedent Factors**

Table 4.4 presents Pearson correlations between the Attitude scale and each of the antecedent scales. All correlations are positive and statistically significant, indicating that more favourable perceptions of credibility, relevance, peer influence, design, promotions and the Facebook platform are associated with more positive attitudes toward Facebook advertisements.

The results in Table 4.4 show that credibility ( $r = .36, p < .001$ ) and ad design ( $r = .33, p < .001$ ) have the strongest bivariate associations with attitude toward Facebook advertisements. Students who perceive Facebook ads as credible and well-designed tend to report more positive attitudes. Platform perceptions ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ) are also moderately and positively related to attitude, indicating that seeing Facebook as an effective and relevant advertising platform is linked to more favourable attitudes. Relevance ( $r = .29, p < .001$ ) and peer influence ( $r = .20, p < .001$ ) show smaller but still significant positive correlations with attitude. Promotional incentives ( $r = .13, p =$

.027) have the weakest but still statistically significant relationship, suggesting that promotions and discounts are associated with attitudes, albeit more modestly.

Overall, the preliminary correlations suggest that students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements are most strongly related to how credible, well-designed and platform-effective they perceive these ads to be, with relevance, peer influence and promotions also playing supporting roles.

**Table 5:** *Correlation between attitude toward Facebook ads and antecedent factors*

Predictor	r	p-value
Credibility	0.358	0.000
Relevance	0.290	0.000
Peer influence	0.196	0.000
Ad design	0.333	0.000
Promotional incentives	0.125	0.027
Platform perceptions	0.316	0.000

#### 4.3.2 Multiple Regression Predicting Attitude toward Facebook Advertisements

To determine which factors uniquely predict students' attitudes when considered together, a multiple linear regression was conducted with:

- Dependent variable (DV): Attitude toward Facebook ads (ATT\_Mean)
- Independent variables (IVs): CRED\_Mean, REL\_Mean, PEER\_Mean, DES\_Mean, PROMO\_Mean, PLAT\_Mean

- Control variables: Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male), Year of study (dummy variables for Levels 200, 300, 400; Level 100 as reference), and FB daily time (dummy variables for 3–4 hours, 5+ hours, Less than 1 hour; 1–2 hours as reference).

The overall regression model was statistically significant:

- $R^2 = .314$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .284$
- $F(13, 300) = 10.55$ ,  $p < .001$

This means that the set of predictors (antecedent factors and controls) explains approximately 31.4% of the variance in students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements, which is a moderate effect size in social science research. Table 4.5 shows the unstandardized coefficients (B), standard errors (SE), standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-values and p-values for all predictors.

After controlling for gender, year of study and Facebook daily usage, several antecedent factors emerged as significant positive predictors of students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements. Platform perceptions had the strongest unique effect on attitudes ( $B = 0.287$ ,  $\beta = 0.290$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This implies that, holding other variables constant, a one-unit increase in students' perception that Facebook is an effective and relevant advertising platform is associated with an approximate 0.29-point increase in the attitude scale (on a 1–5 scale).

Credibility of Facebook ads was also a strong predictor ( $B = 0.231$ ,  $\beta = 0.247$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Students who see Facebook ads as trustworthy and believable tend to report more favourable attitudes. Ad design and quality significantly predicted attitude ( $B = 0.158$ ,  $\beta = 0.164$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Better visual appeal, clarity and media quality of ads are associated with more positive attitudes.

Relevance ( $B = 0.102$ ,  $\beta = 0.107$ ,  $p = .045$ ), peer influence ( $B = 0.120$ ,  $\beta = 0.123$ ,  $p = .017$ ), and promotional incentives ( $B = 0.102$ ,  $\beta = 0.109$ ,  $p = .031$ ) also made statistically significant

contributions. Although their standardized effects are smaller, these findings suggest that ads that match students' interests, are positively engaged with by friends, and offer attractive promotions all help to enhance attitudes toward Facebook advertising.

In contrast, none of the control variables—gender, year of study or daily Facebook usage—were statistically significant predictors of attitude in the model (all  $p > .05$ ). This indicates that once perceptions of credibility, relevance, design, promotions, peer influence and platform effectiveness are accounted for, demographic and usage differences do not meaningfully explain additional variance in attitudes.

Model diagnostics (normality of residuals, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity) did not indicate serious violations of regression assumptions; variance inflation factors for the predictors were below 10, and the Breusch–Pagan test suggested no significant heteroscedasticity.

**Table 6:** *Multiple regression predicting attitude toward Facebook advertisements (N = 314)*

Predictor	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p-value
Credibility (CRED_Mean)	0.231	0.047	0.247	4.89	0.000
Relevance (REL_Mean)	0.102	0.051	0.107	2.01	0.045
Peer influence (PEER_Mean)	0.120	0.050	0.123	2.39	0.017
Ad design (DES_Mean)	0.158	0.050	0.164	3.15	0.002
Promotional incentives (PROMO_Mean)	0.102	0.047	0.109	2.17	0.031
Platform perceptions (PLAT_Mean)	0.287	0.053	0.290	5.46	0.000

Gender (Male = 1)	0.146	0.117	0.062	1.24	0.215
Year of study: Level 200 (ref = Level 100)	0.165	0.145	0.063	1.14	0.256
Year of study: Level 300	0.181	0.158	0.063	1.15	0.252
Year of study: Level 400	0.119	0.175	0.037	0.68	0.495
FB time: 3–4 hours (ref = 1–2 hours)	-0.155	0.148	-0.060	-1.04	0.298
FB time: 5+ hours	-0.029	0.161	-0.010	-0.18	0.857
FB time: Less than 1 hour	-0.085	0.177	-0.026	-0.48	0.632

*(Only predictors shown; intercept omitted for brevity.)*

#### **4.4 Research Question Three: Influence of Facebook Advertisements on Purchasing**

##### **Decisions**

Purchasing decision was measured using four 5-point Likert items (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*):

- PD1: Buy after seeing a product advertised on Facebook
- PD2: Choose a brand because of Facebook ads
- PD3: Feel convinced by Facebook ads to consider purchasing
- PD4: Follow through with a purchase after seeing a Facebook ad

A composite Purchase Decision scale was computed as the mean of the four items (PurchaseDecision\_Mean). The scale showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha \approx .85$ ), indicating that it reliably measures a single underlying construct.

In addition, two behavioural indicators were included:

- F1\_Purchases\_3mo: Number of purchases influenced by Facebook ads in the last three months (0, 1, 2–3, 4–5, 6+; treated as ordinal)
- F2\_Spend\_3mo: Amount spent due to Facebook ads in the last three months (C0, C1–C50, C51–C100, C101–C200, C200+; treated as ordinal).

Overall, students reported a moderate level of purchase influence ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ , range = 1–5) on the Purchase Decision scale.

#### **4.3.1 Correlations between Purchase Decisions and Key Facebook Advertising Factors**

Table 4.6 presents Pearson correlations between the Purchase Decision scale and (a) Attitude toward Facebook advertising, (b) Promotional incentives, (c) Platform perceptions, and (d) the two behavioural indicators.

The correlations in Table 4.6 show that there is a moderate, positive association between attitudes toward Facebook advertising and purchase decisions ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Students who hold more positive attitudes toward Facebook ads tend to report higher levels of Facebook-influenced purchasing. Promotional incentives (discounts, coupons, free delivery) are also moderately positively related to purchase decisions ( $r = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The more students find Facebook-based promotions attractive, the more likely they are to report buying because of ads. Platform perceptions (seeing Facebook as an effective and relevant advertising platform) show a smaller but significant positive correlation with purchase decisions ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The two behavioural indicators are very strongly correlated with the Purchase Decision scale:

- Number of Facebook-influenced purchases in the last three months (F1) has a correlation of  $r = .83$ ,  $p < .001$ .

- Amount spent due to Facebook ads in the last three months (F2) has a correlation of  $r = .81, p < .001$ .

These very large correlations suggest that the Purchase Decision scale aligns closely with students' actual recent buying behaviour, supporting the criterion validity of the measure. In other words, students who score higher on the purchase decision items are also those who report more actual purchases and higher expenditure attributable to Facebook advertising.

**Table 7:** *Correlations between purchase decision and key Facebook advertising variables*

Variables	r	p-value
Purchase Decision ↔ Attitude toward FB ads	0.401	< .001
Purchase Decision ↔ Promotional incentives	0.354	< .001
Purchase Decision ↔ Platform perceptions	0.202	< .001
Purchase Decision ↔ No. of FB-influenced purchases (F1)	0.832	< .001
Purchase Decision ↔ Amount spent via FB ads (F2)	0.811	< .001

#### 4.4.2 Multiple Regression Predicting Purchase Decisions

To determine the extent to which Facebook advertisements and related perceptions predict purchasing decisions when considered together, a multiple linear regression was conducted with:

- Dependent variable (DV): Purchase Decision scale (PurchaseDecision\_Mean)
- Independent variables (IVs):
  - Attitude toward Facebook ads (Attitude\_Mean)
  - Credibility of ads (Credibility\_Mean)
  - Relevance of ads (Relevance\_Mean)

- Peer influence (Peer\_Mean)
- Ad design and quality (Design\_Mean)
- Promotional incentives (Promotions\_Mean)
- Platform perceptions (Platform\_Mean)
- Control variables:
  - Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male)
  - Year of study (Level 200, Level 300, Level 400; Level 100 as reference)
  - Facebook daily time (3–4 hours, 5+ hours, Less than 1 hour; 1–2 hours as reference).

The overall model was statistically significant:

- $R^2 = .333$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .302$
- $F(14, 299) = 10.66$ ,  $p < .001$

Thus, the set of predictors explains approximately 33.3% of the variance in students’ purchase decisions influenced by Facebook advertising—a moderate effect size. Table 4.7 presents the unstandardized coefficients (B), standard errors (SE), standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-values and p-values.

**Table 8:** *Multiple regression predicting purchase decisions from Facebook advertising variables*

Predictor	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p-value
(Constant)	-0.088	0.323	—	-0.27	0.786
Attitude toward FB ads	0.260	0.058	0.258	4.52	< .001
Credibility	-0.055	0.049	-0.058	-1.13	0.261
Relevance	0.100	0.051	0.105	1.97	0.049
Peer influence	0.159	0.051	0.162	3.15	0.002

Ad design	-0.016	0.051	-0.017	-0.32	0.749
Promotional incentives	0.316	0.047	0.335	6.70	< .001
Platform perceptions	0.178	0.055	0.177	3.23	0.001
Gender (Male = 1)	0.200	0.117	0.084	1.70	0.089
Year of study: Level 200	0.069	0.145	0.026	0.48	0.634
Year of study: Level 300	0.238	0.157	0.082	1.51	0.132
Year of study: Level 400	0.284	0.174	0.087	1.63	0.103
FB time: 3–4 hours	0.057	0.148	0.022	0.39	0.699
FB time: 5+ hours	-0.001	0.161	-0.000	-0.01	0.995
FB time: Less than 1 hour	0.036	0.176	0.011	0.20	0.839

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*( $\beta$  values are standardized coefficients; intercept omitted from  $\beta$  column.)*

After controlling for gender, year of study and daily Facebook usage, several Facebook advertising-related variables emerged as significant predictors of purchasing decisions. Promotional incentives are the strongest unique predictor of purchase decisions ( $B = 0.316$ ,  $\beta = 0.335$ ,  $p < .001$ ). A one-unit increase on the 1–5 Promotions scale is associated with about a 0.32-point increase in the Purchase Decision score, holding all other variables constant. Put differently, a one standard deviation increase in perceived promotional attractiveness predicts approximately a 0.34 standard deviation increase in Facebook-influenced purchasing.

Attitude toward Facebook ads is also a strong, positive predictor ( $B = 0.260$ ,  $\beta = 0.258$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Students with more positive attitudes toward Facebook advertising are more likely to report that Facebook ads influence their purchasing decisions, even after accounting for credibility, relevance, peers, design, promotions and platform perceptions.

Platform perceptions significantly predict purchase decisions ( $B = 0.178$ ,  $\beta = 0.177$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Viewing Facebook as an effective and relevant advertising platform is associated with higher purchase decision scores. Peer influence shows a significant positive effect ( $B = 0.159$ ,  $\beta = 0.162$ ,  $p = .002$ ). When friends and classmates engage positively with Facebook ads, students are more likely to be influenced to purchase.

Relevance of ads has a smaller but statistically significant effect ( $B = 0.100$ ,  $\beta = 0.105$ ,  $p = .049$ ). Ads that match students' interests and needs modestly but meaningfully increase their likelihood of making purchases.

In contrast, once these variables are included credibility and ad design do not significantly predict purchasing decisions ( $p > .05$ ). Their influence on purchasing appears to be largely indirect, working through attitudes and other perceptions. Also, demographic and usage controls—gender, year of study and daily Facebook time—do not make significant contributions to the model (all  $p > .05$ ). This suggests that the impact of Facebook advertising on purchase decisions is driven more by how students experience and interpret the ads than by who they are or how long they spend on Facebook.

Assumption checks indicated that the regression model is appropriate: residuals were approximately normally distributed (Jarque–Bera  $p \approx .11$ ), the Breusch–Pagan test suggested no significant heteroscedasticity ( $p \approx .88$ ), and multicollinearity was moderate. Variance inflation factors for the psychosocial predictors were mostly below 10 (Attitude slightly above), which is acceptable for interpretive social science models.

#### **4.5 Research Question Four: Perceptions of Facebook as an Advertising Platform**

Students' perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform were measured using four 5-point Likert items (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*):

- PLAT1: Facebook is an effective platform for advertising products and services.
- PLAT2: Facebook helps advertisers reach students better than traditional media.
- PLAT3: Facebook makes it convenient to learn about new products and services.
- PLAT4: Facebook advertising is relevant to university students.

A composite Platform Perception scale was computed as the mean of the four items (PLAT\_Mean). The scale showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ ), indicating that it reliably measures a single underlying construct reflecting students' perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform.

##### **4.5.1 Descriptive Statistics for Platform Perception Items and Scale**

As shown in Table 4.8, mean scores for the four platform perception items range from 3.17 to 3.23, all slightly above the neutral midpoint (3.00) on the 5-point scale. This suggests that, on average, UniMAC students tend to view Facebook as a somewhat effective and relevant advertising platform, though not overwhelmingly so.

The composite Platform Perception scale has a mean of 3.20 (SD = 1.19), with the full range of possible scores (1–5) observed. The relatively large standard deviations (around 1.4 for the items and 1.19 for the scale) indicate substantial variability in how students perceive Facebook as an advertising medium: some are clearly negative, others strongly positive, and many sit in between.

**Table 9: Descriptive statistics for perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform (N = 314)**

Item / Scale	Mean	SD	Min	Max
PLAT1 – Facebook is an effective platform for advertising	3.17	1.41	1.0	5.0
PLAT2 – Reach to students is better than traditional media	3.22	1.43	1.0	5.0
PLAT3 – Convenient for learning about new products	3.23	1.47	1.0	5.0
PLAT4 – Facebook advertising is relevant to students	3.19	1.42	1.0	5.0
Platform Perception scale (mean of PLAT1–PLAT4)	3.20	1.19	1.0	5.0

#### 4.5.2 Distribution of Responses on Platform Perception Items

To provide further detail, responses on each item were grouped into three categories:

- Disagree = 1–2
- Neutral = 3
- Agree = 4–5

Table 4.9 presents the frequencies and percentages of students in each category for the four Platform Perception items.

The distributions in Table 4.9 show a consistent pattern across all four items. Roughly one-third of students (about 33–35%) disagree (scores 1–2) that Facebook is an effective, convenient or relevant advertising platform. Around 18–22% of students select the neutral option (score 3) on each item. A slightly larger proportion, about 45–48%, agree (scores 4–5) that Facebook is an effective, convenient and relevant platform for advertising.

The item with the highest proportion of agreement is PLAT3 (convenient for learning about new products), where 48.4% of students agree or strongly agree. Similar levels of agreement are observed for platform effectiveness (PLAT1) and relevance to students (PLAT4), where approximately 46–46% of respondents are positive. These results indicate that while a sizeable

minority of students are sceptical about Facebook as an advertising platform, a slightly larger group expresses favourable perceptions, and about one-fifth remain neutral.

**Table 10:** *Distribution of responses on Platform Perception items (N = 314)*

Item	Disagree 1–2 (%)	n	Neutral 3 (%)	n	Agree 4–5 (%)	n
PLAT1 – Effective advertising platform	111 (35.4%)		56 (17.8%)		147 (46.8%)	
PLAT2 – Reach better than traditional media	105 (33.4%)		69 (22.0%)		140 (44.6%)	
PLAT3 – Convenient for learning about new products	106 (33.8%)		56 (17.8%)		152 (48.4%)	
PLAT4 – Relevant to university students	105 (33.4%)		65 (20.7%)		144 (45.9%)	

#### 4.5.3 Overall Platform Perception Categories

To summarise students’ general stance toward Facebook as an advertising platform, the composite Platform Perception scale (PLAT\_Mean) was categorised into three groups:

- Negative perception: PLAT\_Mean < 3.00
- Neutral perception: PLAT\_Mean = 3.00
- Positive perception: PLAT\_Mean > 3.00

As shown in Table 4.10, more than half of the students (54.1%) hold a positive overall perception of Facebook as an advertising platform, while about 40.1% hold a negative perception and 5.7% are exactly neutral. Taken together, these findings suggest that UniMAC students are, on balance, moderately positive about Facebook as an advertising platform. Many recognise its effectiveness, reach and convenience in exposing them to new products and services. At the same time, a substantial minority remain unconvinced, reflecting a mixed but slightly favourable perception profile.

This pattern is consistent with earlier results in the chapter, where platform perceptions emerged as an important predictor of both attitudes toward Facebook advertising (RQ2) and Facebook-influenced purchasing decisions (RQ3). Overall, Facebook is seen by a slim majority as a relevant and useful advertising medium, but it does not enjoy universal acceptance among students.

**Table 11:** *Overall categories of platform perception (N = 314)*

Perception category	Criterion	n	%
Negative perception	PLAT_Mean < 3.00	126	40.1%
Neutral perception	PLAT_Mean = 3.00	18	5.7%
Positive perception	PLAT_Mean > 3.00	170	54.1%

#### 4.6 Discussion

UniMAC students' attitudes toward Facebook advertising are mixed but slightly positive, with the mean just above neutral and about half of respondents classified as positive and 43% as negative. This ambivalence mirrors findings from other student and youth samples, where Facebook or social media advertising elicits co-existing positive, neutral and negative segments (Lukka & James, 2014; Mir, 2014). The moderately favourable overall attitude in this study is consistent with African work showing generally positive but cautious responses to social media advertising, where favourable attitudes co-exist with concerns about value and credibility (Boateng & Okoe, 2015; Duffett, 2015). Prior research indicates that students' attitudes depend strongly on perceptions of informativeness, entertainment, credibility and irritation (Aktan et al., 2016; Mir, 2014). The moderate means for "informative," "enjoyable" and "attention-capturing" items suggest that UniMAC students recognise some informational and hedonic value in Facebook ads, but the sizeable negative segment implies that irritation, privacy concerns or perceived intrusiveness may dampen enthusiasm, as reported in other online and social media advertising

studies (Boateng & Okoe, 2015; Aktan et al., 2016). Overall, the findings indicate that UniMAC students' attitudes align with international evidence of qualified acceptance: Facebook advertising is seen as somewhat useful and engaging, but far from universally welcomed.

Building on this attitudinal profile, the regression findings show that UniMAC students' attitudes are shaped far more by how they evaluate Facebook advertising than by who they are or how long they use the platform. Platform perceptions, credibility and ad design were the strongest predictors of attitude, with relevance, peer influence and promotions adding smaller but significant effects, together explaining about one-third of the variance. This pattern aligns with social media advertising research, where credibility, informativeness and executional quality consistently emerge as key determinants of favourable attitudes (Boateng & Okoe, 2015; Bakalo & Zewude, 2024). Systematic reviews on young people's responses to online advertising similarly highlight informativeness, entertainment, credibility and interactivity as core attitudinal drivers (De Battista, 2021). The importance of platform perceptions in this study echoes work on perceived advertising value and personalisation in Instagram and other social media, where seeing the platform as useful and relevant enhances ad attitudes (Gaber et al., 2019; Wiese, 2020). The positive role of promotional incentives is also consistent with findings that incentives and economic benefits contribute to more favourable attitudes toward social media advertising (Arora et al., 2023). Finally, the non-significant effects of gender, year of study and usage time support evidence that demographic variables often play a limited role relative to message- and platform-level factors in shaping attitudes to digital advertising (De Battista, 2021).

With respect to purchasing outcomes, the findings for RQ3 show that Facebook advertising exerts a moderate but meaningful influence on UniMAC students' purchasing decisions: attitudes, promotional incentives, platform perceptions, peer influence and relevance jointly explain one-

third of the variance in purchase decisions. This is consistent with prior research showing that favourable attitudes toward social media advertising translate into stronger buying intentions and behaviours (Boateng & Okoe, 2015; Mir, 2012). The strong effects of promotional incentives and overall attitude mirror studies where economic benefits, perceived value and social media marketing activities significantly boost purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour (Duffett, 2015; Laksamana, 2018). Likewise, the significant roles of platform perceptions and peer influence reflect evidence that perceived usefulness of the platform and social proof within online communities shape consumers' purchase responses to social media ads (Alalwan, 2018; le Roux, 2016). The smaller but significant effect of ad relevance supports work showing that targeted, interest-congruent social media advertisements more effectively stimulate purchase intention (K. V. S. et al., 2021). Finally, the non-significant contributions of credibility, design and demographics once other factors are controlled echo findings that value- and context-related perceptions often outweigh simple message execution or user characteristics in driving online purchase behaviour.

Finally, regarding how students view Facebook as an advertising medium (RQ4), UniMAC students' platform perceptions are moderately positive but clearly mixed: just over half view Facebook as an effective, relevant and convenient advertising medium, while about two-fifths hold negative perceptions. This pattern mirrors wider evidence that youth recognise Facebook's strong reach and targeting power, especially in education and service contexts, where social media marketing increases awareness and enrolment decisions. Studies of young users similarly report generally favourable views of Facebook advertising as informative and attention-getting, particularly when ads help them stay up to date with products and brands. At the same time, the sizeable sceptical minority in this study is consistent with research showing that many college

students avoid or ignore Facebook ads they perceive as irrelevant, intrusive or uninteresting. Social media advertising research therefore increasingly stresses the need for platforms and advertisers to deliver clearly useful, audience-fit content rather than relying only on reach. Overall, UniMAC students' slightly favourable but divided perceptions suggest that Facebook remains a viable advertising platform, but its perceived effectiveness depends on how well campaigns leverage its convenience and reach while minimising clutter and perceived annoyance.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter synthesises the major findings of the study, drawing together the empirical results into a concise summary. It then presents the main conclusions derived from the findings, outlines practical recommendations for advertisers and institutional stakeholders, and proposes directions for future research on social media advertising and student consumer behaviour.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study examined how Facebook advertising influences the purchasing decisions of students at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), Accra, while also exploring their attitudes toward Facebook ads and perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform. A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed to describe students' attitudes, perceptions and behaviours and to establish relationships among key advertising-related variables. The target population comprised undergraduate students with active Facebook accounts. Using stratified random sampling by institute and year of study, data were collected from 314 students, ensuring representation across Levels 100–400.

Data were gathered with a structured, self-administered questionnaire organised into five sections: demographics; attitudes toward Facebook advertising; antecedent factors (credibility, relevance, design, peer influence, promotions); purchasing decisions; and perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform. All constructs were measured with Likert-type items adapted from prior validated scales and refined for the UniMAC context.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations), reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), Pearson product-moment correlations to examine bivariate relationships, and multiple linear regression models to determine the predictive influence of the advertising-related factors on attitudes and purchasing decisions.

## **5.2 Key Findings**

The study found that UniMAC students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements are mixed but slightly positive overall. Although the mean score on the Attitude scale is just above neutral ( $M = 3.16$ ) and a slim majority of students (51.9%) fall within the positive attitude category, a substantial proportion (43.0%) report negative attitudes. This distribution indicates that students do not respond to Facebook advertising in a uniformly favourable manner; rather, their attitudes reflect a nuanced pattern in which modest acceptance co-exists with notable scepticism and dissatisfaction.

Beyond describing this mixed attitudinal profile, the findings further show that students' attitudes are driven primarily by how they perceive the platform and the qualities of the advertisements, rather than by demographic differences or general patterns of Facebook use. The regression model accounted for approximately 31.4% of the variance in attitudes, with platform perceptions, credibility, and ad design emerging as the strongest predictors. Relevance, peer influence, and promotional incentives also contributed significantly, although their effects were comparatively smaller. In contrast, gender, year of study, and Facebook usage time did not have significant effects, suggesting that students' evaluations of the advertising environment and ad execution are more decisive for shaping attitude than personal background characteristics or duration of exposure to the platform.

Importantly, the results also demonstrate that Facebook advertising has a moderate but meaningful effect on students' purchasing decisions. The purchase decision model explained about 33.3% of the variance, indicating that Facebook advertising-related factors contribute substantially, though not exclusively, to purchase behaviour. Promotional incentives emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase decisions, followed by attitude toward Facebook ads, platform perceptions, peer influence, and ad relevance. This pattern implies that purchasing decisions are most likely to be stimulated when Facebook advertisements offer clear value through incentives, are received positively at the attitudinal level, are perceived within a platform environment viewed as useful and effective, are reinforced by social influence, and align with students' interests and needs through relevance.

Finally, the study found that students' perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform are moderately positive but clearly divided. Just over half of the students (54.1%) view Facebook as an effective, convenient, and relevant platform for advertising, while a large minority (40.1%) hold negative perceptions. This reinforces the broader picture emerging across the findings: Facebook is regarded as a useful advertising medium by many students, yet it is not universally trusted or appreciated, and substantial scepticism remains among a significant segment of the student population.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This study set out to examine UniMAC students' attitudes toward Facebook advertisements, the factors that shape these attitudes, the extent to which Facebook ads influence their purchasing decisions, and how they perceive Facebook as an advertising platform. Overall, the findings portray a picture of qualified acceptance rather than blanket approval or rejection.

First, students' attitudes toward Facebook advertising are mixed but lean slightly positive: just over half hold favourable attitudes, while a sizeable minority are negative. Second, attitudes are driven primarily by how students experience the advertising environment rather than by who they are. Perceptions of the platform, credibility and ad design, together with relevance, peer influence and promotional incentives, explain about one-third of the variance in attitudes, whereas gender, year of study and Facebook usage time add little explanatory power.

Third, Facebook advertising exerts a moderate but meaningful influence on purchasing decisions. Promotional incentives emerge as the strongest predictor, followed by overall attitude, platform perceptions, peer influence and ad relevance, indicating that value, platform trust and social endorsement are critical for converting exposure into purchase behaviour. Finally, more than half of students perceive Facebook as an effective, convenient and relevant platform, but roughly two in five remain sceptical.

Taken together, the study concludes that Facebook remains a viable and strategically important channel for reaching UniMAC students, but its impact depends heavily on the perceived quality, relevance and value of the advertising experience. For advertisers and institutional communicators, simply being present on Facebook is insufficient; campaigns must be credible, well-designed, relevant and incentive-laden to foster positive attitudes and translate into actual purchasing or behavioural outcomes.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that advertisers targeting UniMAC students prioritise credibility-building features in their Facebook advertising. Because students' attitudes are strongly shaped by how trustworthy and well-executed they perceive advertisements to be,

campaigns should clearly identify the sponsor, present accurate and transparent product information, and demonstrate professionalism in both visuals and copy. Using verified pages, providing clear and accessible contact details, and incorporating authentic testimonials can strengthen credibility, reduce scepticism, and contribute to more favourable attitudes toward Facebook advertisements.

In addition, advertisers should place stronger emphasis on relevance through careful segmentation and targeting. Given that students' responses are influenced by how well ads align with their needs and interests, campaigns should be tailored by programme, level, and interest clusters to ensure that students encounter messages that fit their academic priorities, lifestyle preferences, and entertainment habits. The strategic use of audience insights, interest-based targeting tools, and culturally resonant messages is likely to reduce perceptions of intrusiveness or irrelevance, thereby improving attitudes and increasing the likelihood that advertising exposure translates into purchasing decisions.

The findings also suggest that promotional incentives should be a central element of Facebook advertising strategies aimed at UniMAC students, since promotions emerged as the strongest driver of purchase decisions. Advertisers are therefore encouraged to integrate meaningful discounts, attractive bundles, and limited-time offers that clearly communicate value. At the same time, because peer influence also contributes to purchase behaviour, it is advisable to complement promotional strategies with mechanisms that harness social endorsement. Brands and the university can achieve this through student ambassador programmes, influencer partnerships, and highly shareable content that encourages peer-to-peer diffusion and reinforces social proof within students' networks.

Finally, UniMAC and partner brands should aim to shape Facebook campaigns around genuine student benefit in order to strengthen platform perceptions and sustain engagement. Since students' perceptions of Facebook as an advertising platform are positive but divided, campaigns that help students discover relevant opportunities—such as scholarships, academic resources, internships, and campus events—are more likely to enhance the perceived usefulness and legitimacy of advertising on the platform than campaigns that simply push products. To maintain this positive platform experience, advertisers should monitor student feedback consistently, reduce clutter by avoiding excessive or repetitive ad exposure, and emphasise informative, student-centred messages that communicate value clearly and respectfully.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Future Studies**

In light of the findings and the scope of the current study, the researcher suggests several directions for future research. One important step would be to broaden the context beyond UniMAC by extending the investigation to multiple universities across different regions in Ghana. Such a comparative approach would enhance the generalisability of the findings and provide a clearer picture of whether student responses to Facebook advertising vary by institutional type, geographic location, or regional socio-cultural dynamics. Future studies could also expand the platform focus by comparing Facebook with other social media platforms commonly used by university students, such as Instagram, TikTok, or X, in order to determine whether platform-specific features, usage cultures, and advertising formats shape attitudes and purchasing decisions differently. Additionally, adopting a longitudinal design would enable researchers to track how attitudes and purchasing responses develop over time, rather than capturing them at a single point. Where feasible, incorporating behavioural indicators—such as click-through rates, engagement measures,

and redemption of promotional offers—would further strengthen evidence on the extent to which reported attitudes correspond to observable consumer actions and how these relationships evolve.

The researcher also recommends that subsequent studies use qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to deepen understanding of why a sizeable segment of students remains sceptical about Facebook advertising. Interviews and focus group discussions could provide richer insight into the meanings students attach to online advertisements and could more directly probe the drivers of negative attitudes, including privacy concerns, ad fatigue, and perceptions of intrusiveness. Beyond descriptive exploration, experimental studies could be employed to test causal mechanisms by systematically manipulating key variables such as credibility cues, design quality, promotional incentives, and targeting relevance. This would help clarify which advertising elements most effectively shift attitudes and stimulate purchase intentions among university students, thereby strengthening both the theoretical explanation of social media advertising effects and the practical guidance available to advertisers and higher education stakeholders.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK ADVERTISING ON PURCHASING  
DECISIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

This questionnaire is part of an academic study on how Facebook advertising influences the purchasing decisions of students at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC). Your responses are confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Please answer honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.

Section A: Demographic Information

This section asks basic questions about you (e.g., age, year level). Your answers help us understand the diversity of respondents.

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age:  Under 20  20–24  25–29  30+
3. Year of Study:  Level 100  Level 200  Level 300  Level 400
4. Faculty/Department: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Average daily time spent on Facebook:  Less than 1 hour  1–2 hours  3–4 hours  5+ hours

Scale for Sections B–F:

1 = Strongly Disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Neutral   4 = Agree   5 = Strongly Agree

Section B: Attitude Toward Facebook Advertising (ATT)

Tell us how you generally feel about ads you see on Facebook—whether you like them, find them useful, or pay attention to them.

*Indicate how you feel about ads you see on Facebook.*

6. I find Facebook advertisements informative. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I enjoy viewing advertisements on Facebook. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Facebook advertisements usually capture my attention. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Overall, I have a positive attitude toward Facebook advertisements. 1 2 3 4 5

### Section C: Antecedent Factors

These questions explore what shapes your attitude toward Facebook ads.

#### Credibility (CRED)

How believable and trustworthy you find the ads and the information they provide.

10. I trust the information provided in Facebook advertisements. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Facebook ads are reliable sources of product information. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Brands that advertise on Facebook seem trustworthy. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Claims in Facebook ads are believable. 1 2 3 4 5

#### Relevance (REL)

How well the ads match your interests, needs, or lifestyle.

14. Facebook advertisements are usually relevant to my interests. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Ads I see on Facebook reflect my personal needs or lifestyle. 1 2 3 4 5
16. I often see Facebook ads for products I'm actually considering. 1 2 3 4 5
17. Facebook ads feel tailored to me. 1 2 3 4 5

#### Peer Influence (PEER)

How friends' reactions (likes, shares, comments) affect how you see the ads.

18. My friends' reactions to ads (likes, shares, comments) affect my perception of those ads.  
1 2 3 4 5
19. I am more likely to trust ads that many of my peers interact with. 1 2 3 4 5
20. If friends recommend or share an ad, I pay more attention to it. 1 2 3 4 5

21. Seeing classmates engage with an ad increases my confidence in the brand. 1 2 3  
4 5

#### Ad Design (DES)

How the look and quality of the ad (images, videos, clarity) affect your interest.

22. Visually appealing Facebook advertisements attract my attention. 1 2 3 4 5
23. Well-designed ads influence my interest in products or services. 1 2 3 4 5
24. Clear and concise ad messages improve my understanding of the product. 1 2 3 4  
5
25. High-quality images/videos in ads make me more interested in the brand. 1 2 3 4  
5

#### Section D: Promotional Incentives (PROMO)

These items ask how discounts, deals, or limited-time offers in Facebook ads affect your interest or likelihood to act.

26. Discounts or promotions in Facebook ads make the offer more attractive. 1 2 3 4  
5
27. Limited-time deals in Facebook ads encourage me to act quickly. 1 2 3 4 5
28. Free delivery, coupons, or bundle offers in Facebook ads increase my interest. 1 2  
3 4 5

#### Section E: Purchasing Decision (DV; reflective, behaviourally worded)

These items ask about your actual choices—how often Facebook ads lead you to decide to buy or choose one brand over another.

29. I often decide to buy products after seeing them advertised on Facebook. 1 2 3 4  
5
30. Facebook ads have led me to choose one brand over another. 1 2 3 4 5
31. I have made purchase decisions because a Facebook ad convinced me. 1 2 3 4  
5
32. When a Facebook ad interests me, I usually follow through with a purchase. 1 2 3  
4 5

#### Section F: Auxiliary Behavioural Checks

A few quick questions about recent, real-world behaviour (how many purchases and approximate spending influenced by Facebook ads). These are for summary purposes only.

F1. In the past 3 months, about how many times have you purchased something after seeing it on Facebook?

0  1  2–3  4–5  6+

F2. In the past 3 months, approximately how much have you spent on purchases influenced by Facebook ads?

C0  C1–C50  C51–C100  C101–C200  C200+

### Section G: Perceptions of Facebook as an Advertising Platform

Your views on Facebook as a place for advertising in general (effectiveness, reach, convenience). This helps us describe the context of the study.

33. Facebook is an effective platform for promoting products and services. 1 2 3 4  
5

34. Facebook advertisements reach students better than traditional advertising. 1 2 3  
4 5

35. Facebook is a convenient medium for learning about new products. 1 2 3 4 5

36. Overall, Facebook is a relevant platform for advertising to students. 1 2 3 4 5

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study:

Exploring the Influence of Facebook Advertising on Purchasing Decisions among University Students: A Study of UniMAC, Accra

#### Participant Declaration

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.
- I understand participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time.
- I understand no identifying information will be collected.
- I agree to participate willingly.
- I am 18 years or older.

Consent Statement:

- YES, I agree to participate.
- NO, I do not agree to participate.

#### Participant Details

Signature or Tick: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Researcher Statement

I confirm that I have provided clear information about this study and answered all participant questions.

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Title of Study:

Exploring the Influence of Facebook Advertising on Purchasing Decisions among University Students: A Case Study of UniMAC, Accra

#### 1. Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC), Accra. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve.

#### 2. Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to examine how Facebook advertising influences the purchasing decisions of university students...

#### 3. Why You Have Been Selected

You are a student at UniMAC and part of a demographic highly engaged with social media including Facebook.

#### 4. Voluntary Participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may skip questions or withdraw at any time.

#### 5. What Participation Involves

You will complete a structured questionnaire lasting 10–15 minutes.

#### 6. Risks and Discomforts

The study is low risk and involves no physical or psychological harm.

#### 7. Benefits of the Study

Your participation will help improve understanding of Facebook advertising effects among UniMAC students.

#### 8. Confidentiality and Anonymity

No identifying information will be collected. All responses will remain confidential.

#### 9. Right to Withdraw

You can withdraw anytime before submitting your questionnaire.

## 10. Contact Information

Researcher: Evelyn Asare-Ayeh