



UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

**AN EXPLORATION OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA
ADVERTISING STRATEGIES OF DOVE BEAUTY PRODUCTS IN GHANA**

BY

LETICIA SARPOMAAH DERCHIE

(MAPRM24047)

DECEMBER 2025

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**PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
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DECEMBER 2025

DECLARATIONS

I, Leticia Sarpomaah Derchie, declare that except for the reference made to the work of other researchers which I have duly acknowledged, the long essay is my own work produced from research under supervision. This long essay has not been presented to any other academic institution for any academic award. I am solely responsible for any lapses in this long essay.



12/19/2025

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CERTIFICATION

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.



19th December 2025

.....
DR. PRISCILLA TEIKA ODOOM

.....
DATE

(SUPERVISOR)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research paper to my father, Reverend Peter Derchie, my mother, Mrs. Mayfred Derchie and my husband, Mr. Nana Yaw Amankwatia Dickson. Your encouragement and sacrifices gave me the will and determination to complete this master's degree.

I say God bless you immensely.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

This study explored consumer perceptions of Dove's social media advertising strategies in Ghana. Employing a quantitative descriptive survey design, data were collected from 250 Ghanaian consumers through a structured online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The study adopted a two-phase approach involving content analysis of Dove's social media platforms followed by primary data collection measuring consumer perceptions across five dimensions: product-centred appeal, hashtag and interactivity, cultural Localisation, sustainability and ethics, and message tone and visual style. Results revealed significant strengths and weaknesses in Dove's social media advertising approach. Consumers rated product-centred appeal (M = 4.43-4.46) and message tone and visual style (M = 4.30-4.60) highly, demonstrating effective communication of product benefits and professional visual execution. Purchase intention was strong (M = 4.69), indicating commercial effectiveness. However, critical weaknesses emerged in cultural Localisation (M = 1.66-2.76) and sustainability communication (M = 1.73-2.73), with consumers perceiving limited reflection of Ghanaian culture and minimal awareness of environmental initiatives. Hashtag effectiveness was particularly weak (M = 2.60). Platform analysis showed strategy differentiation, with visual platforms (TikTok, Instagram) emphasizing aesthetics while YouTube focused on product demonstrations. Overall advertising effectiveness received moderate ratings (M = 3.89), though competitive positioning was weak (M = 2.37). The findings suggest that while Dove excels in visual presentation and product communication, significant improvements are needed in cultural adaptation, sustainability messaging and interactive engagement to enhance market differentiation and foster deeper consumer connections in Ghana. The study recommends that Dove Ghana should incorporate local cultural elements, Ghanaian

models, and language into social media content to enhance cultural relevance and implement two-way communication strategies to foster deeper consumer engagement.

Keywords: social media advertising, consumer perception, Dove, Ghana, cultural Localisation, beauty products, advertising effectiveness

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

DECLARATIONS	III
CERTIFICATION	IV
DEDICATION	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	VI
ABSTRACT	VII
TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
LIST OF TABLES	II
LIST OF FIGURES	II
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Chapter Overview	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Research Objectives	4
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Significance of the Study	5
1.6 Scope of the Study	6
1.7 Organisation of the Study	7
CHAPTER TWO	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.0 Introduction	8
2.1 Theoretical Framework	8
2.1.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)	9
2.1.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	9
2.1.3 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)	10
2.1.4 Social Identity Theory (SIT)	11
2.1.5 Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model	11

2.1.6 Social Influence Theory	12
2.1.7 Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)	12
2.1.8 Integrated Theoretical Framework for the Study	13
2.2 Conceptual Foundations of the Study	14
2.2.1 Social Media Advertising	14
2.2.2 Advertising Strategies	15
2.2.3 Consumer Perception	16
2.2.4 Consumer Engagement	16
2.3 Empirical Review	17
2.3.1 Empirical Studies on Dove's Advertising strategies	17
2.3.2 Social Media Advertising Impact on Consumer Behavior	18
2.3.3 Social Media Marketing in the Beauty and Cosmetics Industry	20
2.3.4 Sustainability and Green Marketing in Beauty Products	22
2.3.5 Synthesis and Gaps in Existing Research	23
2.4 Chapter Summary	26
CHAPTER THREE	27
METHODOLOGY	27
3.0 Introduction	27
3.1 Research Approach	27
3.2 Research Design	27
3.3 Study Area	28
3.4 Population	29
3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique	29
3.5.1 Sample Size	29
3.5.2 Sampling Technique	29
3.6 Data Collection Instrument	30
3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instrument	32
3.6.1 Validity	32
3.6.2 Reliability	32
3.7 Data Collection Procedure	33
3.8 Data Analysis	34

3.9 Ethical Considerations	35
3.10 Chapter Summary	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	37
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	37
4.0 Introduction.....	37
4.1 Distribution of Dove’s Social Media Marketing Strategies Across Platforms	37
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants.....	39
4.3 Social Media Platform Usage	41
4.4 Participants Daily Social Media Usage.....	42
4.5 Consumer Perceptions of Dove's Social Media Advertising Strategies in Ghana	43
4.5.1 Product-Centered Appeal	43
4.5.2 Hashtag and Interactivity	44
4.5.3 Cultural Localisation.....	45
4.5.4 Sustainability and Ethics.....	45
4.5.5 Message Tone and Visual Style.....	46
4.5.6 Consumer Engagement	47
4.5.7 Overall Evaluation	48
4.6 Discussion of Findings.....	51
CHAPTER FIVE	62
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	62
5.0 Introduction.....	62
5.1 Summary	62
5.2 Conclusion	63
5.3 Limitations	63
5.4 Recommendations.....	64

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 250)	40
Table 2 Social Media Platform Usage	42
Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Consumer Perceptions and Engagement	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Distribution of Dove’s Social Media Marketing Strategies Across Platforms	39
Figure 2 Daily Social Media Usage.....	43

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the study on Dove's social media advertising strategies in Ghana. It presents the background, problem statement, research objectives and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed how brands engage with consumers, with social media emerging as a dominant marketing platform. Social media platforms have evolved beyond communication tools into interactive spaces where brands establish relationships, influence perceptions, and shape consumer purchase intentions (Arora et al., 2019). In the cosmetics and beauty industry, social media has redefined marketing practices by enabling influencer marketing, user-generated content, and direct brand consumer interactions (Alamer et al., 2023). This transformation is particularly significant in emerging markets such as Ghana, where increasing internet penetration and mobile technology adoption have expanded opportunities for global brands to localize their marketing strategies.

Dove, a beauty brand owned by Unilever and established in 1957, has distinguished itself through an unconventional approach to beauty advertising. In contrast to traditional beauty advertisements that promote idealized and airbrushed images, Dove launched the *Campaign for Real Beauty* in 2004 to challenge prevailing beauty stereotypes (Murray, 2013). The campaign was informed by research indicating that only 2% of women worldwide considered themselves beautiful and that a majority perceived media portrayals of beauty as unrealistic (Scott–StrategyOne et al., 2004).

Consequently, Dove repositioned its brand around emotional and social values, emphasizing authenticity, diversity, and body positivity rather than solely functional product attributes (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Zhou, 2024).

The impact of Dove's branding strategy has been substantial, with the brand's global sales increasing from approximately \$2.5 billion to over \$4 billion within a decade of the campaign's launch (Banet-Weiser, 2012; Zhou, 2024). Central to this success has been Dove's effective use of digital and social media advertising, including viral campaigns such as *Evolution* (2006) and *Real Beauty Sketches* (2013), which generated global conversations around beauty ideals. Over time, Dove has continued to adapt its digital marketing strategies to align with emerging social movements, utilizing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter/X to foster interactive and value-driven engagement with consumers.

Understanding consumer perception of social media advertising is increasingly important in the digital marketing landscape. Prior studies indicate that the effectiveness of social media advertising is influenced by factors such as perceived credibility, authenticity, and trust (Kothari et al., 2025). In the beauty industry, influencer credibility which includes expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Additionally, consumers increasingly value authenticity, with user-generated content and transparent brand communication fostering stronger emotional connections than traditional advertising messages (Pittman et al., 2022).

Consumer engagement on social media extends beyond exposure to advertising and involves active interaction, participation, and relationship-building between brands and consumers. Hollebeek et al. (2017) conceptualize consumer engagement as a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that influence satisfaction, loyalty,

and advocacy. In African markets, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X have become essential engagement tools, reshaping business, consumer dynamics and empowering consumers (Urban & Maphathe, 2021). Empirical evidence from countries such as Nigeria and South Africa suggests that interactive content, influencer collaborations, and responsive communication significantly enhance consumer engagement and purchase outcomes (Edith & Chukwuka, 2025).

Ghana provides a compelling context for examining social media advertising strategies due to its rapidly evolving digital ecosystem. Emerging trends such as influencer marketing, live commerce, and user-generated content have been shown to significantly influence consumer behavior in Ghana's fast-moving consumer goods sector (Kusi et al., 2020). However, effective social media marketing in emerging African markets requires sensitivity to cultural values, local consumer preferences, and varying levels of digital literacy. As a result, global brands like Dove must balance brand consistency with localized marketing strategies to remain relevant and effective in the Ghanaian context.

Even though there is growing scholarly interest in social media marketing, most existing studies focus on Western markets. There is limited empirical evidence on how global beauty brands adapt their social media advertising strategies to African contexts, particularly Ghana. Although Dove's campaigns have been widely studied globally, little is known about how Ghanaian consumers perceive and respond to the brand's social media advertising strategies. This gap is significant, given that consumer responses to purpose-driven and activist branding may vary across cultural contexts. Consequently, context-specific research is necessary to inform both academic discourse and practical marketing strategies within Ghana's beauty industry.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social media has transformed brand–consumer communication by enabling interactive engagement, targeted advertising, and community building. As the global beauty and personal care market continues to expand, social media platforms have become central to brand promotion and consumer influence (Statista, 2024). Understanding consumer perceptions of social media advertising strategies is therefore critical for brands seeking to optimize marketing effectiveness and sustain competitive advantage.

Dove’s *Real Beauty* campaign has positioned the brand as a leader in purpose-driven advertising, challenging conventional beauty norms while achieving notable commercial success. Although Dove has extensively utilized social media platforms to promote its values and products globally, there remains limited understanding of how consumers in African markets, particularly Ghana, perceive and engage with these advertising strategies. Ghana’s growing digital population and active social media usage present significant opportunities for global brands; however, empirical evidence on consumer responses to Dove’s localized social media advertising remains scarce. This knowledge gap limits the ability of marketers and scholars to assess the effectiveness of such strategies within the Ghanaian context. Therefore, this study seeks to explore Ghanaian consumers’ perceptions of Dove’s social media advertising strategies and their influence on consumer engagement.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to explore the social media advertising strategies employed by Dove in marketing its beauty products in Ghana. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the social media platforms and advertising strategies used by Dove in Ghana.

2. Assess Ghanaian consumers' perceptions of Dove's social media advertising strategies.
3. Determine how Dove's social media advertising strategies influence consumer engagement in Ghana.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What social media platforms and advertising strategies does Dove use in Ghana?
2. How do Ghanaian consumers perceive Dove's social media advertising strategies?
3. How do Dove's social media advertising strategies influence consumer engagement in Ghana?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in advancing understanding of social media advertising and consumer perception within the Ghanaian beauty market. Academically, it contributes to the limited body of literature on how global beauty brands' social media advertising strategies are perceived in emerging African markets. While much of the existing research focuses on Western contexts, this study provides context-specific empirical evidence from Ghana, thereby enriching theoretical discussions on consumer perception, engagement, authenticity, and digital advertising effectiveness.

From a practical perspective, the findings will be valuable to marketing managers, brand strategists, and advertising practitioners in the beauty and personal care industry. The study offers insights into the effectiveness of different platforms, content types and messaging approaches. These insights will guide brands in developing culturally relevant, engaging, and authentic social media campaigns that enhance consumer engagement, brand trust and loyalty. The results will also

benefit both multinational and local beauty brands seeking to localize their digital marketing strategies in Ghana and similar emerging markets.

The study is also significant for policy makers and industry regulators, as it highlights consumer views on credibility, ethical advertising, and responsible brand communication on social media platforms. Such insights can inform the development of guidelines and policies that promote ethical and consumer-sensitive advertising practices, particularly in the beauty industry where representations of body image and identity are critical.

Finally, this study provides a foundation for future research on social media advertising and consumer behavior in Africa. Its findings and methodological approach will support comparative studies, longitudinal analyses and further investigations into purpose-driven branding and digital engagement in emerging economies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining consumer perceptions of social media advertising strategies employed by Dove beauty products in Ghana. Geographically, the study is limited to Ghana and specifically considers consumers who are active users of social media platforms where Dove maintains an advertising presence. The study concentrates on major social media platforms commonly used in Ghana, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter/X, as these platforms are central to Dove's digital marketing activities.

Conceptually, the study is confined to social media advertising strategies such as content type, message tone, visual style, use of influencers, interactivity, and engagement mechanisms. It further examines consumer perception in terms of perceived authenticity, credibility, trust, and overall attitude toward Dove's social media advertisements. In addition, the study considers consumer

engagement outcomes, including likes, comments, shares, and other forms of online interaction with Dove's social media content. The research does not assess offline advertising strategies, traditional media campaigns, or direct sales performance.

Methodologically, the study is limited to data collected from consumers through survey questionnaires focusing on individuals who have been exposed to Dove's social media advertising. The scope excludes non-social media users, corporate marketing personnel, and comparative analysis with other beauty brands.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study and presents the background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and organization of the study.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature related to social media advertising, advertising strategies, consumer perception, and consumer engagement. It also discusses relevant theoretical and empirical studies and presents the conceptual framework guiding the study.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, including the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the analysis and discussion of the data, highlighting key findings in relation to the research objectives and questions.

Chapter Five summarizes the findings, draws conclusions, discusses implications, acknowledges limitations, and offers recommendations for practice and future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature relevant to understanding consumer perceptions of social media advertising strategies for beauty products, with specific focus on the Ghanaian context. The chapter is organized into four main sections. First, the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study are presented, including the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Identity Theory, Stimulus-Organism-Response Model, Social Influence Theory and Consumer Culture Theory. Second, the conceptual foundations examine key concepts including social media advertising, advertising strategies, consumer perception and consumer engagement. Third, empirical studies relevant to social media advertising effectiveness, beauty industry dynamics and consumer behavior in African markets are reviewed. Finally, the chapter identifies gaps in existing literature and establishes the rationale for the current study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Multiple theoretical perspectives provide complementary lenses for analyzing how social media advertising influences consumer perception and behavior. This study integrates seven theoretical frameworks that collectively explain the cognitive, affective and behavioral processes through which consumers interact with and respond to social media advertising.

2.1.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model, developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), remains foundational to understanding persuasive communication in advertising contexts. The model posits that persuasion occurs through two distinct routes: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route involves careful and thoughtful consideration of message arguments, where individuals engage in high elaboration, critically evaluating the quality and strength of the information presented. In contrast, the peripheral route operates when individuals engage in low elaboration, relying on heuristic cues such as source attractiveness, social proof, celebrity endorsement, or visual appeal rather than message content quality (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The model suggests that attitudes formed through the central route tend to be more persistent, resistant to counter-persuasion, and predictive of behavior compared to attitudes formed through peripheral processing. For Dove's social media advertising in Ghana, ELM suggests that effectiveness depends on matching message complexity to consumer involvement levels and leveraging both informational content (central route) and visual aesthetics, influencer credibility, and social proof metrics (peripheral routes).

2.1.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior, articulated by Ajzen (1991), provides a framework for predicting and understanding human behavior in specific contexts. TPB proposes that behavioral intention that is the immediate antecedent of actual behavior is determined by three conceptually independent factors: attitude toward the behavior (the degree to which performance of the behavior is positively or negatively valued), subjective norms (perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior), and perceived behavioral control (perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior) (Ajzen, 1991). This framework proves particularly relevant for understanding beauty

product purchasing in Ghana's collectivist culture, where subjective norms perceived such as social pressure from family, friends, and community carry substantial weight in purchasing decisions. For Dove's advertising strategy, TPB suggests that effectiveness requires not only creating positive brand attitudes but also addressing social normative influences and ensuring that consumers perceive beauty product purchases as accessible and achievable.

2.1.3 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratifications Theory, originating with Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), shifts focus from what media do to people to what people do with media. The theory posits that individuals actively seek out media to satisfy specific needs and achieve particular gratifications (Katz et al., 1973). Dolan et al. (2016) applied UGT to social media engagement behavior, identifying five primary gratification categories: cognitive needs (information seeking, learning about products), affective needs (entertainment, aesthetic enjoyment), social integrative needs (social interaction, connection with others, status enhancement), personal integrative needs (self-esteem, identity construction, self-expression), and tension release (escapism, relaxation, diversion). Empirical research by Whiting and Williams (2013) found that 88% of social media users seek social interaction gratifications, 80% information seeking, and 76% time-passing. For beauty brand social media advertising, UGT illuminates why consumers engage with brand content beyond purchase intent, seeking beauty tips and tutorials (cognitive), enjoying visually appealing content (affective), connecting with brand communities (social integrative), constructing beauty-related identities (personal integrative), and browsing for leisure (tension release). Dove's Real Beauty campaign, for instance, addresses personal integrative needs by offering alternative identity constructions around authentic rather than idealized beauty.

2.1.4 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory, proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), explains how individuals derive self-concept from group membership and how this identification influences behavior. The theory distinguishes between personal identity (individual characteristics) and social identity (group-based self-concept), proposing that individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, deriving self-esteem from positive evaluations of their in-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). For Dove, whose Real Beauty campaign explicitly constructs brand communities around body positivity, diversity, and authentic beauty standards, SIT provides crucial insights into how identification with brand values drives engagement and loyalty. When consumers identify with Dove's challenge to conventional beauty standards, they experience the brand as an extension of their social identity, leading to stronger commitment, advocacy, and resistance to competitive messaging. In Ghana's collectivist culture, where group identity holds particular salience, brand communities that align with cultural values may prove especially powerful in driving consumer engagement.

2.1.5 Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model

The Stimulus-Organism-Response Model, introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), offers a mechanistic framework for understanding how environmental stimuli influence behavior through internal psychological states. The model proposes that environmental stimuli (S) trigger internal cognitive and affective states within the organism (O), which subsequently influence behavioral responses (R). In social media advertising contexts, stimuli include advertisement characteristics (visual design, message content, interactivity features), organism encompasses psychological states (emotions, cognitive engagement, arousal, pleasure), and responses include engagement behaviors (likes, shares, comments) and purchase intentions (Vieira, 2013). For

Dove's Ghana strategy, S-O-R suggests that advertising effectiveness depends on creating stimuli that trigger positive emotional and cognitive states, which then translate into engagement and purchase behaviors.

2.1.6 Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory, grounded in Kelman's (1958) seminal work, explains how individuals' attitudes and behaviors are shaped by social forces. Kelman identified three distinct processes of social influence: compliance (behavioral conformity motivated by desire for rewards or avoidance of punishment), identification (adopting attitudes or behaviors to maintain satisfying relationships with others), and internalization (accepting influence because the induced attitudes or behaviors align with one's value system). In social media contexts, influencers can affect consumer behavior through all three mechanisms, followers may purchase products to gain social approval (compliance), emulate influencers they admire (identification), or adopt product recommendations that align with their values (internalization) (Goodwin, 1987; Kelman, 2017). For beauty advertising in Ghana, where interpersonal influence carries particular weight in collectivist culture, understanding these social influence mechanisms helps explain why influencer partnerships and peer recommendations prove especially effective in driving purchase decisions.

2.1.7 Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)

Consumer Culture Theory, articulated by Arnould and Thompson (2006), examines how cultural meanings, socio-historic influences, and market-mediated ideologies shape consumer experiences and identities (Arnould, 2006). CCT challenges the universal applicability of Western consumer behavior models, emphasizing that consumption meanings are culturally constructed and contextually embedded (Arnould & Thompson, 2015). The approach examines four research

domains: consumer identity projects (how consumers construct and express identities through marketplace resources), marketplace cultures (social organization of consumption communities), sociohistoric patterning of consumption (how class, gender, ethnicity, and age structures shape consumer experiences), and mass-mediated marketplace ideologies (cultural meanings transmitted through advertising and media). For understanding beauty advertising in Ghana, CCT illuminates how global beauty brands like Dove must negotiate tensions between standardized global messaging and locally meaningful beauty ideals. This theoretical lens helps explain why cultural Localisation emerges as critical for advertising effectiveness in non-Western markets.

2.1.8 Integrated Theoretical Framework for the Study

For this study of Dove's social media advertising effectiveness in Ghana, an integrated multi-theoretical framework combining ELM, TPB, and S-O-R as primary theories, supported by SIT, UGT, and Social Influence Theory, provides comprehensive analytical coverage. ELM explains how consumers process advertising messages through central and peripheral routes, TPB predicts how attitudes, norms, and perceived control shape purchase intentions, and S-O-R links advertising stimuli to psychological states and behavioral outcomes. SIT illuminates brand community identification effects, UGT explains engagement motivations, and Social Influence Theory accounts for influencer and peer effects. Consumer Culture Theory provides the overarching cultural lens, ensuring that analysis remains sensitive to Ghanaian cultural context rather than assuming universal applicability of Western models. This integrated framework acknowledges that consumer responses to social media advertising result from multiple simultaneous processes from cognitive evaluation, emotional response, social influence, identity construction, and gratification seeking, all operating within culturally specific contexts.

2.2 Conceptual Foundations of the Study

This section provides conceptual clarification of the key constructs examined in this study: social media advertising, advertising strategies, consumer perception, and consumer engagement. Clear conceptual definitions establish boundaries for empirical investigation and ensure theoretical precision in analyzing Dove's social media advertising effectiveness in Ghana.

2.2.1 Social Media Advertising

Social media advertising refers to the use of social networking platforms to create, deliver, and distribute paid or branded promotional messages to targeted audiences. It enables organizations to communicate with consumers through interactive, networked, and user-generated environments that allow for real-time feedback and engagement. Unlike traditional advertising, social media advertising facilitates two-way communication, personalization, and community building (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media advertising involves “the use of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization’s stakeholders.” These platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok, allow brands to tailor messages using multimedia content, hashtags, influencers, and interactive features to reach specific consumer segments.

In the context of global brands such as Dove, social media advertising serves as a strategic tool for reinforcing brand identity, communicating brand values, and shaping consumer perceptions within localized cultural settings.

Social media advertising involves two primary approaches: organic and paid. Organic social media advertising refers to unpaid content that brands publish on their profiles, including posts, stories, and user interactions that reach audiences through natural discovery and sharing (Pitsillis, 2023).

This approach relies on building follower engagement and creating shareable content without direct monetary investment. In contrast, paid social media advertising involves sponsored content where brands pay platforms to display advertisements to targeted audiences beyond their organic followers. Paid advertising includes promoted posts, display ads, and sponsored stories, allowing precise demographic and behavioural targeting. Both approaches are integral to comprehensive social media strategies (Pancheva & Marinova, 2025).

2.2.2 Advertising Strategies

Advertising strategies refer to the planned approaches and techniques used by firms to design and deliver advertising messages in order to achieve specific communication and marketing objectives. These strategies guide decisions related to message content, appeal, tone, execution style, media selection, and audience targeting (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Advertising strategies determines “what the advertisement will say (message strategy) and how it will say it (creative strategy).” Common advertising strategies include product-centered appeals, emotional appeals, informational appeals, lifestyle positioning, cultural symbolism, sustainability messaging, and interactive or engagement-driven tactics.

In social media environments, advertising strategies are often adapted to platform-specific features and audience behaviors. This allows brands to employ diverse approaches, such as hashtag campaigns, visual storytelling, influencer partnerships, and product sampling, to enhance message effectiveness and relevance. The strategic use of these approaches influences how consumers interpret, respond to, and engage with brand communications.

2.2.3 Consumer Perception

Consumer perception refers to the process through which individuals select, organize, and interpret marketing stimuli to form a meaningful understanding of a brand, product, or advertisement. It is shaped by personal experiences, beliefs, cultural background, and exposure to marketing communications (Agyekum et al., 2015). It includes “the way consumers interpret and make sense of information to create a meaningful picture of the world.” In advertising contexts, consumer perception determines how messages are decoded, whether they are perceived as credible, relevant, persuasive, or misleading, and how they influence attitudes toward a brand.

On social media, consumer perception is influenced not only by brand-generated content but also by peer interactions, comments, shares, and user-generated content. These interactive elements can strengthen or weaken perceptions of authenticity, trustworthiness, and brand values. For Dove, consumer perception is particularly relevant given the brand’s emphasis on themes such as real beauty, inclusivity, and ethical positioning.

2.2.4 Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement refers to the level of a consumer’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with a brand through interactive marketing platforms. It goes beyond passive exposure to advertising and includes activities such as liking, commenting, sharing, participating in campaigns, and creating brand-related content (Barger et al., 2016) It can also be conceptualized as “a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal brand.” In social media contexts, engagement reflects the depth of a consumer’s relationship with a brand and serves as an indicator of message effectiveness and brand resonance.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Empirical Studies on Dove's Advertising strategies

Research examining Dove's advertising campaigns provides direct insights into how the brand's distinctive marketing approach influences consumer perceptions and brand relationships. Kim and Kim (2025) conducted a comprehensive analysis of The Dove Self-Esteem Project using sentiment analysis, topic modelling, and word network analysis of consumer comments on social media platforms. Their findings revealed complex consumer reception characterized by a spectrum of emotional responses and discussions centred on authenticity, engagement, and social impact. The study highlighted the role of authenticity in consumer-brand relationships and the importance of multifaceted engagement in brand strategies. It demonstrates that Dove's socially responsible branding generates diverse consumer responses, with authenticity emerging as a critical factor in determining campaign effectiveness. The findings suggest that while consumers appreciate socially conscious messaging, they scrutinize brand authenticity closely, with scepticism emerging when messaging appears disconnected from corporate practices.

Murray (2013) provided critical feminist analysis of The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, examining the campaign as a case study in the production and consumption of contemporary meanings of feminism, social change, and female beauty in global consumer culture. The semiotic analysis of print, television, and new media texts revealed a juxtaposition in the campaign's "real beauty" messaging: signs reference feminist politics of liberation while simultaneously dictating a beauty ideology that encompasses appearance and behavior. Murray argued that the campaign positions the brand as the site for female activism about beauty standards, effectively positioning the corporation to usurp the feminist role of engendering social change. This critical perspective reveals tensions between commercial interests and social activism, suggesting that corporate-led

social change initiatives may constrain rather than expand possibilities for challenging beauty norms. The study raises important questions about whether Dove's Real Beauty campaign genuinely challenges beauty standards or merely reconfigures them within a neoliberal framework that ultimately serves corporate interests.

Kim et al. (2019) examined how self-related brand images impact advertising effectiveness by comparing Dove (positioned as an "actual" image brand) with L'Oréal (positioned as an "ideal" image brand). Their experimental studies with both students and general population samples demonstrated that for Dove, participants responded positively toward advertisements framed with low-level construal terms emphasizing concrete, immediate features, whereas they did not differentiate between high-level and low-level construal advertisements for L'Oréal. These findings suggest that Dove's actual/authentic positioning creates specific expectations about advertising messaging, consumers expect concrete, relatable content consistent with the brand's authenticity claims. This research has important implications for the current study, suggesting that advertising strategy effectiveness may depend on alignment between brand positioning and message framing, with Dove requiring authentic, concrete messaging to maintain brand consistency.

2.3.2 Social Media Advertising Impact on Consumer Behavior

Research examining social media advertising's general impact on consumer behavior provides broader context for understanding advertising effectiveness mechanisms. Ayebale (2025) conducted quantitative research in Finland examining social media advertising impact across different product categories. The study revealed that consumer responses vary depending on product category, advertisement format, and personalization level. Fashion, beauty, and electronics brands were found to benefit significantly from social media promotions, while other categories

required more tailored strategies. The research identified advertisement credibility, relevance, and emotional appeal as crucial factors determining effectiveness. These findings suggest that beauty products represent a particularly suitable category for social media advertising, with visual nature and identity-construction functions making them well-matched to social media affordances.

Useni's research utilizing secondary data from 2013 to 2023 analysed the relationship between social media advertising exposure and consumer buying behavior through regression analysis, mediation analysis, and moderation analysis (Useni, 2024). The findings revealed that social media exposure positively influences consumer purchase intentions, with brand awareness mediating this relationship. Significantly, demographic variables including gender, age group, and occupation moderated the effectiveness of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior. These findings emphasize the importance of demographic segmentation in social media advertising strategy, suggesting that effectiveness varies across consumer groups. For the current study examining Ghanaian consumers, these moderation effects highlight the need to consider demographic factors when analyzing advertising strategy effectiveness.

Stanclik and Barański (2024) conducted research with 100 Polish respondents exploring consumer perceptions and interactions with social media advertising. Their findings revealed that while social media users encounter advertisements daily, predominantly for clothing, cosmetics, and electronics, consumers often find them less engaging, with significant portions expressing annoyance and tendency to block or ignore marketing content. Text-based advertisements were found least attractive, while short video formats demonstrated greater potential for capturing audience attention. YouTube emerged as the most memorable advertising platform. Most notably, consumers reported minimal persuasive impact, with few feeling motivated to purchase or recommend advertised products. These findings suggest that advertising format significantly

influences effectiveness, with video content outperforming static text. The research highlights the challenge of advertising saturation, where overexposure leads to consumer resistance and avoidance behaviors.

Macías Urrego et al. (2024) analysed social media's impact on pre-purchase decision making among current and future professionals in Medellín, Colombia. Their survey of 214 students and graduates revealed that 92.5% actively used social media for information before making purchase decisions, with Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook as preferred platforms. Instagram was notably popular among those aged 18-25, while Facebook and YouTube had more uniform appeal across age groups. The findings suggest no significant age-based differences in platform preferences, implying that personal factors beyond age influence social media choice. This research demonstrates the central role social media plays in contemporary consumer information search and decision-making processes, with platform selection varying by demographic and personal preferences. For the current study, these findings emphasize the importance of multi-platform strategies that recognize differential platform effectiveness across consumer segments.

2.3.3 Social Media Marketing in the Beauty and Cosmetics Industry

Research specifically examining beauty and cosmetics industry dynamics provides industry-specific context for understanding advertising effectiveness. Ali's study exploring social media advertising impact on consumer purchasing behavior for skincare products utilized a quantitative survey approach to examine how different forms of social media advertising, including influencer endorsements, sponsored posts, and user-generated content affect purchase intentions, brand loyalty, and trust (Ali, 2024). Results indicated that social media advertising significantly impacts consumer decision-making, with influencer marketing being particularly

influential in shaping brand trust and increasing purchase intentions. Consumers demonstrated higher likelihood of purchasing skincare products when they perceived advertising as authentic and relatable. The research highlighted the role of consumer engagement, reviews, and online communities in reinforcing buying decisions. These findings emphasize authenticity and relatability as critical success factors for beauty brand advertising, consistent with Dove's authentic positioning but raising questions about how authenticity is perceived and evaluated by consumers in different cultural contexts.

Begum and Israel (2024) explored how social media marketing influences women's buying behavior for cosmetic products, noting that online advertisements on social media influence nearly 90% of respondents to consider purchasing cosmetic products. The research examined how social media marketing shapes women's buying behavior through information provision, recommendations, and creating favourable perceptions of brands and products. The study emphasized that women consumers make informed decisions to enhance their attractiveness due to education and financial independence, positioning them as sophisticated consumers who actively seek information and evaluate options. Consumer purchasing behavior was found to be influenced by factors including needs, tastes, financial capacity, self-concept, culture, and personal values. This research highlights the complexity of beauty product purchase decisions, involving both functional considerations and identity-construction processes, with social media serving as primary information source and influence channel.

Another study by Begum and Israel (2024) examined social media marketing's effect on student-consumer purchasing behavior, finding that social media serves as a powerful tool for interactions among friends, family, acquaintances, and strangers, with significant influence on student-consumer decisions at various stages of consumer purchases. This research demonstrates

that social media's influence operates through multiple mechanisms, direct brand messaging, peer recommendations, influencer endorsements, and community discussions, creating a complex web of influences that shape purchasing decisions. The focus on student consumers is particularly relevant for beauty marketing, as younger demographics represent both current consumers and future market segments, with purchasing patterns and brand loyalties established during young adulthood often persisting throughout life.

2.3.4 Sustainability and Green Marketing in Beauty Products

Research on sustainability messaging in beauty marketing provides insights into emerging consumer expectations regarding environmental responsibility. Nayak et al. (2024) examined the impact of green marketing on consumer purchase intention for sustainable cosmetic products through a survey of 247 green product consumers. The study found that consumer awareness and perception, social influence, price and perceived cost, and brand image and loyalty determine green marketing's impact on purchase intentions. Green marketing strategies including transparent labelling, organic products, and eco-friendly packaging attract sustainability-conscious consumers, with these strategies building trust and loyalty among environmentally concerned customers. Consumers demonstrated willingness to pay premium prices for green cosmetics due to perceptions of health benefits and social consciousness. However, the research emphasized that green marketing effectiveness depends on claim authenticity, with false information or greenwashing leading to consumer mistrust and brand reputation damage. These findings have important implications for the current study, as preliminary data suggests Ghanaian consumers demonstrate limited awareness of Dove's sustainability campaigns ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 0.86$), indicating potential disconnect between brand messaging and consumer perception.

2.3.5 Synthesis and Gaps in Existing Research

The empirical literature reviewed reveals several consistent patterns relevant to the current study. First, authenticity emerges as a critical determinant of advertising effectiveness across multiple studies (Kim & Kim, 2025; Murray, 2013; Ali), with consumers increasingly scrutinizing brand claims and rejecting messaging perceived as inauthentic or inconsistent with brand actions. For Dove, whose brand identity centres on authentic beauty representations, maintaining perceived authenticity across diverse cultural contexts becomes paramount. Second, the research demonstrates that beauty products represent particularly suitable categories for social media advertising (Ayebale, 2025; Begum & Israel, 2024), with visual nature, identity-construction functions, and demonstration possibilities aligning well with social media platform affordances. Third, advertising format significantly influences effectiveness, with video content generally outperforming static text (Stanclik & Barański, 2024), and platform selection varying by demographic characteristics and personal preferences (Macías Urrego et al., 2024).

Fourth, influencer marketing proves particularly effective in beauty product contexts (Ali), suggesting that leveraging trusted individuals enhances brand credibility and purchase intentions more effectively than direct brand messaging alone. Fifth, sustainability messaging shows potential for influencing purchase intentions among environmentally conscious consumers (Nayak et al., 2024), but effectiveness depends critically on authenticity and transparency, with greenwashing attempts backfiring through consumer mistrust. Sixth, demographic factors including gender, age, education, and income moderate advertising effectiveness (Useni), suggesting that one-size-fits-all approaches prove less effective than demographically targeted strategies.

However, significant gaps remain in the empirical literature that the current study addresses. First, no identified research specifically examines beauty brand social media advertising in the Ghanaian context. While studies from Poland (Stanclik & Barański, 2024), Colombia (Macías Urrego et al., 2024), Finland (Ayebale, 2025), and India (Begum & Israel, 2024; Nayak et al., 2024) provide valuable insights, generalizing findings across vastly different cultural, economic, and technological contexts risks invalid conclusions. Ghana's unique combination of collectivist culture, emerging middle class, rapid digital adoption, and distinct beauty standards creates a specific context requiring dedicated investigation.

Second, while research examines Dove's campaigns (Kim & Kim, 2025; Murray, 2013; Kim et al., 2019), no studies investigate how these campaigns are perceived specifically in African markets. Murray's (2013) critical analysis raises important questions about whether Dove's Real Beauty campaign genuinely challenges beauty norms or reconfigures them within neoliberal frameworks, but this analysis emerges from Western feminist perspectives. How Ghanaian consumers, operating within different cultural frameworks regarding beauty, feminism, body image, and corporate social responsibility, interpret and respond to these campaigns remains unexplored. The current study addresses this gap by examining Ghanaian consumer perceptions directly.

Third, existing research insufficiently examines platform-specific advertising strategy effectiveness. While studies identify platform preferences (Macías Urrego et al., 2024) and general format effects (Stanclik & Barański, 2024), systematic analysis of how specific advertising strategies (product appeals, interactivity features, cultural Localisation, sustainability messaging, visual aesthetics) perform across different platforms remains limited. The current study's content

analysis across five platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, TikTok, YouTube) coupled with consumer perception measurement addresses this gap.

Fourth, the relationship between cultural Localisation and advertising effectiveness requires deeper investigation in African contexts. While research acknowledges culture's importance (Begum & Israel, 2024), empirical evidence quantifying how cultural adaptation influences consumer perceptions in specific African markets remains scarce. The current study explicitly examines cultural Localisation as a distinct advertising strategy dimension, measuring Ghanaian consumer perceptions of Dove's efforts to reflect local cultural elements, values, and beauty standards.

Fifth, while sustainability messaging shows promise (Nayak et al., 2024), understanding how environmental consciousness and sustainability expectations vary across markets with different economic development levels, environmental challenges, and cultural values remains underdeveloped. Ghana's emerging environmental awareness, combined with pressing developmental priorities, creates a unique context where sustainability messaging may be received differently than in developed markets. Preliminary findings suggest limited awareness of Dove's sustainability campaigns among Ghanaian consumers, indicating potential communication challenges requiring investigation.

Finally, existing research inadequately examines the relationship between specific advertising strategies and consumer engagement outcomes in African contexts. While studies demonstrate that social media advertising influences purchase intentions generally (Ali; Useni; Ayebale, 2025), understanding which specific strategies most effectively drive engagement behaviors (following brand pages, sharing content, participating in discussions) and emotional connections (brand trust, loyalty, identification) among Ghanaian consumers requires dedicated

investigation. The current study addresses this gap through comprehensive measurement of perceptions across five advertising strategy dimensions and six engagement outcome measures, enabling analysis of strategy-engagement relationships within the Ghanaian market context.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed literature relevant to understanding consumer perceptions of social media advertising strategies in the beauty industry. The theoretical framework integrated seven theories i.e. Elaboration Likelihood Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Identity Theory, Stimulus-Organism-Response Model, Social Influence Theory, and Consumer Culture Theory, providing complementary lenses for analyzing advertising effectiveness. The conceptual review defined key constructs including social media advertising, advertising strategies, consumer perception, and consumer engagement, establishing clear boundaries for empirical investigation. The empirical review synthesized research across contexts, revealing that authenticity emerges as critical for advertising effectiveness, though what constitutes authenticity varies culturally.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in exploring consumer perceptions of social media advertising strategies of Dove beauty products in Ghana. It details the research design, study population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations that guided the study. The methodology was designed to systematically investigate how Ghanaian consumers perceive and engage with Dove's social media advertising strategies across various platforms.

3.1 Research Approach

A research approach is the plan or strategy that guides how a study is conducted (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Taherdoost, 2022). It determines the direction of the research, including how data is collected, analysed and interpreted. There are three main types namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Polit & Beck, 2008). This study employed a mixed method approach which focuses on combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of consumer perception of Dove's social media advertising strategies in Ghana.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a sequential mixed methods research approach, in which qualitative and quantitative methods were implemented in distinct but connected phases (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The approach allowed findings from the initial qualitative phase to inform the

design and focus of the subsequent quantitative phase. This sequencing enhanced a deeper understanding of Dove's social media advertising strategies and enabled the systematic measurement of consumer perceptions. The sequential mixed methods approach was considered appropriate because it integrates exploratory insights with empirical validation, thereby strengthening the robustness and credibility of the study findings.

The first phase involved exploratory content analysis of Dove's social media platforms to identify the specific advertising strategies employed by the brand. This preliminary exploration informed the development of the survey instrument by ensuring that questions aligned with actual advertising practices observed on Dove's social media channels. The second phase involved primary data collection through a structured questionnaire administered to Ghanaian consumers who have been exposed to Dove's social media advertising.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted across Ghana, with particular concentration in the Greater Accra, Central, and Ashanti regions. Ghana was selected as the study area due to its growing digital landscape and increasing social media penetration, particularly among young and middle-aged adults. These regions represent significant urban centers with high internet connectivity and active social media usage, making them ideal locations for studying consumer perceptions of social media advertising. The concentration of respondents in Greater Accra (92.8%) reflects the region's status as Ghana's commercial hub with the highest concentration of beauty product consumers and social media users.

3.4 Population

The target population for this study comprised Ghanaian consumers who use social media platforms and have been exposed to Dove beauty product advertisements on these platforms. This population includes individuals across various age groups, educational backgrounds, occupational statuses, and income levels who actively engage with social media content. The population was considered appropriate because these individuals represent the primary target audience for Dove's social media advertising efforts in Ghana and possess firsthand experience with the advertising strategies under investigation.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

3.5.1 Sample Size

A total sample of 250 respondents participated in this study. This sample size was determined based on considerations of statistical adequacy for quantitative analysis and practical feasibility. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) a sample size of 250 is adequate for descriptive studies where the population is large and heterogeneous. Additionally, this sample size satisfies the minimum requirements for conducting various statistical analyses including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, which typically require at least 200 cases for reliable results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013)

3.5.2 Sampling Technique

The study employed a convenience sampling technique combined with purposive sampling. Convenience sampling was used as the primary approach due to the online nature of the survey distribution, which allowed for efficient data collection from accessible respondents who met the study criteria. The Google Forms link was distributed through various social media

platforms, email, and WhatsApp groups, enabling participants to complete the survey at their convenience.

Purposive sampling criteria were applied to ensure that only eligible respondents participated in the study. The inclusion criteria required participants to be: (a) Ghanaian residents, (b) active social media users, (c) exposed to Dove beauty product advertisements on social media platforms, and (d) willing to provide informed consent. These criteria ensured that respondents possessed the necessary knowledge and experience to provide meaningful insights into Dove's social media advertising strategies. While convenience sampling has limitations regarding generalizability, it was deemed appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study and the specific target population of social media users.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

The content analysis phase was conducted over a period of two weeks. The researcher systematically examined Dove's official social media accounts across five platforms: Facebook (@Dove), Instagram (@dove), Twitter/X (@Dove), TikTok (@dove), and YouTube (Dove). For each platform, the analysis focused on posts published within the previous six months to ensure current relevance whilst maintaining sufficient content volume for meaningful analysis.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument for this study. The questionnaire was developed based on extensive literature review on social media advertising effectiveness, consumer perception theories, and preliminary content analysis of Dove's social media advertising strategies. The instrument was designed to capture comprehensive data on consumer perceptions, engagement levels, and overall evaluation of Dove's social media advertising efforts.

The questionnaire comprised seven distinct sections. Section A collected demographic information including age, gender, educational level, occupation, monthly income, and region of residence. Section B assessed social media usage patterns, including platforms used and daily usage duration. Section C examined awareness of Dove's social media advertising strategies, including platforms where advertisements were encountered, types of content observed, and themes identified in campaigns.

Section D, the core of the instrument, measured consumer perceptions across five dimensions using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The five dimensions assessed were: (1) Product-Centered Appeal (3 items measuring clarity of product benefits, trust-building, and product suitability), (2) Hashtag and Interactivity (3 items measuring hashtag effectiveness, campaign participation encouragement, and engagement motivation), (3) Cultural Localisation (3 items measuring cultural reflection, consumer identification, and localized content effectiveness), (4) Sustainability and Ethics (3 items measuring environmental concern, awareness of sustainability campaigns, and impact on brand opinion), and (5) Message Tone and Visual Style (3 items measuring tone positivity, visual attractiveness, and brand identity consistency).

Section E measured consumer engagement through six items on a 5-point Likert scale, assessing product interest, purchase intention, page following behavior, content sharing, emotional connection, and trust development. Section F evaluated overall advertising effectiveness through two items examining general effectiveness and competitive positioning. Section G provided space for optional open-ended comments regarding likes and suggestions for improvement.

The questionnaire was designed for clarity, brevity, and ease of completion, with an estimated completion time of 10-15 minutes. All closed-ended questions used standardized

response formats to facilitate quantitative analysis. The Likert scale items were carefully worded to avoid ambiguity and response bias, ensuring that respondents could accurately express their perceptions and experiences.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

3.6.1 Validity

Content validity was established through multiple approaches. First, the questionnaire items were developed based on established theories and frameworks from consumer behavior and advertising effectiveness literature. Second, the instrument was reviewed by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in marketing and public relations to assess whether the items adequately covered all aspects of the research objectives. Their feedback was incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. Third, face validity was ensured by presenting the questionnaire to a small group of five individuals similar to the target population to assess clarity, comprehensibility, and appropriateness of the questions. Minor adjustments were made based on their feedback before full-scale data collection commenced.

3.6.2 Reliability

A pilot study involving 30 respondents was conducted to assess the reliability of the instrument. Internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the multi-item scales. The Product-Centered Appeal scale achieved $\alpha = 0.82$, Hashtag and Interactivity scale achieved $\alpha = 0.78$, Cultural Localisation scale achieved $\alpha = 0.85$, Sustainability and Ethics scale achieved $\alpha = 0.81$, Message Tone and Visual Style scale achieved $\alpha = 0.79$, and Consumer Engagement scale achieved $\alpha = 0.84$. All alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended

threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating acceptable to good internal consistency. These results confirmed that the instrument was reliable for measuring the intended constructs.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted in two distinct phases. The first phase involved exploratory content analysis of Dove's social media platforms. The researcher systematically examined Dove's official social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, TikTok, and YouTube to identify and document the advertising strategies employed. This analysis focused on content types (video ads, image posts, stories, user-generated content, sponsored posts, live sessions), campaign themes (real beauty/body positivity, self-esteem, product benefits, diversity and inclusion, skincare education), and interactive elements (hashtags, engagement prompts, challenges). Observations from this phase informed the development of specific questionnaire items to ensure alignment between actual advertising practices and survey questions.

The second phase involved primary data collection through the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms, a secure and user-friendly online survey platform that automatically collects and organizes responses. The Google Forms link was distributed through multiple channels including social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram), email lists, and professional networks. To maximize response rates, the survey link was shared with a brief introduction explaining the study purpose and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation.

Data collection occurred over a period of four weeks. The questionnaire remained open throughout this period to allow sufficient time for respondents to participate. Participants accessed the survey link at their convenience, read the informed consent statement, and proceeded to

complete the questionnaire only after providing consent. The online format allowed for real-time data collection and automatic recording of responses, minimizing data entry errors and ensuring data integrity.

To encourage participation and ensure data quality, several measures were implemented. The survey introduction clearly stated the academic purpose of the research and assured respondents of confidentiality and anonymity. Screening questions ensured that only eligible participants (those who use social media and have seen Dove advertisements) completed the full survey. The questionnaire was designed with clear instructions, logical flow, and required fields for essential questions to minimize incomplete responses. A total of 250 complete and valid responses were collected and included in the final analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. Upon completion of data collection, responses were automatically exported from Google Forms into Microsoft Excel format and subsequently imported into SPSS for cleaning and analysis. Data cleaning involved checking for missing values, outliers, and response inconsistencies. Cases with excessive missing data were excluded from analysis, while minor missing values were handled using appropriate statistical techniques.

Descriptive statistics formed the foundation of the data analysis. Frequency distributions and percentages were calculated for all categorical demographic variables (gender, educational level, occupation, income categories, regions) and social media usage patterns. These statistics provided a comprehensive profile of the sample characteristics and helped identify patterns in respondent demographics and social media behavior.

For the Likert scale items measuring consumer perceptions and engagement, descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, minimum values, and maximum values were computed for each individual item.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to rigorous ethical standards to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UNIMAC) ethics committee before commencing data collection. The study followed key ethical principles including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their participation in the study. The first page of the online questionnaire presented a detailed consent form explaining the study's purpose, procedures, expected duration, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality provisions, and voluntary nature of participation. Participants were required to actively indicate their consent by checking a consent box and providing their initials and date before accessing the questionnaire. This process ensured that all participants understood what their participation entailed and made an informed decision to participate.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. The questionnaire did not collect any personally identifiable information such as names, email addresses, or phone numbers. Respondents were identified only through automatically generated response numbers by Google Forms. All data were stored securely in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researcher and research supervisor. Aggregated data were used for reporting and analysis, ensuring that individual responses could not be traced back to specific participants.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The consent form explicitly stated that respondents were free to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participants could exit the survey at any point without submitting their responses if they chose not to continue. This principle respected participants' autonomy and right to self-determination.

The study posed minimal risk to participants, as it involved only completion of an online questionnaire about their perceptions of advertising. No sensitive personal information was collected, and no deceptive practices were employed. All collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes as stated in the consent form.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodological framework employed to explore consumer perceptions of Dove's social media advertising strategies in Ghana. The study adopted a sequential mixed methods approach, integrating exploratory qualitative content analysis with quantitative survey methods to achieve both depth and breadth of understanding. The qualitative phase identified key advertising strategies across Dove's social media platforms, which informed the development of a structured questionnaire used in the quantitative phase. The chapter detailed the study area, target population, sample size, and sampling techniques, justifying the selection of Ghanaian social media users exposed to Dove advertisements. It also described the data collection instruments and procedures, including the content analysis of social media platforms and the administration of an online questionnaire. Measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument were outlined, alongside the data analysis procedures using SPSS.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the survey. The findings are presented in line with the research objectives and discussed accordingly.

4.1 Distribution of Dove's Social Media Marketing Strategies Across Platforms

The figure 1 below illustrates the distribution of Dove's marketing strategies across five social media platforms: Facebook, YouTube, X (Twitter), TikTok, and Instagram. Six distinct strategies are represented: Product-Centered Appeal, Hashtag and Interactivity, Cultural Localisation, Sustainability and Ethics, Message Tone and Visual Style, and Product Sampling.

Overall, the findings show that Dove employs different marketing strategies depending on the social media platform, with clear variations in emphasis.

On Facebook, the use of marketing strategies is minimal. Product-Centered Appeal and Hashtag and Interactivity are used at very low frequencies, while Message Tone and Visual Style appear slightly more prominent. No evidence of Cultural Localisation, Sustainability and Ethics, or Product Sampling is observed on this platform.

On YouTube, Dove relies strongly on Product-Centered Appeal, which records one of the highest frequencies among all platforms. Product Sampling is also notably prominent on YouTube, indicating the platform's use for demonstrations and product-focused content. Message Tone and Visual Style are moderately used, while other strategies show little or no presence.

On X (Twitter), there is a more diversified use of strategies. Product-Centered Appeal, Hashtag and Interactivity, and Message Tone and Visual Style all record relatively high frequencies. Cultural Localisation and Sustainability and Ethics appear only marginally, indicating limited emphasis on these strategies on this platform.

On TikTok, Message Tone and Visual Style are the most dominant strategy, showing the highest frequency among all strategies on this platform. Product-Centered Appeal and Hashtag and Interactivity are also used, though to a lesser extent. Other strategies are largely absent, suggesting a strong focus on visual and stylistic communication.

On Instagram, Dove places strong emphasis on Product-Centered Appeal and Message Tone and Visual Style, both recording the highest frequencies on this platform. Other strategies, including Hashtag and Interactivity, Cultural Localisation, Sustainability and Ethics, and Product Sampling, are not evident.

In all, the graph demonstrates that Dove's social media marketing strategies are platform specific. Visual-oriented platforms such as TikTok and Instagram prioritize Message Tone and Visual Style, YouTube emphasizes Product-Centered Appeal and Product Sampling, while X (Twitter) supports a more interactive and mixed strategy approach. Facebook shows the least strategic activity overall.

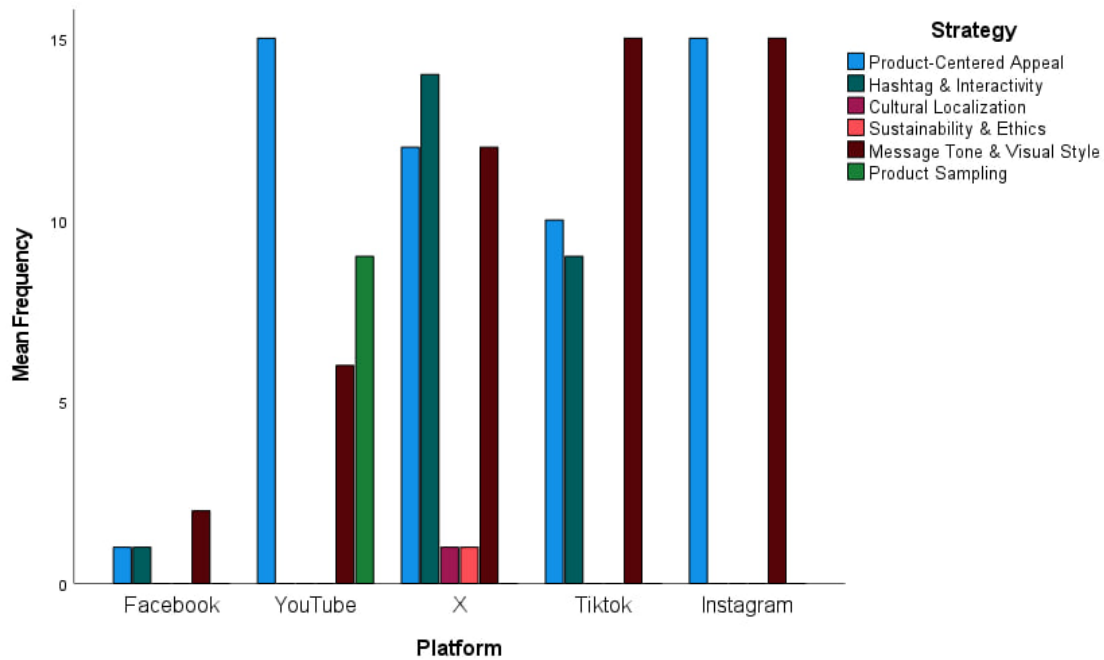


Figure 1. Distribution of Dove’s Social Media Marketing Strategies Across Platforms

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The sample consisted of 250 participants with diverse demographic characteristics. In terms of age distribution, older young adults comprised the largest proportion (42.4%, $n = 106$), followed by middle young adults (37.2%, $n = 93$) and young adults (20.4%, $n = 51$). The sample showed a marked gender imbalance, with females representing the overwhelming majority (82.4%, $n = 206$) compared to males (17.6%, $n = 44$).

Regarding educational attainment, nearly all participants had tertiary education (94.0%, $n = 235$), with only a small fraction having secondary education (6.0%, $n = 15$). The employment status reflected a predominantly working sample, as employed individuals constituted 96.4% ($n = 241$) of participants, while students made up only 3.6% ($n = 9$). Monthly income distribution revealed

that the majority of participants earned between GHS 1,000-2,999 (44.8%, n = 112) or GHS 3,000-5,999 (46.0%, n = 115), with smaller proportions earning GHS 1,000 or less (4.0%, n = 10) or GHS 6,000 or more (5.2%, n = 13).

Geographically, the sample was heavily concentrated in Greater Accra (92.8%, n = 232), with minimal representation from Central (5.6%, n = 14) and Ashanti (1.6%, n = 4) regions. See table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 250)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age Group		
Young adults	51	20.4
Middle young adults	93	37.2
Older young adults	106	42.4
Gender		
Male	44	17.6
Female	206	82.4
Educational Level		
Secondary	15	6.0
Tertiary	235	94.0
Occupation		
Student	9	3.6
Employed	241	96.4

Monthly Income

GHS 1,000	10	4.0
GHS 1,000-2,999	112	44.8
GHS 3,000-5,999	115	46.0
GHS 6,000+	13	5.2

Region in Ghana

Ashanti	4	1.6
Central	14	5.6
Greater Accra	232	92.8

4.3 Social Media Platform Usage

Table X presents respondents' social media platform usage. The results indicate that WhatsApp was the most widely used platform, with 100.0% of respondents reporting regular use (n = 250). This was followed by TikTok (82.8%, n = 207) and Twitter/X (73.2%, n = 183), suggesting a strong preference for interactive and content-driven platforms.

Instagram was also commonly used, with 69.2% (n = 173) of respondents indicating regular usage, while YouTube recorded moderate usage at 54.8% (n = 137). Facebook was the least used platform among respondents, with 49.6% (n = 124) reporting regular use. The findings suggest that respondents are more engaged with mobile-friendly and visually oriented platforms, particularly WhatsApp and TikTok. See table 2

Table 2 Social Media Platform Usage

Social Media Platform	<i>n</i>	% of Responses
Facebook	124	11.5
Instagram	173	16.1
Twitter/X	183	17.0
TikTok	207	19.3
WhatsApp	250	23.3
YouTube	137	12.8
Total	1074	100.0

4.4 Participants Daily Social Media Usage

The bar chart illustrates the distribution of daily social media usage among the 250 participants. The data reveals that the majority of participants engage in moderate to heavy social media use, with 4-6 hours of daily usage being the most common category ($n \approx 97$, approximately 38.8%).

The second most frequent usage pattern was 1-3 hours per day ($n \approx 84$, approximately 33.6%), followed by more than 6 hours daily ($n \approx 55$, approximately 22.0%). Notably, only a small minority of participants reported minimal social media engagement, with fewer than 1 hour of daily usage ($n \approx 15$, approximately 6.0%).

Collectively, these findings indicate that the vast majority of participants (approximately 94%) spend at least 1 hour on social media daily, with over 60% spending 4 or more hours per day.

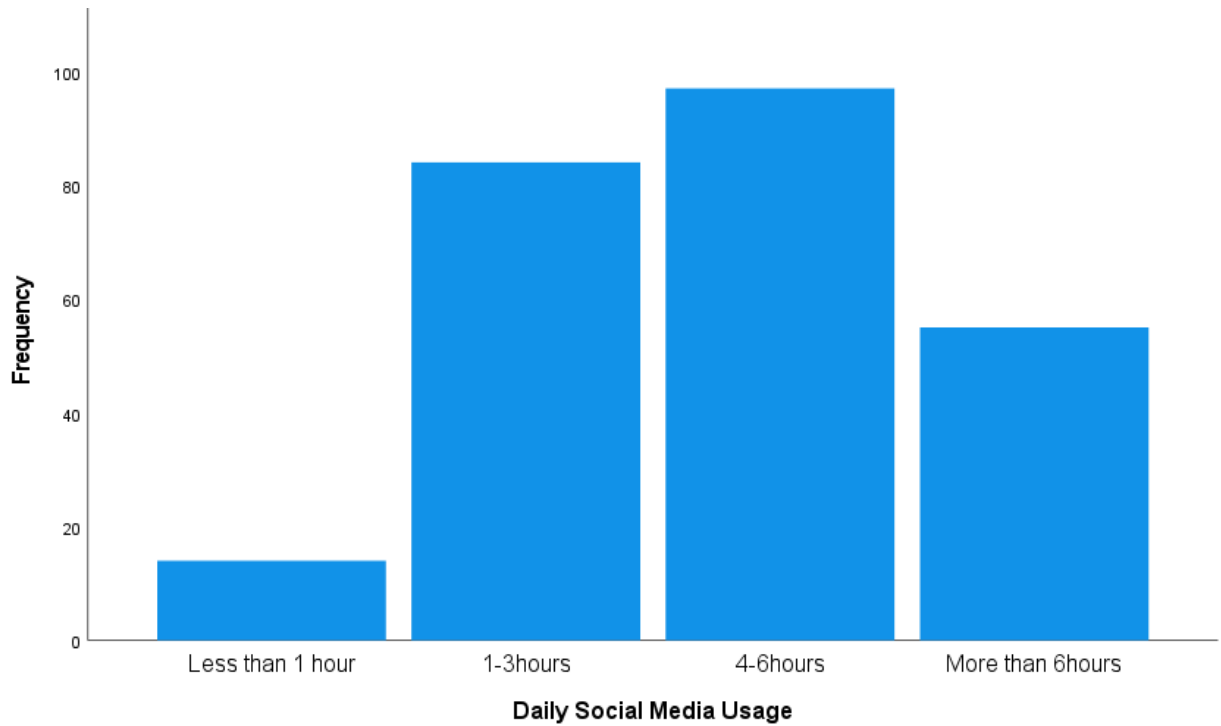


Figure 2 Daily Social Media Usage

4.5 Consumer Perceptions of Dove's Social Media Advertising Strategies in Ghana

The table below presents the descriptive analysis of consumer perceptions regarding Dove's social media advertising strategies among 250 Ghanaian consumers. The analysis covering consumer perceptions across five dimensions, consumer engagement and overall evaluation of Dove's social media advertising effectiveness.

4.5.1 Product-Centered Appeal

Respondents demonstrated highly favourable perceptions of Dove's product-centred advertising appeals. The statement regarding trust-building through informational content received the highest mean score ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.71$), indicating that consumers strongly believe Dove's advertisements effectively communicate product quality information. Similarly, clarity in

explaining product benefits and ingredients was rated highly ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.75$), suggesting that Dove successfully conveys functional product information.

The personalization aspect, measured by highlighting products suitable for specific skin or hair types, also received strong agreement ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.84$). The relatively low standard deviations across all three items indicate considerable consensus among respondents regarding Dove's effective communication of product benefits, suggesting a consistent brand message across different consumer segments.

4.5.2 Hashtag and Interactivity

Consumer perceptions of Dove's interactive strategies revealed mixed results. The strongest positive response emerged for engagement-inducing content, with respondents agreeing that Dove's posts encourage them to comment, like, or share ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.67$). This suggests that Dove's content successfully generates passive engagement behaviors.

However, active participation in campaigns showed more modest results. Encouragement to participate in online campaigns or challenges received a neutral-to-moderate agreement ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.84$). Most notably, perceptions of hashtag effectiveness were the weakest in this dimension ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.86$), indicating that consumers do not find Dove's hashtags particularly catchy or relevant. The higher standard deviation for this item suggests more varied opinions among respondents regarding hashtag quality.

These findings suggest a gap between passive engagement (liking and sharing) and active participation (joining campaigns), with hashtag strategies requiring significant improvement to enhance consumer interactivity.

4.5.3 Cultural Localisation

Cultural Localisation emerged as a significant weakness in Dove's social media advertising strategy. Respondents strongly disagreed that Dove's advertisements reflect Ghanaian people, culture, or language ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 0.63$), representing the lowest mean score across all measured variables. This indicates a substantial disconnect between Dove's advertising content and Ghanaian cultural context.

Consumer identification with models and settings in Dove advertisements was similarly low ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 0.63$), suggesting limited representation of Ghanaian consumers in the brand's visual content. Consequently, localized content's ability to create closeness with Ghanaian consumers was perceived as weak ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 0.88$).

The consistently low scores and relatively small standard deviations across cultural Localisation items indicate widespread agreement among respondents that Dove's social media advertising lacks meaningful cultural adaptation for the Ghanaian market. This represents a critical area requiring strategic intervention.

4.5.4 Sustainability and Ethics

Consumer awareness and perception of Dove's sustainability messaging revealed limited effectiveness. Awareness of specific campaigns on plastic reduction or ethical sourcing was particularly low ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 0.86$), indicating that Dove's sustainability initiatives have not successfully penetrated consumer consciousness in Ghana.

Perceptions of environmental concern in Dove's advertisements were also weak ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 0.76$), suggesting that sustainability themes are either absent or not prominent enough in social media content to register with consumers. However, when sustainability messages are noticed,

they moderately improve brand opinion ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.97$), indicating potential receptivity to stronger sustainability communication.

The higher standard deviation for the brand opinion item (0.97) compared to the awareness items suggests more varied consumer responses when sustainability messages are present, potentially reflecting differences in environmental consciousness among respondents. Overall, these findings indicate an underdeveloped sustainability communication strategy in Dove's Ghanaian social media presence.

4.5.5 Message Tone and Visual Style

Dove's execution of message tone and visual presentation received the most consistently positive evaluations across all perception dimensions. The visual and design quality was rated highest ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.54$), with the lowest standard deviation indicating strong consensus that Dove's advertisements are attractive and professional. This suggests excellent production quality and aesthetic appeal in Dove's social media content.

The positive and inspirational tone of advertisements was similarly well-received ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.78$), aligning with Dove's broader brand positioning around empowerment and positivity. Brand identity consistency and authenticity also scored highly ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.87$), indicating that Dove successfully maintains a coherent brand voice across its social media platforms.

The strong performance across all three items in this dimension demonstrates that while Dove may face challenges in cultural adaptation and sustainability communication, the brand excels in fundamental advertising execution—visual quality, tone appropriateness, and brand consistency. These strengths provide a solid foundation upon which to build improvements in other areas.

4.5.6 Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement with Dove's social media advertising revealed varied levels of involvement across different behavioral dimensions. Purchase intention received the strongest response ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 0.64$), indicating that Dove's advertisements effectively translate into consumer willingness to buy products. This represents a critical commercial outcome and suggests that despite other weaknesses, the advertising achieves its fundamental objective of driving purchase consideration.

Trust-building through online advertising also performed well ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.72$), reinforcing the product-centred appeal findings and indicating that Dove's social media presence successfully enhances brand credibility. Interest generation showed moderate-to-strong results ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.84$), suggesting that advertisements successfully stimulate consumer curiosity about products.

Active engagement behaviors showed more modest results. Following or visiting Dove's social media pages for updates received moderate agreement ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 4.28$), though the unusually high standard deviation may indicate data entry issues or extreme response variability. Social sharing and recommendation behavior was moderate ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.90$), suggesting that while consumers find value in Dove's content, they do not consistently amplify it within their networks.

Emotional connection to the brand through social media campaigns was the weakest engagement dimension ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 0.85$), indicating that while Dove's advertising drives functional outcomes (purchase intention, trust), it has not successfully fostered deep emotional bonds with Ghanaian consumers. This finding aligns with the cultural Localisation weaknesses and suggests opportunities for creating more emotionally resonant, culturally relevant content.

4.5.7 Overall Evaluation

The overall assessment of Dove's social media advertising effectiveness yielded moderate positive results. Respondents agreed that Dove's social media advertising strategies are effective in reaching Ghanaian consumers ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.72$), suggesting general satisfaction with the brand's digital marketing efforts. The relatively low standard deviation indicates considerable consensus on this moderate effectiveness rating.

However, comparative brand evaluation revealed more reserved opinions. When asked whether Dove's advertisements are better than other beauty brands in Ghana, respondents showed disagreement ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.30$). The substantially higher standard deviation (1.30) indicates significant divergence in consumer opinions regarding Dove's competitive positioning, with some consumers viewing Dove favourably relative to competitors while others do not perceive a clear advantage.

This disparity between absolute effectiveness (moderate agreement) and relative competitive advantage (disagreement) suggests that while Dove's social media advertising performs adequately, competing beauty brands may be implementing equally or more effective strategies in the Ghanaian market. This indicates a crowded and competitive digital advertising landscape where Dove has not established clear differentiation. See table 3

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Consumer Perceptions and Engagement

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<i>Product-Centered Appeal</i>					
Dove clearly explains product benefits and ingredients.	250	3	5	4.43	.748
The information in Dove ads builds my trust in product quality.	250	3	5	4.46	.706
Dove's ads highlight products suitable for my skin or hair type.	250	2	5	4.39	.839
<i>Hashtag and Interactivity</i>					
Doves use catchy and relevant hashtags.	250	1	4	2.60	.860
I am encouraged to participate in Dove's online campaigns or challenges.	249	1	5	3.04	.839
Dove's posts make me want to comment, like, or share.	250	3	5	4.20	.671
<i>Cultural Localisation</i>					
Dove's ads reflect Ghanaian people, culture, or language.	250	1	3	1.66	.634
I can identify with the models and settings used in Dove ads.	250	1	4	2.34	.634
Localized content makes Dove feel closer to me as a Ghanaian consumer.	250	1	5	2.76	.881
<i>Sustainability and Ethics</i>					
Dove's ads show concern for the environment.	250	1	3	2.16	.761

I am aware of Dove's campaigns on plastic reduction or ethical sourcing.	250	1	4	1.73	.858
Sustainability messages in Dove ads improve my opinion of the brand.	250	1	4	2.73	.968
<i>Message Tone and Visual Style</i>					
The tone of Dove's advertisements is positive and inspirational.	250	2	5	4.40	.782
The visuals and design are attractive and professional.	250	3	5	4.60	.544
Dove's online brand identity feels consistent and authentic.	250	2	5	4.30	.874
<i>Consumer Engagement</i>					
Dove's advertisements make me more interested in learning about their products.	250	1	5	3.44	.835
I am more likely to purchase Dove products after seeing their ads.	250	3	6	4.69	.638
I often follow or visit Dove's social media pages for new updates.	250	1	33	3.77	4.277
I share or recommend Dove's social media posts to friends.	250	1	5	3.10	.899
I feel emotionally connected to Dove because of its social media campaigns.	250	1	4	2.32	.850
Dove's online advertising increases my trust in the brand.	250	3	5	4.36	.721
<i>Overall Evaluation</i>					

Overall, Dove's social media advertising strategies are effective in reaching Ghanaian consumers.	250	2	5	3.89	.723
Dove's advertisements are better than those of other beauty brands in Ghana.	250	1	5	2.37	1.296

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study reveal a pattern of consumer perceptions toward Dove's social media advertising in Ghana. While certain dimensions demonstrate exceptional effectiveness, critical weaknesses in cultural adaptation and emotional engagement emerge, creating a disconnect between functional advertising success and deeper consumer-brand relationships. This discussion interprets these findings through comparison with existing empirical evidence.

Dove's product-centered appeal demonstrated exceptional effectiveness in Ghana, with consumers strongly agreeing that advertisements clearly explain benefits and ingredients ($M = 4.43$), build trust through information ($M = 4.46$), and highlight suitable products for specific needs ($M = 4.39$). These findings align closely with Kim, Sung, and Um's (2019) experimental demonstration that Dove positioned as an "actual" rather than "ideal" brand, generates positive responses to advertisements framed with concrete, low-level construal terms emphasizing immediate, tangible features. The consistency between Kim and colleagues' findings and the current results suggests that Dove's brand positioning constrains effective messaging strategies universally: regardless of cultural context, consumers expect Dove to deliver functional, concrete information rather than abstract aspirational appeals. Dove's clear communication of product benefits establishes the credibility that drives consumer trust.

However, the exceptional strength of product-centered appeal (mean scores exceeding 4.39 across all items) contrasts with Stanclik and Barański's (2024) Polish finding that consumers reported "minimal persuasive impact" from social media advertising despite high exposure. This divergence may reflect market maturity differences: Polish consumers, operating in a saturated advertising environment, exhibit skepticism and avoidance behaviors, whereas Ghanaian consumers, in an emerging digital advertising landscape, may be more receptive to brand messaging. The finding that 94% of participants spend at least one hour daily on social media, combined with WhatsApp (100%) and TikTok (82.8%) usage dominance, suggests a digitally engaged population still responsive to well-executed advertising rather than experiencing the advertising fatigue documented in Western markets.

Message tone and visual style received the highest ratings across all dimensions—visual and design quality ($M = 4.60$), positive and inspirational tone ($M = 4.40$), and brand consistency ($M = 4.30$) indicating that Dove excels in fundamental advertising craft. Yet cultural Localisation scores were the lowest in the entire study: consumers strongly disagreed that Dove's advertisements reflect Ghanaian people, culture, or language ($M = 1.66$), and identification with models and settings was minimal ($M = 2.34$).

This paradox illuminates Ali's finding that consumers demonstrate higher purchase likelihood when they perceive advertising as "authentic and relatable," yet the current results show that high purchase intention ($M = 4.69$) can coexist with low cultural identification ($M = 2.34$). This apparent contradiction suggests that "relatability" operates through multiple pathways: functional relatability (product suitability for my needs) may compensate for cultural unrelatability (models and settings that reflect my context). Dove appears to achieve the former while failing the

latter, resulting in commercially effective advertising that nevertheless fails to create deep cultural resonance.

The cultural Localisation weakness provides empirical support for Murray's (2013) critical argument that Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty, developed for Western audiences, may not translate effectively across cultural contexts. Murray contended that the campaign reinforces Western neoliberal frameworks that privilege individual empowerment—a value constellation that may resonate differently in Ghana's collectivist culture. The finding that localized content fails to create closeness with Ghanaian consumers ($M = 2.76$) suggests that Dove has not successfully adapted its global messaging to reflect collectivist values, community-oriented beauty norms, or local cultural references.

Platform-specific analysis reveals that cultural Localisation was virtually absent across all platforms, with no observed instances on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok, and only marginal presence on Twitter/X. This complete absence, rather than mere weak execution, suggests a strategic decision to maintain global consistency rather than pursue local adaptation. While this standardization approach enables production efficiencies and brand coherence, it creates the profound cultural disconnect evident in consumer perceptions. Given that the sample was 82.4% female and predominantly young adults, precisely the demographic that beauty brands typically target, the failure to reflect Ghanaian women in visual content represents a significant missed opportunity for deeper consumer-brand identification.

Consumer engagement findings reveal a striking dissociation between behavioral outcomes and emotional bonds. Purchase intention achieved the highest mean score in the entire study ($M = 4.69$), indicating exceptional commercial effectiveness. Trust-building through online advertising also performed strongly ($M = 4.36$), aligning with the product-centered appeal

findings. However, emotional connection to the brand through social media campaigns scored the lowest in the engagement dimension ($M = 2.32$), revealing that while Dove's advertising drives transactions, it fails to foster affective commitment.

This pattern partially contradicts Begum and Israel's (2024) finding that social media advertising influences "nearly 90% of respondents to consider purchasing cosmetic products" through both information provision and "creating a favorable perception of brands." While the current study confirms the purchase consideration effect, it demonstrates that favorable functional perceptions (trust, product quality) do not automatically translate into favorable emotional perceptions (connection, identification). The distinction is consequential: behavioral loyalty driven by functional evaluations may prove more vulnerable to competitive offerings than emotional loyalty rooted in identity and values alignment.

Kim and Kim's (2025) finding that authenticity drives multifaceted engagement provides a framework for interpreting this engagement paradox. Their research identified authenticity as central to consumer discussions of Dove's Self-Esteem Project, with authentic messaging fostering both cognitive and affective engagement. The current study's results suggest that Ghanaian consumers perceive Dove as authentic in brand consistency ($M = 4.30$) but not in cultural authenticity, the brand maintains coherent global identity but fails to demonstrate genuine understanding of or commitment to Ghanaian cultural context. This selective authenticity may explain why functional outcomes (purchase intent, trust) remain strong while emotional outcomes (connection, identification) remain weak.

The finding that emotional connection scored lowest ($M = 2.32$) while purchase intention scored highest ($M = 4.69$) has important theoretical implications. It suggests that the Stimulus-Organism-Response model's assumption that environmental stimuli trigger internal affective states

which then influence behavioral responses may oversimplify the process. In this case, advertising stimuli appear to drive behavioral intentions through cognitive pathways (trust, functional evaluation) while failing to activate affective pathways (emotional connection, identification). This raises questions about whether beauty product purchasing in the Ghanaian context operates primarily through rational evaluation rather than the emotional and aspirational processes emphasized in Western beauty marketing literature.

Findings on hashtag and interactivity strategies revealed a clear distinction between passive and active engagement. While respondents agreed that Dove's posts encourage them to comment, like, or share ($M = 4.20$), forms of low-effort passive engagement, they demonstrated weak agreement regarding participation in online campaigns ($M = 3.04$) and found hashtags neither catchy nor relevant ($M = 2.60$). This gradient from strong passive to weak active engagement aligns with Useni's finding that social media exposure positively influences purchase intentions but suggests that the depth of engagement varies substantially.

The hashtag ineffectiveness ($M = 2.60$) contradicts platform-specific content analysis findings that showed Twitter/X employing hashtag strategies with "relatively high frequencies." This disconnect between strategy deployment and consumer perception suggests that quantity does not guarantee quality: Dove may use hashtags extensively, but these hashtags fail to resonate culturally or create perceived relevance for Ghanaian consumers. The failure may reflect hashtag strategies developed for global audiences that lack local linguistic relevance, cultural meaning, or connection to Ghanaian social media discourse patterns.

Platform analysis revealed that Instagram and Facebook, platforms where user engagement through comments and shares is central, showed minimal hashtag and interactivity strategy deployment, while Twitter/X demonstrated more diversified interactive approaches. This strategic

choice may reflect global platform usage patterns where Twitter functions as a more conversational platform. However, the finding that TikTok (82.8% usage) and Instagram (69.2% usage) are more popular among Ghanaian respondents than Twitter/X (73.2%) suggests that Dove's interactive strategies are not optimally distributed across platforms where Ghanaian consumers are most active. The emphasis on Twitter/X interactivity, while Ghanaian consumers predominantly engage on TikTok and Instagram, represents a potential strategy-market misalignment.

Sustainability and ethics emerged as among the weakest dimensions, with particularly low awareness of Dove's campaigns on plastic reduction or ethical sourcing ($M = 1.73$). This finding contrasts sharply with Nayak and colleagues' (2024) research demonstrating that green marketing significantly impacts consumer purchase intention, with consumers willing to pay premium prices for sustainable cosmetics. The divergence between Nayak's findings in India and the current Ghanaian results suggests important contextual differences in sustainability salience across emerging markets.

Several factors may explain the low sustainability awareness in Ghana. First, the content analysis revealed that sustainability and ethics strategies show minimal presence across platforms, with no observed instances on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok, and only marginal presence on Twitter/X. This strategic absence, rather than ineffective execution, explains consumer unawareness: Dove simply is not communicating sustainability messages prominently in Ghana-facing social media content. Second, Ghana's developmental priorities may position environmental concerns as less salient than in more developed markets where basic needs are more universally met. Third, limited media coverage of corporate sustainability initiatives in Ghana may mean that consumers lack the contextual knowledge to recognize or value sustainability claims even when present.

However, the finding that sustainability messages moderately improve brand opinion when noticed ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.97$) suggests latent receptivity. The higher standard deviation indicates meaningful variance in responses, some consumers value sustainability messaging while others remain indifferent. This suggests potential for market segmentation, with environmentally conscious consumers representing a niche that could be more effectively targeted through explicit sustainability communication. The current findings indicate that Dove has not yet capitalized on this opportunity, despite the brand's global emphasis on sustainability and ethical practices. This represents a strategic gap where enhanced communication could differentiate Dove from competitors while building affective commitment among values-driven consumers.

The overall evaluation revealed a critical distinction between absolute and relative effectiveness. While respondents moderately agreed that Dove's social media advertising strategies are effective in reaching Ghanaian consumers ($M = 3.89$), they disagreed that Dove's advertisements surpass other beauty brands in Ghana ($M = 2.37$). The substantially higher standard deviation for competitive evaluation ($SD = 1.30$) compared to absolute effectiveness ($SD = 0.72$) indicates significant disagreement among consumers regarding Dove's competitive standing.

This pattern suggests that while Dove achieves adequate advertising effectiveness, competing beauty brands have achieved similar or superior performance in the Ghanaian digital marketplace. The finding contradicts assumptions that global brands with substantial marketing resources would necessarily outperform competitors in emerging markets. Several factors may explain this competitive parity. First, local and regional beauty brands may demonstrate superior cultural Localisation, compensating for potentially lower production quality through greater cultural resonance. Second, competing brands may be more aggressively investing in Ghana-

specific influencer partnerships, which Ali's research identified as particularly effective for building trust in beauty product contexts.

Third, the "actual" versus "ideal" brand positioning framework (Kim et al., 2019) suggests that competitors positioned as aspirational brands may effectively employ different strategies—abstract, high-construal messaging emphasizing beauty ideals—that resonate with consumers seeking transformation rather than authenticity. Dove's commitment to authentic beauty representations, while differentiating globally, may not provide competitive advantage in Ghana if competing brands successfully leverage aspiration-driven positioning. The finding that only 2.37 mean score was achieved for competitive superiority, despite strong performance on functional dimensions, indicates that functional excellence alone does not guarantee competitive differentiation in crowded markets where multiple brands achieve basic advertising competence.

Analysis of platform-specific strategy deployment revealed misalignments with Ghanaian consumer usage patterns. The content analysis showed that Facebook receives minimal strategic attention, yet 49.6% of respondents use the platform regularly. More significantly, TikTok, used by 82.8% of respondents, primarily receives message tone and visual style strategies, with limited product-centered appeals or interactive features. This represents a missed opportunity: TikTok's high usage among the sample suggests it functions as a primary discovery platform, yet Dove's strategy emphasizes aesthetics over information or engagement that could drive conversion.

These findings align with Macías Urrego and colleagues' (2024) observation that 92.5% of consumers use social media for pre-purchase information seeking, with platform preferences varying by demographics. The current study's finding that Instagram (69.2% usage) and TikTok (82.8% usage) dominate among Ghanaian consumers, particularly younger demographics who comprise 57.6% of the sample (young and middle young adults), suggests these platforms should

receive more strategic emphasis. However, the content analysis revealed that YouTube, despite moderate usage (54.8%), receives strong product-centered appeal and product sampling strategies, while higher-usage platforms receive less comprehensive strategy deployment.

The universal WhatsApp usage (100%) presents an intriguing finding that existing literature has not adequately addressed. While WhatsApp was not examined in the platform-specific strategy analysis, its ubiquity among Ghanaian consumers suggests potential for direct consumer engagement strategies, such as WhatsApp Business features, customer service channels, or community groups, that could complement public social media presence. The absence of WhatsApp from beauty brand social media advertising literature, despite its dominance in emerging markets, represents a research gap warranting future investigation.

The findings have important implications for theoretical generalizability of advertising effectiveness frameworks developed in Western contexts. The Elaboration Likelihood Model's prediction that both central (informational content) and peripheral (visual appeal, source credibility) routes drive persuasion received support: product-centered appeals (central route) and message tone/visual style (peripheral route) both demonstrated effectiveness. However, the model does not adequately account for cultural Localisation as a distinct persuasive mechanism, despite its emergence as potentially critical for emotional engagement in the current study.

Similarly, the Theory of Planned Behaviour's emphasis on subjective norms, perceived social pressure from important others, suggests particular relevance in collectivist cultures like Ghana. Yet the finding that emotional connection remains weak ($M = 2.32$) despite moderate social sharing intentions ($M = 3.10$) indicates that social influence mechanisms may operate differently than the theory predicts. Ghanaian consumers may share content for instrumental reasons

(providing information to network members) rather than as expressions of brand identification, challenging assumptions about the relationship between social sharing and brand commitment.

Most significantly, Consumer Culture Theory's emphasis on how cultural meanings shape consumption experiences receives strong empirical support. The profound cultural Localisation weaknesses identified in this study demonstrate that advertising effectiveness cannot be understood through universal psychological mechanisms alone, cultural context fundamentally shapes how messages are interpreted, whether they resonate emotionally, and ultimately whether they create meaningful consumer-brand relationships beyond functional transactions. The finding that commercial effectiveness (high purchase intent) can coexist with cultural disconnect (low identification) suggests that theories developed in individualist, developed markets may inadequately capture consumption dynamics in collectivist, emerging market contexts where cultural authenticity and functional performance may operate as partially independent determinants of brand success.

Synthesizing across findings reveals a fundamental divide in Dove's advertising effectiveness in Ghana: exceptional performance on functional dimensions (product information, visual execution, purchase intent) coexisting with profound weakness on emotional and cultural dimensions (cultural identification, emotional connection, competitive differentiation). This pattern suggests that Dove has successfully transferred functional advertising competencies, clear communication, professional production, brand consistency, across cultural contexts, but has failed to transfer or adapt emotional and cultural dimensions that require deep local market understanding. The finding that consumers will purchase products despite cultural disconnect indicates that functional competence creates a floor of commercial viability, but emotional and cultural resonance determines the ceiling of brand success, competitive differentiation, and long-

term loyalty. For multinational beauty brands operating in emerging African markets, these findings suggest that production excellence and informational clarity represent necessary but insufficient conditions for advertising effectiveness, cultural adaptation and emotional resonance determine whether functional success translates into sustainable competitive advantage and meaningful consumer-brand relationships.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, draws conclusions from the key findings, and outlines recommendations based on the results. It synthesizes how consumers in Ghana perceive Dove's social media advertising strategies. The chapter also provides practical and research-oriented recommendations informed by the study's outcomes.

5.1 Summary

This study explored consumer perceptions of Dove's social media advertising strategies in Ghana, addressing a critical gap in understanding how global beauty brands' digital marketing is received in African markets. Using a quantitative descriptive survey design, the research examined 250 Ghanaian social media users' perceptions across five advertising strategy dimensions: product-centred appeal, hashtag and interactivity, cultural Localisation, sustainability messaging, and message tone and visual style. Content analysis of Dove's presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, TikTok, and YouTube revealed platform-specific strategy distributions, with visual-oriented platforms emphasizing aesthetics, YouTube focusing on product demonstrations, and Twitter/X supporting interactive approaches. Key findings revealed a paradoxical pattern: exceptional effectiveness in functional dimensions coexisting with profound weaknesses in cultural and emotional dimensions. Product-centred appeals achieved strong positive perceptions (M=4.39-4.46), and message tone and visual style received the highest ratings (M=4.30-4.60), indicating excellent execution quality. However, cultural Localisation emerged as the most

significant weakness (M=1.66-2.76), with consumers strongly disagreeing that Dove's advertisements reflect Ghanaian culture. Similarly, sustainability awareness was minimal (M=1.73), and emotional connection to the brand remained weak (M=2.32) despite high purchase intention (M=4.69). Overall, Dove's advertising demonstrated moderate absolute effectiveness (M=3.89) but failed to establish competitive differentiation (M=2.37), suggesting that competing brands achieve similar performance levels in Ghana's digital marketplace.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that Dove's social media advertising in Ghana operates within a functional-emotional divide: the brand successfully communicates product benefits and maintains visual excellence but fails to achieve cultural resonance and emotional engagement. This pattern reveals that global advertising competencies, professional production, clear messaging, brand consistency, transfer effectively across contexts, but emotional and cultural dimensions require genuine local adaptation. The finding that high purchase intention coexists with low cultural identification suggests that functional competence creates commercial viability, yet cultural authenticity determines competitive advantage and long-term loyalty. For multinational beauty brands in emerging African markets, the implication is clear: production excellence represents a necessary foundation, but cultural Localisation and emotional resonance differentiate market leaders from adequate performers. Dove's current approach achieves transactional success but misses opportunities for deeper consumer-brand relationships that drive sustained competitive advantage.

5.3 Limitations

1. The study employed convenience and purposive sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the wider population of Ghanaian social media users.

2. The study focused on a single brand (Dove), which limits the ability to compare advertising strategies and consumer perceptions across competing beauty brands in Ghana.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, several strategic recommendations emerge.

First, Dove should prioritize cultural Localisation by featuring Ghanaian models, incorporating local languages, and reflecting cultural contexts in visual settings. Collaborating with Ghanaian influencers and content creators would enhance authenticity while maintaining brand consistency.

Second, sustainability communication requires substantial enhancement through explicit campaigns highlighting environmental initiatives, using accessible language to explain complex concepts like plastic reduction and ethical sourcing.

Third, platform strategy should be realigned to emphasize TikTok and Instagram, where Ghanaian consumers are most active, through increased content frequency and platform-specific formats.

Fourth, hashtag strategies need redesign to incorporate Ghanaian linguistic patterns and cultural references, moving beyond globally standardized tags to locally resonant phrases.

Fifth, emotional engagement initiatives should leverage storytelling that connects Dove's values with Ghanaian women lived experiences, moving beyond generic empowerment messaging to culturally specific narratives.

For future research

Longitudinal studies tracking perception changes over time, comparative analysis across multiple beauty brands and qualitative investigations exploring cultural interpretation processes would deepen understanding of advertising effectiveness in African contexts.

Secondly, future studies should employ random sampling on a large sample size to enhance generalizability of the study.

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APPENDIX
Research Questionnaire

**AN EXPLORATION OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA
ADVERTISING STRATEGIES OF DOVE BEAUTY PRODUCTS IN GHANA**

Dear Respondent,

I am a student from the Department of Public Relation with Marketing, UNIMAC conducting a research study on Consumer Perception of Social Media Advertising Strategies of Dove Beauty Products in Ghana.

You are assured that all information obtained will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. Your identity will not be linked to your responses, and no part of the information will be used for any other purpose without your permission.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. The questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

I would be grateful if you would participate in this study, as your insights are valuable to understanding consumer perspectives on social media advertising in Ghana.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

For consent: I have read and understood the information above and agree to participate in this study. Signature/Initials: _____ Date: _____

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age:
2. Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
3. Educational Level <input type="checkbox"/> Basic <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary <input type="checkbox"/> None
4. Occupation: <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed
5. Monthly Income: <input type="checkbox"/> Below GHS 1,000 <input type="checkbox"/> GHS 1,000-2,999 <input type="checkbox"/> GHS 3,000-5,999 <input type="checkbox"/> GHS 6,000+
6. Region in Ghana: _____

SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

6. Which social media platforms do you use regularly? (Select all that apply) Facebook
 Instagram Twitter/X TikTok WhatsApp YouTube Other: _____
7. How often do you use social media daily? Less than 1 hour 1-3 hours 4-6 hours
 More than 6 hours

SECTION C: DOVE'S SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

8. On which platform(s) have you seen Dove advertisements? (Select all that apply)
 Facebook Instagram Twitter/X TikTok YouTube Other: _____
9. What types of Dove social media content have you encountered? (Select all that apply)
 Video ads Image posts Stories User-generated content Sponsored posts Live sessions
10. What themes have you noticed in Dove's social media campaigns? (Select all that apply)
 Real beauty/Body positivity Self-esteem Product benefits
 Diversity and inclusion Skincare education Other: _____

SECTION D: CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS

Rate the following statements: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Product-Centered Appeal					
Dove clearly explains product benefits and ingredients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information in Dove ads builds my trust in product quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dove’s ads highlight products suitable for my skin or hair type.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hashtag and Interactivity					
Doves use catchy and relevant hashtags.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am encouraged to participate in Dove’s online campaigns or challenges.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dove’s posts make me want to comment, like, or share.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Localisation					
Dove’s ads reflect Ghanaian people, culture, or language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can identify with the models and settings used in Dove ads.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Localized content makes Dove feel closer to me as a Ghanaian consumer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability and Ethics					
Dove’s ads show concern for the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of Dove’s campaigns on plastic reduction or ethical sourcing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability messages in Dove ads improve my opinion of the brand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Message Tone and Visual Style					

The tone of Dove’s advertisements is positive and inspirational.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The visuals and design are attractive and professional.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dove’s online brand identity feels consistent and authentic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION E: CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Instruction: Please indicate (tick box) how much you agree or disagree with each statement using the scale below:

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

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Dove’s advertisements make me more interested in learning about their products.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am more likely to purchase Dove products after seeing their ads.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often follow or visit Dove’s social media pages for new updates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I share or recommend Dove’s social media posts to friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel emotionally connected to Dove because of its social media campaigns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dove’s online advertising increases my trust in the brand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION F: OVERALL EVALUATION

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, Dove’s social media advertising strategies are effective in reaching Ghanaian consumers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dove’s advertisements are better than those of other beauty brands in Ghana.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION G: OPTIONAL COMMENTS

(You may skip this section if you wish.)

What do you like most about Dove’s social media advertisements?

What would you like Dove to improve in its social media campaigns?

THANK YOU!