Advertisement and Criticisms: An Appraisal

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Abstract
This paper examines the common criticism against advertisement. It employs desk research methodology. While the criticism against advertisement were noted, defence for the place of advertisement was given in each case and it was submitted that advertisement plays a big role in enhancing the gross domestic product (GDP) of any nation; and if not for advertisement, the GDP of nations, including Nigeria where advertisement contributed N99.549 to the GDP, will be far less to its potential which will under develop the global economy.

***Key words**: Advertising, advertisement, advertology, criticism, GDP.*

Introduction

The structure of modern society relies on advertisement for its survival. It is inconceivable that an economy whether capitalist or socialist can do without advertisement. Communist Cuba now allows advertisement in its economy especially after the country and the United States of America reopened diplomatic relations in Washington and Havana during the regime of President Barack Obama which happened before the death of Fidel Castro, the father of current Cuba. Not only in industrial economies of the G7 does advertisement strives, but it also does in developing economies of Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Mexico, Mexico, Argentina and a host of other countries. However, despite the critical contribution of advertisement to modern society in general and the economy in particular, critics believe advertisement should not be allowed. If

this stance stays, the society will have to go back to state of nature where life was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short according to scholars while quoting Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan. This may jeopardise progress and development that the world has achieved since the end of World War II in 1945. This paper posits that advertisement should be sustained in the society for human development and for positive multiplier effects that advertisement has brought into the world especially its contribution to the gross domestic products of many countries including Nigeria where advertisement contributed N99.546 billion to the economy (Olatunji, 2017).

Conceptual Background of the Study

Advertising and advertisement are not the same thing though they are usually used interchangeably which may be misleading. The concept of advertology disagrees with the interchangeability in the usage of both concepts. As such, the question can be asked: what is advertology? Ogedengbe and Adesemoye (2010) note that:

> advertology basically looks at advertising as embracing a dynamic process of various parts, which together form a harmonious whole. It is a concept that differentiates advertising from advertisement because they are not the same. Advertology does not agree with the common interchangeability in the usage of advertising and advertisement. This is because they are not the same thing. Advertology differentiates and points out the essential difference between them. Consequently, Advertology can be safely regarded as an attempt to set a theoretical underpinning for the study of advertising (Ogedengbe and Adesemoye, 2010, p. 2).

Advertising and Advertisement: Any Difference?

Advertising has been defined in different circles and mostly such definitions end up to be for advertisement. Arowosegbe (1992) cited in Ogedengbe and Adesemoye (2010) notes that the American Marketing Association for instance defines advertising "as any paid form of non–personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods

and services by an identified sponsor'' and that the British Institute of Advertising Practitioners defines advertising as that which "presents the most persuasive selling message to the right prospects of the product or service at your doorstep at the lowest possible cost". Also, the Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria (APCON) defines advertising as "a form of communication through media about products, services or ideas paid for by an identifiable sponsor".

The above definitions really define advertisement instead. Advertisement is the end product of advertising. It is a technique used by advertisers (identifiable sponsors) to reach their target audience. On the other hand, advertising, according to Doghudje (1987), is a group of activities involving research in the field of marketing, product design, long range or strategic planning of objectives, cost, media, appropriate message, short run or tactical application of such plan. The actual construction of advertisement (copywriting, layouts, arts and production) and finally further research into the effectiveness of advert effort. To Arowosegbe, advertising is a "professional field of study and practice concerned with the creation of informative or persuasive messages about a product, idea, service, individual or organisation and the placement of such messages in appropriate non-personal media of communication for consumption by predetermined public of an identified sponsor".

To clarify the difference between advertising and advertisement, advertising is a concept which concerns itself with making known to the public or target audience what is being promoted and encourage them to patronise what is being promoted through different media such as print media (magazines, newspapers, billboards), broadcast media (radio and television), the new media that is internet-media, as well as below the line media such as pens, umbrella among others. Advertisement is a notice of something for patronage. It can be job vacancies as published in *The Punch* newspaper of Mondays and Wednesdays, and *The Guardian* newspapers of Tuesdays and Thursdays. It can also be any type such as product/brand

advertisement, public relations advertisement, classified advertisement or political advertisement. It is the outcome of advertising. Advertising and advertisement are not the same and that is the trust of advertology, the study of advertising and advertisement.

Advertisement, Public Relations and Propaganda: The Differences

Public Relations: advertisement has been defined. Public relations according to the Mexican statement is the art and social science of analysing trends, predicating their consequences, counseling organisational leadership and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and publics' interests (Onwunali, 2018). While advertisement is primarily concerned with the interest of the sponsor, public relations is primarily concerned with mutual interests of all parties, the organisation and its publics.

Propaganda: Encyclopedia Britannica cited in Ajala (1993) defines propaganda as the systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitude, or actions by means of various symbols-words, gesture, banners, monuments, music, clothing, insignia, among others. The thrust of propaganda can even be injurious to the public. Very unlike advertisement, propaganda aims at deceiving the receiver of the message in a clever way while advertisement aims at encouraging the audience to patronise the advertised products or ideas.

All these are related as they all employ communication as their tool. However, their differences are underlined by their foci which are depicted in the above.

Brief History of Advertising in Nigeria

Like many other fields, modern advertising got to Nigeria through colonialism. With the Europeans, modern advertising practice got into Nigeria through the then West African Publicity Company, now Lintas Limited. The Indigenisation Decree of the Gowon regime

however made the profession of advertising to be an exclusive area for Nigerians. Thus came the Nigerianisation of the advertising industry. Different forms of advertising practice have existed in Nigeria before the advent of Western forms of advertising practice. Advertising has passed through many media times. In the primitive society of trade by barter, the idea of promoting the double coincidence of wants could be safely said to be a form of advertisement. This is because the man who has a need for a tuber of yam and has vegetable to exchange must equally make known what he has and what he needs for exchange. That idea of making known is an advertisement in the primitive days (Olatunji, 2017). However, modern practice of advertising can be said to be an aftermath of the subsistence nature of trade in the primitive days. The need to make known the excess production from specialisation for those in needs coupled with the introduction of money economy form the necessity for advertisement as a product of advertising.

The hallmark of the practice of advertising in Nigeria was the formation of the Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (AAPN) which came to be around June 1971 according to a founding member, Chief Olu Adekoya in the brochure programme of the Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (AAPN) 23rd AGM/Congress held in Ibadan in 1996. The association was formed under the leadership of Oloye Dotun Okunbanjo then Managing Director of Publicity Services Nigeria Limited. He first mooted the idea in 1969. The AAPN is now called Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN). There are 75 officially recognised advertising agencies in Nigeria (Olatunji, 2017). Some of them have won awards. Such awards include the Diamond Awards for Media Excellence, which is the first and most consistent media award in Africa, Lagos Advertising and Ideas Festivals Awards of the AAAN, Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) Awards among other awards around the world.

Apart from the development of advertising agencies in Nigeria, institutions offering mass communication as a course have swelled up. The advertising education is primarily domiciled in mass

communication department in Nigeria. However, the Nigerian academics and professionals in 2017 unbundled mass communication as a course at a workshop hosted by Bayero University, Kano where advertising was voted as a stand-alone course from mass communication. The stand-alone courses from mass communication are journalism and media studies, public relations, advertising, broadcasting, film and multimedia studies, development communication studies and information and media studies.

Types of Advertisements

Ogedengbe and Adesemoye (2010) gave types of advertisements to include:

1. **Product/Brand Advertisement:** This form of advertisement is directed at the consumer to purchase the brand being advertised. Such advertisements may include theprice and where the consumer can buy the product.
2. **Institutional Advertisement:** Another name for this is corporate advertisement. It is the copy that boosts the image and reputation of the advertiser. Corporate advertisement does not mention a product or service. It only mentions the company and its activities.
3. **Patronage Advertisement:** This type of advertisement is used to promote a producer or a retailer of a product rather than the product itself. This is usually adopted where the producer is new or there is fierce competition in the industry. It differentiates the producer or retailer from others.
4. **Public Relations Advertisement:** This is an advertisement that aims to achieve a positive situation for an organisation. It may also be to explain the position of an organisation or even individual about an issue as done by the Nigerian banks and MTN over the USSD charges on mobile money transfer in the country. It is also called advocacy advertisement.
5. **Public Service Advertisement:** This is a copy that promotes public interest. It is a subtle public relations advertisement.

Advertisement such as “accidents kill, don’t speed” is a public service advertisement. This is also called crusader advertisement or social responsibility advertisement (Olatunji, 2017).

6. **National Advertisement:** This is the advertisement that is sponsored by the manufacturer. Such copy can be placed in the local media. It is only called national advertisement in order to differentiate it from retail advertisement. Osunbiyi (1991) says the main goal of national advertisement is to create a favourable climate for a product rather than stimulate immediate sales. He added that this can also be called manufacturer or producer advertising. The copy does not tell the consumer where to buy the product but it stimulates the reader’s interest in the advertised product.
7. **Retail Advertisement:** This advertisement is sponsored by retailers. It is not uncommon to see advertisements sponsored by agent banks among others in Nigeria even in national newspapers. Retailers in other different types of business also engage in this type of advertisement. Retail advertisement usually carries the price of the product or service and the address of where it could be purchased.
8. **Co-operative Advertisement:** This is when an advertisement is sponsored by at least two bodies. For example, an advertisement by both the manufacturer and the retailer is a co-operative advertisement. In some cases, competitors join hands in sponsoring an advertisement. Such is usually an advocacy advertisement.
9. **Business Advertisement:** This is business to business (B2B) copy. This is when a company directs its advertisement to other companies. For example, an advertisement from a raw material producing company to a manufacturer who uses such raw material into a finished product is a B2B copy. Usually, it is common in technical or industry-specific publications.
10. **Trade Advertisement:** This is an advertisement between elements in the chain of distribution. A copy from the manufacturer directed to the wholesaler or retailer is an

example of trade advertisement. Like business advertisement, it is common in technical or industry-specific publications. Below-the-line media are usually used for this.

11. **Professional Advertisement:** This is an advertisement by professionals to professionals. Such copy may be to inform the professionals to know about the existence of new developments in the field. LinkedIn provides a platform for this type of advertisement on the social media.
12. **Travel Advertisement:** This is the copy that comes from transportation and aviation industries. An advertisement from Azman airline, Arik Airor Air Peace that gives a reduced fare for air travel is a good example of travel advertisement.
13. **Recruitment Advertisement:** This is the copy that announces vacancies in an organisation. This is common in national and international publications including Financial Times London, Economist Magazine London, The Punch Newspaper that publishes recruitment advertisements on Mondays and Wednesdays and The Guardian Newspaper that publishes same on Tuesdays and Thursday in Nigeria.
14. **Classified Advertisement:** Usually, this is a copy that is paid for per word. A word may be N100. So, a copy with 50 words will cost N5000. Such copies are usually used by those changing their names especially married women. However, some Nigerian newspapers now charge specific amount for classified advertisement irrespective of the number of words.
15. **Charity Advertisement:** Advertisement that seeks help for the poor is an example of charity advertisement. The Red Cross and Crescent can sponsor this. Also advertisements on fund me projects are another example of charity advertisement.
16. **Political Advertisement:** This is the advertisement that urges the electorate to vote for a particular candidate or party during election. The election can be for legislative or executive positions. It could also be an advertisement that is carrying a political message especially from a political party.
17. **Public Announcement/Notice:** This is a copy that informs the society about a particular development of interest. It is usually

placed on the radio. This is because radio reaches far and wide than other media.

18. **Congratulatory Message:** This is an advertisement that is sponsored to felicitate with someone who just added another feather to his cap. Advertisement congratulating Nigeria on her independence anniversary is an example of congratulatory advertisement.
19. **Supplement:** This is also called advertorial. It is an advertisement that highlights the activities of an organisation within a particular period of time. It tries to bring into focus the achievements and developments in the organisation within the particular period. It is not uncommon to find supplement being published on a particular industry. It can also be on a particular organisation during special events.
20. **Festival Advertisements:** This is a seasonal advertisement that is directed at the audience during festivals such as Eid celebration, Christmas, Easter, Maloud Nabiyy, among others.

Critically, these 20 types of advertisement can be safely grouped into two. These are commercial and non-commercial advertisements. Commercial advertisements are aimed at sales while non-commercial advertisements are not aimed at sales.

Functions of Advertisements

In explaining the functions of advertisements in the society, Gbolagunte (1992) notes that a former President of America Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) says advertisement is the counterpart in distribution of machine in production. And by that use of machines, production of goods and services has been multiplied. Advertisement multiplies the selling effort. It is the greatest accelerating force in distribution. Reaching many people at a low cost, it speeds up sales, turns prospects into customers in large numbers and at high speed. Hence in a mass production economy (large scale economy), advertisement has the greatest opportunity and greatest responsibilities of finding customers. However,

Gbolagunte addsthat apart from commercial functions, advertisement also performs functions in non-commercial environments.

According to Ogedengbe and Adesemoye (2010), the functions of advertisements include:

1). Notifying the public about available goods and services. It creates awareness for available products and services thereby ensuring that human needs are met.

2). Acceleration of economic growth and development thereby raising standard of living for a healthy nation.

3). Preferences creation for products by emphasising their unique benefit over others to the consumers in order to take a rational decision.

4). Provision of an enabling environment for the sales of products and services on a large scale. Such business environment is needed to lubricate the economy.

5). Revenue provision revenue for the media which make the media to be a sustainable business.

6). Provision of employment for the people thereby aiding the employment generation focus of the government.

7). Promotion of locally made goods including Nigerian rice thereby accelerating internal dependence of the economy and strengthening of the local currency, the Naira.

8). Provision of training grounds for artistes and other professionals and ensuring capacity and human capital development of the nation.

9). Promotion of national growth, development and discipline especially through message ofunderstanding, integration,

mobilisation and togetherness of the nation. Operation Feed the Nation and The War Against Indiscipline programmes of the Nigerian government in the late 1970s and early 1980s respectively were promoted by advertisement.

Other functions of advertisement according to Philip Kotler as published by *National Concord* newspaper of Monday, June 17, 1996, page 9 under the headline: Why You Must Advertise, are:

1) To tell the market about your new product.
2) To suggest new uses for your product.
3) To inform the market of a price change.
4) To explain how your product works.
5) To build brand preference.
6) To encourage switching to your brand.
7) To change your customer's perception of your attributes.
8) To remind your customers that the product in questions may be needed in the near future.
9) To remind the customers where to buy the product.
10) To describe available services.
11) To enable you correct false impression.
12) To help you build a proper company image.
13) To persuade your customers to purchase now.
14) To persuade your customers to receive a sales call.
15) To keep your products in minds of your customers during off seasons.
16) To maintain your products top-of-mind awareness.

Doghudje (1987) saysfunctions of advertisement include:

1) To announce a new product.
2) To announce product modification.
3) To announce price or price changes.
4) To announce new packaging.
5) To educate people on how to use a product.
6) To correct false impressions about the brand.

7) To encourage or stimulate the trade or sales force.
8) To remind people that a product is still available.
9) To announce distributor's name or location of outlets or after-sales services available.
10) To announce trade results.
11) To announce a company's contribution to the community's development- by way of taxes, employment facilities, scientific discoveries, among others.

Importance of Advertisement

Golagunte (1992) gives two main reasons advertisement is important in the society apart from its functions.

These two reasons are:

1) It aids business activities for societal growth, development and prosperity. As such, it ensures a good standard of living for the people at an affordable cost. This underlines its strategic importance in a modern society where life is not in a state of nature.
2) Advertisement replaces costly method of communication. If not for it, it may even be impossible to reach all members of the audience at a point in time. Aided by mass communication, advertisement makes reaching of all members of the society a reality.

Advertisement and Criticisms

As is the case in most fields, advertising practice is not without its critics especially on its product, that is, advertisement. For ease of analysis, the criticism against advertisements would be primarily examined from the concept of 10Ds of advertisement. These Ds are demoralising, debasing, dishonest, depersonalising, diabolic, deceptive, disfunctional, disturbing, demarketing, and distrustful. These ten Ds are the submissions of Olatunji (2017) and Osunbiyi

(1991). Other criticisms are also examined apart from the ten Ds. Critiques of the ten Ds and their defences are submitted below.

1) Demoralising: Critics argue that advertisements encourage people to be materially conscious. This, according to Professor Arnold Toynbee cited in Osunbiyi (1991), is not good especially with the fact that a higher percentage of the world's population is poor. On critical examination, this position is not only slim but shaky. It does not hold water. This is because advertisements are directed to a particular segment of the society (Moore &Pareek, 2010) and such segment, through research, can easily afford it. So, it is not demoralising. The case of market segmentation in media planning buttresses this (Balogun, 2006).
2) Debasing: Critics are of the opinion that advertisements in mass media are exposed to both the target audience and the unintended audience. For this, the unintended audience exposed to the advertisement is debased. To advertising practitioners and advertisers, this is not usually the case, as unintended audience for a copy usually looks elsewhere rather than concentrate on the copy. At the same time, advertisements also make use of personalised media like direct mail. Even magazine as a medium embraces socio-economic selectivity. This supports the fact that only the target audience has the capacity to buy copy of the media where the advertisement appears. So, advertisement is not debasing. It is exposed to the right audience.
3) Dishonesty: Antagonists of advertisements also say advertisements are dishonest. Possibly, there are false claims in some copies years back, but the situation has changed today especially with government's watchdog role through the Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria (APCON), self-regulation through sectoral bodies such as the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, and Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (Jibril, 2016). Nevertheless, the fact remains that advertisement is not dishonest as its purpose is to present factual information for people to take a decision. So, if some people use advertisement with falsehood (as fake news), such people should be held responsible not advertisement. If not,

the case is that of giving a dog a bad name in order to hang it. Obviously, advertisement is not dishonest, only that people may be. These days, there are nothing like dishonest advertisements as the watchdogs are really keeping their ears close to the ground. Also, some copies have to pass through vetting and approval by the Advertising Standard Panel of APCON before exposure. So, the case of dishonesty in advertisement does not occur. Any claim of dishonesty in advertisement is tantamount to propaganda.

4) Depersonalising: Critics say advertisements appeal to the mass of the people without regard to individual desires and tastes. This is not the case as advertisement appeals to a specific target at a point in time. For instance, alcoholic copies are not exposed during children time belt in the broadcast media. Underage media too do not allow tobacco advertising. So, advertisements do not depersonalise people, it reaches its specific audience.
5) Diabolic: An Advertisement harp on people's weakness to sell its brand is the position of the critics. This is not the case as advertisement only provides information for people as to how they can meet their needs. At the same time, human beings do reason. That underlines the concept of decision-making process under consumer behavior in advertising management (Forsyth, 2009). No person is loyal to the producer but to his needs as supported by his or her pocket.
6) Deception: Critics argue that advertisements deceive people especially with the use of adjectives such as better, the best among others. This is not the case as copywriters only qualify their brands with the right words as dictated by research. So, if an advertisement uses the word better, it is because it satisfies a marketing need than competition. So, advertisement is not deceptive but buttresses the truth.
7) Disfunctionality: It is being arguedthat advertisement does not contribute to consumption andthat it makes people desire what they do not need. This is not the case as advertisement encourages a particular set of people to buy a particular product to satisfy their need. So, advertisement contributes to

consumption especially if one looks at the fact that repeated purchases, the hallmarks of advertisements, make marketing success which brings about increased gross domestic product for any country including Nigeria where advertisement contributes N99.549 billion into the economy.

8) Disturbing: La Monica cited in Olatunji (2017) said advertisement is disturbing because she felt that entertainment advertisements were wasting the advertisers' money and only boosting the egos of the companies' marketing executives and their advertising agencies. This is misleading as the entertainment in advertisement serves as the catalyst that carries the advertisement to the target audience especially in today's competitive environment where there isnoise in the competitive environment. The entertainment appeal makes the advertisement easily acceptable to the target audience and not a waste.
9) Demarketing. That advertisement demarkets local culture by promoting foreign culture at the expense of national one especially in advertisements placed in the television. This is not true. Advertisement only celebrates humanity. Whatever culture, models and background created in an advertisement is an environment of humanity. The truth about the world is that geographical boundaries cannot separate people of different cultures especially now in an era of globalisation and the internet. What advertisement does is celebration of the oneness of humanity irrespective of where they are, and not the promotion of a particular culture. Also, it unites people of different cultures as against promotion of racism.
10) Distastefulness: Critics argue that advertisements expose one to what he or she does not appreciate or enjoy. It is for this reason that critics say advertisement is distasteful. However, the fact is that there is the freedom of choice in whatever one does. It is a constitutional guaranty in Nigeria. So, it is of choice to accept the exposure or not. The mass media that mirror the society is supported by advertisement because it is the revenue from advertisements that makes the mass media to be. The importance of the newspaper which is made to be by advertisement is

underlined by a former president of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson:

> The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without Newspaper, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter (Thomas Jefferson cited in Ogedengbe and Adesemoye, 2010, p. 23).

Other criticisms against advertisement include that it increases cost of products. The truth is that advertisement does not increase cost of production. In fact, it reduces cost of production which makes many people to be aware of the product. In that case, mass production is assured, so the unit price becomes highly reduced as fixed cost becomes marginal with additional production. This is one of the importance of advertisement in the society. Critics also argue that advertisement promotes capitalism but this is not so as advertisement only serves as promoter of economic wellbeing in all societies including welfarist, socialist and communist societies as exemplified by communist Cuba.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the criticisms against advertisement are not founded and could best be described as mere hearsay as the direct and indirect contributions of advertisement to the gross domestic products of any nation cannot be over emphasised. It is the product that ensures that other products contribute to the economy. Advertisement serves as promoter of goods and services which makes the GDP of the nation to be worthy. In case of Nigeria, advertisement has contributed greatly in making the country the largest economy in Africa through promotion of other services which make up the GDP. The former Finance minister and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala says services industry which advertisement (that contributes N99.549 to the GDP) is part of, jumps the Nigerian economy to number one in Africa. Who then says advertisement does not pay? A man wakes from advertised bed, cleans with advertised toothpaste

and soap, wears advertised wrist watch, drives advertised car and still says advertisement does not pay. When his unadvertised business fails, he will at least advertise it for sale (Osunbiyi, 1991).

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