

# EFFECT OF PROMOTIONAL MIX ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISION OF TECNO SMARTPHONES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*In Nigeria's competitive smartphone market, promotional strategies are vital for shaping consumer preferences, yet Tecno Mobile faces rising competition from brands like Xiaomi, which claimed 19% of the market in 2024. This intensifying rivalry, especially in North Central Nigeria, raises concerns about the effectiveness of Tecno's promotional mix in sustaining its market leadership. This study therefore examined the effect of advertising and personal selling elements of promotional mix on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design whereby structured 5-point likert scale questionnaire was administered to a sample of three hundred and fifty-five (355) customers/users of Tecno Mobile. Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) statistic was employed to test the hypotheses formulated of which the study revealed that advertising has negative and significant effect on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria, while personal selling has positive and significant effects on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria. The study recommends that Tecno should redesign and align its advertising strategies with the preferences and cultural values of consumers in North Central Nigeria, By creating authentic, relatable, and value-driven messages, and utilizing appropriate media channels that resonate with the target audience, the company can improve the effectiveness of its promotions, rebuild consumer trust, and positively influence buying decisions. Tecno should consolidate and scale up its personal selling strategies to leverage their proven positive and significant impact on consumer buying decisions in North Central Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Promotional Mix, Advertising, Personal Selling, Consumer Buying Decision, Tecno

## INTRODUCTION

Consumer buying decision is a vital component in the achievement of business objectives across global markets. It refers to the process through which individuals or groups select, purchase, use, and evaluate products or services. An in-depth understanding of consumer behavior and decision-making processes has become increasingly essential for businesses seeking to retain a competitive edge and expand market share (Kotler & Keller, 2020). Research across various disciplines reveals that consumer decisions are shaped by a combination of psychological, socio-cultural, and marketing variables. Among these, the promotional mix has been consistently recognized for its significant role in influencing consumer perceptions, shaping attitudes, and ultimately driving purchase behavior (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). The promotional mix comprises strategic marketing communication tools such as advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and social media marketing. Each of these elements serves to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products, thereby guiding their purchasing decisions. Effective deployment of promotional tools helps firms create brand awareness, highlight product benefits, reinforce customer value, and encourage brand loyalty across different consumer segments (Belch & Belch, 2021).

In the Nigerian context, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including those operating in the smartphone retail sector, contribute significantly to economic growth through employment generation, innovation, and community development (Adebisi & Bello, 2022). Despite their contribution, these enterprises often face challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, and intensified market competition. To mitigate these challenges, SMEs rely increasingly on promotional strategies to attract customers and remain relevant. Advertising is used to reach larger audiences, while personal selling provides the advantage of tailored interaction with customers. Social media marketing has also emerged as a cost-effective avenue for SMEs to directly engage consumers and shape their buying intentions (Akinyele, 2022; Okoro & Ogbona, 2023).

The promotional mix has proven particularly effective in influencing consumer buying behavior in the smartphone industry. Global smartphone brands invest significantly in integrated promotional strategies to increase brand awareness, create emotional connections with consumers, and stimulate product trials in competitive markets (Kotler et al., 2021). Tecno Mobile, a dominant player in the African smartphone market and a well-established brand in Nigeria, has leveraged promotional campaigns extensively to grow its customer base. The brand's success has been largely driven by its affordability, practical features, and aggressive marketing tailored to meet the preferences of middle- and lower-income earners (Statista, 2023).

Understanding consumer buying decision is crucial in evaluating Tecno's success. The buying process involves several stages including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, actual purchase, and post-purchase behavior (Solomon et al., 2022). Nigerian consumers of Tecno smartphones often consider product features such as price, durability, camera quality, and battery life. However, these preferences are frequently influenced by marketing communications. Tecno's strategic use of advertising, influencer endorsements, sales promotions, and direct marketing has positioned it as a relatable and aspirational brand among diverse consumer groups (Okeke & Ogbonna, 2022).

North Central Nigeria which includes states such as Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory presents a unique demographic with a growing tech-savvy youth population. This region has witnessed an increasing shift toward digital engagement, with consumers responding more readily to online promotions, digital advertising, and social media-based campaigns (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2023). Tecno smartphones have enjoyed significant market penetration in this region due to their strategic promotions and competitive pricing.

Despite Tecno smartphones' evident popularity in North Central Nigeria, there is a clear gap in academic literature examining how its promotional strategies specifically influence consumer buying decisions within this regional context. Existing research largely addresses broader marketing activities or general consumer behavior, without isolating the distinct impact of each promotional mix element on brand-specific purchasing patterns. Considering the cultural diversity and unique socio-economic conditions of North Central Nigeria, a localized investigation is essential. Accordingly, this study examines the effect of the promotional mix advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and social media marketing on consumer buying decisions for Tecno smartphones in the region, with the aim of generating both theoretical contributions and actionable recommendations for marketers, business owners, and other stakeholders seeking to refine marketing communication strategies in similar markets.

### **Statement of Problem**

In Nigeria's dynamic smartphone market, promotional strategies play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences and driving purchase decisions, with brands leveraging elements of the promotional mix advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and social media marketing to influence behavior and enhance visibility (Kotler & Keller, 2020). Tecno Mobile, a subsidiary of Transsion Holdings, has built a strong presence in Nigeria, particularly in North Central states like Benue, Nasarawa, Kogi, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). However, despite its extensive promotional efforts and market dominance, Tecno faces growing competition from brands like iPhone, Samsung, and especially Xiaomi, which captured 19% of Nigeria's market share in 2024 through aggressive marketing and competitive pricing. This rising competition raises concerns about the effectiveness of Tecno's promotional strategies in maintaining its leadership. As consumer preferences shift and brand options multiply, the effectiveness of each promotional mix element in influencing buying decisions especially in the culturally and economically diverse North Central region remains uncertain, highlighting the need for Tecno to reassess and possibly refine its promotional approach.

Unfortunately, there is a limited but growing body of knowledge on the topic of promotional mix and its influence on consumer buying decisions, especially as it relates to smartphone brands like Tecno in North Central Nigeria. Several studies have examined the impact of promotional strategies on consumer

behavior, but most of these investigations are focused on large corporations and urban markets in developed and developing countries. For example, Batra and Keller (2016) explored the integrated marketing communication strategies and their influence on global brands; Kotler and Keller (2022) emphasized the global significance of promotional elements in consumer decision-making; and Chen and Lin (2019) investigated the role of digital promotion tools on consumer attitudes in East Asia.

Regionally, few studies have been conducted on the promotional mix and consumer decision-making within Nigeria. Among those, Akanbi and Adeyeye (2021) examined the effects of advertising and promotion on consumer behavior in Lagos, while Oladimeji and Akinola (2022) focused on the effectiveness of promotional tools in influencing customer preferences among large retail chains in South-West Nigeria. However, their findings were largely limited to metropolitan areas and may not be fully applicable to the socio-economically diverse and semi-urban context of North Central Nigeria.

Local studies such as those by Gbolagade and Oyewale (2021), and Ayuba (2022), have focused on the effectiveness of advertising and personal selling on fast-moving consumer goods, but not on branded technology products like smartphones. Even when promotional strategies are considered, they are often evaluated in isolation, rather than as an integrated promotional mix that includes advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and social media.

Furthermore, previous studies have yielded inconsistent results. For example, Yalo et al. (2019) found a strong correlation between promotional efforts and consumer behavior in Kogi State, whereas Amin (2023) in Abuja noted that digital promotion had little impact due to poor infrastructure and low digital literacy in some communities. Ojo (2022) concluded that the effectiveness of promotional tools could vary depending on the economic and cultural setting of the consumers.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has yet combined the two promotional mix variables in relation to Tecno smartphones within the North Central Nigerian context, nor examined their collective influence on consumer buying decisions. This study seeks to close this gap by providing empirical evidence on how integrated promotional strategies affect consumer behavior, with a focus on Tecno smartphone users in this specific region. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to investigate the effect of promotional mix on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria, thereby contributing to both marketing literature and practice.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of promotional mix on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

- i. examine the effect of advertising on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria.
- ii. investigate the effect of personal selling on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Promotional mix**

Clow and Baack (2023) define the promotional mix as the various communication methods used by marketers to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about their products or services. This definition focuses on the objectives of the promotional mix in influencing consumer behavior. Lamb et al. (2023) state that the promotional mix is the combination of promotional tools used to reach the target market and achieve the desired response. This definition underscores the importance of aligning promotional strategies with target market needs.

Marketing is concerned with identifying and satisfying social needs. Meeting needs profitably is one of the best definitions of marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2022). The meeting of sellers and buyers to conduct transactions for goods or services is known as marketing (Laksana, 2019). As a result, understanding the

market no longer refers to a location but rather to the activities or meetings of sellers and buyers in offering a product to consumers. While marketing is purposeful human activity to meet the needs and desires of customers through a process of exchange and parties with an interest in the company (Belch & Belch, 2023). Marketing is one of the economic activities that contributes to the creation of economic value (Shimp, 2024). The price of goods and services is determined by economic value. Production, marketing, and consumption are all important factors in creating value. Marketing connects production and consumption activities.

This study adopts the definition by Blythe & Martin (2019), who define Promotion as the process of influencing potential customers' purchasing decisions through various communication channels, including advertising, Public Relations, and direct marketing, with the objective of enhancing product visibility and driving Sales.

The above variables, advertising and personal selling, are commonly used in strategies and marketing research to assess the effectiveness of promotional campaigns. Several authors such as (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Sharp, 2017; & Romaniuk, 2013) have explored and discussed these variables in their research.

### **Advertising**

Advertising is the process of promoting and communicating information about a product, service, or idea to potential customers or target audiences. It is a strategic and creative activity used by businesses, organizations, and individuals to increase awareness, generate interest, and influence consumer behavior. Its main purposes include informing, persuading, reminding, and differentiating (Belch & Belch, 2018).

Describes advertising as non-personal communication of marketing related information in a target audience, usually paid for in order to reach the specific objectives of the sponsor. Bennett (2016) defined advertising as a controlled identifiable information and persuasion by means of mass communication media (Borden, 2007). Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Advertising can be done through print media which includes newspaper, magazine, brochures, audio-media for example Radio and Visual media which includes billboards and television (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

This study adopts the definition by Taylor (2017), who define advertising as the process of creating, disseminating, and managing messages that promote a product, service, or idea, with the goal of influencing consumer behavior and achieving business objectives, encompassing various aspects such as advertising expenditure.

### **Personal Selling**

According to Sharma et al. (2018) personal selling is a direct form of communication between a Salesperson and a potential customer, aimed at building relationships and facilitating the exchange of goods and services. This highlights the relational aspect of personal selling. Weeks and Muehling (2018) define personal selling as "the interpersonal process of selling that involves face-to-face communication between a Salesperson and a customer, focusing on understanding customer needs and providing tailored solutions.

The interactive nature of personal selling also makes it the most successful promotional method for building relationships with potential customers. Personal selling is a useful communication tool at certain stages of the buying process, particularly in building up buyers' first choices, certainty and proceedings. This is most imperative especially for a service sector like education, particularly in developing and underdeveloped countries, (Armstrong, 2021). Allen and Shen (2019) in a study on character of competition among institutions, found out that enrolments are significantly negatively related to either gross or net tuition prices, private education is a normal good and there is an empirically significant enrolment response to the opportunity cost of college enrolment. They concluded that tuition price subsidies play a critical role in managing demand at this institution. Both practitioners and academicians



recognize that personal selling effectiveness has become vital to the success of banking institutions (Berry & Kantak, 2019; Bernstel, 2021).

Personal selling represents the most-costly but effective form of directly connecting a consumer with a company's products and services. It has been estimated that the average cost of a face-to-face Sales call is \$170 (Armstrong & Kotler, 2023). However, an in-person Sales presentation, entailing an effective verbal presentation and interaction with the prospective buyer, is considered the most powerful marketing tool in use today (BusinessTown.com, 2015). Personal selling in the nonprofit sector is most appropriate when the financial support sought from the consumer is substantial.

Peck and Camacho (2023) describe personal selling as an interactive process that allows Salespeople to tailor their communication strategies to meet the unique preferences and requirements of each customer. This emphasizes customization in Sales approaches. Manning et al. (2023) define personal selling as the art of persuading customers through direct interaction, enabling Salespeople to present personalized solutions that address specific customer challenges. This definition underscores persuasion and problem-solving.

### **Consumer Buying Decision**

Consumer buying decision refers to the process through which individuals identify, evaluate, and select products or services to satisfy their needs and wants (Kotler & Keller, 2022). This decision-making process is a crucial aspect of consumer behavior, as it influences market demand, product innovation, and corporate strategies. Scholars and marketing professionals have developed various models to explain and predict consumer behavior, with the five-stage decision-making model being one of the most recognized frameworks (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

Cheng et al. (2023) define consumer buying decision as the process through which individuals identify their needs, evaluate options, and make purchase decisions to satisfy those needs. It is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by psychological, social, cultural, and personal factors that guide consumers from recognizing a need to post-purchase evaluation.

Consumer buying decision is a multi-stage process that includes need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2022). According to Solomon et al. (2021), consumer buying decision involves internal (motivation, perception, attitudes) and external factors (social influence, cultural norms) that shape how consumers evaluate and choose products or services.

According to Blackwell et al. (2020), consumer buying decision is the mental and behavioral process consumers undergo when selecting, purchasing, and using products to fulfill their needs and wants. This process includes five key stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. In a similar vein, Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2022) view consumer buying decision as a dynamic and continuous process that reflects both rational decision-making and emotional responses influenced by internal and external stimuli. This study adopts the definition by Kotler and Keller (2022), who define consumer buying decision as the process through which individuals identify, evaluate, and select products or services to satisfy their needs and wants.

### **Advertising and Consumer Buying Decision**

Han et al. (2024) examined the effect of advertising on consumer purchase decision. Random effect regression models were developed in Stata to examine the associations between SMM performance indicators, advertising expenditure, and restaurant firm revenue. Twelve years of SMM data from brands' Facebook pages were collected with a web scraper built in Python. Natural language processing was used to analyze the sentiment of user-generated content (UGC). The results suggest that restaurant annual sales revenue increases as adverts in ' Facebook pages increase. The sample size of the study wasn't specified therefore its findings cannot be generalized.

Almestarihi et al. (2024) examined the impact of advertising on consumer purchase decision. Through a comprehensive analysis of data from various industries, this research investigates the effectiveness of paid advertising in generating revenue and its role in shaping a company's bottom line. Key findings indicate that calculating the ROI of paid advertising is a multifaceted challenge, involving factors such as ad spend, conversion rates, and customer lifetime value. The study also underscores the importance of tracking and attributing conversions accurately to assess the true impact of advertising efforts. The study wasn't premised on a data from a reliable source therefore its findings cannot be applicable in the real sense.

Mishra et al. (2024) evaluated the effect of advertising on consumer buying decision. The research technique involved secondary research supplemented by primary data collecting via a Google Form questionnaire. The research methodology included secondary research, which involves acquiring and analysing current literature, studies, and market reports on digital and traditional advertising, with primary data collection using a survey questionnaire. The results of the study show that advertising has negative effect on consumer buying decision. Despite digital advertising's dominance, conventional approaches continue to have an impact, especially on older audiences and those with lesser means. But in comparison to digital platforms, this power is waning. Customers show varied recall patterns for traditional and digital ads, suggesting subtle interactions with various media platforms. The sample size of the study wasn't specified therefore its findings cannot be generalized

### **Personal Selling and Consumer Buying Decisions**

Wu et al. (2024) assessed the effect of personal selling on consumer buying decision. Lead scoring models are commonly categorized into two classes: traditional and predictive. While the former primarily relies on the experience and knowledge of salespeople and marketers, the latter utilizes data mining models and machine learning algorithms to support the scoring process. This study aims to review and analyze the existing literature on lead scoring models and their impact on sales performance. A systematic literature review was conducted to examine lead scoring models. A total of 44 studies have met the criteria and were included for analysis. Fourteen metrics were identified to measure the impact of lead scoring models on sales performance. Findings of the study indicate that personal selling has positive significant effect on consumer buying decision. The findings of the study cannot replicate the current study due to ontological factors.

Taylor et al. (2024) ascertained the impact of personal selling on consumer buying intention. The exploratory research sets out for a better understanding of purposeful sales practice and potential activities that successful professionals engage in for self-improvement using a sequential two-phase research approach. Findings showed an insignificance positive relationship between personal selling and consumer buying intention. The sample size of the study wasn't specified therefore its findings cannot be generalized.

Waqas et al. (2023) determined the effect of personal selling on consumer buying intention. of mutual funds in Pakistan. Data collected by 20 semi-structured individual qualitative interviews in Pakistan were subjected to thematic analysis. This study reveals the way managers apply different nudges in the form of Islamic beliefs and values in advertising and personal selling to enhance purchase intention and sales performance of mutual fund products among Muslim customers. The findings of the study may only be applicable to mutual funds in Pakistan.

### **Marketing Mix Theory**

The marketing mix theory, also known as the 4Ps of marketing, is a foundational concept in marketing that helps businesses develop effective marketing strategies. It was first introduced by Neil Borden in the 1950s and later popularized by E. Jerome McCarthy in his book "Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach." (McCarthy, 1960)

The product refers to the tangible or intangible goods or services that a company offers to its target market. It involves decisions related to product design, features, quality, branding, packaging, and other aspects that make the product appealing to customers. The Price refers to the amount of money customers are willing to pay for a product or service. It involves determining the right pricing strategy that aligns with the target market's perceived value, competitive pricing, and the company's profit objectives. The Place refers to the distribution channels and methods used to make the product available to customers. It involves decisions related to selecting the right distribution channels, such as direct Sales, retail stores, e-commerce platforms, or wholeSalesers, and ensuring that the product reaches the target market in a convenient and timely manner. While Promotion encompasses the various marketing activities used to communicate and promote the product to the target market. It includes advertising, Public Relations, Sales promotions, personal selling, and other promotional tactics aimed at creating awareness, generating interest, and ultimately driving sales (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016).

Marketing mix theory emphasizes the importance of aligning these four elements to create a cohesive and effective marketing strategy. By carefully considering the product, price, place, and promotion, businesses can better understand their target market's needs and preferences, differentiate themselves from competitors, and ultimately achieve their marketing objectives. Marketing mix theory provides a framework for developing and implementing effective marketing strategies. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). Marketing mix theory, with its four elements helps businesses make strategic decisions regarding their products or services, pricing, distribution channels, and promotional activities. These decisions are crucial in formulating marketing strategies that align with the company's goals and target market. When developing a marketing strategy, a company may analyse its target market and identify the specific needs and preferences of its customers. Based on this analysis, the company can then make decisions about the product features, design, and branding (product element) that will best meet those needs and differentiate the product from competitors. The pricing strategy (price element) can be determined by considering factors such as perceived value, competitive pricing, and the company's profit objectives. The distribution strategy (place element) can be developed by selecting the most suitable channels to reach the target market effectively. Finally, the promotional strategy (promotion element) can be designed to create awareness, generate interest, and persuade customers to purchase the product (Borden, 1964).

Marketing mix theory provides the foundation for developing marketing strategies by guiding the decision-making process regarding the product, price, place, and promotion. By considering these elements and their interrelationships, businesses can develop comprehensive and effective marketing strategies that align with their objectives and resonate with their target market (Gronroos, 1997).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Population was a collective term used to describe the total quantity of cases of the type that were the subject of the study. Since the population constituted the totality of units that the research intended to study, the population of the study comprised all users of smartphones in Abuja, Ilorin, Lafia, Lokoja, Makurdi, Minna, and Jos. These cities were purposively selected because they represent the major urban and commercial hubs of North-Central Nigeria, where smartphone penetration is relatively high, consumer diversity is broad, and advertising exposure is more pronounced. Including these locations ensured that the study captured a representative sample of smartphone users across different socio-economic and demographic groups in the region. Due to the nature of this population, it was considered undetermined. This condition therefore relegated the researcher to adopting the infinite population formula for determining the sample size. The sample formula by Cochran (1963) was used; thus, the sample size was 355 after adding a 10% attrition rate. Convenience sampling was adopted for the study. Primary sources of data were utilized to collect information. The choice of this method was based on the need to gather reliable information using a simple approach that was time-saving and efficient. It was a suitable method for gathering data in studies involving behavioral analysis. The study employed a well-structured five-point Likert scale (SA = Strongly Agree 5, A = Agree 4, U = Undecided 3, D = Disagree 2, SD = Strongly Disagree 1). A close-ended questionnaire was used to obtain data from customers/users of smartphones. The collected data

were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS 3.

#### Model specification

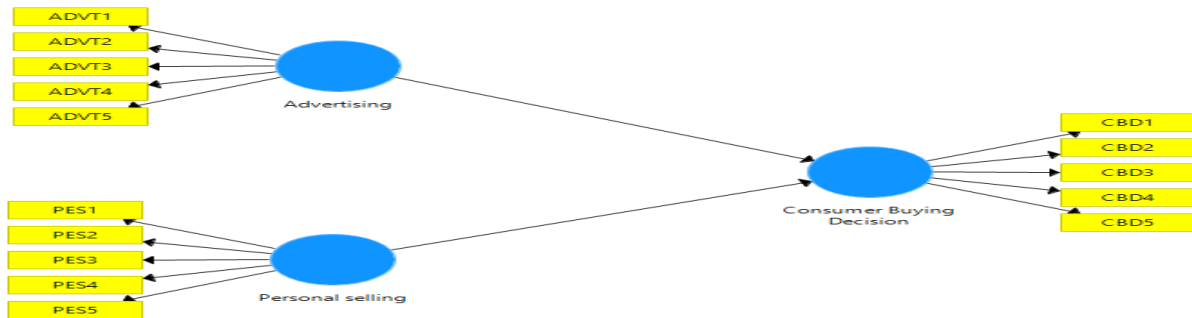


Figure 3.1 Structural model for direct relationship between Promotional mix and consumer buying decision

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 355 copies of questionnaire distributed (which is a 10% increase in the initial sample size to provide for attrition), only three hundred and forty-one (341) was retrieved giving a response rate of 96%. 14(4%) were not properly filled but returned. All further analyses were carried out using 341 responses.

#### Indicator Reliability

When evaluating the measurement model, we initiate the process by examining the item outer loadings. Generally, it is recommended to consider loadings above 0.708, as they signify that the construct accounts for more than 50 percent of the variance in the indicator, ensuring acceptable item reliability (Hair et al., 2019). However, Hair et al. (2019) also suggest that low but statistically significant indicator loadings (below 0.50) may be included. Conversely, outer loadings below 0.4 should be eliminated, and in exploratory research, loadings between 0.4 and 0.7 may be retained if the average variance extracted is satisfactory (Hair et al., 2014). This justifies the decision not to exclude indicators with loadings below 0.70 and above 0.40 from the model.

Table 1: Factor Loadings of the Constructs

	Advertising	Consumer Decision	Buying	Personal selling
ADVT1	0.769			
ADVT2	0.751			
ADVT3	0.873			
ADVT4	0.855			
ADVT5	0.780			
CBD1		0.702		
CBD2		0.714		
CBD3		0.824		
CBD4		0.846		
CBD5		0.848		
PES1				0.686
PES2				0.688
PES3				0.773
PES4				0.785
PES5				0.742

Source: SMARP-PLS Output, 2025

#### Convergent Validity



Convergent validity gauges the degree to which a construct converges to elucidate the variance within its items. To evaluate convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) should exceed 0.5. As depicted in Table 2, the AVE values for all constructs surpass 0.5, affirming that our constructs meet the criteria for convergent validity. This observation suggests that the entire construct accounts for 50 percent or more of the variance present in the items comprising the construct.

**Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity of the Indicators**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Advertising	0.871	0.888	0.903	0.651
Consumer Buying Decision	0.847	0.850	0.892	0.623
Personal selling	0.792	0.803	0.855	0.542

*Source: SMART PLS Output, 2025*

**Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

Variables	Advertising	Consumer Buying Decision	Personal selling
Advertising	1.000		
Consumer Buying Decision	0.551	1.000	
Personal selling	0.408	0.390	1.000

*Source: SMART-PLS Output, 2025*

#### Model Goodness of Fit (GoF)

To validate the PLS model, it is essential to evaluate its goodness of fit, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). In this study, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was employed for this purpose. The selection of this index was based on the fact that SRMR provides an absolute fit measure, where a value of zero signifies a perfect fit. Following Hu and Bentler's (1998) suggestion that a value below 0.08 represents a good fit when using SRMR for model assessment, the study's result revealed an SRMR value of 0.04. This indicates that the model fits well. Besides the chi-square, other measures corroborate the goodness of fit in the study's model.

**Table 4: Model of Goodness of fit Summary**

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.04	0.04
d_ULS	5.778	5.778
d_G	5.451	5.451
Chi-Square	7338.713	7338.713
NFI	0.497	0.497

*Source: SMART-PLS Output, 2025*

#### Test of Hypotheses

The table below showed the path coefficients, t-values and p-values used to test the first four null hypotheses of the study:

**Table 5: Path Coefficient of the Model**

Variables	Beta	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Decisions	F2 Value
Advertising -> Consumer Buying Decision	-0.394	7.461	0.000	Reject	0.144
Personal selling -> Consumer Buying Decision	1.097	22.136	0.000	Reject	1.121

Notes: \*\*\*( $P < 0.01$ ), \*\*( $P < 0.05$ ), \*( $P < 0.1$ )

Source: SMART-PLS Output, 2025

### ***Hypothesis One***

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Advertising has no significant effect on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria.

The result of the test as shown in table 5 revealed that advertising has negative and significant effect on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria, with  $\beta = -0.394$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Thus, hypothesis one was not supported and therefore rejected at 5% level of significance. There is adequate evidence to reject the null hypothesis and the study therefore conclude that advertising has negative and significant effect on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria.

### ***Hypothesis Two***

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Personal Selling has no significant effect on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria.

The result from table 5 shows that personal selling has positive and significant effects on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria, with  $\beta = 1.097$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Thus, hypothesis two was not supported and therefore rejected at 5% level of significance. There is adequate evidence to reject the null hypothesis and the study therefore conclude that personal selling has positive and significant effects on consumer buying decision of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria.

**Table 6: R square Statistics**

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Consumer Buying Decision	0.650	0.648

**Source: Researcher's computation in Smart-PLS 2025**

The r-square statistics shows the level of determinism of the dependent variable by the independent variables of the study. Table 6 show that the study has an r-square value of 0.650 which indicates that the variables used for the study account for about 65% of the variability in the dependent variable. Other factors not captured in the model may account for the remaining 35%.

### ***Discussion of Findings***

Advertising has a negative and significant effect on consumer buying decisions of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria. This indicates that increased advertising efforts by the brand may be perceived unfavorably by consumers possibly due to factors such as message saturation, mismatch between advertising content and consumer needs, poor creative appeal, or lack of trust in the advertised claims thereby discouraging purchase intentions rather than enhancing them. The finding is in agreement with that of Mishra et al. (2024) who found that advertising has negative positive effect on consumer buying decision. However, the finding disagrees with the finding of Han et al. (2024) who found that advertising has positive significant effect on consumer purchase decision.

On the other hand, personal selling has a positive and significant effect on consumer buying decisions of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria. This implies that direct, face-to-face interaction

between sales representatives and potential buyers builds trust, allows for personalized communication, provides immediate responses to customer inquiries, and effectively addresses individual needs, thereby increasing consumers' willingness to purchase the product. This finding agrees with the findings of Wu et al. (2024) whose finding revealed that personal selling has positive significant effect on consumer buying decision, but the finding however, disagreed with that of Taylor et al. (2024) whose finding showed an insignificance positive relationship between personal selling and consumer buying intention.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding that advertising has a negative and significant effect on consumer buying decisions of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria, it can be concluded that the current advertising strategies adopted for Tecno smartphones in the region are ineffective and may even discourage potential buyers. This suggests that the advertising messages, channels, or frequency may not align with consumer preferences or expectations, thereby creating a negative perception of the brand and reducing purchase intentions.

Based on the finding that personal selling has a positive and significant effect on consumer buying decisions of Tecno smartphones in North Central Nigeria, it can be concluded that personalized engagement and direct interaction with customers are more effective in influencing purchase decisions for Tecno smartphones in the region than mass advertising. This suggests that strategies focusing on relationship-building, tailored product explanations, and trust enhancement are likely to yield better sales outcomes.

- i. Tecno should redesign and align its advertising strategies with the preferences and cultural values of consumers in North Central Nigeria. By creating authentic, relatable, and value-driven messages, and utilizing appropriate media channels that resonate with the target audience, the company can improve the effectiveness of its promotions, rebuild consumer trust, and positively influence buying decisions.
- ii. Tecno should consolidate and scale up its personal selling strategies to leverage their proven positive and significant impact on consumer buying decisions in North Central Nigeria. By investing in advanced sales training, equipping representatives with in-depth product knowledge, and fostering exceptional interpersonal skills, the company can deliver highly personalized customer experiences. Strengthening relationship-building efforts, offering tailored solutions, and maintaining consistent follow-up with potential buyers will further deepen consumer trust, enhance brand loyalty, and sustainably boost sales growth.

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### Research questionnaire

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1
	<b>Advertising</b>					
ADVT1	The advertisements for this brand/product are informative and help me understand the product better					
ADVT2	Advertising for this brand/product creates a positive impression that affects my buying decision.					
ADVT3	The advertising increases my perception of the brand's reputation.					
ADVT4	I feel emotionally connected to the brand/product through its advertising.					
ADVT5	I feel the product's advertisements appear frequently enough to impact my awareness of the brand.					
	<b>Personal selling</b>					
PES1	The salesperson provided clear and relevant information about the product features.					
PES2	I felt that the salesperson genuinely cared about my needs.					
PES3	The salesperson presented the product's benefits in a compelling way.					
PES4	I trusted the recommendations made by the salesperson.					
PES5	I am satisfied with the overall sales experience provided by the salesperson					
	<b>Consumer Buying Decision</b>					
CBD1	A brand's reputation influences my buying decision.					
CBD2	I prioritize product quality over price when making a purchase.					
CBD3	My cultural background influences my purchase choices.					
CBD4	I prefer to buy products that are easily available in nearby stores.					
CBD5	I prefer to buy from brands that support environmental sustainability.					