Impact of UK Beverage Industry Online Advertising on Consumer Perceptions: A Localized Strategic Approach

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Abstract

This study examines the impact exerted on consumer attitudes, behaviors and purchase intentions by online advertising strategies employed in the United Kingdom beverage sector. Focusing on High Wycombe, the study explores the effects of online advertising strategies on brand image, brand loyalty and consumer loyalty dynamics within the UK beverage industry. Implementation of the study involved a positive approach. Survey data obtained from respondents in High Wycombe were quantitatively analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. Significant relationships exist between demographic factors (age, gender, education) and consumer perceptions of online beverage advertisements ($p < 0.05$). Younger consumers (18-34 years) show more favorable attitudes. Strong positive correlations link Brand Image (BI), Advertising Content (AC), Social Media Engagement (SME), and Customer Purchase Behavior (CPB), with $R^2 = 0.866$ and SME as the strongest predictor ($r = 0.912$; $p < \alpha$). The uncovering of both demographic and factor-based drivers of consumer perceptions in the UK beverage sector contributes to digital marketing literature and provides practical suggestions for localized strategies in competitive markets. Beverage brands need to refine their online advertising strategies by targeting specific demographics, enhancing creative content, and boosting social media engagement to optimize campaigns, allocate budgets effectively, and maintain competitiveness in the rapidly expanding digital market.

Keywords: *Online advertising, consumer perception, digital marketing, social media*

engagement, UK beverage industry

JEL Classification: J11, L66, M31, M37

Introduction

The beverage industry represents a central component of the UK economy, spanning diverse product categories including soft drinks, juices, bottled water, teas, coffees, functional beverages, and alcoholic drinks (Chinnici et al., 2025; Noble-Ramos et al., 2025). In 2023, the UK non-alcoholic beverage market exceeded £22 billion in value, with soft drinks maintaining the largest share despite the introduction of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy in 2018 (Ridder, 2025; Penny et al., 2023). This growth has been driven by shifting consumer preferences, rising urbanization, and an increasing focus on health and wellness (Cobiac et al., 2024). During the same period, the UK alcoholic beverages market reached an estimated value of £50 billion (Baker, 2024), underscoring the combined significance of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic segments in shaping national consumption patterns (Ridder, 2025; Wilson et al., 2025). Consumption remains widespread across demographic categories, with over 95% of UK adults regularly consuming non-alcoholic beverages. Notably, the 18–34 age group, highly active within digital environments, represents the highest-engagement segment (Mintel, 2023).

Advances in digital technology have profoundly reshaped marketing practices within the UK beverage sector over the past decade (Circana, 2025; Chinnici et al., 2025). The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation, compelling beverage brands to adopt online marketing as a primary means of maintaining consumer engagement amid physical restrictions (Chang, 2020). Contemporary beverage marketing strategies are now inherently digital, characterized by multimedia campaigns, social media activation, influencer collaborations, user-generated content, and interactive advertising formats (Gong, 2025; Corbyn, 2025). In addition, the rise of personalization and value-based marketing, particularly around sustainability and ethical sourcing, has reshaped consumer expectations and forced brands to revisit their strategic priorities (Wang, 2024).

Digital advertising has become an indispensable strategic investment. The UK food and drink sector allocated approximately £1.3 billion to digital advertising in 2023, yet empirical insights into the specific influence of online advertising on consumer attitudes and behaviors remain limited (Axelsson, 2023). This study contributes to addressing this knowledge gap by examining these dynamics within High Wycombe, a major town in Buckinghamshire located 47 km northwest of London (ChooseWhere, 2025). Buckinghamshire ranks as one of the highest-performing counties economically, while High Wycombe's demographic profile displays similarities to national gender and ethnic distributions but notable differences in age composition (City Population, 2023; Office for National Statistics, 2024; Statistics Times, 2025). In particular, the town has a disproportionately high share of residents aged 18–34, an age group strongly influenced by digital content, social media trends, and influencer-driven beverage consumption behaviors (Clark, 2025; Circana, 2025; Matos et al., 2023). These features render High Wycombe a relevant

and strategically significant setting for analyzing how demographic variables shape consumer responses to digital beverage advertising (Acar et al., 2021).

While digital marketing is now ubiquitous across the beverage industry, consumer responses vary considerably. Some consumers welcome targeted and personalized ads, perceiving them as convenient and relevant, while others experience advertising fatigue or actively resist branded digital content (Chang, 2020). Accordingly, this research investigates how online advertising strategies influence consumer perceptions, brand image, and purchase intentions among beverage consumers in High Wycombe. Given the rapid emergence of new digital trends, including influenced campaigns, interactive media formats, and algorithmic personalization, continuous evaluation is essential to ensure that marketing practices remain effective and responsive to evolving consumer expectations (Widodo & Ginting, 2024).

Ultimately, the study seeks to generate insights into consumer attitudes toward digital advertising within the UK beverage market, assess the perceived effectiveness of prominent online promotional strategies, and examine the relationships between brand image, consumer perceptions, and purchasing behavior. Understanding these dynamics is vital for enabling beverage companies to develop more effective, resource-efficient, and adaptive marketing strategies in an increasingly digitalized marketplace (Cho et al., 2023; Sima et al., 2025).

Literature Review

The UK beverage industry has undergone substantial shifts in consumer psychology and purchasing behavior, largely driven by the increasing prevalence and sophistication of online advertising strategies (Yesiloglu & Costello, 2024). As digital media continues to grow its share of overall marketing investment, brands are compelled to design highly creative, distinctive, and interactive online campaigns to capture consumer attention and enhance brand recognition in an increasingly saturated digital environment (Wang, 2024). Research suggests that message personalization plays a particularly influential role in shaping consumer perceptions of health-related product attributes, and its effectiveness is especially pronounced within demographically diverse contexts such as Buckinghamshire (Müller, 2025).

Personalized advertising, tailored to individual preferences, browsing behaviors, and consumption patterns, has been shown to significantly enhance marketing effectiveness within the UK beverage sector. Recent studies indicate that personalized digital advertisements not only strengthen message recall but also exert a stronger influence on purchase intention compared with generic, non-targeted advertising formats (Farhan et al., 2024). Emotional and narrative-driven digital campaigns further enhance consumer satisfaction and foster deeper emotional attachment to beverage brands (Chang, 2020). Survey data from UK consumers corroborates these findings, with over 80% reporting that digital advertising plays an important role in their beverage purchase decision-making processes (Pinca, 2023).

Consumer engagement also varies considerably depending on advertising format. Video-based content has been found to generate higher levels of interest, emotional engagement, and message

retention than static or less interactive formats such as banner ads or traditional print media (Yesiloglu & Costello, 2024). The popularity of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube has further strengthened the appeal of video-centric content, with UK beverage consumers demonstrating heightened responsiveness to short-form and influencer-led video advertising (Ibrahim et al., 2024). However, channel selection alone does not guarantee advertising effectiveness. Excessive exposure, repetitive messaging, or algorithmic over-targeting can lead to advertising fatigue, diminishing consumer responsiveness, and fostering negative brand attitudes (Pu et al., 2023). Consequently, creative variation and continuous content innovation remain critical to preventing desensitization and maintaining consumer engagement (Sheader, 2024).

Mobile advertising has also become an indispensable component of beverage marketing strategies. High smartphone penetration across the UK has shifted much of consumers' digital interaction to mobile environments, making smartphones and tablets primary gateways for beverage advertising exposure (Farhan et al., 2024). Geographic targeting techniques, where consumers receive location-based advertisements aligned with nearby retail outlets, have been particularly successful, effectively linking digital ad exposure with in-store purchasing and enhancing the integration between online and offline retail experiences (Potvin Kent et al., 2024). Despite these developments, notable gaps remain within academic literature. Empirical studies explicitly examine how demographic variables such as age, gender, and income shape consumer responsiveness to online beverage advertising are limited (Matos et al., 2023). Although many studies identify 18–34-year-olds as the most receptive group to digital advertising, response patterns may differ considerably across beverage categories and consumer subgroups. Additionally, the role of digital literacy and technological competence in shaping advertising responsiveness has not been thoroughly explored, despite its potential importance in determining how consumers process and evaluate digital advertising content. This leads to the formulation of hypothesis 1:

> H1: *Age, as a demographic factor, significantly influences consumers' perceptions of online beverage advertisements. Consumers aged 18–34 are expected to hold more favorable perceptions of online beverage advertising than consumers aged 35 and above.*

Social media has fundamentally reshaped the UK beverage marketing landscape by enabling direct, real-time communication between brands and consumers and fostering the development of dynamic digital brand communities (Gu & Zhu, 2023). Interactive and visually engaging formats such as stories, reels, live streams, and consumer testimonials significantly enhance engagement metrics and content-sharing behaviors', thereby improving brand visibility and reputation within the beverage sector (Gursoy et al., 2023). Evidence from beverage campaigns indicates that social-media-driven strategies are highly effective in cultivating regionally focused digital communities, with influencer endorsements and active consumer participation emerging as major predictors of purchase intention (Finlay et al., 2022).

Influencer marketing has become one of the most influential strategies for beverage brands in the UK. Collaborations with social media influencers serve as powerful channels for disseminating brand messages, shaping consumption norms, contributing to the virality of beverage-related

content, and building trust among skeptical consumer groups (Cheah et al., 2024). Empirical findings consistently demonstrate that influencer-endorsed content achieves substantially higher engagement rates and stronger behavioral responses compared with content produced solely by brands (Gu & Zhu, 2023). User-generated content, including reviews, unboxing videos, and consumer-created imagery, further reinforces trust and plays a critical role in shaping overall product perceptions (Gu & Zhu, 2023). Branded hashtag campaigns, digital challenges, and crowdsourced content initiatives enable beverage companies to co-create their brand narratives with consumers, strengthening long-term online relationships (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Effective community management, such as timely comment responses, proactive handling of consumer concerns, and the strategic use of promotional messages, has been shown to significantly increase brand–consumer interaction and positive engagement outcomes (Amson et al., 2025). Survey evidence indicates that more than half of UK consumers exposed to a beverage brand's social media content report being likely to purchase the product, underscoring the persuasive power of digital brand engagement (Gursoy et al., 2023).

Despite considerable advancements, gaps remain in the literature regarding the mechanisms of social media persuasion, particularly across different demographic categories. There is limited empirical understanding of how age, income, or digital literacy influence consumer responsiveness to distinct social media advertising formats within the UK beverage market. Scholars have therefore recommended large-scale demographic analyses to identify variations in consumer reactions to different engagement strategies and platform-specific content types (Acar et al., 2021). This leads to the formulation of hypothesis 2:

> *H2: Consumers aged 18–34 exhibit significantly higher levels of responsiveness to beverage advertisements on social media compared with consumers aged 35 and above.*

Brand image, defined as the set of beliefs, associations, and impressions held by consumers regarding a beverage brand, remains a central determinant of customer loyalty and market performance (Mahrinasari & Roslina, 2024). In a mature and highly standardized industry such as the UK beverage sector, a differentiated and compelling brand image provides a critical competitive advantage (Widodo & Ginting, 2024). Research indicates that a strong brand image enhances consumer confidence, supports premium pricing, and reduces customer churn (Gupta et al., 2024).

Contemporary UK consumers increasingly prioritize brands that demonstrate ethical sourcing, environmental responsibility, and social commitment, making these values key components of brand image evaluation (Mintel, 2023). Furthermore, consumers display higher loyalty toward companies that adopt transparent practices, engage in sustainability initiatives, and demonstrate corporate social responsibility (Tikkha et al., 2024). Emotional connections also play an important role in loyalty formation; campaigns that leverage nostalgia, humor, or socially meaningful themes are particularly effective in fostering emotional attachment to beverage brands (Chang, 2020). Research by Gupta et al. (2024) suggests that a positive and consistent brand image can increase the likelihood of repeat purchasing by more than 20% when measured through consumer lifetime value metrics. Regional studies from Buckinghamshire indicate that ethical sourcing and

transparency regarding nutritional information are especially influential among health-conscious consumers (Clark et al., 2025).

Consistency across digital and in-store brand touchpoints remains essential for loyalty development. Modern consumers actively seek information, evaluate brand claims, and share feedback online; thus, consistency in messaging, product quality, and customer service is crucial at every interaction point (Mahrinasari & Roslina, 2024). Negative viral posts or unresolved complaints on social media can severely harm brand reputation, whereas positive user feedback and influencer endorsements can enhance trust and long-term loyalty (Mahrinasari & Roslina, 2024).

Despite extensive scholarship on brand image, loyalty, and advertising effects, several gaps remain. Few empirical studies have examined how specific advertising formats, particularly online video advertisements compared with static image formats, influence brand image perceptions within the UK beverage sector (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Similarly, the role of diverse consumer characteristics in shaping brand image responses to digital marketing strategies is underexplored, indicating the need for further statistical investigation (Ramadhan et al., 2024). This leads to the development of hypothesis 3:

> *H3: UK consumers who hold positive perceptions of online beverage advertisements are more likely to exhibit strong brand relationships when exposed to advertisements that are creatively innovative and visually compelling.*

Conceptual framework and theoretical model

The purpose of the research framework was to establish a relationship between the variables that could have an impact on the phenomenon investigated. The empirical research followed the conceptual framework which Figure 1 established by designating Brand Image and Advertising Content and Social Media Engagement as independent variables while Customer Purchase Behavior functioned as the dependent variable. Hypotheses H1 and H2 operationalized demographic influences (especially age) on perceptions and responsiveness to these advertising-related constructs, while H3 linked favorable responses to online advertising with stronger brand relationships and purchase intentions. The research used correlation and regression analyses to verify the model's paths which showed how three independent variables would affect Customer Purchase Behavior.

Table 1: Selected theories and models of online advertising in the beverage industry

Theory/Model	Key Concepts	Reference
Elaboration Likelihood Model	Advertising is processed in the mind of consumers through central active, analytical or through the peripheral passive, affective routes and this influences their effectiveness.	(Chang, 2020)

Theory/Model	Key Concepts	Reference
Personalization Theory	Customizing online ads according to personal preferences/browsing histories boosts recall and the intent to purchase.	(Farhan et al., 2024)
Social Influence Model	It has been revealed that influencer/ UGC content influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions due to peer effects of social media.	(Gu & Zhu, 2023)
Advertising Fatigue Theory	Being overexposed and repeated over and over, digital advertisements lose their efficiency and trigger the negative behavior on the part of consumers.	(Pu et al., 2023)
Brand Equity Theory	Good brand image and a positive image also build customer loyalty, with some consistency and emotional appeal.	(Gupta et al., 2024)

Source: author's illustration

Conceptual Framework Model
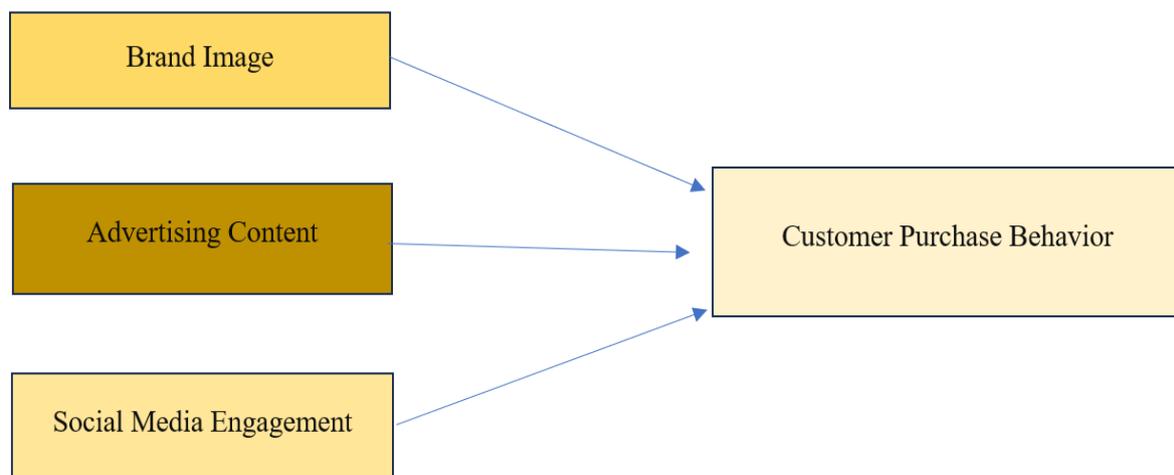
Figure 1: *Conceptual framework model*
Source: authors' illustration

Research Methodology

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data for this research, specifically designed to measure all the main factors of the proposed study model. The structured questionnaire employs closed-ended questions, predominantly utilizing Likert-scale items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). This whole survey has been divided into four different areas: Brand Image (BI), Advertising Content (AC), Social Media Engagement (SME), and Customer Purchase Behavior (CPB).

Demographic characteristics like age, gender, and educational qualification are also included, which could help further understand the influence on consumer perception.

As justification for the selected study setting, High Wycombe's demographic profile displays similarities to UK national gender and ethnic distributions but notable differences in age composition (City Population, 2023; Office for National Statistics, 2024; Statistics Times, 2025). The town has a disproportionately high share of residents aged 18–34, an age group strongly influenced by digital content, social media trends, and influencer-driven beverage consumption behaviors (Clark, 2025; Circana, 2025; Matos et al., 2023). These features render High Wycombe a relevant and strategically significant setting for analyzing how demographic variables shape consumer responses to digital beverage advertising (Acar et al., 2021).

The research design aimed to attain generalizability, enabling the results to reflect broader consumer responses within the UK beverage industry, rather than focusing on a particular brand or context. This is because a premeditated online questionnaire is administered to individual participants only once, ensuring the safety of data collection and enabling its use to identify trends and associations within the sample (Doeim et al., 2022).

This study investigated the influence of online advertisements on consumer perceptions in the UK beverage industry. The target population consisted of people who live, work or study in High Wycombe, UK and are older than 18. The considerable consumption of beverage products among university students made this demographic a notable part of the sample. Respondents' records were kept anonymous in this study. The implemented sampling technique involved convenience sampling, an approach commonly utilized in both quantitative and qualitative studies (Golzar et al., 2022). The sample size was set at 150 respondents because of some limitations, notably time, financial limitations, and inability to get respondents to complete the survey. As a rule-of-thumb for sample size, Roscoe (1975) proposes that in the social sciences, sample size over 30 and below 500 is acceptable.106 responses were received, a response rate of 70.7%, which is considered very satisfactory.

Descriptive and inferential statistics, along with regression analysis, were applied in the survey data analysis to evaluate consumers' perceptions of online advertisement campaigns in the UK. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequencies served to project sample characteristics and key variables, providing an overall analysis of the perceptions of consumers about their attitudes toward online advertisement strategies (Matsuda & Kato, 2024). On the other hand, regression analysis provided insights into the relationships between dependent and independent variables (Customer Purchase Behavior and Brand Image, Advertising Content, and Social Media Engagement), thereby estimating the extent to which the various independent variables affect consumers' purchase decisions and thereby support the understanding regarding the effectiveness of different online advertising strategies. The analysis of data was performed using SPSS and R statistical software to enhance validity and efficiency.

Research ethical standards were maintained through three main practices, which included establishing voluntary study participation, obtaining informed consent, and protecting participant

identities during the research process. The research dedicated its focus to online beverage advertisements while ensuring data protection through its policy of not collecting any personal identification data or digital tracking information from study participants. The research acknowledges persistent ethical discussions about algorithm-based advertising and personalized advertisement targeting, which particularly affects young audiences, while it requires responsible targeting methods and transparent digital advertising practices.

Findings and analysis

Demographic sample characteristics

The demographic features provide a foundation of analysis through which the perceived aspects of age, gender, and education level most likely to influence consumer perception of online ads can be comprehended. Out of the 106 respondents, 58.5 per cent were females, and 41.5 per cent were males. The respondents also fall under various categories, such as 59.4% are aged 18-24, with 34.0% aged 25-34, since this age group would represent a very high number of consumers targeted by online advertising and social media campaigns. The lack of older demographic representation in the sample is only reflected in lower percentage shares of 35-44 (4.7%) and 45-54 (1.9). A large majority of the respondents are Bachelor's (52.8%) degree holders, and a significant number is also Master's (33.0). The education level of this sample is very high, so it may not judge advertising critically and express opinions. Even smaller numbers of respondents with high school education or less (9.4) and with a doctorate (0.9) provide other clues as to the general educational background of the sample. Other (3.8 percent) represents a heterogeneous group of education not included in the standard categories, likely to be vocational training or another specialized degree.

Table 2: Demographic data

Criteria	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	44	41.5
	Female	62	58.5
Age	18-24	63	59.4
	25-34	36	34.0
	35-44	5	4.7
	45-54	2	1.9
Education Level	Doctorate	1	0.9
	Master's degree	35	33
	Bachelor's degree	56	52.8
	High school or below	10	9.4
	Other	4	3.8

Source: information based on primary data

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data, and the results showed the mean and standard deviation of the key variables. The Brand Image factor had the highest mean value of 18.82 (SD = 3.24), with a minimum of 5.00 and the maximum of 25.00 which altogether contribute to a good brand image. Advertising Content had a mean of 18.01 (SD = 3.98) variable with the same range of 5.00 to 25.00. Social Media Engagement had an average of 18.24 (SD = 3.62) within the range of 7.00 to 25.00. The Customer Purchase Behavior factor had a mean of 18.38 (SD = 3.88) with the same range as that of Brand Image ranging from 5.00 to 25.00.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
BI	106	5.00	25.00	18.8208	3.24491	-1.909	.235	4.752	.465
AC	106	5.00	25.00	18.0094	3.98209	-1.777	.235	3.325	.465
SME	106	7.00	25.00	18.2358	3.61624	-1.543	.235	2.080	.465
CPB	106	5.00	25.00	18.3774	3.88269	-2.136	.235	4.434	.465
Valid N (listwise)	106								

Source: information based on primary data

Correlation analysis

The correlation analysis investigates relationship among the main constructs of the study: Brand Image (BI), Advertising Content (AC), Social Media Engagement (SME), and Customer Purchase Behavior (CPB). Here SPSS Version 22 was used to find out the co-relation among the variables. The correlation table shows strong positive correlations among the variables, all statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Correlation analysis

		BI	AC	SME	CPB
BI	Pearson Correlation	1	.827**	.818**	.813**
AC	Pearson Correlation	.827**	1	.874**	.883**
SME	Pearson Correlation	.818**	.874**	1	.912**
CPB	Pearson Correlation	.813**	.883**	.912**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: information based on primary data

Brand images have a correlation with AC (r = .827), SME (r = .818), and CPB (r = .813). Advertising content correlates with SME (r = .874) and CPB (r = .883), and SME correlates with CPB (r = .912). The three independent variables exhibit a significantly positive correlation, which can enhance purchasing behavior. The highest correlation holds among social media engagement with Customer purchase behavior. The result demonstrates that the significant relationship holding

variable is social media engagement with Customer purchase behavior.

Regression model summary

Table 5: Regression model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.930ᵃ	.866	.862	1.44411
a. Predictors: (Constant), SME, BI, AC				

Source: information based on primary data

The R-value of 0.930 signifies a robust correlation between the predictors Brand Image, Advertising Content, and Social Media Engagement and Customer Purchase Behavior. The R-squared value of 0.866 indicates that the model accounts for 86.6% of the variance in Customer Purchase Behavior. This Adjusted R-squared value of 0.862 gives us a less optimistic estimate as the number of predictors adjusts it. The Standard Error of the Estimate, whose value is 1.44411, shows how accurately the model can predict its values. The summary of the model indicates that it is a vigorous and trustworthy platform for predicting customer purchase behavior.

Analysis of variance

Table 6: Analysis of variance

ANOVAᵃ						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1370.190	3	456.730	219.008	.000ᵇ
	Residual	212.716	102	2.085		
	Total	1582.906	105			
a. Dependent Variable: CPB						
b. Predictors: (Constant), SME, BI, AC						

Source: information based on primary data

The ANOVA table proves the regression model with Brand Image, Advertising Content, and Social Media Engagement to be a much better regression in predicting Customer Purchase Behavior. Hence, a larger F-statistic (219.008) with a smaller p-value (less than .001) leads to excessive evidence that the model satisfactorily explains the data, rendering the observed relationships unlikely to be due to chance. The regression coefficients tell us that CPB predictors are Social Media Engagement whose Beta value is 0.912, followed by Advertising Content with a Beta of 0.883, and Brand Image whose Beta is 0.813. This implies that SME exerts the most significant effect on CPB.

Discussion

Demographic factors and online advertisement perceptions

The findings of this study highlight age as the most significant demographic factor influencing consumer perceptions of online beverage advertising. The sample was predominantly composed of younger adults, with 59.4% aged 18–24 and 34.0% aged 25–34, together representing 93.4% of respondents. This demographic profile directly aligns with the acceptance of hypothesis 1, which posited that younger consumers demonstrate more favorable perceptions of online beverage advertising. These results are consistent with existing scholarship suggesting that younger generations, accustomed to digital environments, perceive online advertising as an integrated and natural component of their digital ecosystems (Chang, 2020). The results supported Hypothesis 1 because younger consumers between 18 and 34 years old showed more positive attitudes toward online beverage advertising than older consumers. The results showed statistical significance at $p < 0.05$, which matched the age distribution of the sample.

Hypothesis 2, which predicted higher responsiveness to social media advertising among consumers aged 18–34 compared with those aged 35 and above, was similarly supported. Limited representation of older participants, combined with higher Advertising Content scores among younger respondents, strengthens this conclusion. The results of the study confirmed Hypothesis 2 because the 18 to 34 age group showed greater reactions to social media beverage advertisements than the 35 and older group, which reached a statistical significance level of $p < 0.05$. This finding corroborates previous literature emphasizing that digital socialization contributes to stronger receptivity to online beverage advertisements among younger cohorts (Matos et al., 2023).

Educational attainment patterns also revealed important implications. Most respondents held bachelor's degrees (52.8%) or master's degrees (33.0%). Higher educational attainment may facilitate deeper analytical engagement with advertising content and enhance the capacity to process and judge the credibility of digital messages (Doeim et al., 2022). Taking together, these results demonstrate that demographic characteristics, particularly age and education, play a formative role in shaping perceptions of digital advertising in the UK beverage sector.

Brand image, loyalty, and online advertising effects

The descriptive statistics for Brand Image (M = 18.82, SD = 3.24) and Customer Purchase Behavior (M = 18.38, SD = 3.88) indicate generally favorable attitudes toward both constructs.

Hypothesis 3, which proposed that positive attitudes toward online beverage advertisements correspond with higher brand loyalty when advertisements are visually and creatively appealing, was strongly supported (Matsuda & Kato, 2024). Hypothesis 3 was supported because positive consumer views of internet beverage ads created strong associations with brand-related outcomes, with high correlations between Advertising Content and Social Media Engagement, and between Brand Image and Customer Purchase Behavior (all $p < 0.01$). The overall regression model predicting Customer Purchase Behavior from Brand Image, Advertising Content, and Social Media Engagement was statistically significant because F reached 219.01, and p value remained below 0.001, which provided additional evidence supporting H3.

The results reinforce the foundational marketing principle that a strong brand image serves as a cornerstone for sustained customer loyalty and long-term engagement. This is particularly relevant within the competitive and mature UK beverage market, where brands increasingly rely on digital communication to differentiate themselves and foster consumer affinity (Allen, 2023). The findings are well aligned with the literature demonstrating that emotional responses evoked by online advertisements enhance satisfaction and deepen emotional bonds with brands (Chang, 2020).

Correlation analysis further strengthens these conclusions. All four variables, Brand Image (BI), Advertising Content (AC), Social Media Engagement (SME), and Customer Purchase Behavior (CPB), were positively correlated. The strongest association emerged between Advertising Content and Customer Purchase Behavior ($r = 0.883$), suggesting that the quality, relevance, and creativity of advertising significantly influence consumer decision-making. These results underscore the powerful role digital advertising plays in shaping purchase intentions, influencing not only online transactions but also visits to physical retailers (Matsuda & Kato, 2024).

Social media engagement as predictor of purchase behavior

Regression analysis revealed that Social Media Engagement (SME) was the strongest predictor of Customer Purchase Behavior ($\beta = 0.912$), followed by Advertising Content ($\beta = 0.883$) and Brand Image ($\beta = 0.813$). The correlation between SME and CPB ($r = 0.912$) represented the highest relationship strength observed, confirming that social media acts as a critical driver of behavioral outcomes in the UK beverage market (Matsuda & Kato, 2024).

These findings indicate that high levels of engagement, such as likes, shares, comments, influencer interactions, and participation in digital brand communities, significantly enhance consumers' likelihood of purchasing beverage products. This is consistent with industry trends demonstrating that interactive digital platforms foster greater brand involvement, trust, and purchase readiness. As a result, the evidence strongly suggests that beverage companies must prioritize professionally managed, strategically designed social media experiences to maximize consumer impact.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined consumer perceptions of online beverage advertising strategies in the UK, with a specific focus on High Wycombe, to explore four key research objectives: (1) the role of demographic characteristics in shaping consumer perceptions of digital advertising; (2) the influence of online advertising on brand image and loyalty; (3) the effectiveness of different online advertising strategies; and (4) the impact of advertising content on consumer purchasing behavior. The findings highlight those demographic characteristics, particularly age, serve as the most significant determinants of online advertising perceptions. Younger consumers demonstrated notably higher exposure to and engagement with online beverage advertisements compared with older groups.

The results further demonstrate that brand image, advertising content, and social media engagement collectively shape consumer purchase decisions. The regression model explained 86.6% of the variance in purchase behavior ($R^2 = 0.866$), indicating a strong predictive capacity. Among the predictors, social media engagement emerged as the most influential factor ($r = 0.912$), followed by advertising content and brand image. These findings underscore the central role of social and interactive digital platforms in driving beverage purchasing behavior.

Practical implications

This study provides meaningful insights for practitioners in the UK beverage industry by emphasizing the importance of targeted digital advertising strategies and consumer engagement, especially among demographic groups less inclined toward brand loyalty. It also contributes to academic literature by advancing understanding of digital marketing effectiveness in a competitive and rapidly evolving sector.

The findings reinforce existing theoretical models that emphasize the role of digital advertising in shaping consumer perceptions, brand evaluations, and behavioral intentions. Evidence that online advertising influences both cognitive evaluations (e.g., perceived brand value) and affective outcomes (e.g., emotional attachment) contribute to contemporary discourse on the psychological mechanisms underpinning digital persuasion. The results also highlight the moderating role of demographic variables, particularly age, in digital marketing effectiveness, an area that warrants further conceptual exploration.

From a managerial perspective, the study emphasizes the strategic necessity of audience segmentation and age-specific content tailoring. Younger consumers demonstrated the strongest receptiveness to online and social media advertising. Therefore, brands should prioritize creative, emotionally resonant, and platform-appropriate digital content for this segment. Techniques such as storytelling, user-generated content, interactive features, and personalized messaging can deepen engagement and strengthen the consumer–brand relationship.

The findings in the UK require interpretation together with the existing advertising regulations which govern food and beverage advertising, and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) guidelines and the CAP/BCAP codes which cover digital marketing and age-targeted advertising. Beverage brands must ensure that data-driven and social media–based campaigns comply with these standards, particularly with respect to truthful claims, protection of younger audiences, and responsible promotion of high-sugar or alcoholic products.

The findings further suggest that online advertising must extend beyond awareness creation to cultivate emotional bonds and sustained loyalty. Beverage brands should design immersive digital experiences that reflect consumer values, such as sustainability, transparency, and ethical production, attributes increasingly important to UK consumers. Enhancing consistency across digital and in-store brand touchpoints also remains vital for maintaining credibility and trust.

Research limitations and future directions

Despite offering valuable insights, the study presents several methodological limitations. First, the sample size of 106 participants, constrained by time, financial considerations, and recruitment challenges, limits the external validity of the findings. A larger and more diverse sample would have strengthened the reliability and generalizability of the conclusions across the UK beverage consumer population.

Second, the use of convenience sampling introduces potential sampling bias, as participants were selected based on accessibility rather than randomized procedures. Consequently, the demographic and behavioral diversity of the broader consumer market may not be fully represented. The sample showed strong concentration as 93.4% of respondents belonged to the 18-34 age group. This limited the ability to reach valid conclusions regarding how older consumers reacted to online beverage advertising. This limitation of the results made it impossible to apply the findings to all age groups in the United Kingdom.

Third, the study did not account for external contextual factors that may influence consumer perceptions and behavior, such as economic conditions, cultural norms, or competing brands' marketing activities. These contextual variables may either amplify or attenuate the effects of digital advertising and should be integrated into future analyses for a more comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making.

Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the study restricts the ability to infer causal relationships. Consumer perceptions and behaviors are dynamic and may evolve in response to technological, social, or market changes.

Future studies should aim to address the limitations identified by incorporating more rigorous methodological approaches. A larger sample size and the use of probabilistic sampling techniques would enhance the representativeness and generalizability of findings. Probability-based and stratified sampling methods will enable researchers to study all age groups and different geographical areas and socio-economic status groups within the United Kingdom. Researchers should conduct cross-regional and cross-national studies to test whether the relationships found in High Wycombe exist across different demographic and cultural settings. Longitudinal studies would show how consumer behavior changes over time as digital platforms and regulatory policies and market conditions evolve. The inclusion of qualitative methodologies, such as in-depth interviews, digital ethnography, or focus groups, could yield deeper insights into the motivations, emotional triggers, and contextual factors that shape consumer engagement with online beverage advertising. Qualitative data would complement quantitative findings by offering richer nuance and contextual understanding.

Future research could additionally compare the effectiveness of different digital advertising formats (e.g., video vs. static imagery, influencer-led vs. brand-generated content) to determine which modalities have the strongest impact on brand image and purchasing intentions. Investigating the roles of external factors, such as economic uncertainty, cultural preferences, and

technological advancements, would further enrich the understanding of digital marketing effectiveness within the beverage sector.

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