

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Trade Kings Zambia Limited Advertising Strategies in Influencing Consumer Behaviour Among Residents of Mwalubemba Village in Chongwe Zambia

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of Trade Kings Zambia Limited's advertising strategies in Mwalubemba Village, a rural setting in Zambia. It explored the relationship between advertising awareness, consumer behaviour, and purchase decisions while assessing the effectiveness of various advertising channels, including radio, television, social media, print media, and billboards. A concurrent mixed-methods research design was employed, utilizing surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) to gain insights into consumer engagement with advertising. Data were analysed using Stata Version 16 and Excel. Quantitative data analysis revealed that about 79% of respondents were aware of Trade Kings' advertising channels, with radio (42%) and television (21%). Despite billboards being visually dominant, awareness remained low at 5%. Radio advertising emerged as the most effective channel (27%), followed by television (23%) and social media (20%), reinforcing previous studies that highlight the dominance of traditional mass media in rural markets. However, only 49% of consumers cited advertising as their primary source of product awareness, with 23% relying on word-of-mouth recommendations. Product benefits (39%) and affordability (27%) were the strongest purchase motivators, while emotional appeal (8%) and celebrity endorsements (3%) had minimal impact. Qualitative insights from FGDs and KIIs revealed that consumers preferred locally relatable radio ads delivered in native languages and voiced by familiar announcers, fostering greater trust and recall. Social media advertising showed promise among younger demographics but faced limited penetration due to digital access challenges. While Trade Kings' advertising efforts have effectively created product awareness and influenced consumer decisions, gaps remain in digital outreach, in-store engagement, and messaging for lesser-known products. The study concludes that rural consumers in Zambia prioritize functionality and affordability in purchase decisions, requiring marketing strategies that emphasize product education, affordability, and localized engagement. Recommendations include expanding radio campaigns with consumer testimonials, integrating community-driven marketing efforts, and diversifying in-store promotions to increase consumer interaction. These insights provide valuable guidance for Trade Kings, policymakers, and marketers seeking to optimize advertising strategies in rural markets.

1. Introduction and Background

The effectiveness of advertising strategies is a critical determinant of a company's success in the modern marketplace, where consumer behaviour is increasingly complex and influenced by a multitude of factors. Trade Kings Zambia Limited, a leading manufacturer of Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) in Zambia, has established itself as a dominant player through extensive marketing and advertising efforts. According to Kotler and Keller (2016) "Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor". However, understanding the extent to which these strategies effectively influence consumer behaviour, particularly in rural areas, remains an essential aspect of evaluating their overall impact.

The research sought to assess the effectiveness of Trade Kings Zambia Limited's advertising strategies in shaping consumer behaviour among the residents of Mwalubemba Village in Chongwe, Zambia. Mwalubemba, a rural community with distinct cultural and socioeconomic characteristics, presents a unique context for examining the reach and influence of advertising campaigns traditionally designed for broader urban markets. The study explored how these advertising efforts resonated with the local population, the factors that drive or hinder consumer responsiveness, and the overall effectiveness of these strategies in promoting brand loyalty and product adoption.

In today's competitive marketplace, advertising plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour, influencing purchasing decisions, and establishing brand loyalty (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Businesses continuously invest in various advertising strategies to create awareness, generate interest, and persuade consumers to choose their products over competitors (Belch and Belch, 2020). In Zambia, Trade Kings Limited has become a dominant player in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, leveraging advertising to penetrate both urban and rural markets (Mwanza, 2022).

Despite its significant investments in advertising, there is limited empirical evidence on how these efforts impact consumer behaviour in specific rural communities, such as Mwalubemba Village in Chongwe District. This study sought to assess the extent to which Trade Kings' advertising strategies influence consumer behaviour in Mwalubemba Village, providing insights into the effectiveness of these strategies and their implications for rural market penetration. By exploring the relationship between advertising and consumer behaviour in this context, the research aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of how advertising can be optimized to meet the unique needs and preferences of rural consumers (Armstrong and Kotler, 2018).

Advertising has long been recognized as a powerful tool for influencing consumer behaviour, shaping preferences, and driving purchase decisions across diverse markets (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018). In a rapidly evolving global economy, businesses rely on well-crafted advertising strategies to differentiate their products and build brand loyalty, particularly in competitive sectors like fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) (Belch and Belch, 2015). Trade Kings Zambia Limited, a leading FMCG company, has established a strong presence in both urban and rural markets through extensive advertising campaigns that aim to resonate with a wide audience (Mwansa, 2021). However, while the impact of advertising on consumer behaviour in urban areas is well-documented, there is limited research on how these strategies affect consumers in rural settings, such as Mwalubemba Village in Chongwe District.

Understanding consumer behaviour in rural areas is crucial, as it often differs significantly from urban behaviour due to factors such as cultural influences, economic conditions, and access to information (Rao, 2017). This study sought to assess the extent to which Trade Kings' advertising influences consumer behaviour in Mwalubemba Village, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of their strategies in rural markets. By examining consumer responses to advertising in this context, the research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on rural marketing and provide actionable recommendations for optimizing advertising approaches in similar environments (Singh and Pandey, 2020).

Advertising is one of the most significant elements of marketing, designed to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products and services (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018). Over the years, it has evolved from traditional media like print and radio to more sophisticated digital platforms, making it a critical tool for businesses seeking to establish a strong market presence (Belch and Belch, 2015). The ability of advertising to influence consumer behaviour is well-documented, with studies showing that effective advertising can shape consumer perceptions, create brand awareness, and drive purchasing decisions (Keller, 2016).

In the context of Zambia, advertising plays a crucial role in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, where competition is fierce, and brand differentiation is vital. Trade Kings Zambia Limited, a leading player in this sector, has invested heavily in advertising to promote its diverse range of products, including detergents, beverages, and confectionery (Mwansa, 2021). The company's advertising strategies have primarily focused on mass media channels such as television, radio, and outdoor advertising, aiming to reach a broad audience across both urban and rural areas (Chanda, 2020).

Despite the widespread use of advertising, its impact on consumer behaviour in rural settings remains underexplored, particularly in Zambia. Rural consumers often have different needs, preferences, and access to information compared to their urban counterparts, which can significantly influence how they respond to advertising (Rao, 2017). For instance, factors such as literacy levels, cultural values, and economic conditions in rural areas may affect the effectiveness of advertising campaigns (Singh and Pandey, 2020). Understanding these dynamics is essential for companies like Trade Kings, which aim to penetrate rural markets and establish strong brand loyalty among rural consumers.

Mwalubemba Village in Chongwe District represents a typical rural setting where the impact of advertising on consumer behaviour can provide valuable insights. As a community with limited access to diverse media channels and economic resources, Mwalubemba offers a unique opportunity to assess how Trade Kings' advertising strategies resonate with rural consumers (Phiri, 2019). This study sought to fill the gap in existing literature by exploring the extent to which Trade Kings' advertising influences consumer behaviour in Mwalubemba Village. The findings of this research will not only contribute to a better understanding of rural consumer behaviour in Zambia but also provide practical recommendations for optimizing advertising strategies in similar rural contexts.

By examining consumer responses to advertising in Mwalubemba, the research sheds light on the broader implications of advertising in rural markets, helping companies to tailor their approaches to meet the specific needs and expectations of rural consumers. Such insights are critical for enhancing the effectiveness of advertising in driving consumer behaviour and achieving business objectives in diverse market environments (Kotler, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective advertising should meaningfully influence consumer perceptions, drive purchasing decisions, and foster brand loyalty across market segments. Ideally, companies tailor their advertising strategies to suit the unique characteristics of each target audience. However, in rural settings like Mwalubemba Village in Chongwe District, Zambia, there remains a significant gap between the intended impact of advertising campaigns and the actual consumer response—raising concerns about the effectiveness of current advertising strategies used by companies such as Trade Kings Zambia Limited.

Trade Kings operates in the highly competitive fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, where advertising is not just a tool for brand visibility but a critical investment for market growth and sustainability (Mwansa, 2021; Kotler and Keller, 2016). Despite the company's substantial investment in advertising, little is known about how these strategies perform in rural contexts, where consumer behaviours and media consumption patterns differ markedly from urban settings. Research highlights that rural consumers often have lower levels of exposure to certain advertising channels, limited digital access, and are influenced more by interpersonal communication and cultural norms (Rao, 2017; Singh and Pandey, 2020).

Nonetheless, many companies including Trade Kings tend to apply uniform advertising strategies across both urban and rural markets, potentially overlooking the socio-economic, cultural, and technological dynamics that shape rural consumer behaviour. This one-size-fits-all approach may lead to ineffective message delivery, weak brand engagement, and underwhelming returns on marketing investments (Belch and Belch, 2015). In rural Zambia, for instance, reliance on channels like social media may not yield intended results due to low digital penetration, while more accessible platforms such as radio may offer greater impact if appropriately localized.

Moreover, a misalignment between advertising strategies and rural consumer realities could hinder market penetration, waste valuable marketing resources, and limit Trade Kings' ability to sustain growth in rural areas. Without evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of current advertising efforts in rural settings, the company risks failing to fully capture the potential of these underserved markets (Phiri, 2019).

2 Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies

Global Context

Globally, advertising has undergone remarkable evolution, particularly with the emergence and proliferation of digital media. While traditional channels—such as print, radio, and television—still retain relevance, the industry has increasingly shifted toward digital platforms due to their enhanced targeting capabilities and cost efficiency. Kumar and Shah (2020) conducted a longitudinal study using industry case data, revealing a rising dependence on digital advertising formats such as social media, search engine optimization, and influencer marketing. These strategies allow firms to access real-time feedback, adjust messages dynamically, and reach segmented audiences with high precision.

Supporting this, Luo and Donthu (2023) employed a meta-analysis of 45 studies across North America and Asia, concluding that digital platforms, especially Google Ads and Facebook, provide unparalleled measurement capabilities and return on investment (ROI) analytics, which traditional platforms often lack. However, they acknowledged that such effectiveness is context-sensitive and may not hold true in regions with limited digital access.

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) presented a multi-case comparative study exploring the integration of online and offline advertising strategies in multinational firms. They argued that digital platforms are most effective when used in synergy with traditional media, especially in markets with digital disparities. Their findings align with Smith (2021), who, through a survey of media consumption habits in developing countries, found that television and radio remain dominant due to their broader reach, especially in semi-urban and rural areas.

Consumer awareness is a key mediator between advertising exposure and purchasing decisions. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), advertising effectiveness hinges on its ability to consistently reinforce brand messages, enhance consumer recall, and establish product relevance. Their theoretical framework, based on the hierarchy-of-effects model, demonstrates that brand awareness precedes interest, desire, and ultimately action. However, this model assumes uniform consumer access to and interpretation of media, an assumption that fails in many rural settings where infrastructure and literacy challenges exist.

De Vries et al. (2018) investigated emotional branding through social media, using an experimental design that measured emotional response and brand recall in younger audiences. They found that emotional resonance and social proof—often embedded in influencer and user-generated content—significantly improved both immediate and long-term purchase intent. However, their study was urban-centric and may not generalize to rural populations with limited online exposure.

The literature also underscores the role of psychological and cultural variables in advertising response. Grewal et al. (2020) used structural equation modelling (SEM) to assess how advertising appeals influence consumer behaviour across cultures. Their results indicated that emotional and rational appeals have different levels of effectiveness depending on consumer values, socioeconomic status, and context. This finding is particularly important when assessing advertising in a setting like Mwalubemba Village, where communal identity, income levels, and media access may influence how advertising is perceived and acted upon.

Despite the technological optimism surrounding digital advertising, several scholars warn against assuming its universal effectiveness. Williams (2022), through ethnographic fieldwork in Latin American rural areas, found that traditional advertising—especially radio and print—still commands significant influence. The study concluded that trust in familiar voices and community messaging outweighed the appeal of personalized digital campaigns, particularly in areas with poor internet access.

While the global literature offers rich insights into evolving advertising strategies and their psychological mechanisms, there is a notable gap in the application of these models to rural, under-researched settings like Mwalubemba Village in Chongwe, Zambia. Most existing studies focus on urban, tech-savvy consumers with reliable access to the internet and digital devices. The realities of rural consumers characterized by inconsistent media access, lower literacy levels, and culturally specific preferences—are often overlooked.

This presents a critical research gap that the current study addresses. Although Trade Kings Zambia Limited employs both traditional and modern advertising channels, the effectiveness of these strategies in rural contexts remains unexamined empirically. Global models emphasize digital reach and emotional branding, but their relevance to communities with limited digital penetration and strong reliance on interpersonal communication is uncertain.

Moreover, few studies critically assess how advertising influences actual behaviour—not just awareness or attitude change—especially in the context of low-income rural markets where purchasing power and trust in brands may be influenced more by word-of-mouth and local engagement than by sophisticated media targeting.

By using primary data collected through surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) in Mwalubemba Village, this study evaluates the real-world impact of advertising strategies employed by Trade Kings. The analysis explores consumer awareness levels, preferred media channels, and the extent to which advertising influences actual purchasing decisions. It does so through a mixed-methods approach that combines the statistical rigor of quantitative analysis (via STATA and Excel) with the contextual richness of qualitative insights from rural consumers.

This localized, evidence-based assessment adds new knowledge to the field by revealing how advertising strategies can be adapted to resonate with rural consumers—offering practical guidance not just for Trade Kings, but for any brand operating in similar socio-economic and cultural environments.

Regional Context

Across the African continent, advertising practices are increasingly characterized by a hybrid of traditional and modern methods. This evolution is largely driven by the continent's rapid technological transformation and rising mobile phone penetration. Eke and Nwogbaga (2021), using a quantitative survey of advertising executives across five West African countries, identified a surge in mobile and internet use that has catalysed the adoption of mobile-based and digital marketing. Similarly, Kyeremeh (2022) conducted a multi-country content analysis and found that social media advertising, especially on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, is gaining traction in both urban and peri-urban areas due to its interactive nature and cost efficiency.

Despite these digital advancements, traditional advertising channels continue to dominate in rural African settings. Munyanyi and Phiri (2021), in a comparative rural-urban media access study conducted in Zimbabwe and Zambia, emphasized that radio remains the most influential medium in rural areas due to its affordability, accessibility, and cultural familiarity. Using a household media consumption survey, their study revealed that rural

populations tend to trust radio advertisements more than digital ads, particularly when these are delivered in local languages and voiced by familiar presenters.

Chisenga and Mulenga (2022) extended this understanding through a qualitative case study in rural Zambia, showing how radio advertising significantly shapes consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. Participants consistently cited radio as a primary source of product information and trusted it over digital alternatives. Adom and Osei (2023), using participatory rural appraisal in Ghanaian villages, similarly confirmed that word-of-mouth and community-based advertising strategies are particularly effective in influencing consumer behaviour due to the communal nature of rural African societies.

Another noteworthy trend is the role of localized and culturally embedded messaging. Yeboah and Boateng (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study combining interviews and advertisement content analysis in rural Ghana and found that advertising campaigns using local languages, traditional idioms, and community values foster higher engagement and brand loyalty. This insight has critical implications for campaigns targeting rural populations such as those in Mwalubemba Village, suggesting that content relevance outweighs platform sophistication.

From a Southern African perspective, advertising practices reflect both global trends and local nuances. Mumba and Banda (2020), through a regional advertising market survey, noted that while digital channels are gaining momentum in urban centres, rural areas remain heavily dependent on traditional media like radio and billboards. Zimba and Mwanza (2022) used geospatial analysis and rural audience segmentation to demonstrate that outdoor advertising (e.g., posters, wall branding, and billboards) continues to provide persistent brand visibility, especially in transit-heavy rural areas.

Community engagement strategies such as sponsorships and grassroots events are also widely used across Southern Africa to foster deeper connections with consumers. Ngoma and Mumba (2021) used field observations and stakeholder interviews in rural Zambia to explore the influence of local event sponsorships on consumer loyalty. They concluded that community involvement enhances brand perception, fosters emotional attachment, and positively influences purchasing decisions—factors often underestimated in media-driven advertising strategies.

While many of these studies highlight the effectiveness of both traditional and digital media, few directly compare how these strategies perform specifically in rural contexts with limited media infrastructure and diverse consumer behaviours. Moreover, the literature tends to generalize rural consumer engagement without disaggregating variables such as household income, gender, age, and literacy all which shape media access and interpretation.

Crucially, most existing studies stop short of evaluating actual behaviour change, often focusing instead on advertising exposure or brand awareness. For instance, Kyeremeh (2022) and Eke and Nwogbaga (2021) measure reach and consumer interaction but do not assess whether those exposures translate into purchasing decisions. This is a significant gap, given that behaviour change not just awareness is the core outcome of effective advertising.

Additionally, the literature often overlooks firm-specific strategies, making it difficult to understand how particular brands like Trade Kings Zambia Limited tailor their campaigns in rural markets. There is a lack of empirical evidence on whether such firms adapt their media mix to the rural consumer or rely on standardized, urban-centric messaging across markets.

This study addresses these gaps by focusing on Trade Kings Zambia Limited's advertising strategies in Mwalubemba Village, a rural setting that represents a large and underserved market segment in Zambia. It assesses not only consumer awareness but also the influence of specific advertising channels on actual purchasing behaviour, using both qualitative (focus group discussions and key informant interviews) and quantitative (household surveys) methods. The findings contribute to the literature by offering a context-specific, brand-focused evaluation of advertising effectiveness in a rural African setting an area that remains under-researched yet critical for inclusive market growth.

Zambian context

Zambia's advertising landscape reflects a dynamic blend of traditional and modern approaches, shaped by evolving consumer preferences, infrastructure limitations, and media access disparities between urban and rural populations. Zimba and Mwanza (2022), through a media industry trend analysis using secondary data from advertising agencies, documented a growing shift toward digital platforms in urban and peri-urban areas. They noted that platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have gained popularity among younger and urban-based consumers due to increasing mobile internet penetration. However, they also observed that digital advertising remains relatively underutilized in rural areas, where infrastructure and affordability constraints persist.

In contrast, Kaunda and Kabamba (2023) conducted a household survey in Central and Eastern Zambia and confirmed that radio continues to dominate as the most preferred and trusted medium among rural populations. Their quantitative findings showed that over 72% of rural respondents relied on radio for product and service information, citing its affordability, language accessibility, and widespread availability. This aligns with Chisenga and Mulenga (2022), who used a focus group approach in four rural districts, including Chongwe, to explore the emotional and cognitive responses to radio advertising. Their study found that localized content in familiar dialects created trust and higher message retention among rural listeners.

Trade Kings Zambia Limited stands out as a key player in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector and exemplifies the integration of both modern and traditional advertising strategies. Sichimba and Kasonde (2023), through key informant interviews with Trade Kings' marketing personnel and content analysis of recent advertising campaigns, highlighted how the company adapts its messaging for different market segments. In urban centres, Trade Kings relies heavily on influencer-led social media campaigns, while in rural areas like Mwalubemba Village, it employs radio, billboards, and community activations to sustain product visibility and consumer engagement.

In Mwalubemba Village specifically, radio advertising appears to be the most influential medium due to its cultural relevance and community integration. Ngoma and Mumba (2021) conducted a case study on Trade Kings' rural outreach, involving in-depth interviews and event observations in rural Chongwe. Their findings revealed that community events—such as product sampling days, sports sponsorships, and local ceremonies—helped build emotional connections between the brand and rural consumers. These grassroots initiatives reinforced brand loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing, both of which are critical in rural settings where social networks are strong and interpersonal trust is key.

Outdoor advertising also plays a complementary role. Phiri and Nkhoma (2022) used a visual ethnography approach to study consumer interactions with outdoor media, including billboards, murals, and posters, in three rural districts. In Mwalubemba, they found that well-placed billboards in high-footfall zones (e.g., markets and health centre's) reinforced brand awareness, particularly for low-literacy consumers who relied more on visual cues than text-heavy digital ads. However, the study cautioned that without consistent follow-up messaging through community engagement or radio, static advertising alone had limited impact on influencing behaviour change.

Despite these findings, the literature remains largely descriptive and often fails to evaluate advertising effectiveness in terms of actual consumer

behaviour—a central focus of this study. Most Zambian studies reviewed prioritize media reach, brand awareness, or consumer recall as proxies for effectiveness, but few investigate whether these advertising strategies translate into actual purchasing decisions, particularly in resource-constrained rural environments. For instance, while Kaunda and Kabamba (2023) demonstrate radio's reach, they do not assess the degree to which it influences buying patterns or long-term consumer loyalty.

Moreover, firm-specific evaluations are scarce. The existing literature tends to generalize advertising strategies without disaggregating by company, product category, or target demographic. As such, there is a limited understanding of how a major brand like Trade Kings adapts, applies, and measures its advertising effectiveness specifically in rural areas like Mwalubemba Village.

This study responds to these gaps by critically assessing the effectiveness of Trade Kings' advertising strategies in influencing actual consumer behaviour in Mwalubemba Village. Using a mixed-methods approach—including structured surveys to quantify awareness and purchasing decisions and focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) to uncover deeper motivations and perceptions—the study provides a more nuanced, evidence-based understanding of what drives advertising success in rural Zambia. It moves beyond measuring exposure or recall, instead evaluating the causal link between advertising exposure and consumer action—an area that previous studies have underexplored.

Trade Kings uses a multifaceted approach to advertising in Mwalubemba Village, employing various channels tailored to the rural market which the following:

Traditional Media: Radio: As a dominant advertising medium in rural Zambia, Trade Kings uses local radio stations to broadcast advertisements in local languages, making the ads more accessible and relevant to the audience (Chisenga and Mulenga, 2022; Sichimba and Kasonde, 2023).

Outdoor Advertising: Billboards and posters are used in high-traffic areas of Mwalubemba Village to capture attention and maximize product visibility (Phiri and Nkhoma, 2022).

Community Engagement: Sponsorships and Events: Trade Kings sponsors local events and community activities to build brand loyalty and connect with consumers on a personal level. These events provide opportunities for direct interaction with the target audience and help foster strong community relationships (Ngoma and Mumba, 2021).

Digital Media: Social media and Online Platforms: While digital media is less prevalent in rural areas, Trade Kings uses social media platforms like Facebook for broader reach, targeting urban consumers with complementary digital ads (Kaunda and Kabamba, 2023). These campaigns are integrated with traditional methods to ensure wider audience engagement.

Advertising methods are highly context-dependent, influenced by global trends, regional characteristics, and local needs. Trade Kings Zambia Limited employs an integrated advertising strategy in Mwalubemba Village, combining traditional media, community engagement, and digital platforms. By using local radio, outdoor advertising, and community events, Trade Kings effectively reaches rural consumers, ensuring their products remain visible and accessible. Their ability to adapt to the rural context demonstrates a nuanced understanding of advertising channels and their impact across diverse consumer segments.

Trade Kings' advertising strategy in Mwalubemba Village reflects the importance of adapting to local market conditions while drawing on global and regional trends. By combining traditional media, community-based advertising, and digital approaches, Trade Kings ensures broad reach and effective engagement with their target audience. Their strategy demonstrates the effectiveness of a multifaceted advertising approach in a rural Zambian setting, catering to the unique characteristics of the market.

Understanding consumer awareness is critical for companies aiming to enhance market presence and engagement. This literature review explores the level of consumer awareness of Trade Kings' products in Mwalubemba Village, Zambia. It examines studies from global, African, regional, and Zambian contexts, providing a comprehensive overview of the factors that influence consumer awareness.

In Zambia, consumer awareness of products is shaped by a mix of traditional and modern advertising strategies. Trade Kings, a leading company in the Zambian market, employs various methods to enhance brand recognition among consumers, particularly in rural areas such as Mwalubemba Village.

Radio remains a dominant medium for reaching rural audiences where digital access may be limited. Chisenga and Mulenga (2022) emphasize that radio advertising effectively informs and educates consumers about products. Trade Kings utilizes local radio stations to broadcast advertisements in local languages, enhancing reach and relevance in rural areas like Mwalubemba Village. Additionally, outdoor advertising through billboards and posters reinforces brand visibility, providing constant reminders of products (Phiri and Nkhoma, 2022).

Community engagement also plays a crucial role in shaping consumer awareness. Trade Kings actively participates in local events and sponsorships, fostering personal connections with consumers and increasing brand recognition. Ngoma and Mumba (2021) highlight the importance of these community-based activities in building consumer trust, particularly in rural areas.

While the penetration of digital media is lower in rural Zambia, Trade Kings uses social media platforms to expand its reach. Kaunda and Kabamba (2023) note that social media campaigns are more impactful in urban areas, but they still contribute to overall brand awareness and help engage digitally connected individuals, even in rural settings.

Although research specifically focused on consumer awareness in Mwalubemba Village is limited, broader studies on consumer behaviour in Zambia provide insights. According toimba and Mwanza (2022), consumer awareness levels in rural areas vary based on the reach and effectiveness of advertising strategies.

In Mwalubemba Village, consumer awareness of Trade Kings' products is shaped by a combination of traditional media (radio, billboards), community engagement (local events and sponsorships), and, to a lesser extent, digital media. Radio and outdoor advertising are particularly effective in reaching rural consumers, while community events foster personal connections and trust. Though digital media plays a smaller role in rural areas, its influence is growing, particularly among more digitally connected individuals.

Consumer awareness of Trade Kings' products in Mwalubemba Village is shaped by a mix of traditional advertising, community engagement, and emerging digital platforms. Radio and outdoor advertising remain vital for reaching rural consumers, while community-based approaches help to build brand trust and recognition. Although digital media is more effective in urban areas, it still contributes to overall brand awareness. Understanding these dynamics enables Trade Kings to tailor its advertising strategies to effectively increase consumer awareness in Mwalubemba Village.

The impact of advertising on consumer purchasing decisions is critical for companies seeking to optimize their marketing strategies. This literature review explores how Trade Kings' advertising influences consumer purchasing decisions in Mwalubemba Village. Drawing from global, African, regional,

and Zambian contexts, it provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors involved in shaping consumer behaviour.

In Zambia, the impact of advertising on consumer purchasing decisions is shaped by a blend of traditional and modern practices. Trade Kings, a leading Zambian company, employs a variety of advertising channels to influence consumer behaviour, especially in rural areas like Mwalubemba Village.

Radio advertising is highly effective in reaching and influencing rural consumers. Chisenga and Mulenga (2022) highlight that radio ads tailored to local languages and cultural contexts enhance brand recall and credibility, thereby significantly impacting purchasing decisions. Outdoor advertising, including billboards and posters, provides consistent brand visibility, acting as a reminder and positively influencing purchasing behaviour (Phiri and Nkhoma, 2022).

Trade Kings also leverages community engagement as part of its advertising strategy. The company's participation in local events and sponsorships builds brand loyalty and influences consumer preferences. Ngoma and Mumba (2021) emphasize that community-based marketing fosters personal connections with consumers, increasing the likelihood of purchasing.

Although digital media penetration is lower in rural areas, Trade Kings uses social media to complement its traditional advertising efforts. Kaunda and Kabamba (2023) observe that social media campaigns are more effective in urban areas but still contribute to brand awareness in rural regions. Engaging content and promotions on social media can influence purchasing decisions, even if its impact in rural areas like Mwalubemba Village is less pronounced compared to urban areas.

Although specific research on the impact of Trade Kings' advertising in Mwalubemba Village is limited, broader studies on consumer behaviour in Zambia provide insights.imba and Mwanza (2022) suggest that advertising effectiveness is shaped by factors such as message relevance, media reach, and consumer engagement.

In Mwalubemba Village, traditional media such as radio and outdoor advertising play crucial roles in reaching and influencing consumers. Community engagement through local events helps build brand loyalty and trust, further enhancing purchasing decisions. Digital media, although less prominent, still contributes to overall brand awareness and purchasing behaviour.

Trade Kings' advertising strategies have a notable impact on consumer purchasing decisions in Mwalubemba Village, influenced by a combination of traditional and modern advertising methods. Radio and outdoor advertising are particularly effective in shaping consumer behaviour in rural areas, while community engagement reinforces brand loyalty. Although digital media plays a smaller role, it complements traditional efforts, helping to influence purchasing decisions. Understanding these dynamics allows Trade Kings to tailor its advertising strategies for greater effectiveness in Mwalubemba Village.

Across global, regional, and Zambian contexts, the literature consistently affirms the need for advertising strategies to be adapted to the socio-economic, technological, and cultural conditions of target audiences. While digital advertising thrives in urban and digitally connected settings, rural areas like Mwalubemba Village demand more traditional and community-oriented approaches to effectively reach and influence consumers.

Despite the widespread application of multi-channel advertising strategies by companies such as Trade Kings Zambia Limited, prior to this study, little empirical evidence existed on how such efforts resonate with rural consumers—particularly in Mwalubemba Village. The extent to which Trade Kings' advertising influences consumer awareness and purchasing decisions in this context remained unclear, creating a critical knowledge gap.

This study directly addressed that gap by evaluating the effectiveness of Trade Kings' advertising strategies in Mwalubemba Village using data collected through structured surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs). Quantitative data was analyzed using Stata and Excel, while qualitative insights were drawn through thematic analysis. The findings provide a grounded understanding of consumer engagement with various advertising channels, highlighting which strategies drive awareness and purchasing behaviour in this rural context. These insights offer actionable recommendations to improve advertising effectiveness not only for Trade Kings but also for other fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands operating in similar rural environments across Zambia.

In sum, while the literature confirms that traditional advertising methods dominate rural Zambia, there is a lack of empirical, company-specific studies that assess the behavioral impact of these strategies. This study offers critical insights into how Trade Kings' approach in Mwalubemba Village aligns—or fails to align—with consumer realities, and what improvements are necessary to ensure advertising not only informs but also influences rural consumer choices.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991, is highly relevant for assessing the influence of advertising on consumer behaviour. TPB suggests that behaviour is driven by behavioural intentions, which are in turn influenced by three factors:

- Attitude Toward the Behaviour: This refers to the consumer's positive or negative evaluation of engaging in the behaviour (e.g., purchasing a product).
- Subjective Norms: These are the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behaviour.
- Perceived Behavioural Control: This reflects the consumer's perception of their ability to perform the behaviour, considering external constraints or facilitators.

TPB will help evaluate how different advertising methods (radio, billboards, community events) shape consumer attitudes towards Trade Kings' products. By understanding how these methods affect attitudes, we can determine their effectiveness in influencing consumer behaviour. It will help analyse how different advertising channels affect consumer intentions. It provides a framework for understanding how exposure to various types of advertising impacts consumer perceptions and intentions to purchase.

Additionally, according to TPB, increased consumer awareness, driven by effective advertising, can lead to favourable attitudes and stronger behavioural intentions. This theory will help assess how well Trade Kings' advertising increases product awareness and its subsequent effect on consumer attitudes. TPB directly addresses how advertising influences purchasing decisions through changes in consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. It provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how advertising can shape behavioural intentions and, ultimately, purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, TPB integrates multiple factors that influence behaviour, making it suitable for analysing the complex interplay between advertising and

consumer behaviour. It focuses on understanding and predicting consumer intentions, which are key to understanding purchasing behaviour. Most importantly, TPB can be adapted to different cultural and regional contexts, making it suitable for studying consumer behaviour in a rural setting like Mwalubemba Village.

With limited research in rural settings, TPB allow for an exploration of how advertising influences behaviour in rural settings, where traditional and modern advertising methods intersect. It helps analyse how integrated advertising strategies impact consumer behaviour, which is essential for Trade Kings’ multifaceted approach.

TPB provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how advertising influences consumer behaviour through changes in attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. TPB’s focus on behavioural intentions aligns well with the objectives of assessing advertising methods, channels, consumer awareness, and purchasing decisions. It offers valuable insights into the mechanisms by which advertising affects consumer behaviour, particularly in the context of rural areas like Mwalubemba Village.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study aimed to illustrate how different dimensions of advertising impact consumer behaviour in a rural context, specifically focusing on Trade Kings Zambia Limited’s operations in Mwalubemba Village. The framework integrates theoretical perspectives with practical aspects of advertising strategies and their effects on consumer awareness and purchasing decisions.

The conceptual framework for this study included the following components:

The conceptual framework for the study encompassed several key components that interact to influence consumer behaviour in Mwalubemba Village.

Firstly, the framework addressed Advertising Methods, which include various channels and approaches used by Trade Kings Zambia Limited. Traditional media, such as radio and billboards, along with community events, are integral to the advertising strategy, particularly in rural settings. Although digital media, including social media platforms, plays a role, its impact is less pronounced in rural areas due to limited digital infrastructure. Community-based marketing, which involves local sponsorships and grassroots activities, is also a significant component, reflecting the importance of engaging directly with the local population.

Secondly, the framework examined Consumer Behaviour, focusing on several dimensions. Intention to use refers to a consumer’s willingness or planned behaviour toward purchasing and using Trade Kings’ products after being exposed to advertising. It acts as a bridge between advertising strategies and actual consumer purchasing behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The concept is rooted in the Theory of Planned Behaviour, where intention is a strong predictor of actual behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010). Finally, Purchasing Decisions were considered, highlighting how advertising influences the likelihood of consumers deciding to buy Trade Kings’ products.

Lastly, the framework incorporated Influencing Factors that affect the effectiveness of advertising. Advertising Channels explore how different media channels perform in rural settings and their relative effectiveness. Cultural Relevance underscores the importance of tailoring advertising messages to resonate with local cultural norms and values, which can significantly impact consumer behaviour. Additionally, Accessibility examined the effects of limited digital infrastructure on the overall effectiveness of advertising strategies, considering how the availability of media channels influences advertising outcomes.

This conceptual framework was grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which suggests that behaviour is influenced by:

- Attitudes towards the Behaviour: How advertising affects consumers’ attitudes towards Trade Kings’ products.
- Subjective Norms: The influence of community and social norms on consumer behaviour.
- Perceived Behavioural Control: The extent to which consumers feel they have control over purchasing decisions influenced by advertising.

This conceptual framework for this study on assessing the extent to which advertising influences consumer behaviour for Trade Kings Zambia Limited in Mwalubemba Village included a structured approach to understanding the relationships between various advertising strategies and consumer outcomes. This framework distinguished between independent and dependent variables to elucidate how advertising methods impact consumer behaviour. Figure below shows conceptual framework.

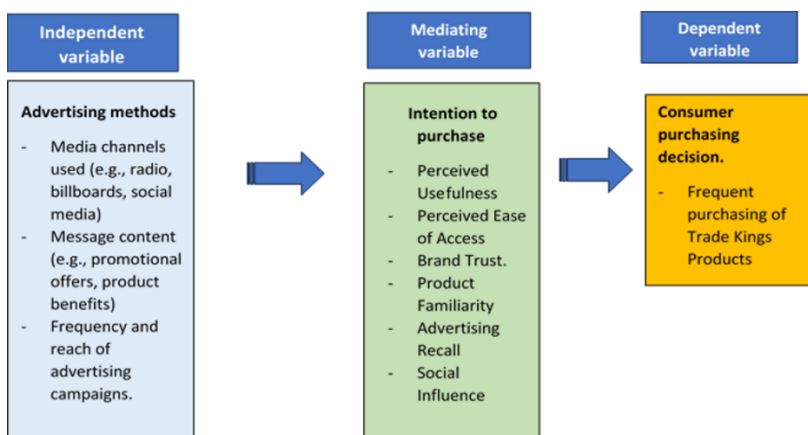


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Consumer Behaviour (Source: Author,2025).

The conceptual framework for this study was grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), a psychological model that explains how human actions are guided by behavioural intentions, which in turn are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. This framework was particularly relevant to understanding the impact of advertising strategies on consumer behaviour, as it allowed for a comprehensive

analysis of how these strategies shape consumer attitudes and decisions.

Advertising Methods as Independent Variable

At the core of this framework are the advertising methods employed by Trade Kings Zambia Limited in Mwalubemba Village. These methods, which include various media channels, message content, and the frequency of campaigns, are designed to influence consumer attitudes toward Trade Kings' products. For instance, by highlighting the benefits and unique features of their products, these advertisements aim to create positive attitudes, making consumers more inclined to purchase.

Moreover, these advertising strategies also work to establish and reinforce subjective norms. For example, endorsements from respected community figures or testimonies from peers can create a sense of social approval, making it more likely that individuals will feel a normative pressure to buy Trade Kings products.

Finally, the advertising methods are intended to enhance perceived behavioural control. This could be achieved by ensuring that products are perceived as easily accessible or by reducing perceived barriers to purchase, such as cost or availability.

Intention to purchase as a Mediating Variable

Intention to purchase plays a critical role in bridging the gap between advertising efforts and actual consumer purchasing behaviour. Rooted in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), intention to purchase reflects a consumer's readiness and willingness to adopt a product after being exposed to marketing communications. Advertising strategies, such as promotional campaigns, branding, and persuasive messaging, shape consumer perceptions, which in turn influence their intention to use a product (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010).

Several factors contribute to intention to purchase such as perceived usefulness, or the extent to which a consumer believes a product will meet their needs, strongly affects purchasing intentions (Davis, 1989). Additionally, perceived ease of access, which refers to how easily consumers can obtain the product, enhances their likelihood of purchase (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). Brand trust, built through consistent messaging and quality assurance, strengthens consumer confidence in using the product (Ha and Perks, 2005).

Advertising recall is another key determinant of intention to purchase, as memorable and engaging advertisements increase consumer recognition and consideration of a product (Keller, 2008). Product familiarity, which grows with repeated exposure to advertising, further supports intention formation (Alba and Hutchinson, 2000). Social influence also plays a role, as recommendations from family, peers, and community members reinforce purchasing intentions (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

Perceived affordability influences consumer intention by shaping their belief in the product's value for money (Zeithaml, 1988). Likewise, advertising credibility, or the degree to which consumers find promotional messages trustworthy, strengthens the likelihood of product adoption (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Emotional appeal in advertising, such as storytelling or nostalgia, enhances engagement and deepens consumer attachment to the brand, fostering stronger intentions to use (Batra and Ray, 1986).

Consumer attitude toward advertising also affects intention to purchase, as positive perceptions of marketing efforts translate into greater willingness to purchase the advertised product (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). In the context of Trade Kings Zambia Limited, understanding these influencing factors can help refine advertising strategies to effectively drive consumer intentions, particularly in rural areas where traditional advertising methods may have varied impacts. By recognizing intention to purchase as a mediating variable, companies can better tailor their marketing approaches to enhance consumer responsiveness and maximize return on investment.

Consumer Purchasing Decisions as the Dependent Variable

The outcome in this conceptual framework is the actual purchasing decisions made by consumers in Mwalubemba Village. According to the TPB, the likelihood of a consumer deciding to purchase a product is determined by their intention, which is influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. If the advertising strategies are effective, they will have positively shaped these three components, leading to a higher probability of consumers purchasing Trade Kings products.

3 Research Methodology and Design

This study adopted a concurrent mixed methods research design, a methodological approach that allows for the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, which are then analysed independently and merged during interpretation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). This design was selected because it supports triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility of findings by validating quantitative results with qualitative insights (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). It was particularly suited for this study, which aimed to assess both the reach and influence of Trade Kings Zambia Limited's advertising strategies on consumer behaviour in Mwalubemba Village. This study population of 263 respondents were considered who are found in the village of Mwalubemba as identified from the village register, including Trade Kings product consumers from Mwalubemba Village. The sample size of consumers for this study was a total of 159 household heads and it was calculated through the Yamane's formula with a 95% confidence level, and a margin of error (confidence interval) of +/- 5 % was used (Yamane, 1967). The sample size will facilitate the collection of quantitative data.

The formula is: $n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$.

Where, n = sample size N = Population size

E = Acceptable magnitude of error

Confidence level = 95%; E = 0.05, p = 0.5, N = 159

Therefore; $n = 263 / (1 + 263(0.05)^2)$

The Focus Group Discussion guide was used to collect qualitative data. The FGD comprised of 2 groups per meeting with 8 participants. This helped to provide a platform to adequately capture the experiences and perceptions of the households in detail.

In addition, a Key Informant Interview (KII) guide was used to collect qualitative data. The KII was conducted with the Marketing lead Trade Kings to explore their expert perspectives on the advertising methods employed by them, the challenges of rural advertising, and their observations on consumer responses. In addition, retailers were also interviewed to get perceptive over their experiences. A structured questionnaire was developed and

administered to 159 randomly selected residents of Mwalubemba Village. Out of 159 targeted participants only 155 responded. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions, primarily using Likert scales, dichotomous questions (Yes/No), and multiple-choice questions to gather quantitative data on consumer awareness, exposure to advertisements, and purchasing behaviours. Structured questions are effective for gathering large amounts of data in a relatively short time. By using standardized questions, responses can be quantified, allowing for the statistical analysis needed to evaluate the extent of advertising effectiveness (Bryman, 2016). Quantitative Data was analysed using STATA version 16 and excel. Descriptive statistics summarised the data, while inferential statistics will assess the impact of advertising methods on consumer behaviour. On the other hand, qualitative data from interviews was transcribed and analysed using inductive thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to advertising effectiveness and consumer responses.

4 Findings

4.1 Objective 1: To explore the current advertising methods used by trade kings in Mwalubemba village

Figure 2 below shows that 79% of the respondents in Mwalubemba indicate that they were aware of the advertising methods used by Trade kings according to Figure 2 while almost 21% indicated that they were not aware.

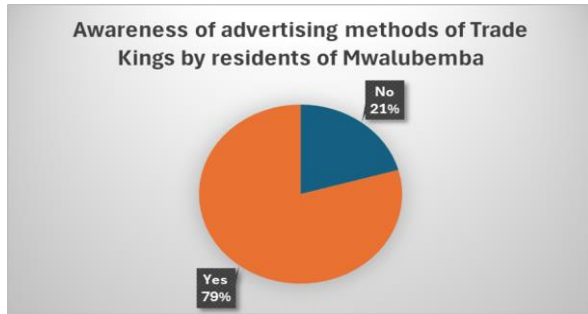


Figure 2: Advertising Methods

In Table 1 below shows the level of awareness of Mwalubemba respondents on the advertising methods used by Trade Kings. The findings revealed that the commonest type of advertising methods known by respondents of Mwalubemba was the use of radio advertisement representing 42% and this was followed by respondents who indicated that Television commercials were common representing 21%. Meanwhile 8% of the respondents mentioned print media and social media post as one of the advertising methods used by Trade Kings. 16% of the respondents indicated instore promotions.

Table 1: Awareness of Trade Kings advertising methods by residents of Mwalubemba

Types of advertising methods	Freq.	Percent
Billboards	8	5%
Radio ads	65	42%
Television Commercials	33	21%
Social media posts	12	8%
Print media	12	8%
Instore Promotions	25	16%
Total	155	100

Table 2. shows a cross tabulation of the types of advertising methods and the frequency of encounter of the advertising methods. According to Table 2, the respondents in the category “Frequent” and knew radio ads as a method used by Trade Kings accounted for 50% of the respondents. On the other hand, the respondents in the category “Very frequent” and new Television commercial as a method used by Trade Kings for advertising was significant representing 33%.

Table 2: Cross tabulation of types of advertising methods and frequency of encounter of the advertising methods

Types of advertising methods	Encounter with trade kings advertising methods					Total
	Very freq	Frequent	Occasiona	Rarely	Never	
Billboards	3 6.67	1 1.82	4 11.11	0 0.00	0 0.00	8 5.16
Radio ads	14 31.11	21 38.18	18 50.00	7 77.78	5 50.00	65 41.94
Television Commercial	15 33.33	11 20.00	6 16.67	0 0.00	1 10.00	33 21.29
Social media posts	4 8.89	4 7.27	2 5.56	0 0.00	2 20.00	12 7.74
Print media	2 4.44	6 10.91	2 5.56	2 22.22	0 0.00	12 7.74
Instore Promotions	7 15.56	12 21.82	4 11.11	0 0.00	2 20.00	25 16.13
Total	45 100.00	55 100.00	36 100.00	9 100.00	10 100.00	155 100.00

According to the research findings in Figure 3, radio and store displays were the most popular promotional methods employed by Trade Kings that Mwalubemba inhabitants were aware of, accounting for 34% and 19% of the total. Facebook received 11%, while television received 19%. At 3%,

billboards were the least familiar kind of advertisement among Mwalubemba locals.

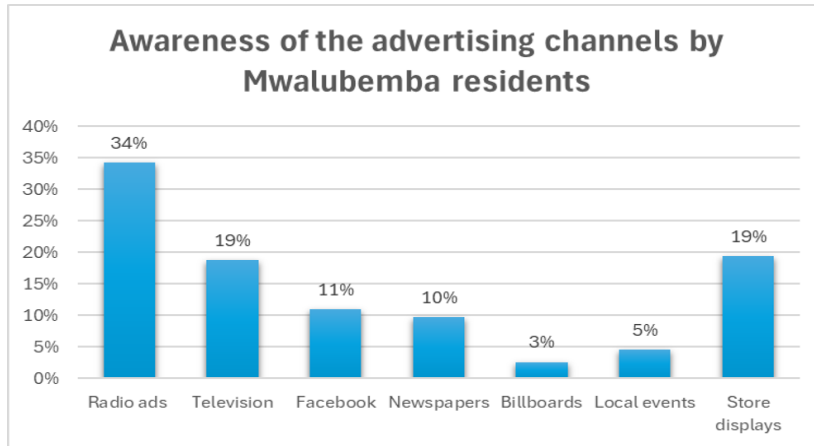


Figure 3: Mwalubemba residents' awareness of the advertising channels used by Trade Kings

4.2 Objective 2: To determine the effectiveness of advertising channels employed by Trade Kings Zambia Ltd in Mwalubemba village

Figure 4 portrays the advertising methods used by Trade Kings that resident of Mwalubemba mentioned that they found to be effective. Radio advertisement scored the highest representing 27% followed by Television commercials representing 23%. The use of social media scored 20% while print media and billboards scored 11% and 12% respectively. Promotions were the lowest representing 6%.

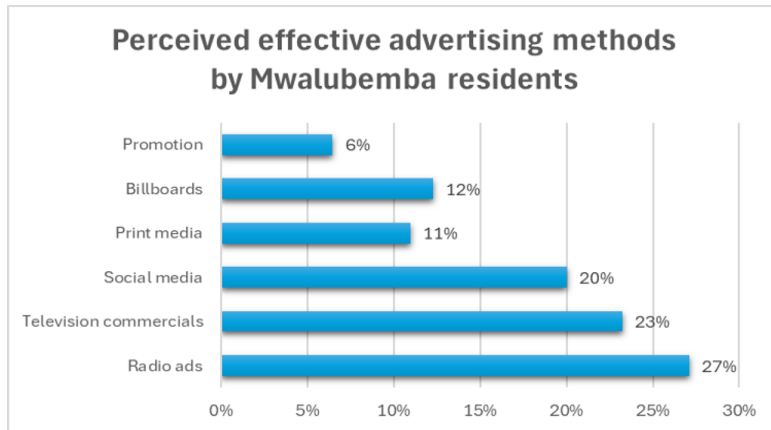


Figure 4: Advertising channels by Trade Kings that are perceived to be effective by residents of Mwalubemba.

The research findings, according to Figure 4, revealed that 31% of the respondents were “Very familiar” with Trade Kings products. In contrast, 30% of respondents fell in the category of “Somewhat familiar” and 23% were in the category of “Heard brand but not familiar”. The least category was “not familiar at all” representing 17% according to Figure 5.

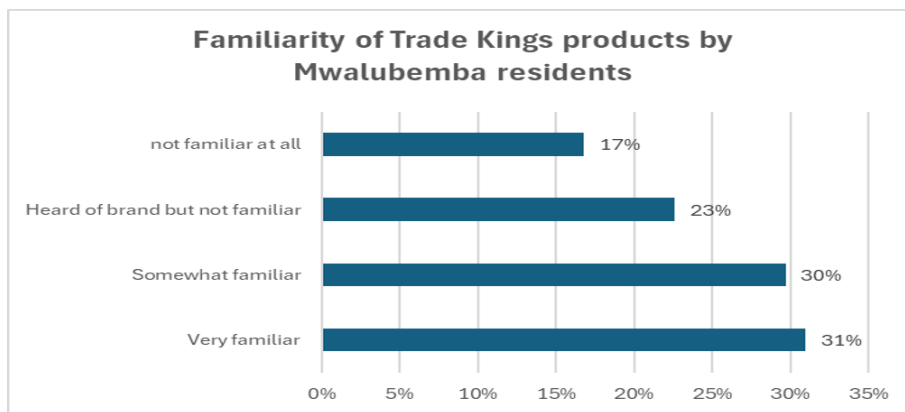


Figure 5: Familiarity with Trade Kings products by residents of Mwalubemba

The research findings, according to Figure 6, revealed that most of the respondents first learned of the Trade Kings products through advertisements, representing 49%, while 23% learned about Trade Kings products through word of mouth and 21% through social media. Only 7% of the respondents

mentioned that they first learned about Trade Kings products through in-store experience.

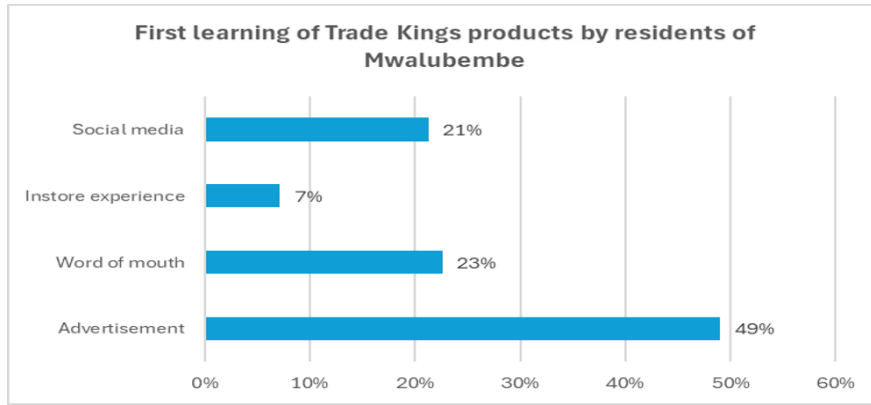


Figure 6: First learning of Trade Kings products by residents of Mwalubemba

Table 3 shows the awareness levels of Trade Kings products by residents of Mwalubemba village. Boom powder was regarded as the commonest product known by residents of Mwalubemba representing 14% according to the research findings in Table 3. The least was Milk it representing 3%.

Table 3: Awareness of the specific products Trade Kings products by Mwalubemba Residents

Products of Trade Kings you are aware of	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Banja	14	9.03	9.03
Boom powder	22	14.19	23.23
Boom sta soft	14	9.03	32.26
Hand sanitiser	13	8.39	40.65
Fruiticana drinks	13	8.39	49.03
Nyama soya chunks	11	7.10	56.13
Chibwantu	13	8.39	64.52
Milk	5	3.23	67.74
Boom detergent	17	10.97	78.71
Boom paste	22	14.19	92.90
Aloha washing powder	11	7.10	100.00
Total	155	100.00	

4.3 Objective 3: To identify advertising strategies that predict the consumer purchasing decisions of Trade Kings Zambia Ltd in Mwalubemba village.

According to Figure 7, the research findings showed that many of the residents of Mwalubemba, representing 43%, fell in the category of “Yes, significantly”, followed by those in the category of “Yes, somewhat”, accounting for 35% of respondents stating that advertising influenced their purchasing decision. Those in the category of “No, not much” represented 8%, while those in the category of “Not at all” represented 13% of the respondents.

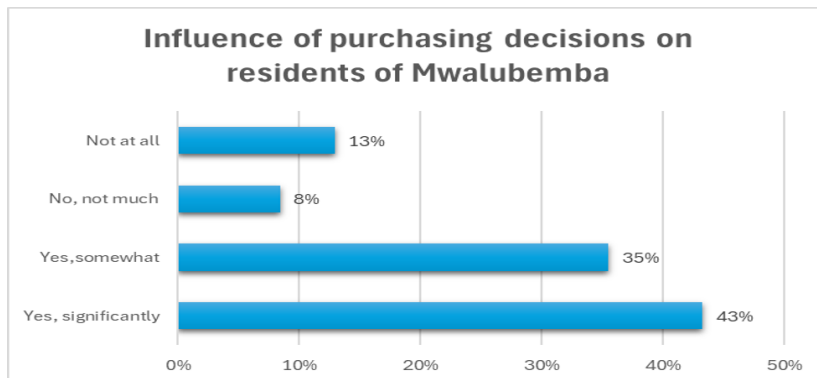


Figure 7: Influence of purchasing decisions on residents of Mwalubemba

The research findings showed that most of the participants were influenced to buy Trade Kings products because of the benefits represented by 39% while 27% indicated that they were influenced by the affordable price according to Figure 8. Those who indicated that they were influenced by the brand reputation represented 23%. The results further showed that 8% were influenced by the emotional appeal that the Trade Kings products have on them. Only 3% mentioned that they were influenced to purchase Trade Kings products because a celebrity had endorsed it.

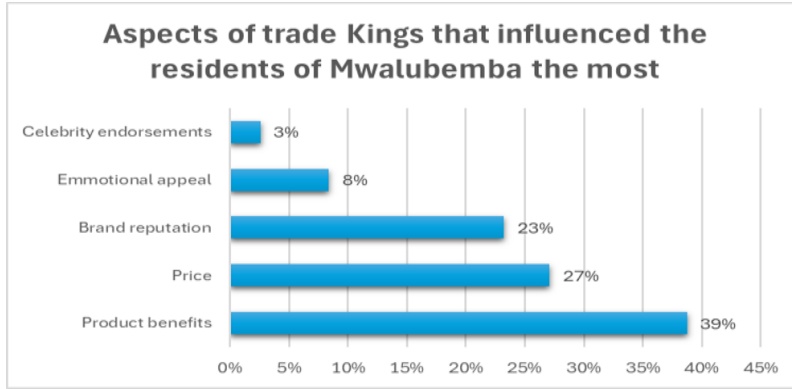


Figure 8: Aspects of trade Kings that influenced the residents of Mwalubemba the most

According to Figure 8, the research findings revealed that more than half of the respondents mentioned that they are very likely to purchase Trad Kings products because of their advertisement, representing 55% of the respondents. This was followed by those in the category “Likely”, representing 34%. those following in the categories of “Neutral”, “Unlikely”, and “Very unlikely” scored 5%, 3% and 3 %, respectively.

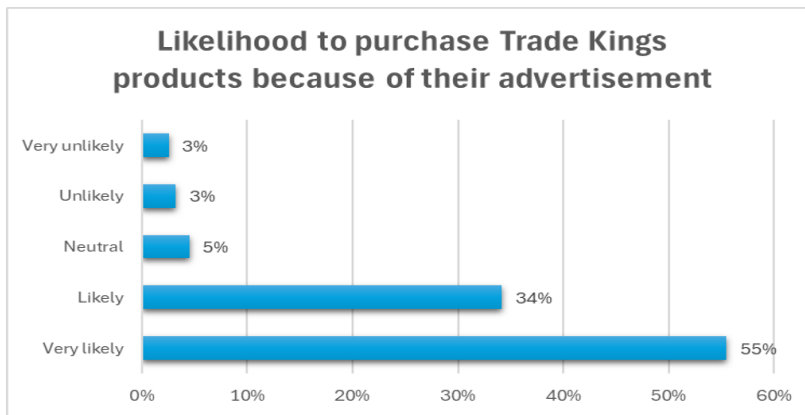


Figure 9: Likelihood to purchase Trade Kings products because of their advertisement

Table 4 below shows a Cross Tabulation of advertising channels and likelihood to purchase Trade kings’ products because of their advertising. The highest number of participants who indicated that they are very likely to purchase Trade Kings products because of advertising through the radio accounted for 35%. The least was in Billboards which represented 0%.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of advertising channels and likelihood to purchase trade king’s products because of their advertising.

Advertising channels	Likelihood to purchase tradekings products as a result of their advertising					Total
	Very like	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	Very unli	
Radio	14 35.00	15 30.61	12 30.77	3 23.08	9 64.29	53 34.19
Television	7 17.50	10 20.41	9 23.08	2 15.38	1 7.14	29 18.71
Facebook	5 12.50	3 6.12	5 12.82	4 30.77	0 0.00	17 10.97
Newspapers	3 7.50	6 12.24	4 10.26	1 7.69	1 7.14	15 9.68
Billboards	0 0.00	1 2.04	2 5.13	0 0.00	1 7.14	4 2.58
Local events	1 2.50	3 6.12	1 2.56	1 7.69	1 7.14	7 4.52
Store displays	10 25.00	11 22.45	6 15.38	2 15.38	1 7.14	30 19.35
Total	40 100.00	49 100.00	39 100.00	13 100.00	14 100.00	155 100.00

4.4 Regression analysis of purchasing decision on advertising effectiveness, awareness levels, types of advertisement and advertising frequency

According to Table 6 below the model has 155 observations, with four independent variables: advertising effectiveness, awareness level, types of advertisement, and advertising frequency. The F-statistic (0.97, p = 0.4274) indicates that the model is not statistically significant, meaning the independent variables do not collectively explain variations in purchase decisions. The R-squared value (0.0251) suggests that only 2.51% of the variance in purchase decisions is explained by the model, while the Adjusted R-squared (-0.0009) implies that, after adjusting for the number of predictors, the explanatory power of the model is virtually zero. The Root Mean Squared Error (1.2174) indicates that the model's predictions deviate from actual

purchase decisions by an average of 1.22 units.

The regression equation derived from the model is:

$$\text{Purchase Decision} = 2.40143 - 0.0568(\text{Advertising Effectiveness}) - 0.0510(\text{Awareness Level}) - 0.0190(\text{Types of Advertisement}) + 0.1393(\text{Advertising Frequency})$$

Each coefficient represents the expected change in purchase decision for a one-unit increase in the respective predictor, holding all other factors constant.

Advertising Effectiveness (-0.0568, p = 0.368): A one-unit increase in advertising effectiveness results in a slight decrease in purchase decision by 0.0568 units, though this effect is statistically insignificant (p > 0.05). This suggests that the perceived effectiveness of advertisements does not strongly influence purchase behaviour.

Awareness Level (-0.0510, p = 0.833): An increase in consumer awareness of Trade Kings products is associated with a minor decrease in purchase decision by 0.0510 units. However, the high p-value (0.833) suggests this effect is negligible and not statistically significant.

Types of Advertisement (-0.0190, p = 0.719): The specific type of advertising used does not have a meaningful impact on purchase decision, as indicated by the small negative coefficient and high p-value (0.719). This suggests that consumers may not differentiate significantly between advertisement formats in their purchasing choices.

Advertising Frequency (0.1393, p = 0.112): Unlike the other variables, advertising frequency has a positive relationship with purchase decision, meaning that increasing the frequency of advertisements tends to increase consumer purchases. However, with a p-value of 0.112, this relationship is not statistically significant at the 5% level, though it shows a potential trend that could be further explored.

Constant Term (2.4014, p < 0.001): The constant represents the baseline purchase decision when all independent variables are zero. The significant and positive value (2.4014, p < 0.001) suggests that even in the absence of advertising factors, consumers still exhibit a moderate likelihood of purchasing Trade Kings products, potentially due to other influences like brand loyalty or word-of-mouth.

Table 5: Regression analysis of purchasing decision on advertising effectiveness, awareness levels, types of advertisement and advertising frequency.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	155
Model	5.73363442	4	1.43340861	F(4, 150)	=	0.97
Residual	222.305075	150	1.48203384	Prob > F	=	0.4274
				R-squared	=	0.0251
				Adj R-squared	=	-0.0009
				Root MSE	=	1.2174
Total	228.03871	154	1.48077084			

Purchase_decision	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
advertising_effectiveness	-.0567961	.0629384	-0.90	0.368	-.1811563 .0675642
Awareness_level	-.0509737	.2420467	-0.21	0.833	-.5292352 .4272878
Types_advertisement	-.0190276	.0528248	-0.36	0.719	-.1234045 .0853493
Avertising_frequency	.1393327	.0872307	1.60	0.112	-.0330269 .3116924
_cons	2.40143	.4589878	5.23	0.000	1.494513 3.308346

4.5 Qualitative Findings

The findings from both the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) reveal several key insights related to Trade Kings' advertising strategies and their effectiveness in influencing consumer behaviour in Mwalubemba Village. The results are organized under the following themes:

Advertising Reach and Visibility

Sub-theme: Frequency of Exposure The respondents from both FGDs and KIIs indicated high exposure to Trade Kings' advertisements across multiple channels. Most participants acknowledged regular encounters with radio advertisements and physical advertising placements such as billboards and shop posters. A notable number of participants in the FGDs also reported hearing Trade Kings' ads frequently during local radio programs. The frequency and consistency of radio advertising make it a highly effective medium for reaching rural consumers. The use of local languages and familiar voices in the ads further enhances their impact, making the messages more relatable and memorable.

Quotes:

"We hear Trade Kings' ads on the radio at least twice every day, especially during the morning shows." (FGD)

"There are always posters in the shops and walls for most of the shops." (KII)

"The radio is always on in my house, and I hear their ads almost every time I tune in." (KII)

Sub-theme: Advertising Channel Preferences Radio was widely mentioned as the preferred advertising channel due to its extensive reach and daily frequency, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. Billboards were also frequently seen but were noted as less effective compared to the consistent exposure offered by radio. A notable finding was the integration of Trade Kings' advertisements into local radio programs, which are highly popular in Mwalubemba Village. Participants in the FGDs specifically mentioned hearing Trade Kings' ads during these programs, which often feature music, news, and community announcements. The seamless integration of advertisements into these programs ensures that they are not perceived as intrusive but rather as a natural part of the listening experience.

Quotes:

"I always hear their ads during my favourite radio show. It's like they know when I'm listening." (FGD)

"The ads come on during the programs I like, so I don't mind them. Sometimes I even sing along to the jingles." (KII)

"Radio is where I mostly hear about Trade Kings. The message sticks more because I hear it often." (FGD)

"The billboard is only useful if I'm driving near it, but I forget it soon after." (KII)

The Key informant from Trade Kings identified a mix of traditional, community-based, and digital advertising methods used by Trade Kings in Mwalubemba Village. These include:

Radio Advertising: Regular advertisements on local radio stations, broadcast in local languages.

Outdoor Advertising: Posters strategically placed.

Community Engagement: Sponsorship of local events and grassroots marketing initiatives.

Digital Media: Limited use of social media platforms like Facebook.

The KII explained:

"We use a mix of traditional and modern advertising methods. Radio is our primary channel because it reaches a wide audience, even in remote areas. We also use billboards, posters, and community events to engage directly with consumers." (KII)

Credibility and Trust in Advertising Channels

Sub-theme: Perceived Trustworthiness of Media Both FGDs and KIIs revealed that participants generally trusted radio more than other media channels for product information. The local language and familiar voices in radio ads created a sense of trust among consumers, making the ads feel more personal and credible. Billboards, on the other hand, were often viewed with scepticism.

Quotes:

"I trust the radio ads the most because the announcers are familiar voices, and they sound like they are from here." (FGD)

"Billboards seem like just big advertisements, but there's no conversation. It feels a bit like they just want our attention, not to really give us information." (FGD).

Product Awareness and Familiarity

Sub-theme: Level of Knowledge About the Product Range Participants from both FGDs and KIIs showed significant awareness of popular products like Boom detergent and Zoono soap. However, some consumers were less aware of other products from Trade Kings, such as hygienix soaps and Amazon sweets. The most common sources of product knowledge were radio ads and in-store promotions.

Quotes:

"I'm familiar with the detergent and soap, but I didn't know they made Pine Gel." (FGD)

"I learned about their pine gel through an ad on the radio, but I didn't realize they have so many products until I visited a store." (KII)

Trade Kings representatives reported high levels of consumer awareness of their products in Mwalubemba Village. A sales consultant noted:

"Consumer awareness of our products is very high, especially for our flagship products like Boom detergent and Zoono soap. Our consistent advertising efforts have ensured that our brand remains top-of-mind for consumers." (KII)

Sub-theme: Influence of Advertising on Awareness The advertisements have played a major role in increasing the awareness of specific products, particularly new or less-promoted ones. Many participants indicated that advertisements in various channels have filled gaps in their product knowledge.

Quotes:

"I had no idea about their juices until I heard about them on the radio. Now I buy them too." (FGD)

"Their ads always mention something new, and it makes me go into the shop to check it out." (KII)

The Trade Kings representatives highlighted several advertising strategies that influence purchasing decisions:

- Culturally Relevant Messaging: Advertisements in local languages.
- Consistent Brand Visibility: Outdoor advertising and in-shop promotions.
- Community-Based Marketing: Local events and sponsorships.
- A sales consultant indicated that:

"Our ads are designed to resonate with the local culture and lifestyle. We use local languages and relatable scenarios to make our messages more impactful. Consistent visibility through billboards and posters also reinforces our brand presence." (KII).

Emotional Connection to Advertisements

Sub-theme: Emotional Appeal of Ads A recurrent theme was that emotional appeals in the advertisements seemed to resonate deeply with consumers. Local voices and community-centric messaging were especially impactful. Many consumers felt a stronger connection to brands that felt embedded in their daily lives.

Quotes:

"When they use local voices, I feel like the company understands us more." (FGD)

"It feels good to hear a message that speaks directly to us, like the one on the local radio station." (KII)

Sub-theme: Cultural Relevance Participants mentioned that advertisements reflecting their lifestyle, aspirations, and needs had a significant emotional impact. Ads that used relatable scenarios, such as promoting family care and household savings, strengthened connections to the brand.

Quotes:

"Seeing an ad that shows how a product helps take care of the family makes me feel more connected to it." (FGD)

"They know what we need. The ads feature families like ours, not just fancy actors." (KII).

Consumer Decision-Making and Behavioural Influence

Sub-theme: Purchase Intent After Exposure to Ads Many respondents cited that they had purchased Trade Kings products after encountering advertisements, particularly those they heard on the radio. Products like detergent and milk it was frequently chosen based on ads heard in the morning programs.

Quotes:

"I bought Boom detergent last month after hearing an ad talking about its stain-fighting power." (FGD)

"I decided to try Trade Kings' margarine when I saw an ad showing how much better it is than other brands." (KII)

Sub-theme: Persuasion Techniques Consumers pointed out that clear, straightforward messaging and demonstrations of product benefits were particularly persuasive. Advertisements that conveyed how the product would benefit them directly tended to motivate their purchase behaviour.

Quotes:

"I like when they tell you directly how the product works and why it's better than the rest." (FGD)

"The ads that show the product in action, like cleaning a tough stain, really made me buy it." (KII).

Effectiveness of Promotional Tactics

Sub-theme: Incentives and Special Offers Many consumers noted that promotional tactics such as discounts or free samples, often announced in ads, had an immediate effect on their purchasing decisions. Special deals during local events were also noted as effective.

Quotes:

"Whenever Trade Kings runs a special offer on detergent, I stock up because the price is right." (FGD)

"I went to an event and got a free sample of their milk. Since then, I always buy it." (KII).

Gaps and Recommendations for Advertising Improvement

Sub-theme: Suggestions for More Engaging Ads Some participants suggested that ads could be more engaging if they featured more localized content or introduced consumer testimonials. They recommended showcasing community success stories linked to using Trade Kings products.

Quotes:

"I would love to see an ad that shows someone from here talking about how they use Trade Kings products in their daily life." (FGD)

"Maybe if the ads showed real people from our village using the products, it would be more believable." (KII)

Key Gaps Identified:

Low Reach of Digital Campaigns: Digital ads are less effective in rural areas due to limited internet access and smartphone usage. This creates a gap in reaching younger consumers who may be more digitally connected.

Lack of Mobile-Friendly Campaigns: While mobile phones are widely used, many consumers in Mwalubemba Village have basic phones without internet access. Trade Kings' digital campaigns do not fully cater to this segment.

Limited Focus on Local Preferences: While Trade Kings' ads are culturally relevant, some participants suggested that they could better reflect local preferences, such as the importance of family care, community values, and practical product benefits.

Over-reliance on Traditional Formats: While radio and billboards are effective, some participants felt that the messaging could be more dynamic and innovative, incorporating storytelling or humour to capture attention.

Sub-theme: Understanding Local Consumer Needs Several participants proposed that Trade Kings could improve its advertising effectiveness by tailoring campaigns more directly to the unique needs and preferences of Mwalubemba residents.

Quotes:

"The ads need to understand that we value for money and quality. Not all of us can afford the fancy products, but we want good products at fair prices." (FGD)

"You could advertise more to fit our budget while still showing how great the products are." (KII).

Community Impact and Social Responsibility

Sub-theme: Community Engagement and Support Many respondents appreciated Trade Kings' involvement in local community initiatives, noting that ads that reflect these efforts (such as sponsoring community events or supporting social causes) strengthened the connection between consumers and the brand.

Quotes:

"I'm more inclined to buy from a company that supports local teams or helps with clean-up activities." (FGD)

"Trade Kings does a lot for the community and that's why building lives is key." (KII)

The findings from the FGDs and KIIs provide valuable insights into how Trade Kings' advertising strategies are perceived and their influence on consumer behaviour. The results highlight the effectiveness of radio advertising, emotional appeal through local connections, and the role of trust and product awareness in shaping purchasing decisions. Based on these findings, while current strategies are successful, there are areas for improvement, particularly in tailoring content to resonate even more with the local community's values and needs.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that 79% of respondents in Mwalubemba Village were aware of Trade Kings Zambia Limited's advertising efforts, indicating a strong advertising presence in the community. Among the channels assessed, radio emerged as the most recognized platform (42%), followed by television (21%) and social media (8%), while billboards and print media registered the lowest visibility. These findings suggest that while Trade Kings employs a multi-channel advertising strategy, the effectiveness and reach of these channels vary considerably, with traditional media clearly outperforming digital and visual platforms in this rural context. This high level of brand visibility aligns with Ngoma and Mumba (2021), who underscored the enduring influence of radio in rural African settings, attributing its effectiveness to low-cost access, linguistic familiarity, and wide audience reach. This finding reinforces the attitude component of TPB, as frequent exposure to advertising—particularly via trusted media like radio—shapes consumer beliefs about product utility and relevance.

The findings revealed that radio was perceived as the most effective channel (27%), followed by television (23%), and social media (20%). Traditional visual formats such as billboards (12%) and print media (11%) were rated less effective, with in-store promotions (6%) registering the lowest impact.

The dominant performance of radio can be interpreted through the lens of Zajonc's (1968) "mere exposure effect," which suggests that repeated exposure to a stimulus such as radio advertisements enhances familiarity and builds preference over time. In Mwalubemba, radio enjoys daily presence in homes and communities, making it a highly repetitive and familiar channel. This frequent exposure not only reinforces brand recall but also builds trust, especially when messaging is localized and linguistically tailored. These findings are consistent with Chisenga and Mulenga (2022), who emphasized that radio is particularly impactful in rural Zambia when content is culturally resonant and contextually relevant.

A major contribution of this study lies in its empirical demonstration of the direct relationship between advertising exposure and consumer purchasing behaviour—a critical linkage that has been underexplored in previous research, particularly in rural African contexts. The findings revealed that 43% of respondents reported that advertising had a significant influence on their purchase decisions, while 35% acknowledged a moderate influence. This indicates that more than three-quarters of rural consumers in Mwalubemba are at least partially swayed by advertising messages, highlighting the strategic importance of tailored, context-specific advertising efforts.

These findings clearly support the attitudinal and control constructs of TPB. Consumers were more likely to purchase products they perceived as useful and affordable reinforcing the role of beliefs and capabilities in determining behavioural intentions. The limited influence of aspirational elements such as celebrity branding also suggests that rural consumers in Mwalubemba are motivated more by rational, value-based assessments than emotional or status-driven appeals, consistent with Kyeremeh (2022) and Maslow's hierarchy of needs in low-income contexts.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In summary, the findings affirm that Trade Kings' advertising strategies have successfully penetrated the Mwalubemba market, particularly through radio. However, there is room for improvement in product-level awareness, visual media engagement, and in-store activation. The study contributes new knowledge by connecting advertising exposure to actual behavioural outcomes in a rural Zambian context, guided by a robust theoretical framework and mixed-method approach. Future interventions should further localize messaging, leverage community events, and consider affordable digital innovations to reach younger and tech-savvy consumers, thereby enhancing both market reach and campaign effectiveness.

5.2 Recommendations

Enhancing Advertising Methods: Trade Kings should increase investment in radio advertising by incorporating local languages, familiar voices, and community-driven content to maximize reach and engagement. Television advertising should focus on prime-time slots and integrate product demonstrations to improve consumer understanding.

Improving Advertising Effectiveness: Strengthening community-based marketing through word-of-mouth campaigns, community influencers, and local testimonials can enhance trust and credibility. Advertisements should emphasize functional and price-related messaging, as affordability and product benefits drive purchasing decisions.

Predicting Consumer Purchasing Decisions: Increasing advertising frequency and consistency across multiple platforms will reinforce brand recall and consumer trust. Local radio should be capitalized on as a trusted medium by incorporating endorsements from community leaders and radio personalities.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that they not aware of any competing financial interests or personal relationships that may have influenced the work described in this document.

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Ethical considerations

The article followed all ethical standards appropriate for this kind of research.

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