

The Comparative And Contrastive Issues Of Media Performance On Advertising In Nigeria

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Abstract

There are difficulties in the use of the available media comparatively and contrastively with elements that may impact positively or negatively on consumers as the media carries the messages to the target audience for decisions on choice of products. The products in the market place do not get adequate media exposure and consumers lack sufficient knowledge of what the market can offer. The use of survey was adopted and the population of study was the media, the agency, advertisers and selected consumers as judgemental sampling was used. The data collection was by questionnaire and interview and presented in percentages while analysis was by deductive reasoning. The findings were that the media in Nigeria – Electronic, print, out of home and other media lacked digital equipment, accessibility and availability for modern advertising that support mass marketing of products. The maximisation of the media has no substitute for success in advertising and has to provide sufficient information about products and markets to consumers in the target market.

Keywords: Media, Advertising, Nigeria

Introduction

The media of advertising is the central organ or channel through which consumers are communicated for the purpose of information, education and persuasion about the products in the market place. The media has been severally discussed in marketing literature as channel of messages to the target market Berkowitz, Kervin, Hartley and Rudelius (2000: 525) and Wright, Warner, Wint and Zeigler (1978:183). Advertising messages are to be directed at the target audience with maximum exposure and at minimum cost as a way of closing the gap between producers and consumers.

There are reasons to suggest that not every message gets to the target audience in the manner intended thus, difficulties may exist in getting the right messages to reach the right audience at the right time through the right media. The problems have continued at an increasing rate with the increase in the population and diverse locations of the target audience to be reached, despite the improvements in the technology of modern equipment for message delivery by the media though may be lacking in Nigeria.

Nigeria is dominated by illiterate audience and other publics with over 75 percent who live in rural areas without the means and resources for affordability and accessibility to the media except the radio that may be fairly available in an average home. The distortion of messages, the increase in costs of the media, low quality output of media, the problems of control and turbulent environment for media operations are still prevalent. The comparative and contrastive issues on the performances of the media of advertising in Nigeria constitute the focus of this study.

Statement of the Problem

The media of advertising has been warped in the problems of media choice and usages as a determinant to its effectiveness. The various media of advertising depict different characteristics and the extent that these were often not taken into consideration when adapting the strategies for the media created value problems for the advertisers on the choice of media. The comparative and contrastive issues in media advantages and the effectiveness of advertising are the bane of media practitioners with the challenges to attempt to reach the target market with the right messages at minimum costs.,

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the effects of media on advertising, especially with the issues of comparative and contrastive elements that make the choice and usage of media difficult.
2. Assess the effects of advertising on consumer choice of products in the midst of inaccessibility and unavailability of some media in rural areas with over 75 percent of the Nigerian population and in the urban centre with low purchasing power and cost of media.
3. Examine the intra and inter media effects on advertising that relate directly with the comparative and

contrastive issues.

Review of Related Literature

The related review of literature is about the framework and the in-depth body of knowledge on the media and advertising as communication processes involving advertisers, agencies, the media and the target audience.

Theoretical Framework

The media of advertising can be discussed from the various perspectives that relates to the communications involving message input and information output to the audience on various subjects. The core of any communication is the process that deals with the message source, input, channel, output and receiver with the feedback mechanism for it to make any meaning to all the parties involved with communications. Advertising must flow in the same process from the origin of the message to the implementation of action. Advertising is any paid non personal message that is identified with a source and the critical form of advertising message is persuasion directed at the consumers for the benefits to be gained.

Development of the Media in Nigeria

The oldest and popular media in Nigeria is the traditional media which include oral communication, use of signs and symbols, dances, objectifs, folk lore, cultures and mores which were used for advertisements, entertainment, education and general dissemination of information. The “traditional media or ‘oramedia,’ are rooted in indigenous folk cultures and are made up of dialogue and verbal exchange, the diffusion is informal, interlinking clusters of stratified local authorities and their influence is pervasive (Ugbajah, 1982:21).

The print media is the oldest and earliest nontraditional media in Nigeria established by the Christian missionaries, “Iwe-Iroyin Fun Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba,” literally meaning, (the book of news For Egba people and Yorubas), was founded in 1859 by Rv. Townsend Henry. In the east, Hope Waddel set up a printing press at Calaba in 1846 which later published the first paper ‘Calabar Observer’, east of the Niger. The newspapers made great impacts on the publics within the communities but the publishers realised early that sales revenue was not enough to sustain the publications, and as such needed to develop the interest of advertiser for the advertising in the newspapers (Coker, 1968:2). This was a revenue generating motive.

The broadcast media followed the trend with a satellite observer station of the Radio Distribution Service (RDS) of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) by the colonial government in 1932. The Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service for Radio and television (WNBS – WNTV) marked a watershed in Nigeria broadcasting in 1959 when it started its operations in Ibadan. The media was more of government property than the private commercial investment.

The promulgation of Decree 38 of 1992 changed the trend of government ownership of media and members of the public were now empowered to have private broadcast media. Alongside Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) and state broadcasting stations were the African Independent Television (AIT), Minaj broadcasting and other private broadcast media. The cable television and Internet Satellite Network are the Modern wonders of the media.

The Major Divisions of the Media

The media are the electronic, print, out of home (outdoor) and multimedia.

The Electronic Media:

The electronic media comprises the Television and Radio and modern concept depict the emergence of internet as standalone and interactive electronic media which has its peculiar nature without sound and motion and capable of combining print media but at the same time make use of computer and monitor for visual display. The Television and Radio have the visual, sound or audio, motion and audio respectively. Wikipedia (2006:8) argue that increasingly other mediums are overtaking television due to a shift towards consumer’s usage of the Internet as well as devices such as TIVO (TiVo is a [digital video recorder](#) (DVR) developed and marketed by [TiVo, Inc.](#) and introduced in 1999. TiVo provides an on-screen guide of scheduled [broadcast programming television programs](#).)

The Print Media

The print media are the newspapers, magazines, journals and the modern technology has made it possible for the

emergence of print and electronic interface with the print publication on the internet for simultaneous reading with the hard copies. The journals are for professional organisations with regulated membership.

Out of Home or Outdoor Media

The out of home or outdoor media use bill board at sites and locations to display advertisements on wooden boards or electronic billboard with capability for motion display and sound. The messages are repetitive. The multimedia includes video, tape recorders, fax machines, catalogues, yellow pages, calendars and diaries. The other media are E-mail advertising, unpaid advertising (word of mouth or buzz advertising).

Media Structure and Planning

The media structure is the form of ownership of media in Nigeria which was government dominated or a monopoly of the government, but the recently promulgated decree 38 of 1992 has changed this by empowering private ownership of the media. The messages in the media had been dominated by the government. The media also had the dualism paradox as social and business institutions meant to inform, entertain, educate, mobilise, and promote various segments of the economy. As business institution it must generate revenue, control costs, stimulate demand, create business and entrepreneurship, sell, commercialise, paid for, legally bound to operate within the premise of the law (Nwosu and Nkamnebe, 2006).

The structure also compelled government to fund the media including salaries of staff in the media, equipment of media. The media was operated as civil service or parastatals which deprived the media sector of the highly qualified calibre of staff needed to do rigorous and intellectual news analyses. The media suffered from brain drain and not technologically oriented developments as in modern print and broadcast media in advanced world of technology. The result has been poor quality output of media products.

Ugboajah (1980:43) argues that a disquieting fact is that the media institutions that is well ahead of the others in the trend towards expansion, the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (now Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (F.R.C.N) for example has probably the largest share of poorly-educated editors.

The advertisements which could have been the major sustenance of the media were carefully chosen to reflect the sector favoured by government policies be it in agriculture (such as operation feed the nation campaign, aids epidemics and antismoking) which may discourage the purchase of newspapers, listenership and viewership audience. The trend today may have changed with the privatisation and commercialisation of the media, but the growth of advertising has not matched the expectations of the publics who still lack sufficient knowledge of products in the Nigerian markets. The GSM companies are the most visible advertisers using all forms of media to reach the target markets. The poverty ravaging the society is also taking its toll on Nigerian interests in ownership of advertising business. The structure still favour government control of every facet of the society as individual investors have remain indifferent to the course of commercial investments and advertising is a hard currency driven venture that does not compromise frequency.

Media Plan

A media plan deals with set objectives of reaching the audience with the desired messages, the media mix used in advertising campaigns, (Bovee (192:562). The problems of media planning are the lack of data in terms of circulation, readership, listenership, viewership, penetration and reach. Doghudje (1997:194) suggests that media planning in Nigeria could be frustrating for lack of data especially when media rates changes arbitrarily almost on daily basis. The provision of accurate data will enable the media improve on their programmes.

The strategic questions begging for answers are how should media data be organised and who should organise it among the agencies, media specialists, media owners, and professional media organisations? The circulation rate, cost per thousand or cost per mile rate (CPM), readership profile, features or pages most read in the newspapers or most popular columns read by the audience are the various issues and questions that have not been answered to date in modern day Nigeria and most people do not know these information that could guide their opinion on media production in Nigeria.

The audience profile should be able to reflect on the literacy level of consumers, location in the country, shopping habits, housewives, children, adults, other factors among others. The media should always provide this information to guide consumers, but neither the media nor the consumer audit panel have these records. The

media plan has no statistics of the media and may therefore not plan well for the use of the media and by extension planning for advertising may be a costly venture without the accurate data.

Characteristics of the Media

The media stands to be unique in the dissemination of information as no other means serve the same purpose for messages exchange in human interactions and relationships. The media characteristics demonstrate how the media is perceived and get to the reach of the publics and some of the characteristics could be the reach, penetration, circulation, selectivity, coverage, flexibility, cost, production quality, the permanency and editorial environment. Other factors may include noise, speed of news spread, urban centeredness, colour, quality, accessibility and availability.

Newspapers:

The newspapers have high coverage of the news and advertisements in Nigeria and could use different languages for publications, different categories of editions (morning, evening, and daily, weekly) which the audience could use for bridging the gap of omissions. The different news segments encourages varying costs of advertisement placements such as front pages, back pages, inside pages, solus, centre spreads and eye piece. The colour print has added to the pleasing of the eye.

The Newspapers have the concentration or circulation in urban centres with limited or nothing for the rural areas. This might not be unconnected with the dominance of illiterate audience in rural areas. These affects the manufacturers as there is a total loss of market for their products in rural areas, as well as limits the revenue earnings of publishers while more than 75 percent of rural population do not see newspaper advertisements.

Newspapers are comprehensive in scope, coverage, varieties of news, arrangements, classified adverts, time bound for the day, and attracts high population of readership at urban centres (Nwosu and Nkamnebe, 2006, Bovee and Aren, 1986). The newspapers suffer from poor quality production which constitutes serious media noise (blot of typefaces) which negatively affects the readership. The news content of newspapers is considered transient in the memories of the audience, though it has storage advantage. The newspapers also suffer from clutter of advertisements that confuses the audience rather than boost their interest in particular advertisement and the products.

The placements in wrong positions, the low speed in circulation to all parts of the country, reading of different editions due to geographic locations made the newspapers less attractive to some members of the audience. However, the short lead time between placements of advertisements, as its flexibility rate, low cost of production, the readers ability to choose what to read or control of exposure at home, office, leisure, serve as working paper at professional conferences and cut out for pasting on office boards are among the special features of the newspaper media.

The editorial advertisements cannot be changed during production, the penetration into rural areas are limited but highest in the urban areas with homes and offices, there are many of those who do not have the money to buy but resort to free reading that encourages readership but reduces quantity of the daily sales.

Magazines

The magazines are periodicals published and sold weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannually and have high quality colour prints production, with special and specific technical news that are not as broad as the newspaper coverage's. The audience is highly selective across the literate segments of the public. The magazines have interconnectivity with the internet for visual display of the print version. Magazines cost more than newspapers, has high mortality rate, poor circulation and limited to urban centres, attract less advertisements compared to newspapers, highly technical oriented, articles are the main information sources against news for newspapers. The advertisements are more specific than the general advertisements for newspapers, and have high colour print production that is more attractive for special audience.

Journals

This is an exclusive technical medium for professional members. The advertisements are highly exclusive for technical products and selective audience.

Out of Home or Outdoor Media

The characteristics of out of home media start with the location at different sites and places on highways and main streets, transport stations, public parks and private building structures. The outdoor or bill board is very prominent, attracts the least cost, but often with clustered arrangements that has implications for obstructed vision of audience. It is accessible to all publics, pedestrians, motorists who read without paying a direct fee as in purchase of newspapers. The advertisement is highly repetitive and not easily changed until may be withdrawn.

The destruction rate is very high by fire, rain, human interference by tearing away or super imposition of another advertisement bill on the existing surface, defacements, destruction by road construction works especially for urban development. The audience are always in a hurry to read it. There is now the interface with electronic billboard with motion pictures but no voice or audio effects. The owners of sites could cause its destruction especially when cost of rent is not met or an old advert is to be withdrawn.

The roof top bill boards attract added attention of the audience. Out of home is the only media without life news though posters may be considered as bill boards with current news. Molokwu (2000) discussed more on various outdoor issues.

Direct Mail

The direct mail is one-on-one with limited advertisement, high content of information exclusivity. There is clutter of mails from unknown sources that could discourage audience interests.

Internet

The internet is the most interactive media with capability for instant or immediate reply and is also highly limited to exclusive audience. There is the potential for direct selling with messages that are precise on the product or subject matter. It is highly compatible with print media.

Television

The Television is the most popular, expensive and penetrative media with motion, visual, audio and colour production as added advantages over other media. The poor production quality, highly transient message, limited coverage to urban centres, due to the prohibitive acquisition cost, incessant power cuts without alternative power supply make the television a problem to the audience. Advertisements can be dropped in between news and at locations of exposure during the news cast, such as braking news when the audience or listeners are still attentive.

Radio

The Radio is a universal medium that is highly available and accessible in Nigeria and the most popular of all the media, with over 85 percent rate of ownership. There are local and national stations with coverage of news and advertisements at both localities. The cost is low and the medium is highly flexible in advertisement lead time and placement with well segmented programmes for children, adults, gender sensitive and advertisements that are placed in between these programmes.

There is highly clutter of advertisement and low attention from consumers who take a lot of things for granted. The presence of noise is very high with environmental distractions and other obstructions including power outage which causes the audience extra costs for batteries. The radio is easily affordable and the messages are repetitive without the support of visual and motion pictures. News can be dropped on short notice which also apply to advertisements inform of news flash.

Cable Television

The cable television is aided by satellite transmissions and interconnectivity of transmitting stations. The cable television is very expensive for advertisements and this highly and almost exclusively favours the advanced industrialised rich nations. The Nigeria manufacturers and industrialists are not using the cable television to internationalise their products, by exposing them to the international community though, the commercial banks seem to be at the forefront of this crusade considering the need for money transfer from various countries of the world.

Methodology

The study was survey design. The inter media and intra media effects on advertising was the major marketing communication aspects that was investigated including media characteristics. The employees of advertising

agencies, the media and the advertiser were the population as well as selected consumers all based on judgemental decisions. The data collected was by interview and a review of various advertisements in the different media made available from archives. The data was analysed using qualitative methods of deductive and intuitive reasoning that justified the results.

Discussion of Findings

The techniques for media delivery of messages have always revolved around emotional, cultural, testimonial, pressure (impulse), association, sloganeering, controversy, hypnotism (hallo and guerrilla). These have been used for the advertisement of various products including social causes such as aids, polio, child abuse, and religious affairs.

The broad effects of the media clearly show the dominant advertisements as commercial for manufacturers' products and consumer services promotions. The non commercial highly dominated by government advertising of the projects and public social interests, while both the government and manufacturers use the advertisements to also promote their corporate identities, images and reputation management.

Wilmshurst (1985:83) argues that no message has any value if it is not transmitted and received effectively. The publics or audience receive advertisement messages with difficulties because of the different forms of media disturbances including government obnoxious laws and the power failures that disrupt transmissions and print productions.

The media is filled with foreign news and advertisements which negatively influences the behaviour of the Nigerian youths. The promiscuity among the youths has been traced to foreign contents of media news and advertisements. Mazrui (1987:177) agrees with this as one major cause for concern in Africa is that the continent is westernizing culturally without westernizing economically.

However, the media has exposed the use of modern technologies that have helped to improve the standard of living. Competitions have increased and the Nigerian manufacturers are now anxious to compete with their counterparts elsewhere in the world.

The government which dominates the media especially electronics through the news, party politics, publicity on public matters even when not at publics' interests still do have many instances on records for not making good use of marketing its policies and services which Okigbo (1997:166-167) completely concurred. Broadcasting has not been rightly utilized for the projection of a marketing economy because it is seen more as public or government property. The media does not offer consumers sufficient guide in making purchase decisions including rejection and acceptance of products, organised consumer media summit, reply or criticism against bad advertisements.

Advertisements are often placed in Newspapers at wrong locations which make it difficult for consumers to easily read or identify with the messages. Most advertisements are tucked away in obscure positions. The equipment for media production has not been regularly upgraded to match modern broadcasting standard over the years including lack of adequate maintenance and replacements. The television has lost much relevance and now produces sub-standard news and entertainment programmes that many viewers prefer to tune to cable network broadcasts.

Inter and Intra Media Effects

The radio has less barriers in reaching the audience than the television and newspapers, because many members of the publics and specific target audience own radio or listen to that or others who own radio within the environment. Most people work in offices with radio by the sides. The effects or influence of media on the behaviour of the people may be felt more by the impact of television because of its powerful vision, audio, motion and colour impressions.

The broadcast media is more transient than the print media though the radio and television use tape facilities. The television and radio can accommodate late placements than the Newspapers due to the effects of lead time, that is, time between when advert is received or booked and when it is eventually aired. The increase in the number of newspaper publications, television and radio stations have increased the information available to the

consumers.

Integrated Media Relationships and Control

The symbiotic relationship between print and internet media which promotes synergy should be encouraged, as it constitutes the greatest breakthrough in inter-media relationships. There are chances for news and general information and advertisements sharing the same or similar messages for speedy delivery and continuous placements respectively in all the media. The television can carry the brief version while newspapers will carry the detail information. There is increasing use of all media simultaneously for an advertisement.

The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) (2001:4) suggests that the two bodies Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) identified unwholesome exposure of tobacco and alcohol beverages advertisements in wrong time belts, disguising of advertisements as programmes and juxtaposition of commercials within programmes. Thus, the opinion of presenters on products appeared in sponsored programmes including unsubstantiated claims in religion broadcasts (miracle marketing) and unrestricted broadcasts of tradomedical advertisements, all of which contravene sections of the codes of the advertising laws. These were evidence in the findings in this study that advertising was badly put at the disposal of the highest bidder even when the interests of consumers may be at stake. The control of advertising was left in the hands of media presenters rather than the professionals hence in obscurity and mystified.

The control of cost is an important aspect of the media which affects both the media and the consumers. The media will not get the desired patronages sufficient to recover the cost of production and consumers will not get the desired information because of the prohibitive cost of buying television and radio (Agba (1997:164).

In all these circumstances, the traditional communication media by words of mouth, face to face and other media for traditional relations have become popular again among consumers. The manufacturers are meeting this new development by using public address system, motor caravan promotions and hiring dancers and speakers with local and native demonstrations to promote products. The media is the wheel on which advertising rotates or it is like a pendulum that swings advertising messages to the destination of consumers, such that the performance of any media may affect directly the results of advertising. The use of live coverage of events and a combination of the local media activities are now prominent features of Nigerian Television, Radio and trade Fair respectively, even in covering obituaries, product launch, wedding ceremonies and political party and special events.

Recommendations:

The media has to contribute more to the improvements of the knowledge of consumers and manufacturers about the market place. The deregulation of the media has enhanced its commercial value and has increased the inter and intra media competitions. The media should continue to dominate advertising which will enhance mass marketing in the interests of the manufacturers and consumers. The nation has to also continue to rely on the media of advertising for reaching the entire public and the international community for the exposure of the country for investment opportunities that could enhance national development and growth. The government, manufacturers and consumers are now proactively involved in the affairs of the media. The use of low quality equipment by Nigerian media and the continuous improvements in the equipment of broadcasting by the foreign media in Nigeria should be discouraged, as it has continued to put Nigeria at a disadvantage in the use of competitive media for popularising Nigerian products in Nigeria and internationally.

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