

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGE ADVERTISEMENTS AS DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMPTION HABITS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IBADAN METROPOLIS**

**Stella Ebehiremen Ajoke Sanni-Oba,**  
Department of Mass Communication,  
Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa.  
sanniobastella@gmail.com.

**Adekola Iyanuoluwa Adefolabo,**  
Department of Mass Communication & Media Technology,  
Lead City University, Ibadan

**Anthony Apeh Amedu,**  
Department of Mass Communication & Media Technology,  
Lead City University, Ibadan  
amedu.anthony@lcu.edu.ng

### **Abstract**

Food and beverage advertisements have become a pervasive part of adolescents' everyday environments, influencing dietary choices and long-term health behaviours. This study investigated the role of such advertisements in shaping the consumption habits of secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis. The study was guided by the social cognitive theory (SCT). A cross-sectional survey design was employed, and data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire administered to 437 students across selected public and private schools. The sample consisted of adolescents aged 10–19 years, with a balanced distribution across gender and school type. Findings revealed high exposure to food and beverage advertisements, particularly on television (53.1%), social media (41.4%), and within school environments (41.1%). A significant proportion of respondents reported trying advertised food items (80%) and persuading their parents to purchase them (41%). Chi-square analysis showed a statistically significant relationship between advertisement exposure and the frequency of consuming snacks, sugary beverages, and soft drinks ( $\chi^2 = 66.74$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The study concludes that food and beverage marketing exerts a strong influence on adolescent consumption behaviour, regardless of background, and calls for targeted media literacy, parental involvement, and school-based interventions to mitigate the impact of unhealthy food advertising on this impressionable demographic.

**Keywords:** Food advertising, Adolescents, Consumption habits, Media influence

### **Introduction**

Food and beverage advertisements have a profound influence on the consumption habits of adolescents, who are a key target demographic for advertisers. The influence of food and beverage advertisements on consumption habits has become a significant area of concern, especially among

adolescents. The global increase in non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension is strongly linked to unhealthy dietary patterns (Al-Jawaldeh and Marwa, 2022). Popkin (2006) stated that between the ages of 10-19, adolescents, being a vulnerable group, are heavily influenced by their environment, including media exposure

and consequently tend to make decisions themselves. This concern is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where the rise of Western dietary habits, coupled with aggressive marketing strategies, has shifted the eating patterns of young people.

This research emerged from a personal curiosity about the pervasive role of advertising in shaping dietary choices and consumption patterns, particularly among secondary school students in urban centres like Ibadan, Nigeria. Observing a shift in eating patterns and the growing consumption of unhealthy foods linked to aggressive marketing campaigns sparked an interest in understanding the underlying dynamics. The research questions developed aim to explore the intersection of advertising exposure, consumption habits, and socioeconomic factors among secondary school students in both private and public institutions.

Understanding the relationship between food advertisements and adolescent consumption habits that inherently influence their dietary choices is crucial for addressing public health concerns such as obesity, malnutrition, and diet-related diseases. In Ibadan metropolis, one of Nigeria's largest cities, the media landscape is characterised by a proliferation of food and beverage advertisements on television, social media, billboards, and other platforms. These advertisements often target secondary school students, who are at a critical developmental stage where preferences, habits, and behaviours are shaped (Packer et al, 2022).

Adolescents are highly susceptible to marketing techniques that exploit their cognitive and emotional vulnerabilities (Packer et al, 2022). Exposure to these advertisements often promotes the

consumption of calorie-dense, nutrient-poor foods like junk food and the rest, thereby creating a long-term impact on their consumption habits and ultimately contributing to poor dietary choices and increasing the risk of chronic diseases (Arrona-Cardoza, Katherine, José, Cisneros & Daiva, 2023).

To iterate, adolescents are particularly susceptible to media influence due to their developmental stage (Strasburger, Barbara, & Amy, 2009). During this period, peer pressure, identity formation, and exposure to external stimuli play a crucial role in shaping behaviours. Food and beverage companies exploit these vulnerabilities by using marketing strategies that appeal to adolescents, such as the use of celebrities, influencers, and attractive packaging. These tactics make unhealthy food products appear desirable, trendy, and socially acceptable (Bankole, Neil, Shannon, & Nicola, 2024; Hub, 2020).

In Nigeria, the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and fast foods has risen significantly, mirroring trends in high-income countries (Yusuf & Gylych, 2023). This increase correlates strongly with advertising exposure. For instance, studies have observed that Nigerian adolescents who frequently watch television are more likely to consume advertised food products, including SSBs, fried snacks, and processed foods (Jimoh, 2016). This trend has long-term implications for public health, particularly as eating habits formed during adolescence often persist into adulthood (Tali, Axelrod, Shimony, Boaz, & Kaufman-Shriqui, 2021).

Globally, research underscores the impact of food advertisements on adolescents. For instance, a review of studies from 2017–2022

found that advertising influences food preferences, consumption behaviours, and brand loyalty among adolescents, often leading to unhealthy eating habits (Arrona-Cardoza, Katherine, José, Cisneros & Daiva, 2023). Rapid urbanisation and the rise of social media platforms have amplified this effect, as companies utilise targeted advertising and influencer marketing to engage young audiences yet little localised research has addressed this issue (Rosário & Dias, 2023). Not to mention, these studies predominantly focus on developed countries, with limited exploration of how such dynamics play out in African contexts like Nigeria. This study fills that gap by focusing on Ibadan, a city with diverse socioeconomic groups, providing a unique context to compare private and public-school students. Despite consensus on the influence of advertisements, there is debate over the extent to which external factors, such as peer pressure, parental influence, and socioeconomic status, mediate this relationship. Additionally, policies aimed at regulating food marketing remain under-enforced in many developing nations, raising questions about their effectiveness in protecting adolescents.

Efforts to regulate food and beverage advertisements have been minimal in Nigeria compared to other countries. Institutions such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) advocate for restrictions on advertising unhealthy foods to children, citing their detrimental impact on public health. However, implementing these guidelines in developing countries like Nigeria poses challenges due to weak regulatory frameworks and the influence of multinational corporations (WHO, 2021). For instance, countries like the United Kingdom have implemented strict guidelines

to limit the advertising of unhealthy foods to children (Taillie, Lindsey Smith, Emily Busey, Fernanda Mediano Stoltze, and Francesca Renee Dillman Carpentier, 2019). In contrast, Nigerian regulatory bodies have yet to enforce significant restrictions, leaving adolescents exposed to the aggressive marketing tactics of multinational food corporations (Bankole, Neil, Shannon, & Nicola, 2024). This study aims to clarify how these global and local dynamics intersect in the context of Ibadan.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the consumption habits of secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis?
2. What is the level of exposure of secondary school students in Ibadan metropolis to food and beverage advertisements?

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: There will be no significant relationship between exposure to food and beverage advertisements and the consumption habits of secondary school students in Ibadan metropolis.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Consumption Habits Among Secondary School Students**

The concept of “consumption habits” among adolescents generally refers to the food choices, frequency, and overall patterns of consumption of all consumables, including food, beverages and even non-edible items observed within this age group. Studies emphasise that adolescents’ consumption habits are influenced by various factors such as family environment, peer pressure, socioeconomic status, and, notably, food advertisements. These habits encompass not just what foods are consumed, but when and how often they are eaten. Key examples include the frequency of breakfast

consumption, preference for sugary drinks, and the tendency to consume convenience foods, such as fast food or snacks (Fismens et al, 2024).

Adolescents, particularly those in school, often face nutritional challenges as they may skip meals (especially breakfast) and choose foods high in sugar and fat, which can negatively affect their health and academic performance. These habits often form during adolescence and carry into adulthood, making it a critical stage for interventions to promote healthier dietary choices (Inchley, 2016).

The media, particularly food and beverage advertisements, play a significant role in shaping these consumption habits by promoting unhealthy food choices to adolescents, leveraging emotional and social appeal. There has been an observation of unhealthy consumption habits and dietary intakes that are not up to the standards of international recommendations among in-school adolescents, courtesy of their exposure to food and beverage advertisements (Gkiouleka, 2022). This has consequently caused the World Health Organisation (WHO) to call for restrictions on the advertisements of certain products, such as tobacco products and unhealthy foods/drinks to children and young adolescents (Tsochantaridou, 2023). The advertisements of junk food have been highlighted as a detrimental factor shaping junk food consumption in adolescents, along with interactions with environmental factors.

Adolescents' consumption habits have therefore been found to be influenced by several interconnected factors, ranging from peer influence, which causes the FOMO (Fear of missing out) syndrome, to parental influence, to socioeconomic factors, to

emotional and psychological factors, among many more, each shaping their dietary preferences and behaviours. One of the most significant influences is food advertising and media exposure (Kalnina et al, 2022). Advertisements, especially those targeting adolescents via television and digital platforms, often promote unhealthy foods by using emotional appeals, catchy jingles, and vibrant visuals, making unhealthy choices seem desirable (Jimoh, 2016). These marketing strategies contribute to increased consumption of foods high in sugar, fats, and salt.

Within the school environment, these influences are particularly strong. Adolescents spend a significant amount of time in school, where both the food environment and school-based policies around nutrition can significantly shape their eating patterns.

### **Food and Beverages Advertisements**

Advertising can be defined as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor (Shkil, 2021). It is also commercial information disseminated in any way, in any form and using any means, addressed to an indefinite number of people and aimed at attracting attention to the advertising object, formation or maintenance of interest in it and its promotion on the market<sup>12</sup>. It is typically paid for by an identifiable sponsor and aims to deliver persuasive messages to a target audience in the most cost-effective way possible. Additionally, it has been interpreted in various ways, such as “the sale of cornflakes to people who eat Cheerios,” “occupations that manipulate symbols,” “the cave art of the twentieth century,” and “the official art of capitalist society (Shkil, 2021).

Food and beverage advertising, therefore, refers to the activities designed to promote food and beverage products and services (Pinto et al, 2020). With food and beverage advertisements, food and drink products are promoted to the target audience of brands using various channels.

Food and beverage advertisements have long been a major influence on the food choices of children, shaping not only what they want to eat but also how they perceive certain foods and ultimately, request them from their parents. Growing up, children are exposed to a myriad of advertisements that position products like Kellogg's Cornflakes as a "must-have" breakfast item, often paired with catchy jingles and vibrant visuals. These advertisements, designed with emotional appeals and classical conditioning techniques, have made cereals like Cornflakes a staple in many households worldwide, including in Nigeria.

For example, every child knows the jingle, *"When you wake up in the morning, before you start your day, breakfast time is Kellogg's time."* This iconic ad has made Kellogg's Cornflakes synonymous with a healthy and fun start to the day, especially for school-going children.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Exposure to unhealthy food advertisements increases the likelihood of adolescents consuming such products, contributing to poor dietary behaviours and increasing the risk of obesity and other diet-related health issues, especially in the absence of media literacy or regulatory protections (Arrona-Cardoza, Katherine, José, Cisneros & Daiva, 2023). For instance, social media has become a powerful tool for food companies, leveraging influencer partnerships and interactive content to engage young audiences and normalise poor dietary habits.

These strategies contribute to the obesogenic environment observed globally, where high-calorie, low-nutrient diets are normalised among young people. Peer pressure and the glamorisation of unhealthy foods further amplify this problem, making adolescents highly vulnerable to these influences (Chung, Dorice, Tiffany, Nicholas, Jean-Louis, Kathleen, & Seixas, 2021).

In Nigeria, urban centres like Ibadan present a unique context where socioeconomic disparities influence adolescents' exposure to advertisements and their subsequent consumption habits. Private and public-school students may experience varying levels of exposure, shaped by differences in digital access, peer influence, and family environments. Regulatory bodies like the World Health Organisation have emphasised the need to limit exposure to unhealthy food advertising to protect children and adolescents (WHO, 2023). However, gaps in policy enforcement, particularly in regions like Ibadan, Nigeria, exacerbate the issue, necessitating local research to understand the specific dynamics and inform targeted interventions.

This study addresses the urgent need to explore the relationship between food and beverage advertisements and consumption habits among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis. It aims to provide evidence to support policymaking and educational programs that can mitigate the adverse effects of such advertising.

### **Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)**

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is a psychological framework developed by Albert Bandura; it emphasises the interplay between personal, behavioural, and environmental factors in shaping human behaviour. According to this theory, individuals learn behaviours and attitudes not only through direct experiences but also by observing others and their interactions with

the environment (Bandura, 1986). It highlights the importance of cognitive processes such as attention, memory, self-efficacy, and motivation in the learning process (Ward, 1990). In the context of food and beverage advertisements as determinants of secondary school students' consumption habits, Social Cognitive Theory helps explain how these advertisements influence adolescents' food choices and eating behaviours through observational learning, perceived self-efficacy, and reinforcement mechanisms.

Observational learning is a central tenet of Social Cognitive Theory and plays a crucial role in the development of consumption habits among secondary school students (Ward, 1990). Adolescents often observe the behaviours of peers, family members, or media figures in advertisements and imitate these behaviours if they find them desirable. For instance, food and beverage advertisements frequently depict individuals enjoying fast food, sugary snacks, or energy drinks in appealing and socially engaging contexts. Adolescents who observe these scenarios may perceive such behaviours as attractive and normative, leading them to mimic the consumption habits portrayed.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopted a quantitative approach with a correlational survey research design to examine the influence of food and beverage advertisements on the consumption habits of secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis. The population for this study comprised male and female adolescents aged 10 to 19 years who are currently enrolled in four selected secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State (Community Grammar School, Elewura, Community Grammar School, Ring-road, Calvary Group of Schools, Felele and Baptist Secondary School, Idikan). These included two public and two private schools

to ensure representation across different school types and learning environments. Based on the records obtained from each school's administrative unit during the 2023/2024 academic session, the total estimated population across the four selected schools was 16,680 students.

The sample size was calculated with a 95% confidence level and determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations. The minimum required sample size was approximately 391 respondents. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select participants for this study from secondary schools within Ibadan. The sampling process involved two main stages: stratified random sampling and simple random sampling.

Stratified random sampling was used to categorise these schools into distinct strata based on school type, public and private. This stratification ensured that both categories were adequately represented in the study. Simple random sampling was employed within each age-gender stratum to select the respondents. This method gave all eligible students within each defined group an equal and independent chance of being selected, while also maintaining fairness and representativeness across categories. This study used a self-administered adapted questionnaire from different studies as the research instrument for data collection, and it will be structured into five sections.

The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine its internal consistency. A pilot study was conducted among a small group of secondary school students who were not part of the main study. Their responses were analysed using statistical software to calculate Cronbach's Alpha. The resulting reliability coefficient exceeded 0.70.

The data collected from the questionnaires were entered into JASP & SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 21 for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations are used to summarise students' consumption habits, exposure to food and beverage advertisements, and

influencing factors. To examine the relationships between advertisement exposure and consumption habits, as well as differences between students in public and private schools, Chi-square tests were conducted. The results are presented using charts for demographic data and tables for research findings.

**Results and Discussion of Findings**

**Research question one:** What are the consumption habits of secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis?

**Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students' Consumption Habits**

Variables	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
	<b>F(%)</b> 18 (4.1)	<b>F(%)</b> 175(40.0)	<b>F(%)</b> 61(14.0)	<b>F(%)</b> 183(41.9)
I eat snacks (e.g., biscuits, chocolates, pastries).				
I drink soft drinks or energy drinks	18(4.1)	246(56.3)	63(14.4)	110(25.2)
I eat breakfast.	19(4.3)	64(14.6)	50(11.4)	304(69.6)
I consume fast food.	45(10.3)	201(46.0)	61(14.0)	130(29.7)
I drink sugary beverages like soda.	66(15.1)	175(40.1)	68(15.6)	128(29.3)
I drink water during the day	11(2.5)	57(13.0)	64(14.6)	305(69.8)
I consume fruits regularly	23(5.3)	217(49.7)	80(18.3)	117(26.8)
I consume vegetables regularly	23(5.3)	187(42.8)	109(24.9)	118(27.0)
I snack between meals	91(20.8)	147(33.6)	94 (21.5)	(105 (24.0)
I consume dairy products (milk, yoghurt, cheese)	29(6.6)	173(39.6)	91(20.8)	144(33.0)
I try new foods or drinks	40(9.2)	189(43.2)	89(20.4)	119(27.2)
I prefer sweet or savoury snacks over healthy options	112(25.6)	135(30.9)	81(18.5)	109(24.9)
I base my food choices on taste	45(10.3)	100(22.9)	79(18.1)	213(48.7)
I base my food choices on price	99(22.7)	154(35.2)	51(11.7)	133(30.4)
I base my food choices on convenience	40(9.2)	162(37.1)	74(16.9)	161(36.8)
I base my food choices on health benefits	17(3.9)	95(21.7)	52(11.9)	273(62.5)

**Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025**

Table 1 presents a detailed breakdown of the consumption habits of secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis, with responses categorised by frequency: Never,

Sometimes, Often, and Always. Snack consumption is significantly high, with 183 students indicating they always eat snacks such as biscuits, chocolates, or pastries, while

only 18 reported never doing so. Soft drink consumption follows a similar pattern: 246 students (56.3%) sometimes consume soft drinks or energy drinks, and 110 (25.2%) always do, revealing a persistent preference for sugary beverages. Breakfast habits are notably consistent, with 304 students (69.6%) always eating breakfast, and arguably the most positive habit observed in the dataset. Similarly, water consumption shows strong adherence to healthy behaviour, with 69.8% reporting daily intake, suggesting that hydration is well maintained among respondents.

In contrast, the frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption is more moderate. For fruits, 217 students responded with 'Sometimes' and only 117 with 'Always'.

Vegetable consumption follows a similar trend, with 42.8% indicating 'Sometimes' and 27.0% reporting consistent daily intake, and these highlights nutritional gaps. Snacking between meals reveals more variability, with only 105 always snacking, 94 often, and a sizable portion, 91 students, indicating they never snack between meals. Dairy product consumption also appears fairly distributed, with 144 (33.0%) always consuming milk, yoghurt, or cheese, and 173 (39.6%) doing so sometimes. The willingness to try new foods is relatively strong, with 189 (43.2%) sometimes and 119 (27.2%) always.

**Research question two:** What is the level of exposure of secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis to food and beverage advertisements?

**Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students' Exposure to Food and Beverage Advertisements**

Variables	N. E(%)	M.I.E(%)	M.O.E (%)	H.E(%)
I see food and beverage advertisements on television.	29(6.6)	105(24.0)	71(16.2)	232(53.1)
I see these advertisements on social media platforms.	62(14.2)	127(29.1)	67(15.3)	181(41.4)
I see these advertisements on billboards/posters around my area.	51(11.7)	112(25.6)	90(20.6)	184(42.1)
I hear these advertisements on the radio.	58(13.3)	112(25.6)	76(17.4)	191(43.7)
I read food-related ads in newspapers or magazines.	142(32.5)	100(22.9)	85(19.5)	110(25.2)
I see food or beverage ads at my school.	111(25.4)	104(23.8)	90(20.6)	132(30.2)
I see promotions like 'buy one get one free' or discounts.	60(13.7)	116(26.5)	80(18.3)	181(41.4)
I discuss food or drink advertisements with friends at school.	84(19.2)	120(27.5)	81(18.5)	152(34.8)
I have seen advertisements that feature celebrities or influencers.	46(10.5)	114(26.1)	70(16.0)	207(47.4)
I have seen food or drink ads that target students like me.	73(16.7)	124(28.4)	112(25.6)	128(29.3)

**Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2025**

**Key:** Not exposed (N.E), Minimally exposed (M.I.E), Moderately exposed (M.O.E), Highly exposed (H.E)

Table 2 provides insights into the level of exposure of secondary school students in Ibadan metropolis to food and beverage

advertisements. The data reflects responses across multiple media platforms and social contexts. The responses were categorised as Not Exposed, Minimally Exposed, Moderately Exposed, and Highly Exposed. Exposure through visual media appears particularly high. Advertisements on television had a combined 71.6% of respondents reporting either moderate or high exposure, with 71 students and 232, respectively. Social media platforms reflected a similarly elevated pattern, 15.3% moderately exposed and 41.4% highly exposed. These figures confirm that digital and broadcast media remain the most pervasive sources of advertising influence among adolescents.

Billboards and posters followed closely, with 90 respondents moderately exposed and 184 highly exposed, highlighting the ambient nature of advertising in students' physical environments. Radio exposure was also significant, with 17.4% moderately and 43.7% highly exposed, suggesting that auditory media still plays a role. Print media such as newspapers and magazines showed the lowest exposure levels. A substantial number of 142 students reported not being exposed at all, and only 25.2% were highly exposed. This discrepancy likely reflects the

declining consumption of print materials among younger demographics.

School-based exposure was another notable area. While 181 students (41.1%) reported high exposure to food and beverage ads within school premises, this is likely influenced by branded signage, vendor presence, or school-sponsored promotions. Peer conversations around food ads also featured, with 186 (42.4%) students acknowledging high exposure in that context, illustrating how peer environments reinforce marketing impressions.

Promotional tactics like “buy one get one free” were widely recognised, with 186 students reporting high exposure. This suggests that strategic marketing incentives are effective in capturing adolescent attention. Celebrity and influencer-driven advertisements also showed high reach, as 183 respondents (41.7%) reported being highly exposed. Similarly, 194 (44.2%) were highly exposed to ads directly targeting students.

**Hypothesis Testing**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between exposure to food and beverage advertisements and the consumption habits of secondary school students in Ibadan metropolis.

*Table 4. Model Summary – Influence of Advertisement Exposure on Consumption Habits*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.436	0.190	0.188	0.487

**Source: SPSS Computation 23.0**

Table 4.9 shows that there is a modest positive correlation (R = 0.436) between exposure to food and beverage advertisements and consumption habits. Approximately 19% of the variance in consumption habits among adolescents can

be explained by advertisement exposure alone. While this percentage may not appear large, it suggests that advertising plays a noteworthy role in shaping food preferences and dietary behaviours in this demographic group.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study investigated food and beverage advertisements as determinants of consumption habits among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis. The findings presented across Sections A to E offer a multidimensional perspective on how adolescents engage with food, perceive marketing stimuli, and are influenced by their school and social environments.

Consumption behaviour reflected a complex interaction of health intentions and hedonic impulses. A significant number of respondents reported 'Always' consuming snacks (41.9%), sugary beverages (29.3%), and soft drinks (25.2%). These findings are consistent with studies from other low- and middle-income countries, where urban adolescents exhibit a preference for highly palatable, low-nutrient food items (Amevinya et al, 2022). A similar study also found that Australian adolescents exposed to food advertising across media were more likely to consume snacks and sugary drinks regularly (Boyland, 2013). However, healthier habits were also prevalent, as 69.6% of respondents reported eating breakfast daily and 69.8% consistently drank water, indicating the presence of structured dietary routines potentially supported by family or school-based interventions.

Exposure to food and beverage advertisements was found to be extensive. Over half of the students reported high exposure on television (53.1%) and social media (41.4%), while 42.1% were highly exposed to billboard advertising. School-based exposure was particularly concerning, with 41.1% seeing food ads within school environments and 42.4% engaging in peer discussions about these advertisements. This confirms assertions by a study commissioned

by WHO that adolescents are routinely targeted by commercial food messaging in both physical and digital environments (WHO, 2010). A similar study also observed that 42% of outdoor food ads near schools in Ghana promoted unhealthy food and beverages, which reinforces concerns about how adolescent-targeted advertising infiltrates educational spaces (Amevinya, 2022).

Crucially, the findings revealed that advertisement exposure does not stop at awareness but directly informs behaviour. Nearly 80% of students reported trying food products they saw advertised, while 41.0% strongly agreed they had asked their parents to purchase advertised items. Additionally, 47.8% expressed increased trust in advertised brands. These data align with Delfino et al (2020), who document a significant link between food advertising and unhealthy consumption.

However, research also emphasises that the impact of advertising isn't uniform. A study that discussed ads and their intent demonstrated that active parental mediation can significantly reduce the influence of marketing on children's purchase behaviour (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2010).

These findings suggest that while food and beverage advertising is clearly influential, its effects can be counteracted through education, parental guidance, and digital literacy interventions, a promising area for school and family-based health programs.

Environmental reinforcement of consumption habits was also evident. More than half (53.1%) of students stated they frequently encountered food and drink ads around their school, and 50.1% acknowledged the sale of advertised products within or near school canteens. Identifying schools as commercial nodes that serve as

extensions of corporate advertising strategies. This aligns with the findings of a study that documented an average of 36 unhealthy food advertisements within a 250-meter radius around schools in Kampala, Uganda, with 86% promoting high-sugar, high-fat products (Dia, 2020).

Peer dynamics also played a major role; 49.2% of students strongly agreed that their classmates discussed food ads, and 50.5% noted seeing peers make purchase decisions based on those ads. These findings reinforce a similar study's conclusion that school-based marketing exposure correlates with higher rates of unhealthy food consumption (Powell et al, 2007). In addition, another study emphasised that adolescents exposed to food ads near schools developed more positive attitudes toward junk food, confirming the role of the school environment as a critical space in shaping food choices (Amevinya, 2022).

The regression analysis showed a modest but significant relationship between ad exposure and consumption habits ( $R = 0.436$ ,  $R^2 = 0.190$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This means that about 19% of the variation in food choices among adolescents could be attributed to exposure to food and beverage advertisements. A similar multi-country study published in *BMC Public Health* also found that exposure to sugary drink ads, especially across multiple platforms, significantly predicted higher intake among children, reinforcing the broader influence of marketing on youth dietary behaviour (Story, Neumark-Sztainer & Simone, 2002).

### **Conclusion**

This study affirms that food and beverage advertisements are non-negligible contributors to adolescents' consumption behaviours in Ibadan. The data reveal a

paradox wherein students maintain some health-conscious habits while simultaneously demonstrating high susceptibility to marketing stimuli. Particularly troubling is the consistent exposure within educational environments, where the reinforcement of brand visibility and peer validation coalesce to nudge purchasing choices.

Although advertising was not the sole determinant of dietary choice, its influence was sufficiently pronounced to warrant regulatory attention. The lack of difference across private and public-school students' further points to the systemic nature of marketing influence, transcending socioeconomic divides. The findings highlight an urgent need for multilayered interventions spanning curriculum reform, regulatory enforcement, and public health education. The null hypothesis was rejected, affirming that exposure to food and beverage advertisements is significantly associated with the consumption behaviour of secondary school students.

### **Recommendations**

Educational authorities should introduce advertising-free buffer zones within and around school environments. Regulatory guidelines should explicitly ban the placement of banners, posters, and branded vending stalls within 200 metres of school grounds.

National and state-level school curricula should incorporate media literacy education to equip students with critical tools for deconstructing marketing messages. Such education would empower adolescents to make informed dietary decisions.

Front-of-pack nutritional warnings should be mandated for all processed snacks and sugar-sweetened beverages sold near school areas. This aligns with WHO best practices for curbing childhood obesity.

Schools, through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), should adopt healthy tuck shop policies that prioritise nutritious options over ultra-processed foods.

Broadcasting commissions should regulate the timing and content of food advertisements, limiting junk food ads during children's TV viewing hours, particularly after school and on weekends.

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