



Research Article

Influence of Advertising Sex Appeal on Consumer Patronage of Nivea Body Lotions in South-East Nigeria

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

Due to the rise in production and demand for products, advertisers adopt different strategies to make their goods and services appear distinctive in the market. This study examined whether advertising sex appeal influences consumer patronage of Nivea Cocoa Body Milk and Nivea Body Milk Nutritivo Deep Moisture Serum lotions in five states of Southeast Nigeria. The study was anchored on Cognitive Response Theory and Affective Response Theory. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Using an online survey, data were collected from 384 users of NIVEA Cocoa Butter Body Milk and NIVEA Body Milk Nutritivo Deep Moisture Serum Lotion in South-East Nigeria. Multistage sampling was used. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Findings show that sex appeal attracts attention but does not substantially drive patronage of the selected Nivea lotions. Respondents placed greater emphasis on product quality, affordability, availability, packaging, continuous advertising and positive testimonies. The study recommends that advertisers should use sex appeal only when it is relevant and appropriate to the advertised product.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The goal of every producer, advertiser or business-oriented person is to make profit. In order to make profit a reality, creating awareness of products or services in the minds of prospective consumers and positioning a product or service against competing brands is imperative. Advertising therefore remains an important marketing communication tool through which businesses create awareness, communicate product information and influence consumer responses. Recent Nigerian studies indicate that advertising can contribute to consumer awareness and patronage when messages effectively reach and engage their target audiences (Adeoye, 2025; Ibrahim et al., 2024). Adeoye (2025), for instance, found that social media advertising created awareness and significantly influenced consumer patronage, while Ibrahim et al. (2024) reported that outdoor and radio advertising had significant positive effects on consumer patronage. Advertising appeals are approaches employed to attract consumers' attention and influence their perceptions and responses towards products or services. In Nigeria, advertisers employ different appeals to communicate with consumers and position products in competitive markets (Nwosu & Ogbu, 2025). Among the various advertising appeals is sex appeal, which involves the use of sexually suggestive images, physical attractiveness, words or representations to attract attention and communicate persuasive messages. Recent Nigerian research has examined consumers' exposure to sex appeal and found that although such appeals are noticed, they do not necessarily attract consumers to the advertised products (Bala

& Jatto, 2025). The relationship between sex appeal and consumer response is therefore not necessarily straightforward. Nigerian studies suggest that sexual appeals may attract attention without automatically translating into patronage. Bala and Jatto (2025), for example, found that although exposure to sexually appealing advertisements was substantial, a majority of respondents reported that sex appeal did not attract them to the advertised products. This contrasts with findings from Igani et al. (2025), who reported a significant positive relationship between sexual appeal and customer loyalty in the skincare market. These contrasting findings suggest that the effectiveness of sex appeal may depend on the product, audience and advertising context.

Sex appeal is particularly relevant to beauty, skincare and personal-care advertising, where physical appearance and attractive representations may be incorporated into promotional messages. NIVEA is a skincare brand owned by Beiersdorf, with products covering different areas of skin and body care (Beiersdorf, 2026). Nigerian research has also examined NIVEA advertising. Oladipo et al. (2025) investigated NIVEA television advertising and found weak relationships between television advertising exposure and consumer purchasing behaviour, while identifying factors such as message clarity, emotional appeal and consumer trust as relevant to advertising effectiveness. Similarly, Oladipo and Oyedokun (2025) examined consumer trust and attitudes towards NIVEA television advertisements, focusing on perceived credibility, appeal and purchasing behaviour. The growing use of digital and

social-media platforms has also expanded the opportunities available to advertisers to expose consumers to brand messages. Nigerian studies show that social-media advertising can influence consumer awareness, perceptions and patronage. Adeoye (2025) found that social-media advertising significantly influenced consumer patronage, while Leman and Mapak (2025) reported that Facebook advertising influenced awareness, perception and purchase decisions among consumers of Yuorit Yoghurt in Jos South. Similarly, Mbazu et al. (2025) found that advertising influenced consumer attitudes, brand awareness and purchasing decisions among consumers in South-East Nigeria.

Despite the increasing use of attractive and sexually suggestive representations in advertising, attention generated by an advertisement may not necessarily translate into patronage. This is particularly important for skincare products, where consumers may consider product quality, affordability, availability, brand trust, perceived benefits and other functional attributes alongside the attractiveness of the advertisement. Nigerian research on cosmetics patronage has identified product-related factors such as perceived quality, price, scent, brand name and product design as important influences on consumer patronage (Anetoh et al., 2022).

Previous Nigerian studies have examined advertising and consumer patronage, social-media advertising and consumer behaviour, as well as sex appeal and purchasing responses. However, limited empirical evidence has specifically examined the relationship between sex appeal and the

patronage of selected NIVEA body lotions among online consumers in South-East Nigeria. This study therefore examines awareness, exposure, perception and the extent to which sex appeal influences the patronage of selected NIVEA body lotions among online consumers in South-East Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Sex appeal remains a frequently used advertising technique because sexualised images and attractive models can attract attention. However, evidence indicates that attention and engagement do not necessarily result in purchase or sustained patronage. Lawrence et al. (2021) and Stewart et al. (2023) show that consumers may respond to sexual appeals at the attention or engagement stage without necessarily translating those responses into actual purchase behaviour. Hermannsdóttir and Gunnarsdóttir (2015) also found that using sexual appeals for products unrelated to sex or sexuality may produce negative consumer responses.

This creates a practical question for skincare advertising: does sex appeal actually influence consumers to patronise the advertised product? Although NIVEA body lotions are promoted through different media and creative approaches, there is limited empirical evidence on whether sex appeal contributes to patronage of these products among online consumers in South-East Nigeria. The present study addresses this gap by examining consumers' awareness, exposure, perception and patronage responses to sex appeal in selected NIVEA body-lotion advertisements.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective was to ascertain the influence of advertising sex appeal on consumer patronage of Nivea Cocoa Body Milk and Nivea Body Milk Nutritivo Deep Moisture Serum lotions among online consumers in South-East Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. examine the level of consumer awareness of sex appeal in Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions' advertisements in South-East Nigeria;
2. examine the level of consumer exposure to sex appeal in Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions' advertisements in South-East Nigeria;
3. ascertain consumer perception of sex appeal in Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions' advertisements in South-East Nigeria;
4. determine the extent to which sex appeal promotes consumer patronage of Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions in South-East Nigeria; and
5. ascertain factors affecting consumer patronage of the identified Nivea lotions in South-East Nigeria.

2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of consumer awareness of sex appeal in Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions' advertisements in South-East Nigeria?
2. What is the level of consumer exposure to sex appeal in Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions' advertisements in South-East

Nigeria?

3. How do consumers perceive sex appeal in Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions' advertisements in South-East Nigeria?
4. To what extent does sex appeal promote consumer patronage of Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions in South-East Nigeria?
5. What factors affect consumer patronage of the identified Nivea lotions in South-East Nigeria?

2.1.1 Significance of the Study

The study provides empirical information for Nivea and other advertisers on consumers' responses to sex appeal in body-lotion advertising. It also contributes to scholarship on advertising appeals and consumer behaviour and may assist students and researchers studying sex appeal, digital advertising, skincare products and patronage.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Concept of Sex Appeal in Advertising

Sex appeal in advertising refers to the use of voices, images, models, objects, words and other creative elements that carry sexually suggestive or erotic meanings. Lawrence et al. (2021) describe sexual appeals as advertising messages that use sexual content to evoke sexual thoughts, feelings or responses among viewers. In practice, such appeals may be presented through the physical attractiveness of models, revealing clothing, nudity, body exposure and other visual features, as well as through suggestive language and messages. Recent research indicates that the effectiveness of sex appeal may depend on how consumers perceive the advertisement and its relevance

to the product. Bala and Jatto (2025), in a study of consumers in Abuja, Niger and Kaduna States, found that although exposure to sexually appealing advertisements was high, 59% of respondents indicated that sex appeal did not attract them to a product. The study also reported negative emotional and behavioural responses towards such advertisements. This indicates that the presence of sexual imagery does not automatically generate favourable consumer responses.

The use of sex appeal in advertising cannot be separated from the cultural and ethical expectations of the audience. Adesemoye et al. (2025) observed that advertising in Nigeria interacts with sociocultural values and norms and that gender portrayals perceived as inconsistent with prevailing expectations may attract criticism and public backlash. This suggests that audience responses to sex appeal may vary according to cultural expectations and interpretations of gender representation. Therefore, sex appeal can be understood as an advertising strategy that employs sexual, romantic, erotic or physically attractive cues to gain attention and stimulate consumer responses. However, Nigerian evidence suggests that its influence is not automatic. Consumer reactions may depend on the type of appeal, the advertised product, cultural expectations, perceived relevance and other characteristics of the advertising message.

3.1.1 NIVEA Company: History, Products and Advertising

NIVEA is a skincare brand owned by Beiersdorf, with products covering different

areas of skin and body care (Beiersdorf, 2026). The present study focuses specifically on NIVEA Cocoa Body Milk and NIVEA Body Milk Nutritivo Deep Moisture Serum Lotion. Nigerian research has recently examined NIVEA advertising and consumer behaviour. Oladipo et al. (2025) investigated the effect of television advertising exposure on consumer purchasing behaviour using NIVEA as a case study. Based on responses from 900 participants, the study found weak relationships between television advertising exposure and purchasing behaviour, suggesting that advertising exposure alone may have limited influence on consumer decision-making. The authors further identified factors such as message clarity, emotional appeal and consumer trust as relevant to advertising effectiveness. Similarly, Oladipo and Oyedokun (2025) examined consumer trust and attitudes towards NIVEA television advertisements, focusing on perceived credibility, emotional appeal, message clarity and authenticity. Their findings indicate that broader advertising characteristics are relevant to consumer responses to NIVEA advertising. These Nigerian studies are relevant to the present study because they demonstrate that NIVEA advertising can be examined beyond simple exposure and attention. Consumer responses may also depend on the credibility, clarity, emotional content and perceived relevance of the advertising message. The present study therefore focuses specifically on whether the use of sex appeal in NIVEA body-lotion advertisements contributes to consumer patronage among online consumers in South-East Nigeria.

3.1.2 Factors Affecting Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage may be influenced by several product- and consumer-related factors, including perceived quality, price, product information, availability, brand characteristics, product familiarity and previous experience. Recent evidence supports the importance of these factors in cosmetics consumption. Anetoh et al. (2022), in a study of cosmetics consumers in Anambra State, found that perceived quality, price, scent, brand name and product design significantly influenced consumer patronage. Similarly, Testa et al. (2024) identified perceived product quality, product knowledge, price and consumer attitudes among factors shaping consumers' decisions regarding cosmetic products. These findings suggest that advertising appeal operates alongside broader product and consumer considerations.

Recent studies also support the relationship between advertising and consumer patronage. Ibrahim et al. (2024), in a study of table-water brands in Osun State, found that both outdoor and radio advertising had significant positive effects on consumer patronage. The study further reported that the combined advertising variables explained a substantial proportion of the variation in patronage, indicating that advertising remains an important component of consumer decision-making.

Similarly, Adeoye (2025) found that social media advertising significantly influenced consumer patronage in Abuja. The study reported that social media advertising created awareness and influenced

patronage, with Facebook identified as an important platform for consumer engagement. This suggests that the medium and manner through which advertising messages are delivered may also contribute to consumer responses. The distinction between advertising attention and behavioural response is further supported by Liu (2024), who found that advertisements containing sexual appeals could generate greater attention and memory in some contexts while simultaneously producing lower purchase intention. Sigurðardóttir et al. (2025) similarly found that increased nudity did not automatically improve attitudes toward the advertisement, brand attitude or purchase intention in their experimental study. These findings demonstrate that consumer responses to sexualised advertising are context-dependent. In the context of cosmetics, consumer patronage is therefore likely to involve a combination of advertising, product and consumer factors. Rehman et al. (2023) found that visual appeal and other situational factors influenced consumers' online browsing and cosmetics purchase intentions, while Martins et al. (2023) reported that perceived quality played a significant role in purchase decision-making among consumers in Nigerian hypermarkets. Thus, sex appeal may attract attention to a cosmetic advertisement, but factors such as perceived quality, price, product relevance, availability and brand perceptions may also determine whether attention develops into patronage.

3.1.3 Relationship between Sex Appeal and Consumer Patronage

The relationship between sex appeal and

consumer patronage has received attention in Nigerian advertising and marketing research, particularly within the cosmetics and skincare sectors. Evidence from Nigeria, however, does not produce a uniform conclusion, suggesting that the effect of sex appeal may depend on the product, audience and advertising context. Bala and Jatto (2025) examined consumers' exposure to sexually appealing advertisements in Abuja, Niger and Kaduna States. Although exposure to such advertisements was substantial, 59% of respondents indicated that sex appeal did not attract them to a product. The study also reported negative emotional and behavioural responses towards such advertisements. This suggests that exposure to sexual advertising does not necessarily translate into favourable consumer responses or patronage.

More recently, Igani et al. (2025) examined seductive advertising and customer patronage of skincare products in Port Harcourt. Using a correlational design and 281 valid responses, the study found a significant positive relationship between sexual appeal and customer loyalty, which was used as a measure of customer patronage. The finding provides recent Nigerian evidence that sexual appeal may contribute to patronage within the skincare market. Research specifically involving NIVEA also indicates that advertising exposure does not automatically produce purchasing behaviour. Oladipo et al. (2025) examined NIVEA television advertising among 900 respondents and found weak relationships between television advertising exposure and consumer purchasing

behaviour. The authors noted that factors such as message clarity, emotional appeal, consumer trust and personal preferences may affect the extent to which advertising influences purchasing decisions.

Similarly, Oladipo and Oyedokun (2025) examined consumer trust and attitudes towards NIVEA television advertisements. Their findings emphasised the importance of perceived credibility, emotional appeal, message clarity and authenticity in consumer responses to NIVEA advertising. International evidence likewise suggests that sexual appeals do not consistently translate into purchase behaviour. Stewart et al. (2023) found that sex appeals in social-media advertising could increase engagement without producing a corresponding increase in actual purchase. Gramazio et al. (2021) also found no consistent increase in purchase intentions from sexualisation in advertising. Hu et al. (2020) further showed that sexual appeals could produce an initial positive response that did not necessarily persist after deeper consideration.

The Nigerian evidence therefore suggests that the relationship between sex appeal and consumer patronage is contextual rather than automatic. While some studies report positive relationships between sexual appeals and consumer responses in cosmetic and skincare contexts, other studies report weak or negative responses. NIVEA-specific evidence further suggests that advertising exposure alone may have limited influence on purchasing behaviour. These divergent findings provide justification for the present study. While

previous Nigerian studies have examined sexual advertising in cosmetics and skincare generally, and recent studies have examined NIVEA advertising more broadly, limited evidence specifically addresses whether sex appeal influences patronage of NIVEA body lotions among online consumers in South-East Nigeria. The present study therefore examines consumers' awareness, exposure, perception and patronage responses to sex appeal in selected NIVEA body-lotion advertisements in the region.

4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cognitive Response Theory

Cognitive Response Theory explains persuasion in terms of the thoughts and evaluations generated when audiences process persuasive messages. Greenwald (1968) proposed that individuals generate cognitive responses to persuasive messages and that these responses can mediate attitude change. In advertising, consumers may produce favourable or unfavourable thoughts about the message, product or brand, and these responses can shape attitudes and behavioural intentions. The theory is relevant because exposure to sex appeal may generate attention and cognitive evaluation of both the advertising appeal and the advertised lotion. The present study therefore examines whether such responses translate into patronage.

Affective Response Theory

Affective Response Theory emphasises feelings and emotional reactions generated by advertising. Batra and Ray (1986) demonstrated the role of affective responses in mediating acceptance of advertising. Sex appeal can evoke attraction, pleasure,

discomfort or other emotions, which may influence attitudes toward an advertisement and its brand. The theory is relevant because consumers may respond emotionally to sexualised advertising without necessarily converting that response into purchase behaviour.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an online cross-sectional survey design. The population comprised users of NIVEA Cocoa Butter Body Milk and NIVEA Body Milk Nutritivo Deep Moisture Serum Lotion residing in South-East Nigeria who participated in the online survey. Although the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2026) reported **17,776,098 active internet subscriptions** in the South-East in the fourth quarter of 2025, the specific population of users of the two NIVEA products is not publicly documented. The population was therefore treated as unknown, and the Wimmer and Dominick sample-size calculator yielded a sample size of 385 respondents.

A multistage procedure involving stratified, purposive and convenience sampling was used. The five states constituted the strata, while the questionnaire was distributed digitally. Data were collected with a structured Influence of Advertising Sex Appeal (IASA) questionnaire covering demographics, exposure and awareness, perception of sex appeal, perceived influence on patronage and other patronage factors. Three professionals validated the instrument; a pre-test involved 20 Nivea consumers outside the study sample. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

5.1 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Out of the 385 responses received, 384 responses were valid and analysed

Table 1. Online consumers' awareness of sex appeal in Nivea lotion advertising

S/N	Indicators	SA	A	D	SD	Criterion	M	SD	Dec.
1	Beautiful lady with exposed chest and back	123	196	63	2	+2.50	3.14	2.68	A
2	Beautiful lady with exposed thighs and legs	86	198	94	6	+2.50	2.94	2.50	A
3	Sexually suggestive write-ups	79	180	69	56	+2.50	2.73	2.37	A
4	Teasing picture/video of male and female models in warm embrace	59	42	199	82	+2.50	2.20	1.88	D
5	Sexually suggestive tone of voice in its video advertisement	48	62	187	84	+2.50	2.19	1.86	D
	Cluster mean					+2.50	2.64	2.26	

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The findings indicate that respondents were generally aware of sex appeal in Nivea lotion advertisements (cluster mean = 2.64).

Table 2. Medium, frequency and duration of exposure to Nivea lotion advertisements

Exposure indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Medium of exposure		
Television	194	50.5
Social media	89	23.2
Magazines	21	5.5
Newspapers	18	4.7
Billboards	16	4.1
Flyers	21	5.5
Posters	18	4.7
Shops	7	1.8
Frequency of exposure		
Every time	84	21.9
Occasionally	232	60.4
Rarely	68	17.7
Never	0	0.0
Duration of use		
Less than 1 year	148	38.5
1–2 years	99	25.8
3–4 years	58	15.1
5 years and above	79	20.6

Source: Field survey, 2026.

Television was the major medium through which respondents encountered the Nivea advertisements (50.5%), followed by social media (23.2%). Most respondents saw the advertisements occasionally

(60.4%), while 21.9% saw them every time. Regarding product use, 38.5% had used the selected lotions for less than one year and 20.6% for five years or more.

Table 3. Consumers' perception of sex appeal in Nivea lotion advertising

S/N	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Criterion	M	SD	Dec.
1	Sexually appealing advertising is used to catch attention	92	240	42	9	+2.5	3.08	2.61	A
2	Sexually appealing advertisement makes me uncomfortable	20	100	238	22	+2.5	2.31	1.86	D
3	Sexually appealing advertisement shows poor morality of models	52	103	193	34	+2.5	2.45	2.06	D
4	It paints a bad image for the company	37	77	242	28	+2.5	2.32	1.90	D
5	Continuous display contributes to sex-related crimes in Nigeria	15	115	208	15	+2.5	2.36	1.90	D
6	Sexually appealing advertisements are effective for impulse buying	34	225	107	9	+2.5	2.75	2.29	A
7	A product cannot sell without underdressed models	13	58	227	86	+2.5	1.99	1.57	D
8	Unrelated advertising strategy turns me off	118	207	37	22	+2.5	3.09	2.66	A
	Cluster mean					+2.5	2.54	2.10	

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Respondents had a moderately positive perception of sex appeal (cluster mean = 2.54). They agreed that it attracts attention ($M = 3.08$) and that an advertising strategy unrelated to the product can turn them off

($M = 3.09$). They disagreed that sexual advertising necessarily causes discomfort, reflects poor morality, damages the company's image or is essential for product sales.

Table 4. Influence of sex appeal on patronage of Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Criterion	M	SD	Dec.
1	First purchase was prompted by seeing a sexually appealing advertisement	2	48	239	95	+2.5	1.88	1.43	D
2	Sex appeal advert does not make me buy any Nivea lotion	38	278	46	22	+2.5	2.86	2.40	A
3	Sexually appealing advertising has sustained patronage	5	74	282	23	+2.5	2.15	1.66	D
	Cluster mean						2.29	1.83	D

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Sex appeal did not substantially influence patronage of the selected Nivea lotions (cluster mean = 2.29). Respondents disagreed that their first purchase was prompted by sexually appealing

advertising ($M = 1.88$) and that sex appeal sustained patronage ($M = 2.15$). They agreed that sex appeal advertising did not make them buy Nivea lotion ($M = 2.86$).

Table 5. Factors influencing consumer patronage of Nivea products

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Criterion	M	SD	Dec.
1	I buy good quality products	68	293	15	7	+2.5	3.10	2.60	A
2	If products are affordable I will buy them	301	48	30	2	+2.5	3.70	3.22	A
3	I patronize products that are always available	68	277	15	24	+2.5	3.01	2.55	A
4	I patronize improved products more than unimproved products	77	281	20	6	+2.5	3.12	2.62	A
5	I buy products with better packaging	75	282	22	5	+2.5	3.11	2.62	A
6	Continuous advertising makes me buy products	69	298	14	3	+2.5	3.12	2.62	A
7	I patronize products with positive testimonies	119	250	15	0	+2.5	3.27	2.77	A
	Cluster mean						3.20	2.71	A

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

15 Respondents agreed to all patronage factors presented, with mean scores from 3.01 to 3.70. Affordability had the highest mean (3.70), followed by positive testimonies (3.27), continuous advertising (3.12), improved products (3.12), better packaging (3.11), quality (3.10) and availability (3.01).

5.2 Discussion of Findings

Findings from the first research question showed that respondents were aware of sex appeal in Nivea advertisements, particularly through attractive models and exposed body features. This supports the broader literature indicating that sexual cues can attract attention (Wirtz et al., 2018; Hwang et al., 2020). However, the present findings also

show that not every sexual cue was equally noticeable, suggesting that the form of the appeal matters. The findings in answer to research question two revealed that television was the dominant medium of exposure, followed by social media, while most respondents encountered the advertisements occasionally. This indicates that consumers may encounter Nivea advertising across both traditional and digital channels rather than through one medium alone. For the third research question, respondents agreed that sex appeal attracts attention but rejected several negative characterisations of such advertising. Importantly, they agreed that an advertising strategy unrelated to the advertised product could turn them off. This is consistent with Hermannsdóttir and Gunnarsdóttir (2015), who found negative responses when sexual appeals were used for products without a sexual connection. The finding also agrees with the view that the relevance of an advertising appeal to the advertised product can affect consumer responses (Bažantová et al., 2021).

The fourth research question produced the clearest result: sex appeal did not substantially drive patronage. Respondents disagreed that it prompted their first purchase or sustained patronage. This is consistent with Stewart et al. (2023), whose field experiment found increased social-media engagement but no corresponding increase in actual purchase, and with Gramazio et al. (2021), who found no consistent increase in purchase intentions from sexualisation. The fifth research question showed that consumers considered affordability, positive testimonies, continuous advertising, product improvement, packaging, quality and availability important to patronage. The result reinforces the view

that advertising appeal is only one part of the consumer decision process. Overall, the findings suggest that sex appeal may attract attention but does not, by itself, determine patronage of the selected Nivea lotions.

The findings should be interpreted within the scope of the study. The respondents were online consumers of the selected Nivea lotions in the five South-East states, and the data were collected through an online questionnaire. Thus, the results describe the perceptions and reported behaviour of the respondents rather than establishing a causal effect of sex appeal on all Nivea consumers. Nevertheless, the pattern across the patronage measures provides useful evidence on the distinction between attention and actual consumer patronage.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that sex appeal is used in advertising to attract consumers' attention, but it did not substantially promote patronage of Nivea Cocoa and Nutritivo lotions among the respondents studied. Consumers placed greater emphasis on affordability, quality, availability, product improvement, packaging, continuous advertising and positive testimonies. The findings further indicate that sex appeal is more likely to be acceptable when it is relevant to the advertised product; unrelated sexual appeals may reduce consumer interest.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Nivea and its advertising agencies should use clear and appropriate visual and textual elements and avoid excessive or unrelated sexual imagery.
2. Advertisers should maintain an effective presence across television and

social media, which were the major channels of exposure in this study.

3. Advertisers of body lotions should attract attention without creating unnecessary discomfort or using sexual appeal that is unrelated to the product.
4. Nivea and similar brands should emphasise product quality, affordability, availability, benefits, packaging and consumer value rather than relying on sex appeal to drive sales.
5. Advertising agencies should periodically conduct consumer research to identify the factors that encourage or discourage patronage.

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