

An Investigation into the Antecedents of Overall Attitude toward General Advertising

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Abstract

The study, an investigation into the antecedents of overall attitude towards advertising in general focused on the factors that influence consumers' perceived attitude towards advertising characteristics. The research effort is geared towards examining whether the institution of advertising and instrument of advertising are important construct in the study of overall attitude towards advertising in general. Cross sectional survey research with descriptive design was used. The principal instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument contained questions with multiple indicators relating to attitude towards advertising instrument, advertising institution and overall attitude towards advertising in general. Copies were administered to a convenience sample of 250 respondents. Out of the 180 instrument returned, only 147 copies were found valid hence used for analyses. All hypotheses were tested at 0.01 levels of significance using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson correlation coefficient (r). The findings revealed that there was a joint contribution of the components of advertising institution and advertising instrument to overall attitude towards general advertising. This result is an indication that attitude towards advertising is a mediating variable through which advertising influences brand attitude and purchase intention. It is then concluded that attitude to advertising institution and advertising instrument are strongly predictors of overall attitude to general advertising. Since the research did not involve consumer characteristics of socio-demographic variable to determine its influence on overall attitude, there is need to recognize that future research in such area is necessary.

Keywords: Advertising Institution, Advertising Instrument, General Advertising, Overall Attitude

1.1 Introduction

Advertising has been part of economies since the beginning of trade. Most advertisements focus on product information which tends to familiarize the consumers with natural brand and introduce new products, educate and persuade consumers to their purpose. Thus, the underlying elements that make advertisement persuasive, lies with the propensity to attract willing audience that is ready to be transformed by the message. Advertising in contemporary society is a process of persuading a mass audience through the mass media to commercial product. (Nwosu & Nkamnebe, 2005). While many scholars have extolled advertising as function that has accounted for the success of various brands in the market, others believe that most claims made for products are excessive, often mendacious and brings advertising into disrepute (Wolff and Biernatzki, 1994). The success or failure of any advert message however depends on the attitude of the audience towards the message content and the media. Attitude is of special interest because it defines how people are persuaded which are reflected in their behaviour. Attitude towards institution of advertising is one of the determinants of advertisement and it influences consumers' responses to any particular advertisement (Melita, 2000). This influence has been studied for the past 20 years (Datt – Beramann, 2006). The history of attitude to advertising suggests that the overall positive attitude towards traditional advertising institution is found to be declining (Cheung et al, 2009). The overall attitude toward advertising focuses on public opinions towards the advertising instrument with her persuasive campaign without due recognition to the creative media art of the advertising agency and her persuasive advertising campaign (Cheung et al, 2009; Okpara et al, 1999; Nwosu and Nkamnebe 2005).

Nigeria, although divergent in ethnicity has common values, norms and standard based on the notion of African ideology and as such permeate consumers having somewhat similar characteristics to marketing communication. Yet, not much study has been recorded towards investigating public opinion on the broad advertising institution and advertising instrument in Nigeria. This study aims at illuminating how advertising institution and advertising instrument influence consumers' attention, intention and the purchase behaviour. In an attempt to explore the relationship between determinants and primary antecedents of overall beliefs and attitudes towards advertising, in Bulgaria and Romania, it was affirmed that advertising instrument and advertising institution emerged as significant predictors of advertising attitudes (Petrovici and Marrinov, 2005). It is not certain whether these variables have impact on the attitude of consumers in Nigeria.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Despite the numerous positive uses which advertising can be put into for corporate and social development, advertising is criticized for adding high cost to the final product as well providing misleading and false information. More so advertising cripples competition. Some products are advertised with disregard to the message content, appeal or timing thereby making consumers to be vulnerable to it. These consumers are reserved and confused regarding the advertising institutions and instruments and their contribution towards influencing attitudes to advertising. Both attitude institution and attitude instrument are direct antecedents of overall attitudes towards advertising (Tan and Chia, 2009; Petrovici and Marinov, 2005). Other scholarly researched works on attitude towards advertising have taken place but none has researched on the influence of the institution and instrument of advertising on the overall attitude towards general advertising; and nothing is known of the overall attitude of Madonna Community and Nigerians towards the instrument and institution of advertising.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study is to gain better understanding of the antecedents of overall attitude towards general advertising. The specific objectives are:

- a. To determine the influence of advertising instrument on attitude towards general advertising.
- b. To analyze the influence of message content of advertising on attitude towards general advertising.
- c. To examine if there is any significant joint contribution of advertising institution and advertising instrument on overall attitude towards general advertising.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study contributes to knowledge in the field of advertising literature through the examination of factors that influence consumers' attitude towards advertising. Findings from this work can be used to interpret market activities of companies and build their corporate image through sponsorship. Thus, the persuasive power of advertising campaign will be strengthened and public trust in the advertising industry will be raised. The result of the findings will also help in meeting the needs and managing the interest of stakeholder in advertising as it affects Madonna Community and Nigeria generally. It will further help advertising regulatory agency in checking all forms of abuses to public decency.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Consumers are regularly exposed to substantial amount of product information advertising through a variety of media. Consumers evaluate the perceived advantages and disadvantages of product advertisements resulting in a more or less positive overall attitude towards such advertisement. An understanding of consumers' overall attitude towards product advertisement is of great importance as it probably influences their relations to these messages and ultimately the market place behaviour. This section provides a review of the relevant literature that borders on advertising, attitude towards advertising, and the antecedents of attitude towards advertising.

2.1 GENERAL ADVERTISING

Advertising has been perceived from divergent view points; some of which are positive and others negative. Okpara et al(1999) described advertising as ubiquitous, pervasive, materialistic, annoying, indispensable, and fascinating. This view provides a somehow balanced appraisal of advertising. Ogilvy (2005) notes that the trouble with most advertising is that it insults the intelligence of the public and bores you to death; while Okpara et al (1999) in his own view says advertising has pernicious effect on individuals, social groups and whole society.

A consumers' purchasing behaviour may be influenced by various factors such as family and friends, religious beliefs, cultural attitudes, social expectations, work requirements and professional standards as well as advertisement message and strategies, one of the most important responsibilities of advertisers is to place an appropriately designed advertising message in the most appropriate medium so as to bring the advertised products to the attention of the targeted consumers. A wide range of media are available for this including newspapers, magazines, television, radio etc. (Nwosu and Nkemnebe, 2005). Quickfacts (2006) observed that a strong creative advertisement will perform well regardless of size or positive in the newspaper. That is why advertisers often invite readers into their tests through pictures of admirable persons as an avenue of linking products with positive attitudes. (Olaosun, 2005). Adverts which evoke emotions of personal enhancement have been found to be highly effective (Kover, Goldberg and James, 1995). They explained that messages that raise high level of consumer desires for advertisement arouse high level of message empathy and high purchase desire. They also serve to construct a social identity for the audience. Other strategies that are used to ensure effective and successful advertisement pertains to message, media or channel selection, message and the tone, advert space and even the media schedule.

2.2 ATTITUDE TOWARDS GENERAL ADVERTISING

Attitude towards advertising construct has been the focus of several investigation in marketing literature in part because of the suggestion that it is antecedent to additional variables affecting consumers (O'Donohoe, 1995).

Several authors have provided conceptual frameworks indicating the importance of Advertising in general (AG) construct in relation to other marketing variables (Ducoffe 1996; Shavitt et al, 1998). It is observed that individual respond to advertising commercials based on the type of instrument. This is supported by the view of Berndt et al, (2005). It is clear that audience have different perceptions of and attitude towards different media. This shows that people strongly attend to information based on relevance on them at a given point (Tolley, 1991). This is supported by the view of Steward (2005) who found empirical evidence for the notion that individual attitudes towards media vehicles condition their responses to marketing communications in these vehicles. Recent research by Mueller (2006) shows that while consumers are significantly less likely to believe advertisers claims for low involvement products such as shampoo, they are significantly more likely to believe claims for health related products. Obermiller et al (2005) found that involvement with a product tends to mitigate the negative effects of high sceptism. The result of Diehi and Mueller (2008), suggest that consumers don't really like pharmaceutical advertising but they tend to believe it, and are less skeptical of its informational content as compared to advertising in general. In the study of determinants and antecedents of overall attitude to advertising in general, findings confirmed that consumers in Bulgaria and Romania are more positive about advertising as institution than instrument used to promote advertising. Product information is the main personal use of advertising which influence general attitude to advertising in Bulgaria. The entertaining value of advertising was found the strongest personal use in Romania. No significant differences were found in their attitude towards institution and instruments of advertising in the two countries (Petrovici and Marinov, 2005).

Attitude towards advertising in general is the abstract attitude for involving general belief about advertising while the attitude that consumers have towards advertising in different media would be seen as specific attitude which are less abstract (Tan and Chia, 2007). In some survey relating to attitude towards advertising, only the abstract attitude was asked in an attempt to examine consumer attitude towards advertising in general (Shavitt et al, 1998; Melta, 2000). This measure of attitude towards advertising is problematic for not defining the frame of reference. Series of research interests have supported the notion of economic and social predictors of advertising (Davila and Rogas mendex, 2001). Also there is extended research to include primary determinants or personal use of advertising that included the perception of people on advertising as a source of product information, social role, materialism and pleasure/hedonic use (Tan and Chia, 2009; Petrovici and Marinov, 2005; Cheung et al, 2007). In all these, there appear to be no high light on the importance determining relationship or the joint contribution of the institution and instrument of advertising relevant to a particular execution.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Attitude towards advertising could be structured in such a way that attitude towards advertising in general should be the organizing attitude for attitude towards specific media. (Tan and Chia, 2009). This attitude towards general advertising is an abstract attitude since it involves general beliefs about advertising using specific media. The attitudes that consumers hold towards advertising media would be the specific and they are the personalized attitude. On this basis, O'Donohoe (1995) categorized attitude into personal experience beliefs and macro belief as shown in the framework below. These constitute the message content. According to Tan and Chia, (2004) a person may possess attitude towards advertising generally which is abstract level attitude based on share belief. This might be acquired from secondary information source other than from one's own experience. This is antecedents to the formation of attitude towards advertising in general (Schelossor et al, 1999). Sometimes, this person may have purchased a product that satisfied his needs after learning from an advertisement. This is a personal experience that reinforces his belief about the information. It is either the art or instrument that shape the persons attitude toward the advertisement. Sometimes the personal experience may reinforce the macro level beliefs on advertising thereby influencing his attitude towards advertising in general.

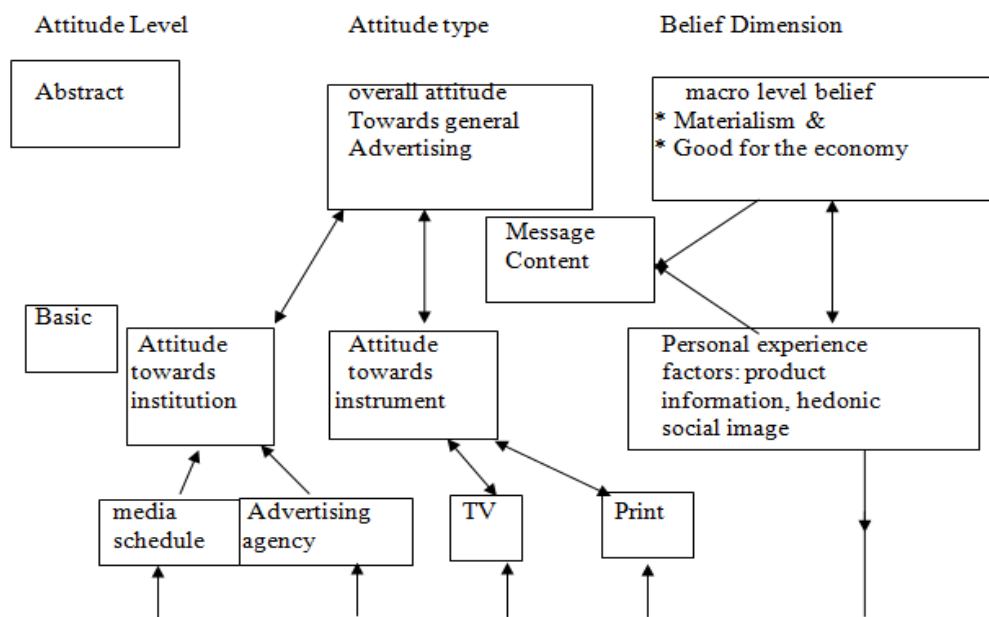


Fig. 2.1 Antecedents of overall attitude towards general advertising

2.4 ANTECEDENTS OF OVERALL ATTITUDE TOWARD ADVERTISING IN GENERAL

In their contribution, Tan and Chia (2009) provide support for product information as having positive influence on attitude towards print advertising being supported by the variables as having positive contribution in predicting attitude to advertising. Ducoffe (1996) and Shavitt et al, (1988) observed that individuals respond to advertising based on the type of instrument. In the findings from the study of Bulgaria and Romania, Petrovici & Marinov (2005) indicated that consumers are more positive about advertising institution than advertising instrument Product information that constitute message content influence over all attitude. It then means that attitude towards institution, and attitude towards instrument could be tested.

2.5 HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses (Ho) are postulated to guide the study and will be compared with our estimation.

- Ho₁: Attitude toward advertising instruments does not influence the overall attitude towards general advertising.
- Ho₂: The message contents and the institution of the advertising media do not influence the overall attitude towards general advertising.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between advertising instrument and institution in their joint contribution towards general advertising.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to test the above stated hypotheses, a cross sectional survey research with descriptive design was conducted in Anambra State using Madonna University Community, Okija. The research design also accommodated generalization of findings on the target population from which only a representative portion was actually studied. The principal instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument contained questions that included multiple indicators relating to attitude towards advertising instrument, advertising institution, general attitude towards advertising and advertising in general.

Copies of the questionnaire were administrated to a convenience sample of 250 respondents drawn from staff and students of Madonna University, Okija. Of this number, 180 instruments were received, but only 147 properly completed hence used for the analyses. In the study of consumers attitude towards imported goods, Enefiok, (2009) used University Community as a population base. As the questionnaire addressed attitude and advertising related issues, all measures were assessed using Likert summated rating scales of 5– strongly agree to 1 – strongly disagree. They are collectively regarded as non comparative scales. The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). All hypotheses were tested at 0.01 levels of significance using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient (r).

4.0 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The methodology highlight of the study is succeeded by presentation of data, the analysis and interpretation of results.

4.1 Demographic information of respondents

The data below shows the demographic information of respondents.

Table 4.1: bio-data distribution of respondents

ITEM	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (S)
Age		
11-20	98	67.0
21-30	45	31.0
31-40	2	1.0
41 & above	2	1.0
Total	147	100
Gender		
Male	91	62.0
Female	56	38.0
Total	147	100
Nationality		
Nigerians	141	96.0
Foreigners	6	4.0
Total	147	100
Occupation		
Civil servant	2	1.5
Lecturer	2	1.5
Student	143	97.0
Total	147	100

Source: *Survey data 2012*

Table 4.1 shows the demographic information of the respondents. The respondents belonged to age bracket of 11 and 20 (67%) comprising more of students. The study covered more males (62%) than females (38%) and more Nigerians (96%) than foreigners (4%). Students constituted the majority of the respondents (97%). Lecturers (1.5%) and civil servants (1.5%) completed the rest. This probably reflects the bio-data distribution of the University Community.

4.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Here the hypotheses of the study will be analyzed and results interpreted.

Hypothesis 1 (Ho₁): Attitude towards instruments of advertising (media: electronic & print) does not influence the general attitude towards advertising.

Table 4.2a - ANOVA

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Significant
Between groups	176421.600	4	44105.400	10.400	0.012
Within Groups	21204.500	5	4240.900		
Total	197626.100	9			

a. *Predictor (constant): attitude towards instrument of advertising media (electronic & print).*

b. *Dependent: general attitude towards advertising.*

Table 4.2a above shows the contribution of the independent (predictor) variables to variations in the dependent variable. The f-cal is found to be 10.400 significant at 0.012; and the f-table is 5.100. Comparing the f-cal and f table, we find that f-cal (10.400) is greater than the f-table (5.100); we therefore reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative, and conclude that attitude towards instrument of advertising media (electronic & print) influence positively on general attitude towards advertising.

Hypothesis 2 (Ho₂): The message content of the instrument and institution of advertising do not influence the general attitude to advertising.

Table 4.2b ANOVA

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Significant
Between groups	34114.400	4	8528.600	10.431	0.012
Within Groups	4088.000	5	817.600		
Total	38202.400	9			

a. *Predictor (constant): the message content of the instrument and institution of advertising.*

b. *Dependent: general attitude towards advertising*

Table 4.2b above shows the contribution of the independent (predictor) variables to variations in the dependent variable. The f-cal is found to be 10.31 significant at 0.012; and the f-table is 5.100. Comparing the f-cal and f-table, we find that f-cal (10.431) is greater than the f-table (5.100); we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, it is therefore concluded that the message contents of the advertising instrument and

advertising institution is positively related to general attitude to advertising.

Hypothesis 3 (H₀₃): There is a significant negative relationship between instrument and institution of advertising in their contribution towards general advertising.

Table 4.2c: Correlation between instrument and institution of advertising correlation

		x1	x2
	Pearson Correlation	1	.986**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
x1	Sum of squares and	11192.55	
	Cross-product	0	119881.700
	Covariance	589.082	630.616
	N	20	20
	Pearson Correlation	.986**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
x2	Sum of Squares and	11981.70	13100.800
	Cross-products	0	
	Covariance	630.616	694.726
	N	20	20

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Using Pearson's correlation coefficient to test the relationship, the result in Table 4 above reveal a high positive correlation between instruments of advertising and institutions of advertising in their contribution towards general advertising, as indicated by $r=0.986$ and sig. value of 0.000 which is less than 0.01 level of significance. This leads to rejection of the null hypothesis, the acceptance of the alternative, and conclusion that there is a significant positive relationship between instrument and institution of advertising in their contribution towards general advertising.

5.1 FINDINGS

Result in table 4.2a did not render support to the hypothesis since F-calculated of 10.400 is found to be greater than f-tabulated of 5.100 at 0.012 level of significance, leading to a conclusion that attitude towards advertising instrument has positive influence on overall attitude towards general advertising. This is consistent with Petrovici and Marinov (2005) study of Romania but inconsistent with same study in Bulgaria. Using analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the influence of message content on overall attitude to general advertising, Table 4.2b shows that message content of the advertising instrument and advertising institution is positively related to overall attitude to advertising in general. This shows that information, hedonic value and other constituent message content that are significant predictors of general attitude are important construct in determining overall attitude to general advertising. This conformed to Mittal (1994). Testing the relationship between instrument and institution of advertising and their contribution to overall attitude towards advertising Table 4.2c show a high positive correlation as indicated by $r=0.986$ and significant value of 0.000 less than 0.01 level of significance. This led to the conclusion that there is a significant positive relationship between advertising instrument and advertising institution in their contribution to overall attitude towards general advertising.

5.2. IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research on media effect within marketing context has turned to focus on traditional mass media. It failed to take cognition of the nascent new mass media and the potential changes that have been suggested in both the characteristics and the influence on advertising practice. The result of the study however provides some useful baseline information on the influence of the advertising instruments and advertising institutions on overall attitude to general advertising characteristics.

This study has theoretical and managerial implications. Many studies have examined attitude towards advertising and its underlying determinants (Petrovici and Marinov 2005); Tan and Chia, 2005; Reed and Ewing, 2004) But none of these studies focused on the factors influencing consumers perceived overall attitudes towards general advertising in Anambra, Nigeria. Report from the study indicates that there is a significant relation in their contribution to overall attitude towards general advertising. Thus the hypotheses of this study support the proposition that advertising institution and advertising techniques are important construct in the study of overall attitude toward advertising. It is then concluded that focusing on advertising instrument without recognizing the practice of advertising agency, media, the regulatory action of Advertising practitioners council of Nigeria as well as their creative art, would be very inappropriate in shaping overall attitude towards general advertising.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study indicates that attitude towards advertising media is a relationship mediating variable through which advertising influences brand choice and purchase intention. It has therefore been shown that attitude to advertising institution and attitude to advertising instrument are strong prediction of overall attitude to general advertising. The study further revealed that message contents of these media channel influences overall attitude to advertising. Based on the above findings, it is recommended that organizations and advertisers should give

due considerations to both instruments of advertising as well as the institution of advertising in all its ramifications since both have been shown to influence the general attitude towards advertising in Nigeria.

5.4 LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The major limitation of this study is the concentration of the study in the Madonna University, Okija, Anambra State as its scope. This has implications for generalization of the result hence the need for larger scale organizational study that compares and analyses consumers' position across several states. The use of cross-sectional data has inherent limitations for inferring causal relationships and study dynamics. Advertising in this is measured but not in terms of buying behaviour and sales as the business-oriented researcher would do but in terms of psychological attitudes attributable to advertising. Lastly, the sampling technique was convenience, the sample size rather small and focused on a delimited consumer segment. Thus the data used in the study account for small research bias of the overall population. As such, the research findings reflect the views of the students but cannot be generalized based on the population as a whole. Given that the study dwells so much within the confines of traditional advertising, it is worth noting that the nascent online media with her fast growing interactive mode of technology needs further research.

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