

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**ONLINE ADVERTISING CHARACTERISTICS AND PURCHASE
INTENTION IN THE GHANAIAN AUTOMOBILE MARKET**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF MPhil MARKETING DEGREE**

JULY, 2018

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this work is the result of my own and has not been presented by anymore for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been fully acknowledge.

I do bear sole responsibility for any shortcoming.

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the Lord Almighty for His Divine Breakthrough and Favour, Mercy and Abundance Grace for a successful completion of this thesis. I also dedicate it to my two brothers Daniel and Benjamin, who supported me financially, as well as a Mother and a Friend, Yaa Amponsah Twumasi for her enormous support and guidance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To God be all the Glory for His unlimited Favour and His tremendous Protection throughout the entire thesis writing process. A big thank you to my principal supervisor, Dr. Mahama Braimah for his patience and brilliant contributions towards the writing of this thesis. Special thanks also go to Prof. Bedman Nartey, my co-supervisor for his steadfast support and excellent contributions in making this thesis a reality. I am deeply grateful to Isaac Mensah, for his support.

ABSTRACT

Online advertising is an increasingly-examined aspect of marketing literature, yet the relationship between the specific dimensions of the construct and its outcomes remain unclear. This study was therefore designed to examine the relationship between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention and the mediating role of volume of electronic word of mouth in the automobile industry. Questionnaires were used to gather data from 350 online automobile purchasers in Ghana. The data was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in AMOS, where the measurement and structural models were tested. The findings of the study indicated that emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity of online advertising of Ghanaian automobile companies have a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of consumers. The studies also found that Electronic word-of-mouth mediate the relationship between online advertising and purchase intention. It is recommended that automobile companies focus on crafting online advertisements that are appealing, creative and informative in order to drive responses of current and potential consumers. Also, automobile industries must carefully engage their clients to ensure that users of their online platforms give positive recommendations. For purpose of future research, this study could be replicated in other industries or countries in order to determine the general application of the findings in this study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
eWOM	Volume of electronic word of mouth
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

In the last decades, rapid technological innovation and the improvements in global technology systems have dramatically transformed the advertising industry (Duffett, 2015). This has enabled invention of the internet to further re-define the global nature of advertising (Woo, Choi, Shin & Lee, 2014). Consequently, the world has become a global village and many more firms are competing for the attention, actions and responses of the same consumers, thus exposing consumers to hundreds of advertisements daily. The evolution of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has affected consumer purchasing response and this has further led to a change in corporate strategies (Chen & Hsieh, 2012).

Firms are compelled to transform their ways of attracting prospective customers as well as maintaining existing ones in the 21st century (Leung, Bai & Stahura, 2015). Therefore, firms that wants to survive and thrive and grow in this competitive business environment, have to first seize the attention and action of their consumers through marketing communication tools. Advertising has become a central tool in any marketing strategy for consumer behavioural response and change (Saleem & Abideen, 2011). Indeed, the everyday lives of consumers are filled with advertisements.

The concept of advertisement in the olden days where communities used symbols, and pictorial signs to persuade their productive customers has significantly developed to modern form communicating with potential purchasers (Saleem & Abideen, 2011). Advertising represents a

“mediated form of communication from a recognised source, which is aimed at persuading the receiver” of the information to take a certain form of action, now or in the near future (Richards & Curran, 2002). Advertising can be defined as the non-personal and a paid form of promoting goods, services, and ideas, by an identified sponsor (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011). Similarly, Johar (2016) posit advertising as communication that have the objective of convincing consumers about products, services and brands.

As technology evolves, businesses and experts in advertising have imbedded online platforms in crafting advertisement in order to influence, draw and engage users as a means of building their brands (Waters, Canfield, Foster & Hardy, 2011). Online advertisers are able to generate the necessary publicity of the existence of their product to reach their growing number of target audiences. Jaishri and Shruti (2006) assert that online advertising encourages relationships to be built between customers and brands. Specifically, businesses and brands create an online platform as a means to advertise their products. Ultimately, the goal of online advertising is to create awareness, provide information, act as a reminder and encourage action (Johar, 2016). Consequentially, advertising online has developed into new platform that enables companies and firms to create awareness and promote brand equity in as much as generating purchase intentions in the automobile industry (Peng, Zhang, Zhang, Dai & Li 2014).

There are numerous forms of online advertising; these includes logos, text-based hyperlinks to authorised websites, e-mail, banners and pop-up messages (Ducoffee, 1996). Bakshi and Gupta (2013) hold that online advertisement connotes the delivering of messages to Internet or online users through Web sites, e-mail, ad-supported software and Internet-supported smart phones.

Research reported that, in 2012, there was an increase in business use of online platforms by firm of Fortune 500 firms (Barnes, Lescault & Andonian, 2012). In 2011 for instance, there was an exponential increase in the corporate blogs of these companies, which indicated the highest increase since 2008 (Barnes, Lescault & Andonian, 2012).

Again, about 73 of these firms on Fortune 500 businesses possess a Twitter page and 66 percent have a Facebook account. Brands such as Coca-Cola, Starbucks, Red Bull, and Converse each boasts of over 35 million followers on Facebook alone. Automobile companies including Honda Motor Company created a new social media department to handle online activities of the company (Rechtin, 2012). Considering the impact of online platforms, these global institutions spend significant organisational resources managing them.

Currently, the largest online platform worldwide is Facebook, with 1.32 billion active subscribers; and the online platform is regarded as the leading social business site for advertising online (Macdonald, 2014). In 2015, e-Marketer reported an increase in activities in online communities, which have resulted in an estimated growth of 25.4% globally in global online advertising activities. Rainer and Schultz (2014) opined that the most valuable platform that could be more suitable for a product is online advertising, especially with products such as luxury equipment that is extremely valued and consumers have congruently demanding information needs. An advertising agency in China (iResearch) reported that, in 2010, the majority of the internet users accepted the usage of the internet to better recognise the automobile market (Liu & Li, 2010).

iResearch (2010) further reported that, in Chinese automobile manufacturing company, advertising online is regarded as the most significant advertising conduit to use because of its large audience coverage, rich content, strong interactivity and efficient communication format.

Apart from the global acceptance of online advertising as a means of generating the intention to purchase, Ghana, as an emerging economy has similarly witnessed a swift change to online advertising as a result of new and improved technologies (Koufaris, 2002; Rodgers & Sheldon, 2002)). The regular day to day existence of shoppers is loaded with notices. Consumers are skeptics when it comes to patronizing a product; they know the pros and cons associated with using advertising (Fabian, Meyer, Ramaseshan & Bartsch, 2017).

Additionally, Ghanaian companies have recognised the magnitude of striving for new opportunities to achieve and retain competitive advantage over other competitors as consumers become more and more complicated. Companies are therefore going an extra mile to create awareness and communicate with clients effectively and efficiently via online advertising. Companies send regular messages to their online platforms through various advertising platforms, which normally generate intention and conversation among the consumers (users). Indeed, the online advertising is growing faster in the marketing and advertising sector in Ghana. This is evident in the increasing number of online advertising campaigns that have resulted in intense competition and challenges in the Ghanaian advertising industry.

Advertising in the automobile industry in the 1950's and 60's has transformed over the period after the invention of the internet where manufacturers advertise to millions of consumers

through websites and social networks. In 2010, the automobile industry experienced the largest advertising spending growth among other industries (e-Marketer 2010). According to Adelson-Yan (2012), the automobile industry spent \$11.9 in 2012 on paid search and online banner ads, representing an increase of 39 percent over spending from 2011. In the US alone, Bakshi and Gupta (2014) note that companies spent over \$ 5.07 billion on paid digital advertising in 2013; and in 2011, Audi became the first brand to include a Twitter hashtag in a Super Bowl Spot.

Online advertising in the automobile industry has become strategic in nature, and aims to create impact through generating consumers' intention to purchase as well as encouraging consumers to understand the message about the brand (Curtis, Moriarty, & Netten, 2009). Automobile manufacturers provide websites and social networks, which mean that, once potential and existing consumers for cars visit the websites of the company, it provides detailed information about their products. Online automobile ads enhance consumers' interest in something they didn't think they want or need.

Through advertisement, organisations persuade customers with goods and services, provide unending discount and reach customers with information via platforms such as whatsapp, twitter, Instagram, facebook and other avenues. For consumers to have the intention to purchase, online advertising strategy must be coaxed by objectives (statements of desired purchase intention), and these objectives can be measured to determine whether the advertising was effective in generating the needed purchase intention (Wijaya, 2012). The explosive growth of online advertising in contemporary times makes it an essential communicating tool for businesses to

create content and share content that generates purchase intention of the consumers for business growth (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The Internet, instead of traditional platforms, has been one of the major channels used by able customers to gather necessary information about products. In fact, consumers of automobiles are ready to gather vital messages through a search engine, interaction with manufacturers about the product and furthermore click through banner advertising before making a purchase response (Langville & Meyer, 2011; Gupta, 1996). As the backdrop to this, the study pursued to explore the extent to which online advertising influences the intention of users of automobiles in Ghana. This study is important as it outlines how online advertising influences consumers of automobile industry to respond to online advertising and the extent to which consumers' electronic word of mouth recommendations mediate the relationship between online advertising and purchase intention.

1.1 Research Problem

According to Adelson-Yan (2012), the automobile industry spent \$11.9 in 2012 on paid search and online banner ads. Online advertising in the automobile sector has been experimenting with different formats of advertising such as virtual exhibition, public online forum, video display, search engines, mobile applications among others (Peng *et al.*, 2014). Extant literature suggests that organisations that advertise online use different advertising formats such as banner displays and web pages (Dreze & Hussher, 2003) for successful automobile online advertising (Peng *et al.*, 2014).

Online advertising as a marketing communication tool is a significant platform for organisations and purchasers to learn, share product information, interact, purchase and evaluate products (Chappuis, Gaffey & Parvizi 2011; Lee, & Rha, 2013). However, several scholars have argued that what influences consumers to respond to online advertising are yet to be well understood (Hamouda, 2018; Gong, Strump, Maddox, 2013; Goldsmith, Lafferty, 2002; Dong, Chang, Liang, Fan, 2018; Lee, Lee, Yang, 2017). Peng *et al.* (2014) argues that most automobile corporations still fall short of precise measurement of online advertising strategies. In effect, automobile producers need theoretical understanding and guidance on how to perform online advertising to generate consumer interest. Peng *et al.*, (2014, pg. 835) assert that “online advertising is an important channel for automobile manufacturers because of its large audience coverage and efficient communication format”. In this study, the investigation is extended on the online advertising characteristics and purchase intention in the automobile market. According to Peng. *et al.*, (2014, pg. 835), “online advertising is no longer effective by the simply using banner displays on web-page only rather utilizing and combining the various online characteristics and format are essential for successful advertising”. Peng *et. al.*, (2014, pg. 834) investigated “the effects of online advertising on automobile sales and the findings revealed that both formats of online advertising have significantly positive effects on automobile sales. However, excessive spending on non-search advertising does not help sales and a moderate budget is preferred. On the other hand, spending on search advertising has no such constraint to improve the vehicle sales”. There is a dearth of literature in the developing country context as majority of the studies on online advertising characteristics are found in the US, Asia and Europe (Bakshi & Gupta, 2013). Findings from the studies might not necessarily be wholly applicable to

the Ghanaian context, as the rate and speed of usage of technology differs between the advanced economies and Ghana.

Scholars have begun to doubt whether numerous advertisements are noticed by consumers (Yelber, 2010; Jaishri & Shruti 2006). In this regard, the unanswered question is whether advertisements are noticeable by consumers and whether online advertising characteristics actually triggers consumer intentions and responses (Gruber, 2006). Chao (2012) argue that further research is needed to understand consumer advertising preferences and the extent of influence on their choice of advertising media. Though Yelber (2010) argues that some people think online advertising is misleading and influence consumers to buy inferior products, online advertising is growing. The significance of online advertising is anticipated to further grow in today's digital world (Brackett & Carr, 2001; Sharma & Sheth, 2004).

However, extant literature suggests that majority of studies on online advertising are conceptual in nature and employ qualitative approach in data collection and analyses (Johar *et al.*, 2016; Peng *et al.*, 2014). One can therefore identify a gap in the existing literature; thus, empirically determining the relationship between online advertising and consumer intention to purchase in the automobile industry using a quantitative approach. Though, Lee and Hong's (2016) argues that online advertising influences customer intention to purchase, it remain to be seen if this relationship would hold true in a developing country context such as Ghana. It is also not clearly established, what role volume of electronic word of mouth would play in that relationship, and whether the findings would hold true in the automobile industry

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention and the role that volume of electronic word of mouth plays in this relationship.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the relationship between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention in the automobile industry.
2. To examine the mediating role of volume of electronic word of mouth on the relationship that exists between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study seeks to make a number of empirical, theoretical and conceptual contributions. The research provides an additional in-depth knowledge for management to understand the taste and preference of consumers regarding advertising media. This study will help advertising managers and decision makers identify specific tools that can be used to enhance advertising platforms for consumers to choose from.

From an academic point of view, the study proposes a conceptual model that can be used to tell which form of online advertising is most effective to generate a response from automobile consumers. The study seeks to solicit information that will be beneficial to researchers to understand purchase intention towards online advertising characteristics.

To government and policy makers, this study will help effectively regulate and direct automobile manufacturers on how to best enrich their online advertising platforms to enhance purchase intention. To the general public, the study will provide detailed information regarding the alternative online advertising channels and how they influence their (consumers) needs and choice. Findings will be espoused on contemporary online advertising platforms; thus, explaining what consumers of automobiles should expect from the online service of automobile manufacturers.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The research is limited to investigating the influence of online advertising characteristics on consumer purchase intention of automobiles in Ghana. Consumers of online automobiles from Ghana constitutes the context of this study. This can however be a limitation of the study with respect to the generalisability of the results. The results of the study can only be generalised to the geographical area studied. However, inferences can be made from the context of the results that can be shared in the event of similar demographic characteristics.

1.6 Chapter Organisation

Chapter one presents background information. The chapter discusses the research problem, research objectives, study purpose, delimitation and significance of the study and how the study is organised.

The second chapter of this study discusses the contextual issue of the study. It identifies the socio-economic and geographical variables of the Accra Metropolis as the study area. The chapter further discusses the automobile industry from a global to Ghanaian perspectives.

Chapter three provides relevant empirical and theoretical literature reviews, with '*Elaboration Likelihood Model*' having been used to give a foundation to this study. Furthermore, this chapter provides definitions of the key variables used in the study; and reviews empirical findings on the concept under investigation. A conceptual framework was then proposed.

Chapter four presents the research methodology used in the study. It explains the research philosophy, research design, population, sampling design, data collection methods, and the way data was processed as well as the way it was analysed.

Chapter five presents the findings of the study. It correspondingly analyses and discusses the findings of the study with respect to the objectives of the study as stated in Chapter One.

Chapter six concludes the study. The final chapter of the study summarises conclusions to the study. In this chapter, necessary recommendations are made while future research areas are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.0 Introduction

The majority of the automobile industry in the world, especially in China, has experienced greater growth in sales and revenues. According to Peng *et al.* (2014), the Association of the Automobile Industry in China tremendously increased its automobile sales in 2006 and 2009 reaching a total amount of 46 percent and 13.6 million vehicles respectively. This industry contributes substantially to the growth of China especially its GDP. Obviously, industries especially the automobile is a pillar and has become a significant market that has generated income over the years. This research extend enquiry on the relationship between online advertising and purchase intention in the automobile industry with the introduction of volume of electronic word of mouth as a mediator.

2.1 Ghanaian Automobile Industry

Ghana's manufacturing base is relatively advanced. Import substitution industries consist of electronics manufacturing. RLG Communications is the first indigenous African firm to assemble laptops, desktops, and mobile phones, and is West Africa's biggest Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and mobile phone manufacturing company. Ghana began its automotive industry with the building of a prototype robust SUV, named the SMATI Turtle (GDP, 2014) intended for use in the rough African landscape. It was designed and made by the artisans of Suame Magazine Industrial Development Organisation.

Industry in Ghana accounts for about 25.3% of the country's total GDP. Ghana's key manufacturing industries include electronics manufacturing, car manufacturing, electric car manufacturing, automotive manufacturing, light manufacturing, aluminium smelting, food processing, cement, and small commercial ship building. A comparatively small glass-making industry has emerged due to the high-quality sand available from the Tarkwa mining area. Foreign capital has been on the rise in recent years. Other industries include the production of food and beverages, textiles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, and the processing of metals and wood products. Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) and Ghana Oil Company (GOC) deal with crude oil and gas exploration, exploitation, and refining (Graham, 2015). Most products are for local consumption, with some being exported.

The automobile industry in Ghana has become one of the most significant economic sectors by revenue in recent years (Odoom *et al.*, 2014). The automobile industry constitutes various companies and organisations that are involved in the design, development, and manufacturing, marketing and selling of motor vehicles (Aichner & Coletti, 2013). This development has enabled the automobile industry to customise the process for creating online platforms that will enhance the ease of access to customers.

One of the main problems in Ghana that has been hindering the growth of the automobile sector is the absence of financial inclusion in the country. Most people do not have access to financial services, such as the option to lease, that makes the acquisition of an automobile easier. To address this issue, the Mahindra Group has entered into an agreement with the Fidelity Bank, Ghana to make available financial assistance to consumers looking to buy its vehicles. Such

initiatives are requirement if widespread ownership of automobiles is to be attained. Presently, most of the consumers fit in the affluent class; however, the automobile industry in Ghana presents immense opportunities for the future as the burgeoning middle class is principally untapped in the country (Ghana's Automobile Market, 2017). Despite bottlenecks such as the presence of a large 'grey' market and poor road conditions in the country, the automobile sector is likely to address these issues as time goes by and become a centre of the Western Africa region in the future. Some of the key players in Ghana's automobile industry are BMW, Ford, Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan and Toyota.

Ghana's industrial production is rising at a 7.8% rate, making it the 38th fastest rising industrial production in the world due to government industrialisation policies.

The manufacturing industry in Ghana has resulted in it becoming one of the 40th fastest and the most rapid organisation in terms of growing industrial productions in the world. The automobile industry has accounted for an increase in the GDP recently and is estimated to supersede rapidly by 2021 to at least 30% of the GDP. The automobile manufacturers in Ghana are therefore moving quickly provide a product with enough attributes to their final consumers at a lower cost, coupled with flexible terms of payment per annum. Equally, clients are now more knowledgeable through word of mouth than ever before and they are accustomed to the hassle-free paying pattern of the automobile sector. Advertisers or marketers are using online channels to communicate their vehicles to customers and to create awareness of the calibre of brands they have (Akayeti, 2015).

The automobile industry in Ghana has attracted foreign investors to operate effectively and efficiently to contribute to the growth of the country, which has boosted the employment rate and reduced poverty as a whole. Ghana has been ranked as the 7th best economy on the Ibrahim Index of Africa Governance. This has given the country a level of esteem for doing business (Odoom *et al.*, 2012).

Among all markets, auto dealers play significant responsibilities in a car manufacturer's delivery approach, this is as a result that, they guarantee before and after transactional services of the vehicles to end-consumers. The automobile sector in Ghana has been categorised under two main sections –franchised car dealers and second-hand car dealers. The franchised car dealers' focus is on bringing in new vehicles, while the second-hand car dealers usually deal in used vehicles. The franchised dealers are well-established bodies and, in most cases, have tens of employees. The franchise dealers are well organised firms and undertake marketing activities not only targeted at individual customers but also business to business parties as well.

Franchise dealers have showrooms and warehouses, and engage in intelligent marketing communication strategies in their business activities. Franchise dealers' main distinguishing factor is that they buy and take possession of the brand-new cars from parent companies outside Ghana. Likewise, they bring in slightly use cars that might have been in showrooms for a long time from their country of origin. This implies that franchise dealers have a parent company in different countries within Europe, Asia, and America; notwithstanding the various models of vehicles they produce.

The second category is the second-hand dealers. They are made up of individuals who patronise used cars from abroad and resell them in Ghana. It usually constitutes a sole proprietor who runs the business with family members, which in most cases is less than ten (Astrachan, & Shank, 2003). Normally, dealers within this category do not have showrooms or a warehouse. The cars are displayed in fenced garages more often than not along roadsides within the major cities of the country. Correspondingly, a few of them have enclosed structures that they consider a showroom. Second-hand dealers do not only buy and sell used cars from abroad but also from individuals and organisations who intend to dispose outdated cars. The growing trend in this category deals with individuals who have registered websites and purchase slightly damaged cars for sale in Ghana.

Fortunately, these cars are comparatively lower in cost than slightly used cars. Second-hand car dealers often sell cars on behalf of other individuals for commission. The below table depicts some major franchise dealers in Ghana and the range of car brands they sell.

Table 2.1: Franchise Dealers in Ghana

NO	COMPANY /DEALER	PRODUCT
1	PHC MOTORS	Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Land Rover, TATA, BMC trucks
2	SVANI	Bolero Pick-Up, Ford Expedition, Scorpio Pick-Up, Chevrolet, Champion Alfa, Eicher
3	JAPAN MOTORS	Nissan vehicles
4	CFAO GHANA	Daimler-Chrysler, Hyundai, Mitsubishi, Jeep, Ford, Chevrolet, Daewoo, Isuzu, Opel, Peugeot, Citroën, Renault Trucks, Renault, Dacia, Nissan, Toyota, Daihatsu, Honda, Iveco, Maruti, Subaru, Suzuki
5	SNEDA MOTORS	Chery Saloon cars, Great Wall Pick-up, station wagon, buses, Dong Feng mini trucks, medium trucks, heavy duty trucks, FYM Motorcycles, Atv, fun cars, Golf, and JMC.
6	TANINK GHANA	Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Iveco Vehicles and Terex Mining and construction earth moving equipment.
7	AUDI CENTRE	Audi, Skoda
8	SOADWA MOTORS	Honda vehicles
9	CAITEC MOTORS	Various models of pick-ups, vans, buses, saloon cars, trucks
10	SILVER STAR AUTO	Mercedes Benz
11	TOYOTA GHANA	Toyota vehicles
12	UNIVERSAL MOTORS	Volkswagen vehicles
13	PRESTIGE MOTORS	Peugeot
14	MECHANICAL LLOYD	BMW, Ford, DAF trucks
15	FAIRLLOP INTERNATIONAL	MG Rover, Jaguar
16	DUETT GHANA	All kinds of trucks

Source: Odoom et al., 2012

Other franchised dealers include Masai Motors, Africa Motors, Rana Motors, Motherwell International, Neoplan Ghana, Nordic Motors, Modern Automobile Services, Honeyoung Motors, Hyra Motors Ghana, Procon Group Ghana, Caltec Delta, Bradco Trade Association, Bhojwani Ghana, Autonet, African Automobile, Revi Motors and Stelin Automotive & Trading.

Most of the used cars found within Accra Metropolis consist of De-Georgia Motors Enterprise, DALPAT Ventures, Chapok Motors Limited, Bona Park Ventures, Dorashels Automobile, Nyomena Enterprise, Runway Auto Enterprise, Prince Global Company Limited and Okofo Motors. Complimenting these two categories of automobile dealership in Ghana, it is unmistakable that franchised dealership generally sells specific brands of cars, which is normally as a result of an agreement between the local dealers and the manufacturers of the various car brands. On the other hand, second-hand car dealers sell all types of models and brands. Apparently, there is no conformity between the manufacturers and the individual dealers since they do not buy the cars directly from the manufacturing companies of the car brands (Odoom *et al.*, 2012).

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of online advertising on the purchase intention of consumers and the mediating role of volume of electronic word of mouth. This chapter reviews literature on the issues under investigation, and has three dominant sections. The first section discusses the empirical literature relating to Web 2.0 and brand communities, integrated marketing communication, advertising, online advertising, search and non-search format of online advertising, purchase intention and volume of electronic word of mouth. The second section focused on the theoretical foundation and discusses the theory of “persuasion”. The final section of the chapter is devoted to the discussion and development of a conceptual framework to guide the empirical part of the study.

3.1 Web 2.0 and Brand Communities

To understand the focus of this study regarding online advertising and purchase intention, it is important to understand the concept of Web 2.0 and brand communities as they relate to the usage of online platforms. Web 2.0 came into existence as a result of the modern transformation of online advertising tools; however, applications such as personal web pages, encyclopaedia and content publishing in Web 1.0 has drastically been worn-out by current format like blogs, wikis and other collaborative projects in Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

World Wide Web (www) came into existence as a result of the reincarnation of Web 1.0, which was used mainly as a most important lumber room of online data as well as an instrument that

could be used to achieve an end result (Riegner, 2007). Originally, the Web was based on the function of “read only”, thus performing functions such as finding a website, navigating pages using hyperlinks, and sending emails (Riegner, 2007; Alexander, 2006). Currently, the Web goes beyond the basic function of finding websites and sending emails to friends to including content creation and sharing, creating online communities, sharing files and blogging. The new incarnation of the www has come to be known as the Web 2.0, which is progressively utilised as a form of interactivity and individual expression and persuasion (Riegner, 2007).

Originally introduced by O’Reilly in 2005, Web 2.0 has now received global attention for more than two decades. Web 2.0 applications support the creation of informal users’ networks, facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing/refining of the informational content (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Web 2.0 applications help firms to gain and maintain markets, acquire knowledge and communicate directly with customers (McKinsey, 2007; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Businesses have identified several opportunities that Web 2.0 presents where firms can design and inculcate marketing strategies into the applications (McKinsey, 2007). Web 2.0 can be classified under four main identities: content aggregators, communities, social networks and blogs (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

One of the essential identities of the Web 2.0, which is normally used by firms for their marketing activities, is the brand communities. According to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), a brand community is “a specialised, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand”. A brand community is made up of persons who

create a sub-culture that entails myths, values and rituals of a brand based on a common interest in a particular brand (Cova & Pace, 2006).

Organisations, marketing experts and agencies use brand communities as essential online platforms to interact with their customers (Brodie, Ilic, Juric & Hollebeek, 2013; Dholakia & Durham, 2010). Again, a brand community serves as a platform when firms want to interact, impact and spread information and learn about loyal customers (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005), because customers obtain value as a result of offline and online activities (Schau, Muñiz & Arnould, 2009).

Nambisan and Baron (2009) argue that there are various behaviours that are exhibited by persons in brand communities, which include customers engaging with each other in order to provide help or share various experiences. Businesses are therefore developing online brand communities because of the growing importance of various online advertising platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 represent a broader application of online platforms; thus, the next section of the chapter will focus on integrated marketing communication as a means of directing the focus of the study to online advertising.

3.2 Integrated Marketing Communication

Durkin and Lawlor (2001), Eagle and Kitchen, (2000) posit that Integrated Marketing Communication focuses on various trends of marketing, thereby increasing the relationship between direct marketing and relationship, market segmentation, evolution of information and development of new technology in data and communication application. Moreover, Kitchen and

Schultz, (1999) argued that communication influences consumers who are media friendly. In other words, Gurău, (2008), McKim, (2002), Reich, (2003), Hackley and Kitchen, (1998) and Smith *et al*, (2002) suggested that, when media channel get saturated, proper information from advertisers and marketers are communicated to productive audiences. Concurrently, “most of the firms operate in an intricate and aggressive environment where demands are constantly changing”. “To confront this challenge, management of business organisations has had to increase the levels of resources with attention focused on attracting and retaining customers”. “This situation has prompted the marketing concept that Kotler (1988) describes as the determination and subsequent satisfaction of customer needs and wants more efficiently and effectively than one’s competitors”.

Most importantly, marketing communication has been identified as persuasion, which entails a primarily one-way communication mode (Waterschoot & Van den Bulte, 1992). Although IMC positively impact on consumer decision making, more research needs to be done to scrutinize opportunities that surrounds IMC in the online environment. Gurau, (2008) defined IMC as one of the marketing strategies that helps in co-ordinating innumerable media messages and it has the propensity to influence organisation and its perceived brand value. More so, Duncan (2002, p. 8) propounded Integrated Marketing Communication as:

“A cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue with them”.

Notwithstanding the above definition, Kotler (2011) defined the term advertising as a paid form of non-personal communication of ideas, goods and service by an identify sponsor.

3.3 Concept of Advertising

The elements of the communications mix help to maximise the impact of the communications activities. These originally enabled marketers to have many tactics when dealing with the tools of communication. The basic taxonomy of promotional tools comprises of personal selling, advertising, sales promotion and public relations (Holm, 2006). Collectively, they are called promotional mix (Holm, 2006; Kitchen, 2003; Kotler, 2011). For the rationale of this study, emphasis is placed on advertising.

Advertising is a marketing communication program that is used to create awareness, create demand, promote marketing systems, helps middlemen and build images for the organisation and its' products and services. Some researchers (Clark *et al.*, 2009; Alhaddad, 2015) have identified advertising as a traditional method of marketing communication and thus the most accepted tool for promoting a business and its products/services. The primary goal of advertising is to publicise a product/service or the organisation at large in terms of its associated customer value (Hosseini & Mehrara, 2013). In this context, customer value is a term used to describe the value provided for customers through a specified service or product (Rotich *et al.*, 2016). Customer value as a result increases as service or product quality increases.

There are a lot of advertising functions, which include bringing awareness to the masses; making customers aware of the prices and attribute of the product leading to greater sales; helping to expand the market; bringing customers and sellers together; and lastly, is economical when

targeting the masses (Khan, 2007). Advertising, as viewed from the practitioner's perch, appears to be a moving set of interlocking pieces and parts involving multiple players/promoters who are constantly and continuously evolving, emerging, and adapting so that the field is being reinvented on an almost daily basis (Hosseini & Mehrara, 2013). The magical aspect of advertising is to change the mind and perception consumers have towards brands (Kumar & Gupta, 2016).

Broadly speaking, advertising can be grouped into traditional and online advertising. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) explained that organisations mostly do their advertising through newspaper, magazines, brochures, audio, and visual media, which includes billboards and television. Most traditional form of advertising includes television, radio, and print forms of advertising (Clark *et al.*, 2009; Hosseini & Mehrara, 2013). Television advertising is simply a short audio-visual program in which one or more individuals (often popular and reputable individuals) speak about or demonstrate the value accompanied by a product or service (Clark *et al.*, 2009). This form of advertising has an advantage over radio advertising, which has to do with the fact that the personalities and products involved can be seen (Hosseini & Mehrara, 2013).

Print advertising consist of the use of posters, hand-bills, pull-ups, and billboards (Clark *et al.*, 2009). With respect to this type of advert, services/products are publicised in writing or diagrams. Billboards and pull-ups have a longer lifespan as they can be used for a long time. Posters and hand-bills are, however, easily destroyed by rain or human activities and therefore have a short lifespan. So, television advertising is preferable when a company wants to create awareness on a product that has appealing looks and physical properties.

According to Hosseini and Mehrara, (2013), online advertising it involves written product campaigns on social media, online posters and billboards, and online video adverts such as the promotion of products and services on YouTube. The advantage of internet advertising is that it supports all forms of advert such as television, radio, and print (Hosseini & Mehrara, 2013). Invariably, television, radio and print advertising can be carried out on the internet.

3.4 Concept of Online Advertising

Clients nowadays expect their service providers to be present online twenty-four seven (24/7), which is a vital component for every business (Drew, Kortt & Dollery, 2016). For decades now, the evolvement and change in online advertising has become drastic thereby giving marketers and advertisers the opportunity to create enormous awareness to their potential customers. Online advertising has moved from simple advertising formats like emailing (Li & Leckenby 2007), to sophisticated interactive formats such as banner ads, pop-ups, interstitials, 3D visualisations and advertising games (Faber *et al.*, 2004). Due to the growing importance of online communities as a platform for advertising, businesses are currently shifting their focus to these user-driven technologies that include social blogs, micro-blogging, social network sites, and video-sharing. According to Eighmey and Farnall (2000), online advertisement is the commercial use of the Internet for posting and propagating; in other words, it is an internet-based advertisement using digital technology for production and publication.

Evidently, some of the new online advertising tools such as banner ads are fading out with the introduction of new tools; and thus, advertisers have been looking for new ways to promote their products and brands on the Internet (Becker-Olsen 2003). For example, an alternative to banner

advertising is the integration of commercial content into editorial content, which is widely known as brand placement, product placement or sponsored content (Van Reijmersdal, Neijens & Smit 2007).

The use of online platforms for advertising empowers businesses to interface and interact with their clients. In doing this, businesses are able to lower their cost of advertising, and improve efficiency as it is better than other traditional communication tools (Hassan, Nadzin & Shiratuddin, 2015; Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt & Fuller, 2013). Additionally, given the popularity of online advertising platforms and its user-generated content, online WOM such as micro-blog and review rating, serve as important sources of information for potential investors and clients regarding the future prospect of the business (Chen & Xie, 2008; Gu, Park & Konana, 2012).

Online advertising incorporate platforms such as social media, websites etc. that are expected to predict the performance and equity value of a business (Luo, Zhang & Duan, 2013). In view of this, businesses must accept the technology inherent in the online advertising platforms and employ such technologies in their job functions (Rodríguez & Honeycutt, 2011; Walczuch, Lemmink & Streuken, 2007).

3.4.1 Online Advertising Format

Online advertising over the years has received drastic evolution and changes. Becker-Olsen (2003) purport that online advertising has different format and these format comprises of websites (for instance blogs, news sites, sponsored content and social networking sites etc). Other scholars classified online advertising format as display of banner, search engine optimisation and digital

video. The advertising format integrate to give different perspective about information thereby influencing consumer intention to respond to online advertising. This was suggested by Kim, Pasadeos and Barban (2001, p.269):

“Making it desirable for advertisers to masquerade their commercial messages as editorial content”. Online advertising format has been classified into search and non-search format.

However, it has been elucidated by the behavioural modes that prospective consumers receive major information in two folds, i.e. pull and push approach. Whereas push strategy depicts the exposition of information about product to consumers, pull strategy simply looks around for information about services and product that benefit the needs and wants of consumers.

- ***Search Format Advertising***

Chen and Li (2010) recommended that using search advertising to maximise the marketing effect increases productivity efficiently and effectively. There are countless number of challenges that marketers who advertise online face: these challenges includes competitors advertising same products and distracted audience. “Whether searching online or offline, social psychological theories such as regulatory focus theory propose that people make decisions and pursue goals largely for their utilitarian value: to gain pleasure and/or to avoid pain” (Mowle, Georgia and Doss, 2014, pg. 494)

- ***Non-Search Format Advertising***

Previous studies concerning non-search format advertising have focused on its click-through rate. Making use of this instrument in measuring effectiveness of advertising, researchers have

investigated the various elements, tools and characteristics of offline and online advertising. Animated colour, text and graphics have substantial effects on the click-through rate. According to Robinson *et al.* (2007, pg. 529) “larger banner size is connected with a higher level of click-through rate”. Lohtia *et al.* (2003, pg. 208) establish that “the use of the emotional appeal intensifies the click-through rate, while the use of promotional incentive does not increase the click-through rate. More recently, researchers have started to compare the effects of varying types of non-search format advertising”. Breuer *et al.* (2011) mentioned that banner advertising has weaker long-term effects than other non-search advertising types.

3.5 Purchase Intention

According to Batra *et al.* (2000), consumers gain emotional (e.g., display of status, wealth, and prestige), informativeness and creativity benefit as well as utilitarian advantage (e.g., quality and low price) from the brands and products they choose. In regards to this, most of the consumers’ intention to purchase a car increases as a result of their emotional values towards that specific car.

Yoo *et al.* (2000, pg. 240) therefore posit that “purchase intention refers to a consumer tendency to purchase the brand routinely in the future and resist switching to other brands”. However, in the automobile industry, consumers may consciously perceive that cars offer the right proportion of features and quality. This perception of high standard about the car leads to the recognition of superiority and differentiation of a particular car and, accordingly, reassures consumers to patronise that car over other competing cars (McConnell, 1968b; Yoo *et al.*, 2000).

Consumers repurchase as a result of the quality of the product even when provided with other alternatives (Gobe, 2001; Yayli & Bayram, 2010). Consequently, consumers get emotional

values towards the brand leading to positive feelings upon using the brand, which finally results in consumer loyalty (Stauss & Neuhaus, 1997).

3.6 Mediating Effect: Volume of Electronic Word of Mouth

Consumers are sceptics. Therefore, organisations and other institutions have had to find ways and means to interact with their customers due to the fact that consumers have become influential, sophisticated and powerful. Leung, Bai and Stahura (2015) argued that powerful consumers have enabled firms to transform their strategy of attracting, retaining and maintaining potential consumers. Scholars such as Chandra, Goswami and Chouhan (2013), Patino, Pitta and Quinones (2012) and He and Zha (2014) have posited that marketers and advertisers specifically design appealing and attractive advertising messages that will, in the end, create brand awareness and preference for consumers.

Traditional advertising has therefore become less significant because of the speed and various sources of online communication. Word of mouth recommendation is one of the influential factors that illicit consumers to have access to information. Consequently, marketers and advertisers have realised the need to strategise their advertising information in order to trigger consumers to have the intention of purchasing. Also, marketers have recognised that spending millions to elaborate and design advertising campaigns in addition to word of mouth would probably do better than harm. Word of mouth has been noted as an importance marketing tool that cuts through the confusion quickly and effectively and inculcates trust among consumers (e.g., De Carlo *et al.*, 2007). Holmberg *et al.* (2015) posit that influencers who are effective in an

online advert might essentially affect the purchasing decision of customers via trust in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) marketing.

Word of mouth communication is a major part of online consumer interactions, particularly within the environment of online communities. The word of mouth industry is experiencing massive growth - since 2004, the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) has grown from 3 to 350 corporate members (WOMMA, 2007). With the knowledge of word of mouth, advancement in internet technologies have increased the number of consumers that are using the Internet to seek destination information and to conduct transact online.

Furthermore, Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004, p. 39) refer to eWOM as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet. The intention to purchase from consumers' perspective enables the consumer to rely solely on electronic word of mouth transfer in order to mitigate the risk associated with the product quality before patronizing. Comparing traditional word of mouth to electronic word of mouth, Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) postulate that word of mouth has the features of extensiveness of spreading information, fast, large volume of information, instant to receive, anonymous and transcends space and time. As a result, volume of electronic word of mouth plays an important role in the purchasing decisions of consumers (Duan, Gu & Whinston, 2008b). The phenomenon about volume of electronic word of mouth has really changed the behaviour of consumers all because of the growth of internet usage.

With volume of electronic word of mouth, the comment or messages that are made by consumers remains in the heart of consumers unlike offline advertising whereby the messages disappear as soon as it is spoken.

3.7 Theoretical Perspectives- Elaboration Likelihood Model

This theory used for this research is Elaboration likelihood model. This theory has been utilize in the area of how consumers receive, perceive and process information before making a decision to purchase. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1983) has been adopted to underpin this study. Although several models explains the characteristics of online advertising and purchase intention, the ELM specifically address the issues and processes involved with how people process information or messages. The concept of “elaboration” explains the degree to which a person deliberates over issues contained in a message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983 p. 32). Proponent of the ELM model explains that, there are two separate routes to attitudinal change and these routes are central and peripheral routes to behaviour change. While central routes see behaviour change from complex analysis of pros and cons of ad information, peripheral see behaviour change from observing cues.

The central route considers behaviour change as resulting from a person's thorough deliberation and discussion of information that the person considers essential to the facts of a particular behavioural position (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). For instance when an individual is introduced to an advert about a drug brand, such a person is more likely to read more about the drug to authenticate the genuineness of the brand. The consumer is likely to process information about the benefits of the drug, negative side effect and the content of the drug. Griffin (2012) further

notes that, a consumer, in an effort to process the new information about the drug, accurately synthesize and try to understand if the information is accurate and sufficient to take decision. Consumers who process information using the central route, are highly involve to diligently grasp the information that the seller is sending through the adverts.

The second approach to persuasion emphasizes more on a peripheral route to attitude change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). “The peripheral route of message processing does not rely solely on scrutiny of the message as much as it does on hints unrelated to the information” (Baran & Davis, 2010 p. 34). They further explained that a person’s behaviour change through the peripheral route do not occur because of a person’s central route (well-thought-out the pros and cons of the issue), but because the attitude issue or object is related with important positive or negative cues (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). In the peripheral route, involvement and information processing time is low, but the consumer quickly move to look for positive and negative cues from the ads (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983).

The basic theme in the Model is that, there are different methods to information processing, which depend on whether the elaboration likelihood of the communication situation is high or low (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). When the elaboration likelihood is high, the central route to persuasion should be particularly effective, but when the elaboration likelihood is low, the peripheral route should be better (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). This explains why there is usually brand loyalty associated with customers who purchase products after fact-checking the claims of the product as compared to customers who just purchase products based on their aesthetic outlook.

The model points out that sometimes persuasion starts from central route and leads to the peripheral route and vice versa thus persuasion occurring through both routes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). For instance, a user who just saw an ad online about a wrist-watch can start processing message through the peripheral route (look at the design of the watch) then, diligently consider the merits (durability and performance) in the information (central route). The instance stated shows a peripheral route central route path to persuasion. It can also be the vice versa where persuasion starts from central route to peripheral route.

In relation to consumer perception and purchase decision features, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) explains that, the cues in any ads information or message stem from other secondary characteristic such as; Expert or source credibility, Likeability and Consensus. First, expert or source credibility factor of the theory argues that, consumers are persuaded when the advert message from an expert or credible source. Consumers in this regard will look for the source of the advert information that is being put on the platforms. Second, from likeability feature, the theory argues that, consumers are easily persuaded by visual appeal of a message or a product. Here, consumers will want to see the visual presentations of the ads, analyse them and take decision based on the appealing nature of ads. The third factor is the consensus, which explains that, consumers are persuaded by ad information or message when a majority of people have already accepted the message. For instance, some consumers will consider where there a lot of people using it and gets good reviews about it via online and word of mouth. The individual in this instance is likely to be persuaded via the consensus cue about the product.

3.8. Online Advertising Characteristics and Purchase Intention

Advertising has a creative nature (Reinartz & Saffert, 2013), however, studies have been conducted to highlight irritation cues within the society and the environment as a whole (Ashmawy, 2014). Consequently, entertainment and informativeness are the major categories of online advertising characteristics that is geared towards the characteristics and attitudes of consumers (Gao & Koufaris, 2006). Furthermore, Lee and Hong (2016) posit that advertising creativity, entertainment, emotional appeal and informativeness have been reviewed literally as the foremost sources of advertising effective characteristics.

Alhabash *et al.* (2013) intensively geared their attention on the emotional content and entertaining aspect of the advertisement. However, Alhabash *et al.* (2013) argued that the entertaining aspect in the advertisement showcases a momentous role in the formation of a response towards online advertisement and it has generated to a message that is persuasive or has online content that is designed suitably to be emotionally appealing. According to Reinartz and Saffert (2013), consumers of online advertising have more interest in an advertisement that has informative value and, at the same time, is rich in content.

According to Lee and Hong (2016), advertising creativity, advertising informativeness, entertainment and emotional appeal are the advertising literature that mostly emphasises and has influencing power on the behavioural patterns of consumers of online advertising. Furthermore, this study adopted advertising creativity, informativeness and emotional appeal as the constructs in determining online advertising characteristics.

- ***Emotional Appeal and Purchase Intention***

People, especially women, are emotionally sophisticated when it comes to advertisements. Emotional appeal is created by the use of persuasive tools, techniques and messages that are meant to elicit an emotional response from the target audience: these could include the use of passionate movies, sad stories and victorious music that are designed to touch the audience, prompting a response to the message. Emotional appeal works better on individuals who are not very inspired by a message in a cognitive manner (Petty & Cacioppo, 2012).

These emotions are significantly generated by consumers as a result of the importance they attach to the message. Such emotions may have a negative or positive impact. In effect, the conclusion of various studies presents emotional appeal as a component in determining how potent a message can be (Xie, Donthu, Lohtia, & Osmonbekov, 2004). Swani, Milne and Brown's (2013) research revealed that information or messages online that contained emotional content had a greater response rate than messages that are not emotionally appealing. Sentimental reactions lead to attitude formation (Batra & Ray, 1986). Although Lee and Hong (2016) used emotional appeal as a construct, their study indicated that emotional appeal did not have a positive relationship with decisions that consumers make. This construct was adopted in order to test it within the Ghanaian context.

- ***Informativeness and Purchase Intention***

Informativeness could depict the "ability to inform users about product alternatives that enable them to make choices yielding the highest value" (Munusamy, & Wong, 2007). However, informativeness enables customers to make critical decisions in which in a long term will lead to

purchase. Hence, it is different from emotional appeal (Lee & Hong, 2016). “This construct is developed based on how consumers distinguish messages, and it is therefore measured based on their response” (Palvo, Liang & Xue, 2009, pg. 457).

According to Resnik and Bruce (1977), consumers make decisions that are justifiable and serve their interest when buying and, as a result, there exists a presence of information in the advertisement. However, for advertising to be valued by individuals, persistent and consistent information about the product needs to be displayed. Tremendous change occurs when businesses engage in rich advertising information. Through the use of websites in the electronic spectrum, Gao and Koufaris (2006) have identified the provision of indispensable information in the formation of the intention to purchase by consumers. However, this proclamation is also shared by Resnik and Bruce (1977) who studied television advertising. According to Taylor *et al.* (2011), informative advertising ultimately leads to the progression of electronic word-of-mouth comment by consumers within the social networking environment. Consumers focus their attention and response to make future decisions based on the rich content of information that are placed on online advertising, which literature generally agrees with (Lee & Hong, 2016).

- ***Advertising Creativity and Purchase Intention***

According to Haberland and Dacin (1992), “advertising creativity is the degree to which an advertisement is innovative and unanticipated”. Advertising creativity can be divided into two main features: divergence and relevance. The divergence creativity has to do with components regarded as unique, new and updated, while relevance creativity has to do with features that are significant, suitable and beneficial to the target audience.

Creativity messages attract the intention of consumers to purchase and draw their attention to goods, services and product that are advertised online. Reinartz and Saffert's (2013) research findings indicated that an institution's sales nearly increase on the average as a result of creative content of advertisement than those without creative content. This shows an indication that advertising creativity has justified the investment made in them (Reinartz & Saffert, 2013).

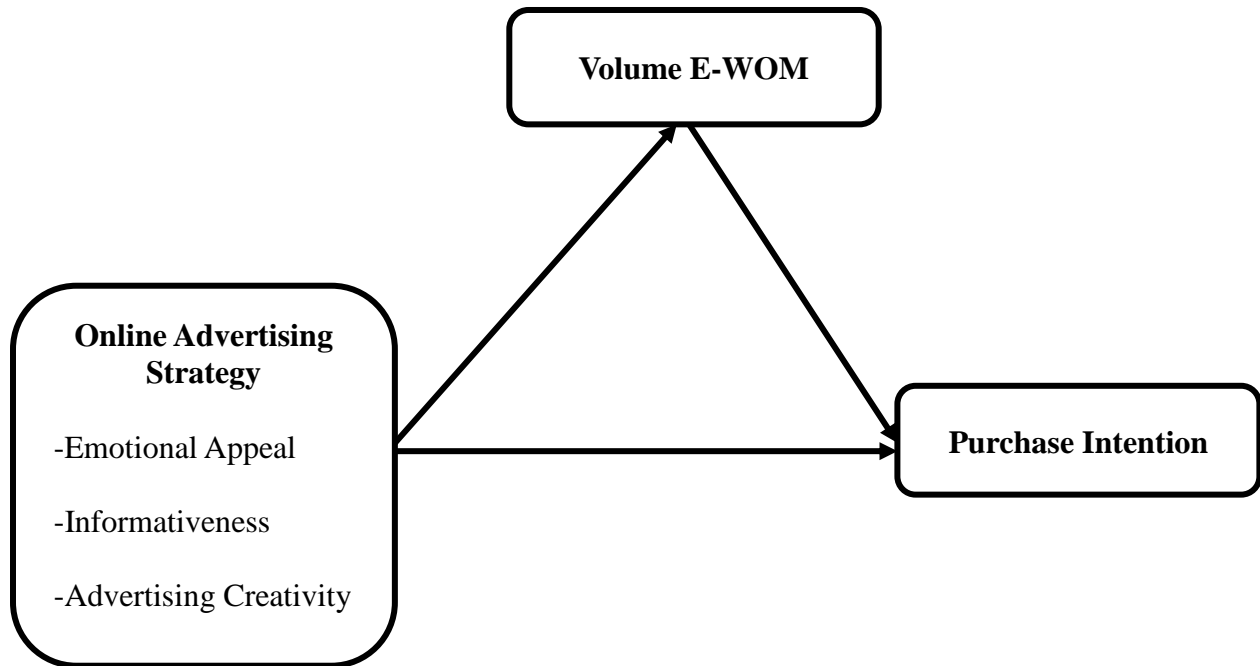
In Smith *et al.* (2007), experimental research acknowledged that advertising creativity leads to a rise in enthusiasm to process an advertisement and strengthen the attitude towards the advertisement and that positive impact is transferred to the brand. However, Lee and Hong (2016) postulate that a vital relationship exists between advertising creativity and the purchase intention that advertisement will have on the target audience.

3.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework displays the complete research by classifying and stressing the elements, patterns and the relationship that exist between and among the study concepts (Kalaba, 2014). The Conceptual Framework of this study argues that the online advertising characteristics construct made up of three dimension, thus; emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity, have significant impact on purchase intention in the automobile industry. It also argues that all the dimensions have a significant impact on customer purchase intention. The conceptual framework further argues that volume of e-wom has a positive impact on the relationship between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention in the automobile industry in Ghana.

Online advertising characteristics comprising emotional appeal, Informativeness and Advertising creativity are the independent variables in this study, while purchase intention is the dependent variable. Volume Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WOM) serves as a mediating variable between independent variable (emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity) and the dependent variable (purchase intention).

Figure 3.1: Online Advertising strategy and Purchase Intention in the Automobile Industry



Source: Author's Own Construct

3.10 Research Hypothesis

Online advertising is conceptualised to have a relationship with customer purchase intention. It is therefore hypothesised that online advertising has a positive and significant relationship with purchase intention. As noted earlier, online advertising is conceptualised to include three dimensions as discussed below.

Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal can be said to be a persuasive technique that advertisers employ in an attempt to create an emotional response in consumers. Consumers select to purchase online because of the emotional appeal of an advert (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). Several researchers believe that emotional advertisement can evoke consumers' intentions to purchase, ultimately, resulting in

consumers responding to brands (Adaval, 2001; Batra & Stephens, 1994; Rossiter *et al.*, 1991). Customers rely on how appealing online messages are; thus, acquiring customers via electronic word-of-mouth and referral has become an important goal for firms. However, volume of electronic word-of-mouth significantly mediates emotional appeal and purchase intention of consumers. It is therefore hypothesised that:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between emotional appeal of online advertising characteristics and purchase intention (PI).

Informativeness

Informativeness can be described as the innumerable messages that communicate directly or indirectly to individual consumers. Consumers can assess advertising through informativeness (Ducoffe, 1996). The information advertisers put across on the media influences a consumer's intention to purchase. Information trigger consumers to make abrupt decisions. Advertisers must design their messages in such a way that it will serve as a channel through which consumers can observe and form the intention of purchasing (Lee & Hong, 2016). It is therefore hypothesised that;

H₂: There is a positive relationship between informativeness of online advertising characteristics and purchase intention (PI).

Advertising Creativity

Advertising creativity is the pillar of every branding and advertising. In other words, "it gives life" and "pump blood" to messages about the brand that may be found irrelevant in the mind and heart of target audience (Lee & Hong, 2016). Advertisers who are creative attract more and

more consumers. According to Kover, Goldenberg and James (1995), advertising creativity is the ability of a commercial entity to elicit interest in purchasing. Advertising creativity importantly impacts purchase intention. Advertising creativity is the centre of marketing element that leads to the success of all advertising campaigns. Advertising creativity is an area that explore the persuasiveness of consumers, thereby influencing consumers to purchase (Yang, Chen & Smith, 2008; Sasser & Koslow, 2008; Dahlen, Rosengren & Torn, 2008). Therefore, it is hypothesised that;

H₃: There is a positive relationship between advertising creativity of online advertng characteristics and purchase intention (PI).

Volume of Electronic word-of-mouth

Volume of electronic word of mouth is a marketing strategy that can be used effectively and efficiently when it contains persuasive information. Marketer's have recognised volume of electronic word of mouth as the most influential tool of information transmission (Goldsmith, 2006). WOM is described as 'oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product, or service' (Arndt 1967, p. 3). Gupta & Harris (2010) purported that electronic word-of-mouth has been developed as a result of internet technology. In this new era, consumers progressively send and receive messages via the online. Volume of electronic word of mouth has become a very essential channel through which consumers communicate concerning the product and service they buy. Volume of electronic word of mouth transmits both positive and negative messages

and information to consumers and this can influence purchase intentions. It is therefore hypothesised that;

H_{1b}: volume of Electronic word of mouth significantly mediates the relationship between emotional appeal of online advertising characteristics and purchase intention (PI).

H_{2b}: volume of Electronic word of mouth significantly mediates the relationship between informativeness and purchase intention (PI).

H_{3b}: volume of Electronic word of mouth significantly mediates the relationship between advertising creativity and purchase intention (PI).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methods that were used to carry out the study and discusses the rationale behind the methods chosen in order to attain the objectives set. Research methodology is essential to ascertain an acceptable level of credibility for any kind of management research. Theoretical and empirical literature on the subject of online advertising and purchase intention of consumers has been examined in the previous chapters. This chapter is designed to explain in detail the methodology adopted for the study; and has been divided into subsections “in terms of research design, research paradigm, research strategy, target population, sample frame and size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, mode of data analysis and ethical considerations”.

4.1 Methodological Overview

Cooper and Schindler (2006,) defined research methodology as a systematic and organised investigation considered to offer information for solving problems. Numerous scholars have comprehensively written on research methodology (Saunders, et al., 2003; Collis & Hussey, 2003; Boateng, 2014; Malhotra & Birks, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Dyson & Brown, 2006; Petty et al., 2012; Neuman, 2000; Proctor, 2005). However, the fundamental factor in most cases on research methodology is that the selection of methodology basically involves the research problem and affirmed research questions.

4.2 Philosophical Perspectives

According to Sarantakos (2012, pg. 250), methodology entails the “theoretical principles as well as framework that provide guidelines about how research is done in the context of a particular paradigm”. In any research design, one of the most important initial steps is choosing a suitable research paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) posit that research ought to be directed by a philosophy that distinguishes the researcher’s particular belief about the nature of data collection, analysis, and how phenomena are to be perceived and interpreted. Scholars like Saunders *et al.* (2011) argue that unambiguous philosophy enables the researcher to think critically about the enhancement of knowledge. As such, the concept of paradigm is significant in the research process within a study.

Researchers and academicians have established philosophical approaches in dealing with research studies (Proctor, 2005; Holden & Lynch, 2004). Fundamentally, a philosophical perspective enables researchers to accurately define, in deeper terms, the “why” for the study rather than abruptly choosing “how” (Holden & Lynch, 2004). Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002) provide an inclusive summary of the importance of a philosophical position in any research. According to Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002), philosophical perspectives mostly help to clarify the research design of its overall approach, and also reveals to the researcher which strategy would work significantly. It also assists the researcher to recognise and establish designs that may not be part of his or her past experience.

Proctor (2005) posits that there are two philosophical extremes in dimensions that can be characterised into Positivism and Phenomenology. It is essential to mention that, although the

labels of philosophical positions have been described differently by various authors, the concepts they express remain resolute. For example, instead of ‘Phenomenology’ as used by Proctor (2005), Malhotra and Birks (2007) and Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002) labelled it ‘Interpretivism’ and ‘Social Constructionism’ respectively, whereas Holden and Lynch (2004) labelled them as Objectivism and Subjectivism.

It is believed that, the positivist paradigm views social phenomenon world as an external environment in which exclusive and definite structures affect people in a similar way and vice versa (Proctor, 2005). This measure its properties through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation reflection or intuition (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002).

Positivism distinguishes the actual purpose of marketing and research to be the establishment of causal laws by use of reliable information and facts that enhance the investigation, prediction and explanation of marketing phenomena (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The research paradigm used for this study is positivism. In an actual sense, the focus of this philosophy domain should be geared to what people, consumers and individuals are thinking and feeling, thus, immediate attention should be paid to the way they communicate with each other, and action taken whether verbally or non-verbally (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002).

4.3 Research Purpose

Every research study is conducted for a particular purpose. “There are three categories of research purpose: exploration, description, and explanation” (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pg.890). “These categories vary in various aspects including the way hypothesis or questions are

formulated and how data are collected. A research purpose provides a basic and clear direction for carrying out the research”.

4.3.1 Exploratory Research

This research is also called formative research. Exploratory research gathers preliminary information that enables researchers to define problems and suggest hypotheses (Stebbins, 2001). It is typically used when a research topic is relatively new. The objective of exploratory research is the discovery of ideas and insight (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The method used in conducting a research approach includes literature review, interviews, focus group discussions and case study. Requisite information is needed to explain the concept and scope of an exploratory research and to enable the researcher to understand the problem better, this is because, the research assumption or question might be difficult for the researcher to understand. This is because of the new and unfamiliar area of the research. The research purpose is established to define the best research design, selection of subjects as well as collection method (Manerikar & Manerikar, 2014; Singh, 2005).

4.3.2 Descriptive Research

This form of research purpose “is also known as Statistical Research. Its main goal is to describe the data and characteristics of what is being studied” (Omair, 2015; Ethridge, 2004). Furthermore, the primary idea of this type of research is to study frequencies, averages and other statistical calculations. Descriptive research is conducted to gain a good understanding of a topic. This research is highly accurate; hence it does not consider the cause behind a situation.

Descriptive research is quantitative in nature and uses survey and panels as well as the use of probability sampling. It is the exploration of the existing phenomenon (Brown, 2012).

4.3.3 Explanatory Research

This research purpose exists to obtain information about a situation or problem in order to explain the relationship among variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Explanatory research is done to investigate the connection between the causes and results of the evidence, therefore explaining the cause and effect relationship. This could be done through using questionnaires, group discussions, interviews, random sampling etc. The fundamental goal of explanatory research is to recognise the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Explanatory research answers the questions of "why" and "how" something happened. This form of research purpose aims to change a precise theory that can be used to explain the phenomena that leads to the generalisation from the research. Basically, it explains the topic in question and informs the audience what it is and how it works. "While primary data may be collected through the use of observation, interviews or questionnaires, secondary data may include both raw and published summaries such as data collected by other researchers, organisations, governments and other statistical institutions".

4.4 Research Design

Research design postulates a process by which the overall view of methods chosen for a study and the reasons accounting for the chosen methods are carried out (Yin, 2003). Saunders *et al.* (2009) assert that research design comprises of the entire plan of the study in terms of data collection, and analytical phases of the research work. The research design comprises an outline

of what the researcher seeks to carry out from writing the hypotheses, research questions, and operationalisation of variables, to the final analysis of data. According to Zikmund, Babin and Griffin (2012), research design simply means “a detail blueprint used to guide the implementation of a research study towards the realisation of its objectives”. Zikmund *et al.*'s definition of research design places emphasis on the methods and techniques used for gathering and analysing data.

Thus, research design focuses on the approach or method to obtain data. Therefore, research design is a blueprint of a comprehensive plan on how the research is to be accomplished. The research design's main aim is tailored “with reference to research paradigm, research purpose, research strategy, research approach and data collection methods, which includes sample size determination, sampling techniques adopted in this work, sources of data, and the survey instrument”. Taking into consideration the preceding chapters and the “research question, the philosophical assumptions for this research follows the positivist perspective”. As a result, “the researcher scrutinises this study from an objective angle where the answers to the research questions are expected from the objective responses of the sampled respondents. Research questions and hypotheses have been predominately formulated from the literature and have been tested empirically under cautiously controlled circumstances”.

An explanatory scheme is adopted for this study as the researcher purports to study a phenomenon by explaining the relationship among some constructs (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2011). Additionally, this study is quantitative in nature and has adopted a survey research approach involving the use of structured questionnaires that were designed to obtain

information from respondents (Zikmund *et al.*, 2012). Existing theory was used to formulate the research problem and the intention is to establish enough knowledge about specific factors and their relationships among one another (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009). In order to draw general conclusions and collect optimum valid results, a significant sample was needed for this research.

A deductive approach was adopted in this study; however, the theories examined needed empirical testing to make an appropriate analysis (Creswell, 2014). This research “is cross-sectional in nature and previous cross-sectional studies have mainly employed the survey strategy” (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012; Bughin *et al.*, 2010). The choice for this research design therefore became necessary not only due to the explanatory nature of the study but also because it has been suggested to be suitable for analysing such phenomena, situations, and problems by considering a cross-section of the population at one point in time (Litvin *et al.*, 2008; Hakim, 2000). Again, “the suitability of using the survey strategy in this study is to help the researcher identify and explain statistically”, the factors that influence purchase intention and online advertising in the Ghanaian automobile markets.

4.5 Population of the study

The research population consists of the number of entities or bodies that share common features and contribute significantly in agreement to the purpose of the research under investigation (Etikan *et al.*, 2016). The research population includes the people, organisations and other institutions (De Vos, 2003); and the researcher would want to draw conclusive opinions from what has been collected from these populations. The current research population includes consumers who purchase cars online in Ghana.

4.6 Sampling Technique

The procedure for collecting the research population is known as research sampling (Creswell, 2009). For the purpose of this research, convenience sampling was used. This is because, according to Boateng and Okoe (2015), who conducted research in media advertising used convenience sampling to describe the easily accessibility of respondents. According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), using the entire population to conduct research will be very cumbersome and too large. Sampling is done in order to accomplish a representation from the entire population under consideration in a research; consequently, online users of automobiles (cars) constituted the sample size for the study.

With probability sampling, separate elements in the sample frame have an equal chance of being included in the sample, which therefore enables statistical inferences (Stehman, 2001). This permits scholars and researchers to answer questions that pertain to research and to achieve the purpose that requires them to estimate statistically the features of the population contingent on the sample. Frequently, probability sampling is related to experimental and survey research strategy. With non-probability sampling, making a valid inference about a population is sometimes not possible. According to Saunders *et al.* (2011), systematic sampling, random sampling, cluster sampling and stratified random sampling are the generally accepted techniques for probability sampling.

4.7 Sample Size

The subsection of the population of the study is termed a sample. According to scholars like Osborne and Costello (2009), for a reliable factor analysis to be conducted, the sample size needs

to be big enough. This is because it takes full advantage of the likelihood that the percentages, mean and other statistics reflects the true estimate of the population. Therefore, to accomplish research accuracy, it is imperative to use a sample size that is large during survey research or study. Most importantly, Hair et al., (2010), recommended that the smallest sample size could be 100, meanwhile, Kent, (2007) endorsed 100 sample size and beyond to be used in conducting quantitative research. Moreover, Coakes and Steed (2003), suggested not less than 200 sample size to be appropriate for quantitative method. Thus, as far as this study is concerned, 350 online automobile purchasers in Ghana were considered as the sample size. There are two broad categories of sampling techniques: probability and non-probability sampling (Malhotra, 2011).

4.8 Research Strategy

Research strategy implies the process and procedures “used to answer the research questions and research purpose” (Yin, 2014). There are a number of forms of research strategy, which include experiment, survey and case study. Research strategy is steered by research questions and objectives, philosophical perspective or foundation, available resource and the extent of existing knowledge (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

4.8.1 Survey

Essentially, the most common and basic strategy for research is the survey research strategy. It is primarily conducted for social research including business disciplines (Saunders *et al.*, 2009); and is normally used to answer questions like “who”, “what” and “how”. Survey methods are mainly used in explanatory and descriptive research. According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), a survey could be defined as the detailed study of the market in order to obtain information and

collect data about the attitudes, impressions, actions, opinions and satisfaction level etc. by questioning a section of the population. In other words, a survey could be explained as the method of sociological investigation that uses questions to gather or collect information about how people think or act concerning a situation. Significantly, surveys are associated with deductive research approaches, and the survey strategy enables researchers to gather enough data or information from a large population at a very low cost. These data are classically quantitative in nature and are collected by questionnaire; and can straightforwardly be linked and analysed using different statistical procedures. According to Babbie (2004), survey methods are the preferred strategy for researchers whose interest is to collect substantial and original data from a large population. Organised interviews and structured observation can be used to gather information although questionnaires are the best and most commonly used tool for conducting a survey. Thus, this method is used for sampling data from respondents that are representative of a population and uses a closed ended instrument or open-ended items. In this study the respondents are all customers in Accra and beyond who purchases cars from online. Since this group of consumers is relatively huge, the survey technique is the appropriate technique to be employed.

4.9 Research Approach

Various researchers and scholars of research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Potter, 1996) have essentially discussed two universal approaches to research: qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Engstrom & Salehi-Sangari, 2007). Some scholars have adopted a blend of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Hair *et al.* (2003), whereas quantitative research is basically concerned with numbers, methods for data collection, well-structured, mannered and lastly, high concern representatives; qualitative is best utilised

when there is limited understanding of the phenomenon under investigation: this is because it provides the researcher enough descriptive space (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Each method is used differently because of the way data are being collected and analysed. Both qualitative and quantitative are used in business research.

4.9.1 Quantitative versus Qualitative Approach

Social scientists and natural scientists, taking different perspectives, define quantitative research as a procedural, systematic, empirical, scrutinizing and investigation of observable phenomena through statistical, computational and mathematical techniques (Creswell, 2012). However, Saunders *et al.* (2009) posit that quantitative methods could be defined as the ways and means in which data gathering techniques and data analysis procedures help in generating data. The main objective of quantitative research is to employ and develop models, hypotheses and theories that pertain to some particular phenomena. Furthermore, quantitative data includes data such as percentages, statistics, and so on. Fundamentally, it is the research purpose and the research problem that determines or shows which research method to use (Given & Lisa, 2008). The central point in quantitative research is the measurement that links or connects empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. With the help of statistics, the quantitative researcher analyses the data and optimises the number to yield an unbiased result that can be generalised to some larger population (Odoom, 2012).

In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research inquires deeply into specific experiences, with the purpose of exploring and describing meaning of the research via text, narrative or visual based data, by evolving themes exclusive to that set of participants. “Qualitative methods

produce information based on particular case studies”. This approach can be used to substantiate asserted hypotheses. Scholars employ qualitative methods across numerous academic disciplines focusing on natural and social sciences; meanwhile, in a less academic context, areas of application include qualitative market research, service demonstration and business by non-profits (Denzin, et al., 2005).

Qualitative research comprises of methods and research concepts from various disciplined academic fields. The primary goals of a qualitative research project may differ depending on the disciplinary background. Therefore, qualitative methods are best for asking questions pertaining to “why” and “how” questions of human experience in making significant decisions. The qualitative research approach is basically used by the education, political science and social work researchers. Using diverse approaches and combining them within one study enables the possibility of covering several perspectives of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2009). It is therefore imperative to use a diversity of qualitative methods which comprises of interviews, analysis of texts and observations of documents.

4.9.2 Inductive versus Deductive

In every research, there are two approaches that can be used in testing and building theories from different perspectives: these are inductive and deductive approaches (Neuman, 2006). This therefore posit that inductive research approach is a form of research that begins with the final stage of scientific research, especially observation, and works backward to form a hypothesis. According to Creswell and Clark (2007, p.23), a deductive researcher “works from the ‘top down’, from a theory to hypotheses, to data, to add to or contradict the theory” (p.23). Comparatively, Creswell and Clark (2007), also argue however, that an inductive researcher can be someone that

works from the “bottom-up, using the participants’ views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes”. Consequently, there seems to be discrepancies among scholars and researchers as far as the best approach and method to use when conducting research and collecting data. However, these two methods (i.e., inductive and deductive analysis) are not mutually exclusive and mostly they address similar questions using different methods.

In conclusion, the difference that exists between these two approaches is that, while inductive is building the theory, deductive is testing the theory. These approaches could be selected depending on the extent that the existing theories and knowledge are available related to the topic of interest. According to Chamberlain, (2006), abductive on the other hand comprises of both induction and deduction, as it depends on the formulation of hypothesis and the empirical that further is examined on new empirical objects. The abductive research is employed in a situation where the prevailing theory requires adjustment or does not apply to the area, the novel theories are expected to answer the research questions. The abductive research is employed in a situation where the prevailing theory requires adjustment or does not apply to the area, the novel theories are expected to answer the research questions. Also, according to Bryman & Bell, (2011) in abductive research, data is gathered to construct fresh theories, which are deduced again and then gather information to verify the theory. This research adopted the deductive approach as the purpose for this study is to examine the hypotheses, and make informed deductions grounded on statistical investigation of the data with the tendency of being comprehensive (Lee and Lings 2008).

4.9.3 Justification for Quantitative Research Approach Choice

This study focuses on the quantitative approach in establishing the various constructs (online advertising, purchase intention and the automobile industry in Ghana). The current research used the quantitative approach because this method empowered the researcher to use a structured questionnaire to gather relevant data from a large number of participants for analysis. Choy (2014) asserts that the quantitative approach can be used to conduct research speedily if, and only if, responses can be evaluated within a short period relative to using the qualitative or even the mixed methods approaches.

4.10 Data Collection

There are numerous reasons for using data. There are many reasons for collecting data. Data collection can be defined as the means of collecting and measuring information on individual variables in an organised and procedural or systematic fashion, which enhances respondent to relevantly answer questions and evaluate results. Consequently, data collection depicts an element of research in all fields of study, including social sciences and physical, business and humanities. According to Yin (2003), there are diverse strategies that can be used for casual, descriptive and exploratory research, and these strategies are the survey, case study, experiment, archival analysis and history. The main goal of data collection is to capture evidence that enables analysis to lead to the formulation of convincing and reliable answers or results to the questions that have been modelled.

As far as this research is concern, the data collection involved consists of some procedural or systematically planned activities: the data collected type; appropriate source of data collection; research instrument preparation and design; procedures for data collection; techniques of data

analysis; quality criteria; and, lastly, ethical considerations. These are explained below in more detail.

4.11 Types of Data

Data collection methods can be grouped into two types: primary data collection method and secondary data method (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). There is a clear discrepancy between “primary and secondary data. Whereas primary data is collected specifically for the purpose for which the data is required, secondary data is collected for another primary purpose” (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Malhotra, 2007). In this research, questionnaires were used to collect data and information in order to fish out the factors that influences the intention of consumers to respond significantly to online advertising in the automobile industry in Ghana with the mediating effect of electronic word-of-mouth. Data type can be identified as the first significant step and a process in the data collection process.

4.12 Data Collection Instrument

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), the instruments that can be used to collect or gather primary data can be categorised into four groups: self-administered questionnaires, personal interviews, participant observation and telephone interviews. The approach selected for this study was the quantitative method approach using self-administered questionnaires as this was considered suitable and appropriate, and consequently, the best instrument for data collection.

4.13 Questionnaire Design and Administration

Every research undertaken aims to attain quality data. However, it can only be achieved through the designing of high quality questionnaires. Malhotra and Birks (2007) suggested that steps or processes for designing questionnaires aids as the basis for the development of the questionnaires in this study. The researcher developed a closed ended structured questionnaire to collect primary data from research respondents. The next section of this part of the questionnaire captured respondents' demographics, including income level, marital status, gender, age, educational level, the professional association respondents belongs to and their nationality.

The second part of the questionnaire captures the usage of online advertising strategy, followed by the major constructs of the conceptual framework as presented in Chapter 3. Five (5) variables were addressed in this research. The questions from the third part of the questionnaire were guided by previous literature and empirical studies on online advertising, purchase intention and the automobile industry. An adapted scale was used to measure the three constructs of online advertising strategy, being emotional appeal, advertising informativeness and advertising creativity. The researcher used a structured questionnaire for the study.

However, as Churchill (2005) posit, self-administration of a questionnaire enables respondents to sort for vivid clarification during their confusion stage of the questionnaires. With automobile consumers, the self-administering method encouraged respondents to seek answers from the researchers. In respect to this study, the questionnaire was developed and designed by the researcher based on the objectives and the research questions. Also, some of the questions were generated as a result of the reviewing of literature. The researcher put in place some proper

measures and steps that enabled respondents to answer the questions without hassle. And also, procedures to overcome the incapability and reluctance to answer the questionnaires were put in place. Churchill (2005) suggested that, by doing this, it will help reject questions that might seem personal and sensitive. The selected respondents were people who can write and read, and understand the effects of the study so as to contribute and give accurate responses. Structured questionnaires can be established by using different methods. These methods include dichotomous, multi-choice and on scales (Proctor, 2005; Peterson, 2000; Churchill, 2005). The scale adapted for this research is elaborated below:

Construct	References
Emotional appeal	Bangen,2018; Bhasin, 2018; Oetting, 2018; Lee & Hong, 2016
Informativeness	Taylor, 2011; Blanco, Blasco & Azorin, 2010; Lee & Hong, 2016
Advertising creativity	Reinartz & Saffert, 2013; Sinan, 2016; Minnium,2016; Lee & Hong, 2016

4.14 Pre-Test and Pilot Study

A pre-test and pilot study were conducted on a small sub-group of the population in order to discover whether the instrument used for the data collection was dependable, relevant and valid (Du Plooy, 2009; Bhattacharjee, 2012). This was done in order to cross-check the dependability and reliability of the scales used. Saunders *et al.* (2009) argued that one of the goals in conducting pre-testing of questionnaires is that it should enhance the simplicity of the questions therefore making it convenient enough for respondents to answer.

In every social research study, different people interpret and construe written questionnaires differently, and as a consequence there is a possibility that the feedback from respondents or individuals help shape the questionnaires before the final administering of them. Hair *et al.* (2010) and DeVellis (2003) recommended that, for a researcher to overcome the problem of respondents misapprehending the questions, a pre-test and pilot study of the questionnaire needs to be carried out in order to fish-out future problems. Pilot-testing is a significant benchmark that aids in eliminating errors in the writing of questionnaires before administering them. As a result, the questionnaires were pre-tested among some workers of Ghana Cocoa Board in the Greater Accra Region and Takoradi, and EMBA students from University of Ghana who had knowledge of the subject being studied.

4.15 Mode of Data Analysis

In analysing research data, researchers and scholars mostly use the two-main types of techniques, namely qualitative and quantitative techniques. Some researchers use qualitative analysis to accomplish results that are not numerically based and interpreted to deliver meanings as well as relationships. Quantitative analysis, on the other hand, is a technique that gives researchers the opportunity to make findings based on numbers. Babbie (2004) posit that quantitative analysis describes the representation of mathematical or numerical data in describing and explaining the phenomenon that the data reflect. This research is based on quantitative analysis. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 and structural equation modelling with AMOS version 21 were adopted. Several researchers have used various software to analyse data such as SPSS software (Wong & Merilees 2008; Herrmann, Henneberg & Landwehr, 2010; Roy & Banerjee 2014; Asamoah, 2014).

Primary data was gathered with the help of questionnaires and SPSS was used for the preliminary entering and coding as well as data cleaning. It was transferred to AMOS for further analysis. According to Pallant (2011), data screening consists of three steps: data error check on every variable, location of place of error occurrence and deleting of errors.

4.16 Factor Analysis

According to literature, there are two major approaches to factor analysis: exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007; Pallant 2011). Factor analysis is important to researchers in the sense that it enables researchers to develop and evaluate items and test for those items. However, exploratory factor analysis is frequently commenced at the initial stages of research. This is done in order for the researcher to gather, identify and obtain essential information about the interrelationship that exists among variables. Hair *et al.* (2010) argued that EFA can be used for “examining the underlying patterns or relationships for a large number of variables and to determine whether the information can be condensed or summarised in a smaller set of factors or components”.

According to Pallant (2011) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), confirmatory factor analysis depicts a more sophisticated and multifaceted set of techniques that are done later in the process of the research to test and confirm explicitly or detailed theories and hypotheses concerning the structure underlying a set of variables.

4.17 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modelling, according to Ullman (2006), can be defined as the statistical technique that is significantly used for multivariate data analysis that scrutinises or examines the actual relationship that exists between independent variables and dependent variables. It could also be termed “causal modelling or analysis of covariance structures” (Ullman, 2006, p.35). Schumacker and Lomax (2004) posit that Structural Equation Modelling is an analytical procedure or technique that is basically used to test several measurements that includes various hypotheses, namely functional, predictive or causal hypotheses. SEM is “a statistical method that takes a confirmatory approach to estimate a series of separate, but interdependent, multiple regression equations simultaneously with the considerations of measurement errors of latent variables” (Jöreskog *et al.*, 1979, p.45).

Below are three features or characteristics of structural equation modelling that makes it an inimitable technique statistically in multivariate data analysis:

1. Model definition;
2. Estimation of multiple interrelated dependence relationships; and
3. Incorporating latent variables not measured directly.

The researcher used SEM to explore the structural route within the constructs in order to test the proposed hypotheses in the research. In conducting SEM, there are two stage approaches. Both stages are there in the performance of SEM analysis and have been used by several scholars in the past decade. The first stage was used during the exploratory phase and the second stage

proceeded in the confirmatory phase. For this study, the two-stage approach was used to test the research model.

Various scholars and researcher like Anderson and Gerbing (1988) have argued that the two-stage approach avoids unnecessary interaction between constructs during structural modelling testing as compared to the one-stage approach. Various researchers and scholars have published textbooks and software packages such as LISREL, EQS and AMOS (Henriksen & Pedersen, 2007). Structural equation modelling is a renowned and recognised technique (e.g., Hair *et al.*, 2006). According to Kline (2015), the test of the measurement model has to be undertaken: this is because correlations that exist between constructs essentially need to be estimated before testing the structural model. This measurement model assesses whether the construct meets the validity and reliability requirement (Byrne, 2013).

4.18 Testing Model Fitness

Researchers have coined a number of model fitness indices. Evaluating the model fit encompasses the clarification of how well the conceptualised model fits the empirical research. Scholars such as Hooper *et al.* (2008), Bagozzi and Yi (2012) and Hair *et al.* (2014) have postulate that the model fit standard used in absolute fit include Root-Mean-Square Residual (RMR), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Root-Mean-Square-Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Chi-Square (χ^2) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI). The above criteria, according to Hair *et al.* (2014), are essentially based on the differences that exist between the model-implied correlation and the observed covariance matrix. Comparative fit ensures that the model considered is better than the competing model in accounting for observed data.

Kelloway (1998) suggest that the comparative fit is typically based on the examination of a “baseline” model as compared to a theoretically derived model. This category of criteria includes Normed Fit Index (NFI), Relative Non-Centrality Index (RNI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). $RMSEA \leq 0.08$, $GFI \geq 0.90$, $NFI \geq 0.90$ and $CFI \geq 0.90$ are fit indexes used for the estimation or the evaluation of how well the model fit the data that was collected (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hooper *et al.*, 2008).

4.19 Quality Criteria

Scholars and researchers have noticed and verified that the quality of every research should not be compromised or overlooked (Malhotra & Birks 2007). Yin (1994) posited that utilizing the measurement of validity and reliability will ensure that the questionnaires are devoid of bias and misinterpretation (Golafshani, 2003; Roberts, Priest & Traynor, 2006). Accordingly, for this study, the researcher made sure individual personal demographic information are confidentially kept secret.

4.19.1 Reliability

The quality of all research depends exclusively on the reliability and validity of the research data and methodology. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) suggested that reliability is when a researcher measures the stability of a proposed measure. Moreover, Selvi and Balakrishna (2014) posit that, in designing a study, reliability is an importance factor researchers and scholars should be taking into consideration while judging the quality of the study and analyzing results. A Cronbach alpha is used to assess reliability of a measurement scale. Reliability, according to Neumann (2006, p.196), could also mean the consistency or the dependability. One of the vital roles in assessing the reliability check, according to Yin (2003), is the fact that it decreases the biases and the

errors in the study. In this research, the researcher recorded out the sample procedure, research technique section, questionnaire design and the questionnaire administration. In Malholtra's (2007) book, he suggested that alternative forms, test-retested and the internal consistency reliability approach are the three ways through which reliability can be assessed. Malholtra (2007) posited that the calmness way to compute for the internal consistency of a scale is by way of using the split-half reliability test. The most used test is Cronbach alpha (Guy *et al.*, 1987) because consistency of an entire scale is assessed by measurement of the reliability coefficient (Cronbach, 1951). Achieving a reliability range of 0.5 to 0.6 is considered adequate when testing reliability of constructs even though a cronbach alpha is usually estimated to be over 0.6.

Churchill and Iacobucci (2006), Hair *et al.* (2014), and Peter (1979) point out that, in computing for the cronbach alpha value, inter-correlations that exist between samples of items must range between 0 and 1. In this study, reliability of the measurement scale was tested and confirmed using Cronbach alphas and composite reliability (CR). Composite reliability is a measure of the overall reliability of a collection of heterogeneous but similar items. The AVE, on the other hand, illustrates the amount of variance the items share with the construct it purports to measure.

4.19.2 Validity

Validity, according to Zikmund *et al.* (2012), is the process of ascertaining the extent to which a score reliably represents a concept. Burns and Burns (2008) supported the assertion that validity also means the appropriateness of the measurements to assess the variable it claims to measure. Construct validity involves testing a scale, not against a single criterion but in terms of theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the nature of the underlying variable or construct.

Construct validity comprises of two (2) sub-types: convergent validity and discriminant validity. In the study of Rezaei (2015), and Rezaei and Ghodsi (2014), discriminant validity was used in identifying the extent to which a construct is different from other constructs; while the convergent validity was used to ensure that the constructs identified are truly reflected by their indicators. In the works of Kim, Hwang, Zo and Lee (2016), and Rezaei (2015), discriminant validity was applied using construct correlations and cross-loading criterion, and convergent validity was applied using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings. In this research, content and construct validity were used to confirm the measurement scale. Content validity was ensured by allowing senior marketing experts (both academia and practice) to check the scales used in the study (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). Constructs used in this study were subject to both EFA and CFA. The final measurement model was subjected to a SEM process in the analysis section to examine the various structural propositions postulated in the conceptual framework for the study. Results for both reliability and validity measures are presented in Chapter 5.

In any research, ethics is one of the most important issue researchers must consider and not overlook (Malhotra & Birks 2007). In accordance with this, the researcher took steps to make sure that no participant in this research work was harmed in any way. Potential ethical issues were therefore considered in the collection of data, analysis, and presentation of findings. This study process was guided by three ethical principles adopted from Denscombe (2014). These principles suggested that participants' interests were protected, therefore the researcher avoided deception or misrepresentation, and participants provided their informed consent.

4.20 Ethical Consideration

Confidentiality in research is very vital to every researcher. The confidentiality of the respondent was assured since their names and identity were not captured on the data collection instrument, the nature of the questionnaire, researcher's objective and purpose of the study were appropriately explained to the respondents. According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), ethical issues spring forth especially when there are minor conflict and misunderstanding between the researcher and respondents. In order to avoid conflict concerning ethical issues, the researcher made sure respondents became aware before administering the questionnaires.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter outline the analysis of the data that was collected for the study. Questionnaires were self-administered to online automobile users in Ghana. This phase also represents the quantitative analysis in order to attain the objectives set for this study in Chapter One. The analysis begun with descriptive statistics of the total respondents. It proceeded by conducting CFA. Also, validity and reliability tests were done to define the appropriateness of the items, furthermore, this chapter informs both the mediating results based on the conceptual framework and the structural model.

5.1 Editing of Data, Coding, Screening and Entry

After data was gathered, it was then entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S.) for further analysis. The researcher checked for errors and also checked if some of the data were missing: this was done through coding and screening. According to Coakes, Steed and Dzidic (2006), data screening enables the researcher to eliminate some of the input that could skew the findings. This screening was also done to ensure that data is error free and therefore it is suitable for running the analysis.

5.2 Demographic Background of Respondents

The respondents for this research have been profiled in accordance with their level of income, marital status, gender, age, educational level, the professional association they belong to and

nationality. Three hundred and fifty (350) questionnaires were administered and all of them were retrieved. Table 5.1 depicts the results of the demographic statistics acquired from this study.

Table 5.1: Level of Income of Respondents (Monthly)

Income (GHC)	Frequency	Percentage %
0-999	18	5.1
1,000-2,999	80	22.9
3,000-4,999	161	46.0
5,000-6,999	88	25.1
7000-7999	3	.9
Above 8,000	0	0
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

The income level of respondents indicates that most of the respondents are workers of which the majority of them are monthly salaried workers. With this, 94.9% of the respondents earn a monthly income between GHC 1,000 and above GHC 8,000.

Table 5.2: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage %
Single	197	56.3
Married	143	40.9
Separated	10	2.9
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	0	0
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

The findings in Table 5.2 show that 197 out of 350 participants of the sample size representing 56.3% were single; whilst a total number of 143 indicating 40.9% were married. The findings also show that 10 respondents representing 2.9% were separated and none were divorced and widowed.

Table 5.3: Gender of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage%
Male	214	61.1
Female	136	38.9
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

In Table 5.3, out of the total sample size of 350, 214 were males and 136 were females representing 61.1% and 38.9% respectively. The findings indicated that the study was not skewed to any gender and includes opinions from both gender in order to access a fair and significant result. It is essential to conclude that the percentage of female and male in this study is not partial and however does not warrant bias response in any way.

Table 5.4: Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage%
20-29	75	21.4
30-39	85	24.3
40-49	126	36.0
50-59	47	13.4
Above 60	17	4.9
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

Table 5.4 designates the age of the total respondents that was used for the study. The findings indicate that the larger number of the respondents representing 36.0% were between the age of 40-49, followed by those within the ranged of 30-39 representing 24.3%. Those between the ages of 20-29 were 75 representing 21.4%: those within 50-59 were 47 representing 13.4%. The least number of participants, being 17 representing 4.9% were aged above 50. These findings show that the majority of the people who purchase online cars users are within the working age.

Table 5.5: Educational Background

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage%
No education	0	
Primary	5	1.4
Secondary	10	2.9
Tertiary	335	95.7
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

With respect to the educational level of the respondent who participated in this study as shown in Table 5.5, there were 335 respondents who had tertiary educational background (1st degree, master's or PhD) representing 95.7% of the total sample size. There were 10 and 5 respondents representing 2.9 % and 1.4% who had secondary education and primary education respectively. This result indicates that the majority of the people who purchase online cars are well learned and they consider the pros and cons before final purchase.

Table 5.6: Professional Association

Association	Frequency	Percentage%
Yes	221	63.1
No	129	36.9
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

In terms of being a member of a professional association in Table 5.6, 221 out of the total of 350 replied yes representing 63.1% whilst 129 respondents indicated no representing 36.9%. This result indicated that the majority of the respondents belong to a recognised professional body.

Table 5.7: Nationality

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage%
Ghanaian	335	95.7
Non-Ghanaian	15	4.3
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

With regard to the nationality of the respondents in Table 5.7, out of 350 respondents, 335 representing 95.7% were Ghanaians and 15 respondents representing 4.3% are Non-Ghanaians.

Table 5.8: Online Advertising Purchasers

Convinced	Frequency	Percentage%
Yes	304	86.9
No	46	13.1
Total	350	100

Source: Field Data, 2018

Table 5.8 depicts the number of respondents that purchase from online advertising. Out of 350 respondents, 304 claimed that yes, they have been convinced by online adverts to purchase a car online representing 86% whilst 46 respondents said no, they have not been convinced by online advert to purchase a car online, and this represent 13.1% of the total percentage. Arguably, these findings show that, although consumers can be convinced to patronise cars online, it does not necessary mean that he or she will go there and purchase.

Table 5.9: Automobiles Driven by Respondents

Automobile Brand	Frequency	Percent
Toyota	151	43.1
Hyundai	141	40.3
Mitsubishi	3	.9
Honda	17	4.9
Nissan	14	4.0
Ford	6	1.7
Mercedes	4	1.1
Chevrolet	3	.9
Kia	7	2.0
Mahindra	4	1.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2018

Table 5.9 constitutes consumers who have driven the aforementioned cars. With this, Toyota had the highest number of consumers as per the sampled result with 151 users representing 43.1% of the total responses obtained. This result is followed by Hyundai (141 respondents) representing 40.3%, Honda (17 respondents) representing 4.9%, Nissan (14 respondents) representing 4.0%, Kia (7 respondents) representing 2.0%, Ford (6 respondents) representing 1.7%, Mercedes and Mahindra (4 respondents each) representing 1.1%, and lastly, Chevrolet and Mitsubishi (3

respondents each) representing 0.9% making a total 350 responses. It must be noted that the responses were obtained from the respondents based on availability, capability, willingness and readiness to partake in the study without being prejudiced towards any specific car users.

Table 5.10: How often do you Search for Online Information on Cars in a Week

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	91	26.0
1-5 times	259	74.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2018

Table 5.10 displays how often consumers search for information online on cars within a week. The result shows that out of 350, 91 respondents representing 26% says they do not use the online platform to search for information at all. On the other hand, 259 respondents representing 74% claims they go online to search for information 1 to 5 times within a week.

5.3 Data Analysis

Table 5.11: Descriptive Statistics

Items	Code	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
I am emotionally attached to online advertising	EAPP1	3.4486	1.19283	-.453	-.572
The emotional content makes me pay attention to online advertising	EAPP2	3.4371	1.15815	-.520	-.486
like online adverts on cars because its messages appeal me	EAPP3	3.3257	1.15660	-.246	-.753
I am satisfied with the cars I purchase online because of the emotional content	EAPP4	3.2200	1.11779	-.331	-.519
I like cars that appeals to people	EAPP5	3.3543	1.27581	-.371	-.934
Automobile adverts online are a source of information to me	INFOR1	4.0571	.91604	-1.238	1.858
Information from car adverts online is useful	INFOR2	4.1314	.79388	-1.172	2.332
I learn a lot from watching online adverts on automobile (cars)	INFOR3	4.0371	.83360	-1.055	1.879
I am satisfied with information received from online adverts on automobiles (cars)	INFOR4	3.7657	.92836	-.728	.296
Information gives consumers an idea about the car	INFOR5	3.7371	1.02939	-.819	.300
I consider online adverts on automobiles (cars) unique	ADCRE1	3.611	.9829	-.560	-.046
I consider online adverts on automobiles (cars) because of its updated content	ADCRE2	3.2686	1.14651	-.150	-.826
I am satisfied with the creativity of online adverts on automobile (cars)	ADCRE3	3.7086	.95796	-.647	.222
I tell others about online adverts because they are creative	ADCRE4	3.6857	.92935	-.779	.590
I like online adverts that have creative content	ADCRE5	3.6171	1.06883	-.534	-.352
I consider recommendations of others before buying automobiles (cars) online	EWOM1	3.5543	1.09501	-.561	-.325
Positive feedback messages online influence me to purchase automobiles (cars) online	EWOM2	3.2714	1.12692	-.260	-.721
I will recommend to others to purchase automobiles (cars) online	EWOM3	3.0886	1.19485	-.040	-.907
Recommending cars to people is the best thing to do	EWOM4	3.4200	1.14964	-.372	-.594
I search for information on online adverts on automobiles (cars)	PI1	3.6257	1.01277	-.612	.091
I evaluate alternatives to buy based on online adverts on automobiles (cars)	PI2	3.6200	1.06583	-.409	-.552
Online advertisement influences me to purchase automobiles	PI3	3.6486	1.01249	-.402	-.398
I have purchased because of online adverts on automobiles (cars)	PI4	3.5314	1.09852	-.413	-.547
I have responded to online advert because of it wider coverage	PI5	3.3886	1.03955	-.308	-.442

Source: Field Data, 2018

The above t-test Table 5.11 describes the standard deviation and mean of the variables that were used in the study. This result shows that the respondent selected agreed and/or disagreed with the statements in the questionnaires. Moreover, the result for the mean variable presents how each statement performed from the 350 respondents' point of view. As far as the table is concerned, the highest mean was 4.1314 (information from car advert online is useful); whereas the lowest was 3.0886 (I will recommend to others to purchase automobiles (cars) online).

5.3.1 Means of the Factors

Table 5.12: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Appeal	3.3571	1.00844
Informativeness	3.9457	.69556
Advertising Creativity	3.5783	.77377
Volume of electronic word of mouth	2.6669	.76364
Purchase Intention	3.5629	.83043

Source: Field Data, 2018

Table 5.12 depicts the cumulative standard deviation and mean of the factors, which sort out or classify the various variables. Descriptive statistics was generated using the SPSS version 20. Computed variables was used to generate the means and standard deviations. The results explain the cumulative extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the factors. Specifically, informativeness recorded the highest mean of 3.945 and standard deviation of 0.773 while volume of electronic word of mouth recorded the least mean of 2.666 and standard deviation of 0.763. The least recorded mean also means that volume of electronic word of mouth could generate positive impact on the intention of consumers to purchase in the Ghanaian, this is as a

result that Automobiles are high purchase consumer involvement and word of mouth would not be enough to inform the decisions of consumers.

5.3.2 Test for Validity and Reliability

Reliability

Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), measuring the stability of a proposed measure is termed as reliability. Saunders et al. (2011) have severally stated that reliability is a sign of accuracy, precision and consistency of a measurement. Simply put, extant scholars like Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2012) postulate that reliability is an indicator of a measurement of internal consistency, as well as, how appropriate items on the test measure the same construct or idea. In order to ascertain the consistency of the measurement construct, cronbach is used in this study.

Validity

Zikmund et al. (2012) explain validity as the correctness of a measurement or the extent to which a score honestly represents a concept. Supporting this assertion, Burns and Burns (2008) reiterate that validity refers to the appropriateness of the measurements to assess the variable it claims to measure. In this study the researcher employs factor loadings to check the how precise the measurement scales represent each of the construct or what it in tend to measure.

Table 5.13: Reliability and Validity of Scales – Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables/Scale Items	Codes	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Variance Explained
Emotional Appeal			.807	73.243
I am emotionally attached to online advertising	EAPP1	.859		
The emotional content makes me pay attention to online advertising	EAPP2	.874		
I like online adverts on cars because its messages appeal me	EAPP3	.904		
I am satisfied with the cars I purchase online because of the emotional content	EAPP4	.851		
I like cars that appeals to people	EAPP5	.733		
Informative			.828	59.982
Automobile adverts online are a source of information to me	INFOR1	.756		
Information from car adverts online is useful	INFOR2	.869		
I learn a lot from watching online adverts on automobiles (cars)	INFOR3	.837		
I am satisfied with information received from online adverts on automobiles (cars)	INFOR4	.624		
Automobile adverts online are a source of information to me	INFOR5	.622		
Advertising Creativity			.815	57.785
I consider online adverts on automobiles (cars) unique	ADCRE1	.748		
I consider online adverts on automobiles (cars) because of its updated content	ADCRE2	.723		
I am satisfied with the creativity of online adverts on automobiles (cars)	ADCRE3	.746		
I tell others about online adverts because they are creative	ADCRE4	.782		
I like online adverts that have creative content	ADCRE5	.590		
Volume of electronic word of mouth			.858	70.004
I consider recommendations of others before buying automobiles (cars) online.	EWOM1	.777		
Positive feedback messages online influence me to purchase automobile (cars) online	EWOM2	.893		

I will recommend to others to purchase automobile (cars) online	EWOM3	.769		
Recommending cars to people is the best thing to do	EWOM4	.855		
Purchase Intention			.853	63.278
I search for information on online adverts on automobiles (cars)	PI1	.789		
I evaluate alternatives to buy based on online adverts on automobiles (cars)	PI2	.820		
Online advertisements influence me to purchase automobiles	PI3	.888		
I have purchased because of online adverts on automobiles (cars)	PI4	.792		
I have responded to online advert because of its wider coverage	PI5	.609		

Source: Field Data, 2018

To assist in the interpretation of online advertising characteristics variables, varimax method of rotation was performed on the variable to examine the number of strong loadings and ascertain the specific variables which loaded substantially onto the online advertising characteristics components. Only factors that meet the minimum value of 0.6 as postulated by Hair et al. (2010) were accepted. After the analysis of the data, all the items measuring online advertising characteristics, purchase intention and volume of electronic word of mouth loaded well on the construct above 0.70 between 0.635 and 0.801 meeting the validity test. This measures that, all the items precisely measure what it intended to measure.

An assessment of the internal reliabilities of emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity construct was also conducted. The most commonly used indicator of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was employed to check the reliability of the scales used for this online advertising characteristics construct of the survey. The reliability measures

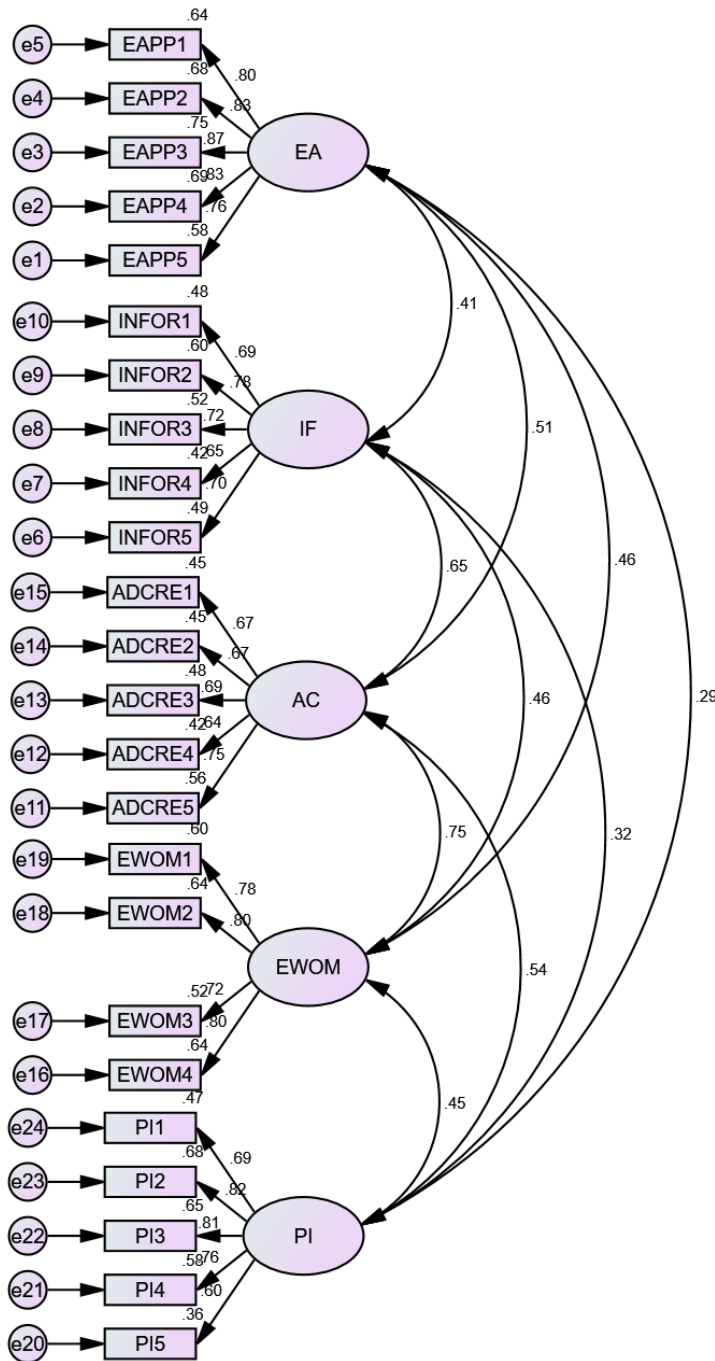
using Cronbach Alphas in this study are above the acceptable satisfactory levels (Cronbach's alphas $> .70$) as recommended by scholars (Cronbach, 1951; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This confirms the reliability of the scales measuring the emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity variable. This means that that the innovation construct is accurate and consistent and can be replicated the same result when it is used in different study.

Data reduction or dimension was operationalised in order to drop some items or scales that were unsuitable, however, none of the items needed to be dropped. All the variables loaded well and were all above 0.5. Table 5.13 indicates the innumerable constructs and items that loaded well. All the items in the construct (independent variable) namely Emotional Appeal, Informativeness and Advertising Creativity loaded well. The mediating variable also loaded well. The five (5) construct were all maintained. The value for the Cronbach Alpha should always be 0.7 or above before any scale can be considered reliable. The reliability here, according to Malhotra and Birks (2007), is referred to as the degree to which measurement duplicates outcomes that are consistent if the procedural measurement steps are repeated. The items used for this study actually met the threshold for the Cronbach Alpha of 0.7.

5.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Chi-square (χ^2), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Root-Mean-Square-Error of Approximation (RMSEA) are the model fit criteria that are mostly used in absolute fit. The above criterion is grounded on the changes that exist between the covariance matrix (Hair *et al.*, 2014) or the observed and model-implied correlation. Consequently, the comparative fit agrees with whether or not the model being measured is better than a competing model in accounting for observed data.

Figure 5.1: Final Measurement Model



The above, Fig 5.1 represents the final measurement model. The EA represent Emotional Appeal, IF shows Informativeness and AC depict Advertising Creativity. The above-mentioned

are constructs for the independent variables. E-WOM is the mediating variable represented by Volume of electronic word of mouth. Purchase Intention is the dependent variable or the outcome variable represented by PI. The below table illustrate the fit indices.

Table 5.14: Model Fit Measures

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	475.656	--	--
DF	237	--	--
CMIN/DF	2.007	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.946	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	0.051	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.054	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.187	>0.05	Excellent

Source: Field Data, 2018

The results in Table 5.14 were produced or generated by AMOS version 21. The following are the fit indices that were obtained. GFI (.898), AGFI (.871), NFI (.898), IFI (.946), TLI (.937), CFI (0.946) and RMSEA (0.054). These are consistent with Hu and Bentler (1999) and Bagozzi and Li (2012) for model fit.

Structural Equation Model

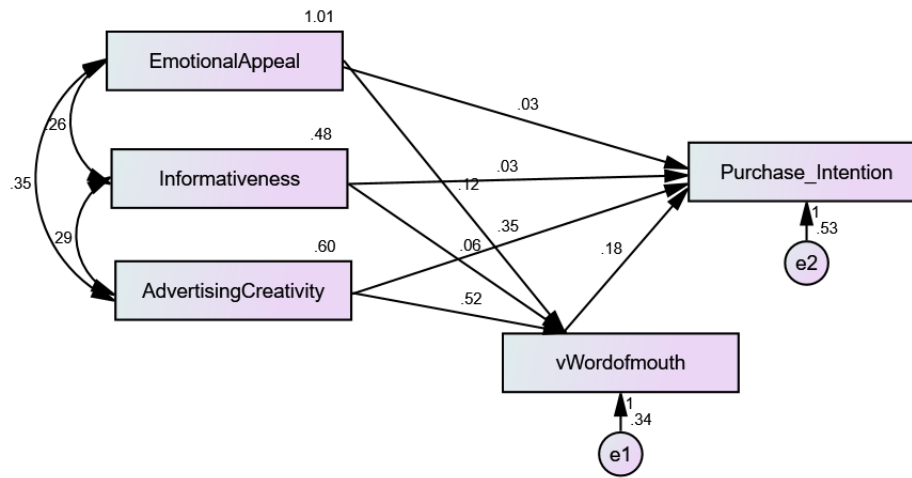


Table 5.15: Cut-off Criteria

Measure	Terrible	Acceptable	Excellent
CMIN/DF	> 5	> 3	> 1
CFI	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
SRMR	>0.10	>0.08	<0.08
RMSEA	>0.08	>0.06	<0.06
PClose	<0.01	<0.05	>0.05

Source: Field Data, 2018

The study found all indices excellent because they are close to 1 indicating an excellent fit for the data based on recommended cut off criteria (Hu & Bentler 1999; Browne & Cudeck 1993).

Table 5.16: Thresholds

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	6.657	--	--
DF	4	--	--
CMIN/DF	1.664	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.995	>0.95	Excellent
SRMR	0.025	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.044	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.495	>0.05	Excellent

According to Hu and Bentler, (1999) the estimation of the model fit indices recorded that $CFI=0.996>0.95$, $SRME=0.025<0.08$, $RMSEA=0.044<0.06$, $PClose=0.495>0.05$. The researcher assessed the fit indices of the second order construct modeled. From the assessment, a CMIN of 6.657 (df = 4, p < .01) and the root-mean-square-error of approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.044 was observed.

Table 5.17 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β Estimate	SE	t-Values	p-Values	Outcome
<i>Hypothesis 1a: Emotional appeal has a positive relationship with purchase intention</i>	EA--> PI	0.530	0.097	8.243	***	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 2a: Informativeness has a positive relationship with purchase intention</i>	INFOR >PI	0.629	0.070	9.244	***	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 3a: Advertising creativity has a positive relationship with purchase intention</i>	ACCC->PI	0.868	1.66	9.244	***	Supported
<i>Online advertising and purchase intention</i>	OAD>PI	0.513	0.79	8.030	***	Supported

Source: Field Data, 2018

Table 5.18: Mediation Test Result

MEDIATION TEST	Direct without Mediator		Direct with Mediator		Mediation Effect
	β		β		
	Estimate	p-Value	Estimate	p-Value	
<i>Hypothesis 1b: Volume of electronic word of mouth mediates the relationship between emotional appeal and purchase intention</i>	.530	(***)	0.536	(***)	Partial Mediation
<i>Hypothesis 2b: Volume of electronic word of mouth mediates the relationship between informativeness and purchase intention</i>	0.629	(***)	0.611	(***)	Partial Mediation
<i>Hypothesis 3b: Volume of electronic word of mouth mediates the relationship between advertising creativity and purchase intention</i>	0.868	(***)	0.879	(***)	Partial Mediation
Total Effect: Online advertising and purchase intention	0.513	(***)	.465	(***)	Significant

Source: Field Data, 2018

This table 5.18 present result after volume of electronic word of mouth has been used to mediate the relationship between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention.

5.5 Discussion of Findings

The key objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between online advertising characteristics and consumer purchase intention on automobile. The central question underlying the current study is thus articulated as: what influences consumers to purchase online in the automobile industry and how does a volume electronic word of mouth recommendation significantly mediate online advertising characteristics and purchase intention of consumers. In

an effort to address this question, the study sought to evaluate two key questions, which added up into both theoretical and empirical investigations in the previous chapters. The major results found from the current research have been deliberated upon in relation to previous literature on the themes under discussion. These are discussed in detail based on the research questions and study objectives in the subsequent section of this chapter.

5.5.1 Influence of Online Advertising strategy and Consumer Purchase Intention

The first objective and hypothesis of this research sought to study the influence on automobile operators of online advertising characteristics and purchase intention, thus, emotional appeal (*H1a*), advertising informativeness (*H2a*), and advertising creativity (*H3a*) on consumer purchase intention.

Supporting *H1a*, the findings of the study indicated that the appealing nature of online advertising characteristics of Ghanaian automobile companies has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($p < 0.01$). The research findings indicated that emotional appeal in online advertising influences purchase intention. This is because the relationship between emotional appeal and purchase intention is supported. Thus, emotional appeal in online advertisements directly influences purchase intention. This confirms the works of Xie, Donthu, Lohtia and Osmonbekov (2004) and Swani, Milne and Brown (2013) who asserted that emotional messages affect the responses of consumers due to their presence in online advertisement but it is inconsistent with research findings of Lee and Hong (2016), which indicated that emotional appeal does not affect purchase intention.

Supporting the proposed *H2a*, the results revealed that informativeness of online advertising characteristics of Ghanaian automobile companies has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention and responses ($p < 0.01$). The finding supported the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between informative content of online advertisement and purchase intention. Thus, informativeness in online advertising characteristics directly influences purchase intention. This confirms the finding of Resnik and Bruce (1977) who asserted that the presence of information in some online advertising material aids consumers to respond in a more intelligent way and will serve their interest when buying. The findings also confirm that of Lee and Hong (2016) who found that informativeness affects purchase intention.

Confirming the proposed *H3a*, the findings indicated that advertising creativity of online Ghanaian automobile companies has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($p > 0.01$). The finding supported the existence of a positive relationship between online advertising creativity and purchase intention. Thus, advertising creativity directly influences purchase intention. The finding of the research confirms Lee and Hong (2016) who asserted that creativity in online advertisements that are placed play a very significant role thereby enabling consumers to make informed decisions.

Thus, all dimensions of online advertising characteristics - emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity of online advertisement directly impact on the purchase intention of consumers in the automobile industry in Ghana. The study confirms previous studies by Lee and Hong (2016) and Alhaddad, (2015) that online advertisements affect consumer intention to purchase and finally respond by patronising contrary to Bjelovar, Barnes and Hair's (2012) study that online advertising is not noticed by consumers.

5.5.2 Mediating Role of Volume of electronic word of mouth on Online Advertising and Purchase Intention

The second objective and *H1b*, *H2b* and *H3b* of the study sought to examine the mediating role of volume of electronic word of mouth on online platforms and the relationship between online advertising characteristics and their intention to purchase. To achieve this objective, the researcher first modeled a second order construct named online marketing strategy, which joined all three constructs. Thus, advertising emotional appeal, informativeness and creativity to examine its effect as a whole on purchase intention. It was not surprising that online advertising strategy positively and significantly influenced purchase intention ($p < 0.01$).

Concerning the type of mediation used, the results of the study showed that volume of electronic word of mouth partially and significantly mediates the relationship between online advertising characteristics (emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity) and purchase intention ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that online advertising on automobile operators alone can drive responses of customers even without volume of electronic word of mouth. However, online advertising that creates positive or negative electronic word-of-mouth can better drive customers towards the adverts and the brand.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the relationship between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention of consumers in the automobile industry. Online advertising characteristics included informativeness, emotional appeal and creativity of advertising on the purchase intention of consumers. Volume of electronic word of mouth was used as mediating variable.

The objectives of this study were two. Objective one was to look into the relationship between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention in the automobile industry. Lee and Hong (2016) argued that, advertisers use effective elements, tools and tactics that helps push messages to consumers in order to illicit their responses. These characteristics include emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity and these were the independent variables used in this study.

The findings indicated that emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity of online advertising of Ghanaian automobile companies has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of consumers ($p < 0.01$). This confirms previous works (Resnik & Bruce, 1977; Xie, Donthu, Lohtia & Osmonbekov, 2004; Swani, Milne & Brown, 2013). However, this result is inconsistent with research findings of Lee and Hong (2016) and Alhaddad, (2015) who indicated that emotional appeal does not affect purchase intentions.

The second objective was to examine the mediating role of volume of electronic word of mouth on the relationship that exists between online advertising characteristics and purchase intention. Volume of electronic word of mouth partially and significantly mediates the relationship between online advertising characteristics (emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity) and the purchase intention of consumers ($p < 0.01$).

Online advertising of automobile companies alone can drive the intention of consumers to purchase. However, when VE-WOM is introduced into the relationship, online advertising performs better.

6.1 Conclusions

The characteristics of online advertising and the role that volume of electronic word of mouth plays on the purchase intention of consumers cannot be underestimated. Online advertising characteristics, which are emotional appeal, informativeness and advertising creativity, significantly affect purchase intentions and the responses of consumers towards ads of automobile companies. Volume of electronic word of mouth partially mediates the relationship between online advertising characteristics on the purchase intention of consumers. Therefore, online adverts can drive the intention of customers without an E-WOM recommendation.

The findings in this study contribute greatly to academic knowledge in the area of the automobile industry, online advertising, purchase intention and volume of electronic word of mouth.

6.2 Recommendations

Automobile companies must focus on crafting online advertisements that are appealing, creative and informative in order to drive responses of current and potential consumers. Automobile industries must carefully engage their clients to ensure that users of their online platforms give positive recommendations. According to Alhaddad, (2015) advertising content that is relevant and worthwhile must be developed in order to have highest-impact on consumers.

6.3 Directions for Further Research

The researcher used a non-probability sampling technique (convenience sampling), which makes generalisation of the findings difficult. Therefore, a probability technique could be used to undertake future research. This would make the generalisation of the outcome of the study much more acceptable. This study can also be replicated in other industries or countries in order to form the basis for comparison of findings. Furthermore, a qualitative study can be used to further research how the automobile industry can use different characteristics to trigger consumer intention to purchase.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

The researcher is a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) marketing student at the University of Ghana Business School, Legon-Accra. The researcher is undertaking a study on the topic “*Online Advertising and Purchase Intention in the Automobile Industry: The mediating role of electronic word-of-mouth*”. This is in partial fulfilment of requirement for the award of a master of philosophy degree in marketing. Response provided for this academic purpose will be treated with extreme confidentiality. Please this exercise will take a few minutes of your time.

THANK YOU.

INSTRUCTION: Please write or tick [√] where applicable

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

1. Level of Income (GHC): a 0-999 [] b. 1,000-2,999 [] c. 3,000-4,999 []
d. 5,000-6,999 [] e. 8,000+ []
2. Marital Status: a. Single [] b. Married [] c. Separated [] d. Divorced []
e. Widowed []
3. Gender: a. Male [] b. Female []
4. Age: a. 20-29 [] b. 30-39 [] c. 40-49 [] d. 50-59 [] e. 60 and above []
5. Educational level: a. No Education [] b. Primary Education []
c. Secondary Education [] d. Tertiary []
6. Are you a member of any recognised professional body/association? a. Yes [] b. No []
7. If yes, state the name of the association.....
8. Nationality: a. Ghanaian [] b. Non-Ghanaian []

SECTION B: USAGE OF ONLINE ADVERTISING

9. Have you been convinced by online adverts to purchase a car online?

- a. Yes [] b. No []

please if no explain.....

10. Which of the following automobile cars do you drive? **(please tick as many as you can)**

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| a. Toyota | [] | i. Mercedes | [] |
| b. Hyundai | [] | j. Chevrolet | [] |
| c. Kantanka | [] | k. Kia | [] |
| d. Mitsubishi | [] | l. Mahindra | [] |
| e. Renault | [] | | |
| f. Honda | [] | | |
| g. Nissan | [] | | |
| h. Ford | [] | | |

11. How often do you search for online information on cars in a week?

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| a. Not at all | [] |
| b. 1-5 times | [] |
| c. 6-10 times | [] |
| d. 11-15times | [] |
| e. 16 times and above | [] |

SECTION C: ONLINE ADVERTISING AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Please kindly indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement below, ranking from the lowest **1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)**, **2 – Disagree (D)**, **3 – Neutral (N)**, **4 – Agree (A)**, and to the highest **5- Strongly Agree (SA)**.

No	Online Advertising in the Automobile Industry	(SD) 1	(D) 2	(N) 3	(A) 4	(SA) 5
A	EMOTIONAL APPEAL:					
1	I am emotionally attached to Online advertising					
2	The emotional content makes me pay attention to online advertising					
3	I like online adverts on cars because it messages appeals me					
4	I am satisfied with the cars I purchase online because of the emotional content					
B.	INFORMATIVENESS:					
5	Automobile adverts online are a source of information to me					
6	Information from car adverts online is useful					

7	I learn a lot from watching online adverts on automobile (cars)					
8	I am satisfied with information received from online adverts on automobiles (cars)					
C.	ADVERTISING CREATIVITY:					
9	I consider online adverts on automobiles (cars) unique					
10	I consider online adverts on automobile (cars) because of it updated content					
11	I am satisfied with the creativity of online adverts on automobile (cars)					
12	I tell others about online adverts because they are creative					

SECTION D: WORD-OF MOUTH RECOMMENDATION

Please kindly indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement below about your gender, ranking from the lowest **1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)**, **2 – Disagree (D)**, **3 – Neutral (N)**, **4 – Agree (A)**, and to the highest **5- Strongly Agree (SA)**.

EWOM	ELECTRONICWORD OF MOUTH	(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)
		1	2	3	4	5
13	I consider recommendations of others before buying automobile (cars) online.					
14	Positive feedback messages online influence me to purchase automobile (cars) online					
15	I will recommend to others to purchase automobile (cars) online					

SECTION E: ONLINE ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER RESPONSE

Please kindly indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement below, ranking from the lowest **1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)**, **2 – Disagree (D)**, **3 – Neutral (N)**, **4 – Agree (A)**, and to the highest **5- Strongly Agree (SA)**.

E	PURCHASE INTENTION	(SD)	(D)	(N)	(A)	(SA)
		1	2	3	4	5
17	I search for information on online adverts on automobile (cars)					

18	I evaluate alternatives to buy based on online adverts on automobile (cars)					
19	Online advertisement influences me to purchase automobile					
20	I have purchased because of online adverts on automobile (cars)					
21	I have responded to online advert because of its wider coverage					