

Strategic Evaluation of How Advertising Works On Product Promotions

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Abstract

Over the years, there have been contentious and controversial debates on how advertising works, that has continue to stimulate intellectual research. The issues involved are diverse as they relate to advertising messages exposure, persuasion, conviction and the impact on consumers' attitudes and behaviours in their decisions on purchase of products. As a corollary, consumers have to be aware of an existing product to satisfy needs, and this could necessitate the recall from memory of any, or search for information that may stimulate the interest to initiate decisions on purchase action. Starch (1966) argues that advertising calls attention and informs people about products via mass media by establishing a favourable or preferential association link between a need and a brand name, and as the need arises the name will come to mind with favourable or preferential image established (a) through repeat advertising and (b) satisfactory use performance of the product. Hence advertising leads to buying action because of (a) the existing preferential image, (b) the attention directing and reminding process and (c) the persuasive – activating power of the image. In a similar vein, Batra et al (1998:121) argue that usually, advertising is not well suited to directly precipitate action, rather, it is better at conducting some communication, association or persuasion task that will hopefully result in the desired action being precipitated. There have been attempts to establish standards for evaluation of how advertising works based on communication principles and models such as AIDA (Strong (1925:9) Hierarchy of Effects (Lavidge et al (1961:61) Innovation Adoption (Rogers (1962:79-82) DAGMAR (Colley (1961) and Elaborative Likelihood model (Petty et al (1983:3-23). These models tended to support the principles of repetition of messages, recognition, comprehension, standardization and action. In this discussion on how advertising works, the approach was to review advertising and the variables that influences consumer attitudes and behaviours, though highly unpredictable, but provides an insight to consumers' reactions to advertising messages.

Keywords: Advertising, Product, Promotions

INTRODUCTION

There are various dimensions to the subject of how advertising works albeit some controversial and contentious debates that advertising indeed works while others feel otherwise. Batra et al (1998:121) argue that usually advertising is not well suited to directly precipitate action. Rather, it is better at conducting some communication, association, or persuasion tasks that will hopefully result in the desired action being precipitated.

This suggests that advertising may cause or influence a change in consumer's attitude favourably or unfavourably towards a product, but the reality of effecting actual purchase action may be subject to other variables outside the scope of advertising, such as price, availability of product, personal dispositions and competitive activities in the market place. In a similar vein, Wright et al (1978:115-116) suggest that although technically speaking, advertising does not create demand for products, most advertising is designed to stimulate demand by increase rates of product usages through persuasion; present new uses of the products and drawing new users of the products through providing information.

The process of how advertising works could be explored from the perspectives of the reaction of consumers to advertising messages and the advertising technicalities that are used in swaying the consumers to act the way they do in taking decisions on purchase of products. Broadbent (1983:1) suggests that in demonstrating how their advertising works, our authors show it harnessing a wide range of needs, emotions – the human desires for value, for efficiency, for status, for safety, for variety, or familiarity, for reassurance and so on. Starch (1966) submits in the same vein that advertising leads to buying action because of (a) the existing preferential image, (b) the attention – directing and reminding process, and (c) the persuasive – activating power of the message.

There have been attempts at establishing some standards for evaluation of how advertising works that are based on communications models such as AIDA (Strong (1961:61), Innovation Adoption Diffusion (Rodgers (1962:79-

82), DAGMAR (Colley (1961) and Elaborative Likelihood Model (Petty et al (1983: 3-23). These models demonstrate advertising influence on consumers as a learning process. Chisnall (1975:196) argues that the various hierarchical model of advertising appear to concentrate on the learning process: that people will ‘take in’ a certain amount of information which will then, it is hoped by advertisers, encourage them to move up the ladder towards the final step of purchase.

The results of consumers’ reaction to advertisings could be dependent on the technicalities used in the presentation of the advertisements suggests that advertising works by creating awareness of social issues and attaching a company name to it. The relevance lies in the power of pictures, visual stimuli, Art direction and design, that are important elements in all types of advertising, but especially in consumer advertisings. How does it work? It works because advertising channels visual images that create awareness of a product or brand image in consumer’s mind.

In this discussion paper on how advertising works, the approach was to start with the abstract, introduction, and a review of advertising and the variables that impact on consumers’ attitudes and behaviours such as cognition, affective, conative, exposure, persuasion – message recall memory, comprehension, motivation, conviction and action. The models of how advertising works was elaborately discussed, including ELM, AIDA, DAGMAR, learning theory or the connectionist (S – R) model and then the conclusions. The obvious submission remains that how advertising works cannot be conclusively explored.

A critical evaluation of how advertising works was also discussed further by asking some pertinent question such as who, what, when, where and why of how advertising works with a view to exploring the answers to these questions. There was need therefore to determine the role of the media and the contributions of the creative and copywriters in agencies. Wright et al (1978:9) argues that the creator of advertising – unlike the reporter, editor, or commentator – needs to remember that his or her creative effort must do more than merely inform or entertain. It must change or reinforce an attitude or behaviour. The conclusions ended this discussion paper by submitting that how advertising works will always be a correlate of the unpredictability of the behaviours of consumers.

MODELS OF COMMUNICATIONS ADAPTED IN ADVERTISING:

The attempts at demonstrating how advertising works have been largely derived from eclectic knowledge in the communication studies. In this regard individual persons absorb communication as a message for awareness before other actions in response to it could be initiated. Ehikwe (2005:13) argues that the promotion of products require effective communications to be successful as consumers will naturally react to what they hear, see, feel, touch, and believe before acting upon it.

The earliest models developed for the demonstration of the flow of communications and the absorption by consumers were the Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA), Hierarchy of Effects, Innovation Adoption, the Elaborative likelihood Model (ELM), the Connectionist or Stimulus-Response (S-R) model, Designing Advertising Goals Measuring Advertising Results (DAGMAR) and consistency theories. These models were adapted to explain the notions of how advertising works.

Action Flow Process	Stages/ Models	AIDA Modes (a)	Hierarchy of Effects Model (b)	Innovation Adoption Model (c)
	Cognitive Stage (d)	Attention	Awareness Knowledge	Awareness
	Affective State (e)	Interest Desire	Liking Preference	Interest Evaluation
	Affirmative Behaviour Stage (f)	Action	Conviction Purchase	Trial Adoption

Fig. 1: Some Communication Models Adapted for Advertising
 Source: Ehikwe (2005:18) Advertising and Other Promotional Strategies, Enugu, Proceision Publishers Ltd.

The AIDA MODEL:

The AIDA (awareness, interest, desire and action) is a communication model adapted for the explanation of how advertising works. Consumers are expected to receive communication as an awareness creation, develop the interest on the product or brand advertised, and these are accompanied by the desire for the product and eventually act or take action to buy the product. This was developed by Strong (1925:9) as a consumer decision process. Harris (1997:12) supports this idea by suggesting that the correlation between familiarity and propensity to purchase has been demonstrated in research that shows that there is an apparent relationship between awareness and brand share. However, this may not be easily demonstrated that other variable factors may not have also been involved in the market place. Harris (1997:12) argue further that more critical is the debate as to whether advertising actually has the power to create attitudes that will lead the consumer to purchase the product (through stimulating interest and desire), or whether its role is in most instances confined to simply establishing awareness.

There is no doubt that any communication that does not command attention cannot be noticed and may not be acted upon. However, consumers' needs or problems are the main cues that trigger off the search for information that advertising provides. Batra et al (1998:220) suggest that clearly for any effect to occur in advertising, an individual must be exposed to it and pay some attention to it gaining consumer's attention is rarely enough by itself, but an advertising that fails to get attention is unlikely to achieve anything else. Attention can be viewed as an information checkpoint that must be encountered as a control measure, on the information individuals are expected to use in their choice or purchase decisions.

HIERARCHY OF EFFECTS MODEL:

Lavidge et al (1961:59-62) suggest that hierarchy of effects model shows the process by which advertising works: It assumes a consumer passes through a series of steps in sequential order from awareness – purchase. A basic premise of this model is that effects occur over a period of time. The main process involves Awareness – knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase. There are reasons to suggest that the un-predictability of human behaviour has made this process rather simplistic. The variables that human interests or consumers encounter in the market place may not be easily discernable. Belch et al (2001:148) argue that advertising communication may not lead to immediate purchase or behavioural response; rather a series of effects occur with each step fulfilled before the consumer can move to the next stage in the hierarchy. The sequence of decision making by consumers assume complex dimensions when the products are complex and with difficult specifications.

INNOVATION ADOPTION:

The proponent of this model was Rogers (1962:79-86) and the argument was that the stages a consumer passes through in adopting a new product or service before taking some action (decision to adopt a new product) were awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption. There is no doubt that the main thrust of this model is that a consumer requires the force of advertising to be convinced that the product exists in the market by creating awareness. The interest, evaluation, trial and adoption may not be the subject for advertising message but individual disposition.

However, advertising could still create the interest and trial through the use of testimonial advertising where an individual or a personality is used to demonstrate the product. The essence is to compel consumers to make a trial and possibly get the product adopted.

DAGMAR:

The DAGMAR model was developed by Colley (1961) that suggest 'All communications that aim at the ultimate objective of a sale must carry a prospect through four levels of understanding':

1. From unawareness to awareness. 'The prospect must first be aware of the existence of a brand or company.
2. Comprehension, 'He must have a comprehension of what the product is and what it will do for him'.
3. Conviction, 'He must arrive at a mental disposition or conviction to buy the products.
4. Action. 'Finally, he must stir himself to action.

Colley described this DAGMAR model as "applied common sense" which suggest that they were put forward not on the basis of empirical evidence. The concept of the marketing communications spectrum is applied common sense (Joyce (1974:171). There was also the concept that Colley viewed the advertising process as a

series of 'Logical and comprehensible steps' along the path trodden by the consumer who has been exposed to some advertising stimulus (Chisnall (1975:194). The objective of advertising is seen as being to present persuasive arguments on the various brands of products in the market place.

Aaker et al (1992:99) argue that DAGMAR emphasizes the communication task of advertising as contrasted to the marketing objectives of the firm. In specific terms advertising goals must be definite, written, measurable task that involves a starting point, a defined audience and a fixed time period. There must be a specific general of well conceived bench marks before advertising goals are determined. A further argument was that DAGMAR really changed the way that advertising objectives were created and the way advertising results were measured. It introduced the concept of communication objectives like awareness, comprehension, image and attitude. DAGMAR has provided the central instruments of determination and measurement of how advertising works though by concept a commonsense, but has been used to support research studies that had been empirically tested.

ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL:

The use of this model centers on persuasive communication such as advertisings lead to persuasion by influencing attitudes. Petty and Cacioppo (1983:3-23) suggest that attitude function depends on amount and nature of elaboration or processing of relevant information that occurs in response to a persuasive message – High elaboration means high involvement in careful consideration, thinking, evaluation, arguments in the message. Low elaboration means the receiver (consumer) does not engage inactive information processing.

The main functional elements are motivation and ability of the consumers in processing information. Advertising conveys product messages but the consumers must be motivated to develop interest in the message and must have the ability to process the message. Belch et al (2001:162-163) argue that motivation depends on involvement, personal relevance, individual needs and arousal level. Ability depends on the individuals' knowledge, intellectual capability and opportunity to process the message.

The submissions of petty and cacioppo focused mainly on information processing and attitude change as a measure of the depth of involvement in the preference for product brands. The high and low involvements as a determination of the amount of influence advertising has on consumer preference for product brands can only be explored from two perspectives or using two parameters – the central route to attitude change by being fully involved, and peripheral route without active involvement.

The central Route to attitude change require that consumer is actively involved in the communication process with high ability and motivation to attend, comprehend and evaluate messages. In advertising messages, the consumer is interested in discussing it, find out the merits and get convinced to act upon it. The consumer will seriously think about the advertising message by a careful consideration and interpreting it into a plan of action with respect to the product or brand being advertised.

Advertising messages that causes curiosity such as "Omo washes brightest and it shows", "Guinness stout is good for you-black power", "Coke – Coca cola is it", "seven-up the difference is clear", are all advertising messages that consumers have been motivated to investigate and be fully involved with the debate on the status of their messages on whether they are realistic or not.

The peripheral Route to attitude change involves consumers attitudes associated with the thinking of what a product or brand may likely be when put to actual use. The brand is associated with positive or negative aspect or functional cues or baits in advertising message that may be associated with the brand. An advertisement that "Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is the most popular party in Africa", or "the only reliable party in Africa", can be subject to doubts or questioning when the actions and behaviors of members doesn't display any act of integrity. Consumers of PDP brand may be scared by such behaviors_ the killings, arrogance and corruption ridden expositions of the President General Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice President Atiku Abubakar, as reported in various newspapers and pending cases in Nigerian courts.

The central Route and peripheral Route can easily cause consumers to be heavily involved or less involved respectively, depending on the composition and content of the advertising message, that could serve as a motivation and development of ability to process the message.

Batra and Ray (1985:13-44) and MacInnis and Jaworski (1989:1-23) argue that it is commonly agreed that consumers are more highly involved when they considered the message content more relevant (high motivation) when they have the knowledge and experience to think about that message content (high ability) and when the environment in which that message content is presented does not interfere with such thinking (high opportunity).

The central Route to attitude change demand that the consumer must be interested in the claim of the message and should be deeply involved in processing and evaluating the message with a view to purchasing the brand of product, in contrast to this, is the peripheral route to attitude change that require the evidence from external factors outside the content of the advertising message. The consumer will not be willing or interested in processing the message further but believing or not from the associated factors to the advertising message claims, and possible evidence from users of the product.

THE CONNECTIONIST MODEL:

The use of learning theories for the understanding of how advertising works may be convincing but human behaviour expectedly is unpredictable. The connectionist theories are in the submission of Chisnall (1974:20) based on the association between Stimulus and Response (S-R) model that postulates learning as being the development of behaviour (response) as the result of a subject being exposed to stimulus.

The earliest experiment on this was the pavlovian conditioned reflexes in dogs that were to salivate by ringing a bell without the actual presentation of food. Earlier, the dogs had been accustomed to hearing a bell being rung several times when food was being given to them. Eventually the secretion of saliva was activated by the sound of the bell alone.

This experiment could be likened to advertising cues and messages that signify the existence of a product, but consumers may not be made to buy the product without other incentives. The dogs got free food and got used to getting free food by just hearing the sound of a ringing bell. How this will apply to consumers who see advertising messages and cues about priced products is another matter for intellectual debate.

The submission of Watson (1925) may allude to the fact that Stimulus and Response (S-R) model of advertising stressed the importance of frequency and recent in exposure to advertisements by target audiences. In such situations buying habits could be installed by a constant flow of advertising of branded products that became etched on the receptive minds of consumers. To this end, repetitive advertising strategies should be designed to imprint indelibly brand awareness and related advertising messages (Chisnall (1974:200).

The stimulus – Response model also involve learning. Berkman et al (1978:226-227) argue that Stimulus-Response associates learning as a trial – and – error process whereby needs, motives, drives are triggered by some cue or stimulus to cause the individual to respond in an effort to satisfy the need. Satisfaction then rewards or reinforces the response by reducing the drive and reducing repeat behaviour the next time the drive is aroused.

Advertising is seen as a learning process by consumers who have to see or hear the message, get involved in understanding and comprehending the message and putting into action what is learnt from the experience or message effects. Bovee et al (1992:156) suggest that learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occur as a result of reinforced practices. This suggests that even when action is eventually effected to purchase the product, learning is still taking place in the use of the product, and repetitive advertising will help to reinforce the assurance of good and reliability of brand to encourage repeat purchases.

An aspect of learning that influence how advertising works is the cognitive theory that views learning as a mental process of memory, thinking and the rational application of knowledge to practical problem solving, (Marcus et al 1980:83). This practical element could be seen from the testimonial advertisements used on television media that encourages demonstrations in the use of product, and the experience of consumers in the use of particular brands of products.

ADVERTISING AND OTHER COMMUNICATION VARIABLES INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Advertising as a communication tool is to inform, persuade, motivate and move consumers towards taking

decisions on the purchase of products. The functions of advertising could therefore be considered as a form of presentation of messages on products and ideas to the knowledge of consumers. This may not however, convince consumers to buy the products and it therefore become imperative that advertising must go beyond mere information to stimulate and encourage consumers towards planting the messages indelibly in their minds.

Joyce (1974:176) argues that advertising in general only work by being seen or heard by consumers and operating on their minds a process which in some way influences one aspect of their behaviour – the physical operations of purchasing. Advertising must be well communicated to be able to convince and influence the attitudes of consumers. Starch (1925) suggests that advertising to be successful: must be seen, read, believed and acted upon. Joyce (174:171) argues further that these assumptions relate explicitly to advertising itself rather than the state of mind of the consumer with respect to the product.

THE MEDIA ROLE

The various media of communication, Radio, Television, Newspapers, Billboards and other media carry advertising messages that consumers receive with different reactions. The power of the Television with motion, colour and sound effects contributes to the influence of advertising on consumers by motivating and persuading them to view, listen and hear the messages but may not cause a conviction of consumers to buy the product. Belch et al (2001:148) argue that Television advertising lets the markets send a message to millions of consumers at the same time..... but this does not mean effective communication has occurred.... There is no guarantee the information will be attended to, processed, comprehended or stored in memory for later retrieval. Even if the advertising message is processed, it may not interest consumers or may be misinterpreted by them. Jacoby et al (1982:12-26) suggest that readers miscomprehend 20 percent of all print advertisings and even more television commercials.

The media play the prominent role in how advertising works by stimulating and arousing the interests of consumers especially by demonstrations, motion, influence of colour, attractiveness to view, read and listen to the advertising and causing the emotions and sentiments of consumers to react favourably or unfavourably to the advertising.

Other variables of Exposure, perception, persuasion, and comprehension are further discussed in the following paragraphs.

EXPOSURE

The fundamental element of advertising and how it works can be effectively and firmly associated with exposure component of communication. Consumers must have to make contact in order to build the knowledge of the existence of a product through advertising messages exposure on those products. The strategic use of advertising message is to expose consumers to various brands of products existing in the market place. A logical process of exposure component is the release of the advertising messages through the media to get consumers to see it, feel it, comprehend and react to it. Batra et al (1998:153-154) argue that a related exposure effect suggest that repeated exposure creates a conscious sense of familiarity with the brand, which then causes liking. The concept here is that familiar known objects are evaluated more highly than are unknown objects with associated uncertainty. Or familiarity may create positive feelings of comfort, security, ownership, or intimacy.

Hawkins et al (2001:310) argue that a successful advertisement must accomplish four tasks exposure that would cause product to physically reach the consumer; Attention that compels the consumer to attend to the exposed product or message; interpretation would cause understanding of the message and comprehend it, and memory would ensure that the message is stored in a manner that will allow retrieval under the proper circumstances anytime the need for the product arises. This process is a basic requirement for the impact of every advertising message, to be felt by consumers and motivate them to act on it.

In the submission of Aaker et al (1992:18) one explanation considered here is that repeated exposure to an advertised brand can by itself, create a liking for it. Exposure of brand or product is the first and basic function of advertising that is required to stimulate the interests of consumers. The advertising message in order to be seen must be exposed and has to be understood to make the necessary impact on consumers. Exposure creates brand preference by making known what is in existence, however, Ehrenberg (1974) suggests that advertising serves mostly to reinforce (rather than create) brand preference and one way of reinforcing it is to keep the advertised

brand “top of mind” through frequent repetition. In a similar submission, Aaker et al (1992:182) argue that a related view of the exposure effect suggest that repeated exposure creates a conscious sense of familiarity with the brand, which then causes liking. Krugman (1968) argues that a product is often preferred not because it is indeed better but because of the pleasure of its recognitionSheer familiarity.

PERCEPTION

The strongest communication element that has a great influence in a consumer decision frame is the perception. Etzel et al (2001:108) argue that perception is the process of receiving, organizing and assigning meaning to information or stimuli detected by our five senses. This is a strong element in a consumer buying decision process where alternatives are identified.

Advertising creates impression that must be congruent to the perception of the consumer to magnify the core or deep sense of positive feeling about a product or brand. Joyce (1974:182) suggests that communications that the recipient is able to perceive (or misperceive) as representing exactly what he already believes run the risk of being rendered ineffective by this effect. Advertising plays the strategic role of differentiating between brands of products in the market place. Harris (1997:12) suggests that advertising is thus intended to differentiate products in the eyes of the consumer and give it a unique positioning.

The result of this differentiation creates the tendency for consumers to select the type of brand of product that appeals to their interests. This is what is usually considered as selective perception. The role of advertising is to create preferential discrimination between brands and plant the interest of particular brands-in the minds and perceptual construct of consumers. A process whereby a consumer chooses to perceive a product within the context of what is already known.

In the same process, consumers are compelled to concentrate on those products or brands that are within the frame of selective perception. Thus, their attention cannot be dissipated indiscriminately in the cluster of many products demanding attention. This is what has been referred to as selective attention. The consumers therefore focus attention on those products that meet their needs, motives, interests, and have satisfaction from the advertising messages appeal.

Advertising is also responsible for creating familiarity through various messages that differentiates or discriminates between product brands in the clutter of messages on similar products to avoid distortions in the minds of consumers. The consumers avoid this situation through selective distortions by reducing the level of distortions in the various message clutters on similar product brands. Advertising directs the messages to those attributes that could help consumers identify with the right product brands.

The process of reduction of distortions tends to compel consumers to retain only the messages that could guide their choice of product brands, in what is considered as selective retention. Thus, advertising communicates special messages that could stimulate the interests of consumers to retain only the messages within their frame of perception. This communication is to avoid or reduce the gap of misunderstanding and frustrations that may hamper the frame of reference of the consumers in their perception, interpretation, comprehension and use of advertising messages for choice of product brands.

PERSUASION, COMPREHENSION, AND MEMORY:

Advertising works by persuasion and any advertising message that cannot be comprehended have no place for memory and the message is entirely lost. Persuasion in advertising is the instrument for appeal and conviction. The various forms of persuasion appeal could be emotional, sentimental, rational and the dispositions of the consumers. Persuasion is an inbuilt element in every advertising message because it is what is expected to create the inducement in the minds of consumers. Aaker et al (1992:346) suggest that messages that are designed to focus a receiver’s attention on the source are said to appeal to ethos..... To concentrate on generating emotional reactions such as a pleasant mood, bolstering the ego, or appealing to a person’s dreams, wishes and fantasies is emphasizing on pathos and the appeal to logic and to the receiver’s capacity to think and reason logically is an appeal to Logos or Logic.

The appeal on use of ethos is a strong factor in persuasion and any advertising message that ignores this cannot be effective. Thus when the source of the message lacks credibility, consumers will not be easily persuaded. The

president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria used in advertising Nigeria as an endorser may not convince investors about Nigeria as worthy of business partnership or investments, considering the activities of 419ers, debt burden, low or poor production infrastructures, poor economic records, weak currency and other factors such as corruption that made Nigeria to be one of the poor nations in the world.

Aaker et al (1998:157) suggest that advertising must try to place into the consumers' memory those brand differentiating features that consumer is likely to actually use in making a choice and that prove the brand is superior. These attributes must be easily recallable by the consumer and also be easily accessible in that consumer's memory. Advertising messages must be convincing to be remembered or recalled by consumers. The attributes of the brand must be close to the needs of the consumer or a close or perfect substitute to the need of the consumer. In such situations advertising aids the consumer's information search and can therefore accept the persuasive message and develop favourable attitudes towards the particular brands.

The successful persuasion of a consumer encourages comprehension and memory of any message. Comprehension however, depends on the ability of the consumer to understand and interpret the language and the motivation of the consumer to search for information that advertising messages would readily provide. The comprehension of advertising message is very important because an un-comprehended and uncommitted message to memory cannot work. Advertising that communicate facts about attributes of brand can cause good perception that in turn stimulates brand comprehension.

ADVERTISING AND ATTITUDES:

Harris (1997:195) argues that advertising has a fundamental goal to reach consumers and influence their behaviour usually in a way to react more positively towards the brand. The positive reaction to brand is influenced by attitudes, which is often defined as the predisposition to react positively or negatively to objects. This is considered from the psychologist point of view. Joyce (1974:176) suggests that advertising is considered to be the consumer's system of beliefs, associations, images, and memories concerning the brand. Belch et al (2001:119) submit that advertising and promotion are used to create favourable attitudes towards new products and services or brands, reinforce existing favourable attitudes and/or change negative attitudes. Thus advertising works through the minds to influence the attitudes that eventually convince the consumer towards a favourable or positive disposition to brands.

The role of attitudes in a consumer's behaviour towards a product or particular brand suggests that advertising messages are primarily focused on influencing attitudes. Advertising work by being seen and or heard by consumers and this affects the minds that in turn stimulate the attitudes. The core elements in attitudes are the cognitive, affective and conative. Fishbein et al (1975) suggest that the cognitive (awareness, comprehension, knowledge), affective (evaluation, liking, preference), and conative (action tendencies such as intentions, trial, or purchase) are the three closely interrelated components in attitudes. The affective component is the main target of advertising that indicates the extent of likeness to trigger off the conative component.

A product is purchased because of the affective limit a consumer has and this is the cognitive effect from the attention given to the message about the product. The products mostly affected by this attitude build up are the highly technical products that require maximum exposure and active search for information.

Advertising has three habit related goals – Habit breaking – Habit acquisition and Habit reinforcement (Bovee and Arens (1986:157). Advertising reinforce positive impressions in the minds of consumers, for example, "Union Bank – Big, strong and Reliable", "Guinness is good for you", "Omo washes brightest and its shows", "Milo the food drink of champions", these are positive messages that can build positive attitudes towards products. An advertisement that is focused on a brand must be associated with the cue or interest that could be associated with the attitude.

Batra et al (1998:293) argue that the simplest explanation of how a feeling that advertising works is that people like it or dislike it as an advertisement, and this attitude gets transformed to or associated with the brand in the advertisement. There is then the potential for a direct causal link between the attitude and behaviour towards the brand. Puto et al (1983:638-643) suggest in a similar manner that transformational advertising is mainly used in associating feelings with brands – developing associations with the brands use capable of transforming the experience to the brand or changed into something else.

In other aspects of attitude building the effects of affective and conative components, are highly associated with previous experiences that could make consumer attitude stick to the brand. Advertising is to reinforce the message as a reminder or memory recall anytime the need is aroused or stimulated. Smith (1993:204-219) concur that not surprisingly, the effects of advertising on brand liking are also greatly reduced when actual brand trial has occurred. Thus brand quality is important in development of attitude towards a brand and advertising is required to emphasize the high quality attributes of the brand to encourage cognitive and affective aspects of attitudes.

Attitudes that lead to favourable disposition to brands are highly associated with thoughts and feelings evoked by advertising messages. This could be emotional, sentimental, rational or humorous that elevates the minds of consumers with a feeling of satisfaction and conviction about the messages. Mackenzie et al (1986: 130-143) argue that attitude to advertising is influenced by the cognitions (thoughts and feelings) that the advertising viewer has about the advertising; this advertising attitude then affects brand attitudes which then affects the intention to buy or not to buy the brand. In other words, attitude towards the advertising affects the attitude towards the brand both directly and indirectly (through shaping and cognitions). Advertising and attitudes are central to the reactions of consumers to stimulus about products and particular brands.

CONCLUSIONS:

Advertising is responsible for the messages that stimulate consumers towards having positive or negative dispositions that precipitates the final action to buy or not to buy the product. The debate on how advertising works continue to attract different reactions with no concrete evidence that it works or does not work. This is a measure of the unpredictability of the behaviour of consumers. How advertising works will always be a subjective judgment with minimal or no empirical evidence that the purchase of product is the result of advertising. The exposure, attention, information dissemination and awareness elements of advertising are inevitable in the decisions of consumers on products.

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