

THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISING ON PRODUCT AWARENESS: A CASE STUDY OF MILO BY NESTLÉ NIGERIA PLC, AGBARA, OGUN STATE

***Awoyemi Ayomide Israel, Kehinde Opadeji, Popoola Olusegun Victor**

Espam Formation University, Sacuoba Anavia, Porto-Novo Republic of Benin.

Article Received: 09 June 2026, Article Revised: 29 June 2026, Published on: 19 July 2026

***Corresponding Author: Awoyemi Ayomide Israel**

Espam Formation University, Sacuoba Anavia, Porto-Novo Republic of Benin.

Doi: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.4540>

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of advertising on product awareness using MILO, a cocoa-malt beverage produced by Nestlé Nigeria Plc at its Agbara factory complex, as the case. The analysis distinguishes advertising exposure across television, digital and social media, sports sponsorship, and point-of-sale promotion, while treating message quality as a complementary determinant of awareness. A cross-sectional survey framework and an ordinary least-squares model are specified for consumers in the Agbara industrial-residential axis. Because verified field responses were not supplied, the empirical section uses a transparent, reproducible synthetic dataset of 240 observations solely to demonstrate how a publishable analysis should be structured. The simulated results show high aided recognition (94.2%) and strong spontaneous recall (70.8%). Digital and social media exposure records the largest standardised association with product awareness ($\beta = 0.457$, $p < 0.001$), followed by television ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.001$), sports sponsorship ($\beta = 0.258$, $p < 0.001$), message quality ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$), and point-of-sale promotion ($\beta = 0.124$, $p = 0.004$). The model explains 61.5% of the variation in awareness. The findings support an integrated communication strategy in which broad-reach media establish salience, digital content sustains repetition and engagement, and sports-based brand activities strengthen distinctive memory structures. The study recommends channel-specific measurement, consistent creative cues, locally relevant digital content, and ethically responsible advertising to children. Actual field data are required before the manuscript can be submitted as an empirical publication.

KEYWORDS: advertising effectiveness; product awareness; brand recall; digital advertising; sports sponsorship; MILO; Nestlé Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is not merely a device for announcing that a product exists. Its first strategic task is to make the brand mentally available when a consumer encounters a relevant purchase or consumption situation. In fast-moving consumer goods, where competing products are often readily available and broadly similar, the probability of consideration depends heavily on whether the consumer can quickly recognise the package, recall the brand name, understand the product promise, and retrieve distinctive associations. Product awareness is therefore a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for preference and purchase. A consumer cannot evaluate a brand that does not enter the consideration set.

The Nigerian beverage market provides a demanding setting for evaluating this process. Consumers face fragmented media use, substantial price sensitivity, rapid growth in mobile and social platforms, and persistent exposure to television, outdoor, retail, event, and influencer communication. Consequently, advertising effectiveness should not be assessed solely by a campaign's visibility. It should be assessed by whether different exposures build unaided recall, aided recognition, knowledge of product attributes, and top-of-mind salience. Digital media may provide repetition and interaction; television may provide broad reach and audiovisual memory cues; point-of-sale displays may trigger recognition near purchase; and sponsorship may connect the brand with culturally meaningful activities.

MILO is a suitable case because Nestlé Nigeria identifies it as one of its major beverage brands and reports that its Agbara factory complex includes MILO and MILO ready-to-drink plants. The company also describes MILO as the market leader in Nigeria's cocoa-malt beverage category and attributes part of its 2024 performance to brand-building activities. In the same year, the MILO sports development programme reportedly reached more than 7,200 schools and over seven million children. At the same time, the long-running secondary-school basketball championship continued as a visible brand platform (Nestlé Nigeria Plc, 2025). These disclosures do not prove advertising causality, but they establish a strong practical basis for examining how integrated communication may sustain product awareness. The weakness in many student studies on advertising is elementary: they confuse awareness with patronage, treat all advertising channels as one variable, and report percentages without a defensible analytical model. This paper avoids that muddle. It defines product awareness as a multidimensional cognitive outcome, distinguishes among principal communication

channels, controls for consumer characteristics, and estimates the relative associations of these channels with awareness. The purpose is to determine whether advertising exposure is positively related to MILO product awareness and to identify which channels are most influential within an integrated campaign.

The specific objectives are to: (i) measure consumers' recall, recognition and product knowledge concerning MILO; (ii) assess exposure to television, digital/social media, sports sponsorship and point-of-sale advertising; (iii) estimate the effect of each channel and perceived message quality on awareness; and (iv) derive managerial recommendations for Nestlé Nigeria's brand communication in and beyond Agbara.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Product awareness and advertising response

Brand awareness refers to the strength of a brand's presence in memory and is commonly expressed through recognition and recall. Recognition asks whether consumers can confirm prior exposure when the brand is presented; recall asks whether the brand can be retrieved from memory when the product category or consumption need is provided. Keller (1993) positions awareness as a fundamental component of customer-based brand equity because it affects the formation and strength of brand associations. Aaker (1991) similarly argues that awareness can create familiarity, signal substance and anchor other associations.

Awareness matters because consumers often use familiar brand names as simplifying heuristics. Macdonald and Sharp (2000) demonstrate that awareness can affect choice even when consumers confront competing information. Huang and Sarigöllü (2012) also link awareness to consumer preference and market outcomes. However, awareness should not be mistaken for automatic purchase. It increases the chance of consideration; price, availability, taste, household habits, perceived nutrition and competitive activity still affect the final decision.

The hierarchy-of-effects tradition explains why awareness normally precedes later responses. Lavidge and Steiner (1961) distinguish cognitive, affective and behavioural stages: advertising first makes the consumer aware and knowledgeable, then influences liking and preference, and finally supports conviction and action. The sequence is not mechanically linear across all markets, but it remains useful because it prevents researchers from claiming sales effects when they have measured only exposure or attitude.

2.2 Advertising channels and message quality

Television combines motion, sound, demonstrations, characters and repeated brand cues. As a household beverage, it can signal consumption occasions and foster shared family familiarity. Its limitations include declining attention among some younger viewers and the difficulty of isolating its exposure from other channels. Digital and social media offer more precise targeting, rapid repetition, interaction and measurable engagement. Dwivedi et al. (2021) observe that digital and social marketing can improve awareness and sales, although intrusive execution and negative electronic word-of-mouth can undermine effectiveness. Wang et al. (2022) further show that contextual relevance and interaction can improve advertising attitudes and purchase intention.

Sponsorship is not a peripheral decoration when it is strategically congruent with the brand. A sustained association between MILO and school sports may provide repeated contact with children, parents, teachers, participants, spectators and media audiences. The mechanism is associative learning: the brand becomes linked with energy, activity, competition and achievement. Yet sponsorship should be measured as communication exposure, not simply praised. The critical question is whether consumers remember the brand and its product cues, rather than the event alone.

Point-of-sale communication operates close to the purchase decision. Shelf strips, branded displays, sampling, retailer visibility and promotional packs can convert weak memory into immediate recognition. Its reach is narrower than mass media, but its proximity to choice gives it practical value. Message quality cuts across all channels. An advertisement that is memorable but unclear may produce only shallow recognition, while an informative but dull message may fail to secure attention. Credibility, consistency, relevance, distinctiveness and ease of comprehension are therefore expected to strengthen the effect of exposure.

Empirical work increasingly treats awareness as an intervening mechanism between advertising and behaviour. Zhao et al. (2022) found that advertising predicted consumer behaviour and brand loyalty through brand awareness, with perceived quality conditioning the relationship. The implication is straightforward: more exposure is not enough. Advertising must build a clear, credible memory structure around the brand.

2.3 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

This study combines the hierarchy-of-effects model with customer-based brand equity theory. Advertising stimuli generate attention and cognitive processing; repeated, credible and relevant cues strengthen memory; and stronger memory improves recall, recognition and

knowledge. Consumer characteristics and previous product use may influence this process and are therefore treated as controls. Figure 1 presents the analytical logic.

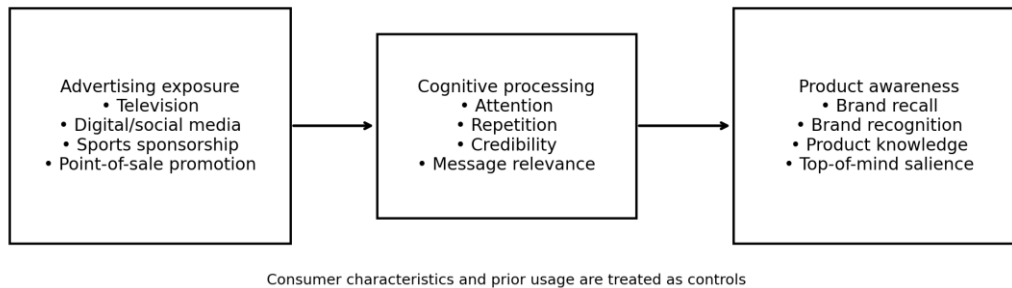


Figure 1. Conceptual framework linking advertising exposure to MILO product awareness.

H1: Overall advertising exposure has a positive and statistically significant effect on MILO product awareness.

H1a: Television advertising exposure positively affects MILO product awareness.

H1b: Digital and social media advertising exposure positively affects MILO product awareness.

H1c: Exposure to MILO sports sponsorship positively affects product awareness.

H1d: Point-of-sale promotional exposure positively affects MILO product awareness.

H2: Perceived message quality positively affects MILO product awareness after controlling for channel exposure and respondent characteristics.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design, population and sampling

A quantitative cross-sectional case-study design is specified. The target population comprises adult consumers who reside, work, study or shop within the Agbara industrial-residential axis of Ogun State and who are familiar with chocolate or malt beverages. In an actual field implementation, a multistage procedure should select commercial clusters, residential areas, transport nodes and retail outlets, followed by systematic intercept sampling. Respondents younger than 18 should not be surveyed without appropriate parental consent and ethics approval.

The model analysis uses 240 synthetic observations. This sample size is adequate for the illustrative multiple-regression specification and allows subgroup description without

pretending to represent the entire Nigerian market. The generation protocol sampled demographic categories from stated probabilities, formed channel-exposure scores on five-point scales, generated message-quality and awareness constructs with normally distributed disturbances, and truncated all scale variables to the interval [1, 5]. A random seed of 77 makes the analysis reproducible.

3.2 Measurement and instrument quality

A structured questionnaire would contain four sections: demographics and prior use; frequency of exposure to specific communication channels; perceived quality of advertising messages; and product-awareness indicators. Exposure items are rated from 1 (never/very low) to 5 (very often/very high). Awareness is assessed through spontaneous recall, aided recognition, recognition of visual identity, knowledge of product attributes, and a four-item Likert composite. Content validity should be established through expert review and a pilot survey. Reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 treated as acceptable for exploratory work.

Table 1. Operationalisation of study variables.

Construct	Operational meaning	Measure	Cronbach α
Television exposure	Frequency of seeing MILO television or online video commercials	Single-item frequency	—
Digital/social exposure	Exposure through social media, mobile video, influencers and digital campaigns	Single-item frequency	—
Sports sponsorship	Recognition and exposure through basketball, school sports and sports clinics	Single-item frequency	—
Point-of-sale promotion	Retail displays, sampling, promotional packs and in-store visibility	Single-item frequency	—
Message quality	Memorability, credibility, clarity and relevance	4-item mean	0.867
Product awareness	Recall, recognition, distinctive cues and product knowledge	4-item mean	0.912

3.3 Model specification and analytical procedure

Descriptive statistics summarise respondent characteristics, exposure patterns and awareness indicators. Ordinary least squares estimates the principal model:

$$PA_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TV_i + \beta_2 DIG_i + \beta_3 SPON_i + \beta_4 POS_i + \beta_5 MQ_i + \gamma X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where PA is the product-awareness composite; TV, DIG, SPON and POS represent television, digital/social media, sports sponsorship and point-of-sale exposure; MQ is perceived message quality; X contains age, gender and household-income controls; and ε is

the disturbance term. Standardised coefficients are reported to compare relative effect sizes. Statistical significance is evaluated at the 5% level. The model is associative rather than causal because exposure and awareness are measured simultaneously.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent profile and advertising exposure

Table 2. Illustrative respondent profile and first source of advertising exposure. (n = 240)

Category	Group	Frequency/percentage
Gender	Female	128 (53.3%)
	Male	112 (46.7%)
Age	18–24 years	79 (32.9%)
	25–34 years	85 (35.4%)
	35–44 years	50 (20.8%)
	45 years and above	26 (10.8%)
Main reported first exposure	Television	21.7%
	Digital/social media	44.2%
	Sports sponsorship	20.4%
	Point-of-sale	12.9%
	Other	0.8%

The synthetic profile is concentrated among respondents aged 18–34, a reasonable analytical focus for a beverage brand that communicates through both family and youth-oriented channels. Digital and social media constitute the largest first-reported exposure source (44.2%), followed by television (21.7%) and sports sponsorship (20.4%). This distribution illustrates why an evaluation restricted to traditional mass media would now be incomplete.

4.2 Level of MILO product awareness

Table 3. Illustrative MILO product-awareness indicators.

Awareness indicator	Result	Interpretation
Spontaneous recall of MILO when cocoa-malt beverages are mentioned	70.8%	Strong top-of-mind presence
Aided recognition of the MILO name/package	94.2%	Very high familiarity
Recognition of distinctive logo/visual identity	86.2%	Strong visual memory
Correct identification of at least one promoted benefit/occasion	62.5%	Moderate-to-high product knowledge

Awareness indicator	Result	Interpretation
Composite awareness score	4.04 ± 0.56	High on a five-point scale

Aided recognition (94.2%) exceeds spontaneous recall (70.8%), as theory would predict. Many consumers recognise a familiar package when shown but cannot retrieve the brand unaided. The gap is strategically important: recognition is useful at the shelf, whereas spontaneous recall is more valuable when the consumer initiates a category decision before encountering the pack.

4.3 Regression results and hypothesis tests

Table 4. OLS estimates for product awareness. ($R^2 = 0.615$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.602$; $F = 46.15$, $p < 0.001$)

Predictor	B	SE	β	p-value	Decision
Television exposure	0.260	0.038	0.289	<0.001	Supported
Digital/social exposure	0.275	0.029	0.457	<0.001	Supported
Sports sponsorship exposure	0.165	0.029	0.258	<0.001	Supported
Point-of-sale exposure	0.089	0.030	0.124	0.004	Supported
Message quality	0.184	0.047	0.178	<0.001	Supported
Age	-0.026	0.025	-0.045	0.307	Not significant
Gender	0.072	0.046	0.064	0.121	Not significant
Income category	0.007	0.025	0.012	0.773	Not significant

The model explains 61.5% of the variance in product awareness. Digital and social media exposure has the largest standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.457$), indicating the strongest unique association after other variables are held constant. Television remains substantial ($\beta = 0.289$), confirming that broad-reach audiovisual communication is not obsolete. Sports sponsorship also contributes materially ($\beta = 0.258$), while point-of-sale promotion records a smaller but significant association ($\beta = 0.124$). Message quality remains significant even after controlling for exposure ($\beta = 0.178$), supporting the argument that repetition without clarity and credibility is strategically wasteful. Age, gender and income are not significant in this specification.

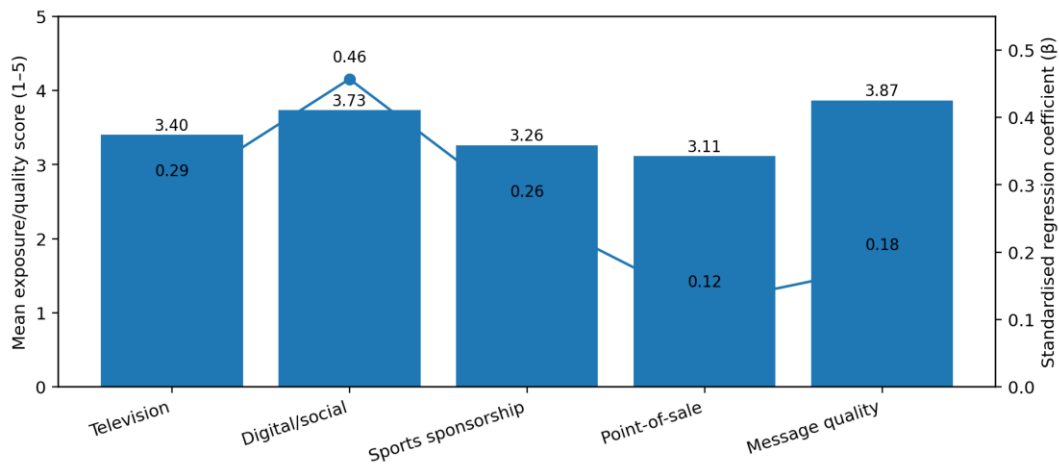


Figure 2. Mean channel exposure and relative regression effects in the illustrative dataset.

5. DISCUSSION

The results support the general proposition that advertising exposure is positively associated with awareness of the MILO product. More importantly, they show why a crude “advertising versus awareness” correlation is inadequate. The channels contribute differently. Digital and social media appear strongest because they combine frequency, portability, short-form video, peer sharing and opportunities for repeated contact. This is consistent with the broader digital-marketing literature, which emphasises improved awareness and engagement when content is relevant and interactive (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022). The result does not mean that digital communication should replace television. It means that digital media increasingly sustains and amplifies the memory structures initially created through mass reach.

Television remains important because MILO is a familiar household brand and the category involves visual demonstrations, family routines and breakfast occasions. The coefficient indicates that television can still create shared salience across demographic groups. The managerial error would be to evaluate television through last-click metrics borrowed from digital campaigns. Its role is broad mental availability, not merely immediate response.

The sponsorship result is especially relevant to the MILO case. Nestlé Nigeria reports extensive school-sports activities and a nationally visible basketball championship. Such platforms can provide experiential repetition that conventional commercials cannot reproduce. The consumer sees the brand on uniforms, courts, event media, school materials and social content, while the event links the brand to activity and achievement. The effect depends on brand-event congruence and consistent visual identification. Sponsoring an event

that audiences remember without remembering the sponsor is expensive vanity, not marketing effectiveness.

Point-of-sale promotion has the smallest channel coefficient, but dismissing it would be foolish. Retail visibility acts near the decision point and may be especially important for consumers whose memory is recognition-based rather than recall-based. Its lower effect may reflect limited reach, uneven execution across outlets, or the fact that it reinforces awareness created elsewhere. Proper interpretation therefore requires complementarity: mass and digital media make the brand retrievable; retail cues help convert that memory into consideration at the shelf.

The message-quality result confirms that media weight alone cannot guarantee learning. Consistent colour, logo, packaging, slogan, product demonstration, and consumption occasion should appear across television, digital, sponsorship, and retail materials. However, consistency should not become creative stagnation. The strategic task is to preserve distinctive assets while adapting format, duration and narrative to each platform. Digital content should be concise and locally relevant; television should provide emotional and audiovisual scale; sponsorship should generate lived experience; and retail media should simplify recognition and choice.

The case also raises ethical obligations. MILO communication frequently intersects with children, schools and sport. Claims about energy, nutrition, performance or healthy development must therefore be accurate, proportionate and compliant with relevant advertising and food-labelling rules. Marketing should not exploit children's limited persuasion knowledge, encourage excessive consumption, or imply that a product alone produces athletic or academic achievement. Responsible advertising is not an optional public-relations gesture; it protects trust, which is itself a component of message effectiveness.

5.1 Managerial implications for Nestlé Nigeria

1. Adopt a channel-role architecture rather than duplicating one advertisement everywhere: television for reach, digital for frequency and interaction, sports platforms for experiential association, and point-of-sale materials for retrieval at purchase.
2. Build an awareness dashboard that separates unaided recall, aided recognition, visual-asset recognition, product knowledge, search interest and campaign reach. Reporting only views or impressions is analytically lazy.
3. Use controlled regional tests. Comparable Ogun State markets can receive different media weights or creative treatments, followed by pre-campaign and post-campaign awareness

measurement. This is superior to asking consumers once whether advertising “influences” them.

4. Protect distinctive brand assets across every execution. The package, MILO name, colour system, and core consumption cues should be identifiable even when a consumer watches without sound or briefly sees a display.

5. Apply strict evidence and ethics review to child-directed and nutrition-related claims, and include parents, schools and regulators in the governance of sports-linked communication.

6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study concludes that advertising is a significant determinant of product awareness when treated as an integrated set of exposures rather than a single, undifferentiated activity. In the illustrative MILO case, digital/social media, television and sports sponsorship show the strongest associations with awareness, while message quality and point-of-sale promotion provide additional explanatory power. The practical lesson is not that one channel wins. Product awareness is cumulative: reach creates familiarity, repetition strengthens retrieval, experience enriches associations, and retail cues activate memory close to purchase.

The limitations are decisive and must not be concealed. The dataset is synthetic; therefore, its coefficients demonstrate method and interpretation, not actual consumer responses. A real study should obtain ethics approval, use probability-based or carefully documented multistage sampling, retain item-level questionnaire data, test construct validity, and report non-response. The cross-sectional design also cannot establish causality, and self-reported exposure is vulnerable to recall bias. Future research should combine brand-tracking surveys with campaign-spend data, digital reach, retail availability, sales, and experimental or quasi-experimental designs. It should also compare urban and rural consumers, parents and non-parents, age groups, and competing cocoa-malt beverage brands.

With those corrections, the study can become a defensible empirical contribution. Without them, presenting simulated numbers as field evidence would be academically unacceptable.

REFERENCES

1. Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalising on the value of a brand name*. Free Press.
2. Buil, I., de Chernatony, L., & Martínez, E. (2013). Examining the role of advertising and sales promotions in brand equity creation. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), 115–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.030>

3. Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., Karjaluoto, H., Kefi, H., Krishen, A. S., Kumar, V., Rahman, M. M., Raman, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., Rowley, J., Salo, J., Tran, G. A., & Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, 102168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168>
4. Huang, R., & Sarigöllu, E. (2012). How brand awareness relates to market outcome, brand equity, and the marketing mix. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(1), 92–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.003>
5. Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualising, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101>
6. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
7. Lavidge, R. J., & Steiner, G. A. (1961). A model for predictive measurements of advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing*, 25(6), 59–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224296102500611>
8. Macdonald, E. K., & Sharp, B. M. (2000). Brand awareness effects on consumer decision making for a common, repeat purchase product: A replication. *Journal of Business Research*, 48(1), 5–15. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(98\)00070-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(98)00070-8)
9. Nestlé Nigeria Plc. (2025). *Annual report 2024*. Nestlé Nigeria Plc.
10. Percy, L., & Rossiter, J. R. (1992). A model of brand awareness and brand attitude advertising strategies. *Psychology & Marketing*, 9(4), 263–274. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220090402>
11. Wang, Y., Zhou, Z., Xu, C., & Zhao, S. (2022). The effect of contextual mobile advertising on purchase intention: The moderating role of extroversion and neuroticism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 849369. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.849369>
12. Wijaya, B. S. (2012). The development of the hierarchy of effects model in advertising. *International Research Journal of Business Studies*, 5(1), 73–85.
13. Zhao, J., Butt, R. S., Murad, M., Mirza, F., & Saleh Al-Faryan, M. A. (2022). Untying the influence of advertisements on consumers' buying behaviour and brand loyalty through brand awareness: The moderating role of perceived quality. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 803348. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.803348>