



PERCEIVED EFFECT OF TELEVISION COMMERCIAL ON THE PATRONAGE OF THE PRODUCT AMONG SPORTS FANS IN ENUGU METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

The importance of advertisement in a business cannot be overemphasized. No alcoholic product becomes widely accepted and patronized without advertisements. The various channels of advertisements include social media, radio, and television. This study ascertained the perceived effect television commercial on the patronage of the product among sports fans in Enugu metropolis. The study was hinged on strong theory of advertisement. Survey method was adopted for the study; 400 respondents were drawn from sports fans at various viewing centers in Enugu metropolis using stratified random sampling method. Questionnaire was used as instrument in eliciting data for the study. The method of data analysis was the frequency tables/percentages and mean analysis. The researcher found out that sports fans in Enugu Metropolis are significantly aware of the television commercials of Heineken, Enugu sports fans hold a positive perception on television commercials of Heineken and finally, Heineken television commercials has no effect on the patronage of sports fans in Enugu Metropolis. It is therefore the recommendation of the study that Heineken should review their price because other beer brands sell at a lower price and given the state of Nigeria economy, many potentials customers may channel their loyalty to other substitute beers.

Keywords: Television, advertising, perception, patronage, beer

Introduction

In recent years, major brewing groups have increased their investments in Nigeria. The country has a young and growing population of more than 200 million people and an average beer consumption of 10 to 12 liters per year (Statista, 2022). Despite the fact that this is one of the highest consumption rates in Africa it is still tiny compared to other regions in the world. One of the beer brands/products that have gained considerable attention from consumers is Heineken (Smith, 2020).

Heineken is undoubtedly a world-class beer in terms of its performance. In 2018, Heineken ranked second in terms of its market share, holding 90% of worldwide sales, a runner-up right after the Hero beer brand (David, 2020). Nigeria is among the most profitable beer markets for industry giant Heineken. Locked in relentless competition with other multinational alcohol corporations, the company is seeking to consolidate its grip on Nigeria. Through a new acquisition of additional equity stakes in Nigerian Breweries, Heineken is pushing for further market domination in the country (Movendi, 2021). Today, Nigerian Breweries' majority owner is Heineken, controlling 37%. Nigeria's alcohol market is of superior strategic importance for Heineken, the second-largest beer producer in the world. In fact, Nigeria belongs to the most lucrative alcohol market in the world. Aside selling beer products to its customers, Heineken also sports like football, baseball, especially in African continent where a large chunk of its market resides (Drake, 2017).

Africa is a significant football region for good reasons. There are five billion football fans around the world, with Africa representing one of the largest fan bases across the globe. Undoubtedly, football is the most popular sport in Africa with an estimated 400 million Africans regularly tuning in to watch the UEFA Champions League (UCL) every season. For Heineken, the continent is also one of its largest markets that accounts for some of the highest growth for the brand, even during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hans, 2022). Beyond the Trophy Tour, Heineken had already made inroads to develop and deepen the connection with fans through the most premium viewing experience for football fans (Hans, 2022).

One of the significant consumers of beer products is sports fans. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa has about 100 million active football fans. This entails that half of the country's population of 200 million people are actually sports consumers (Chidi, 2020). It is on record that 70% of fans in Nigeria consume sports through satellite pay TV in viewing centers, sports restaurants, and households. Only about 25% still go to the stadium sporadically. For instance, most Nigerian fans consume more of the English Premier League and UEFA Champions League than local leagues or other leagues in the world. Scattered all over Enugu state are sports viewing centers. Enugu is the second highest state in the South-East to have sports centers following Anambra state (Ndukwe, 2020). However, there is currently unprecedented competition among beer industries. These are not the best of times for handlers of various beer brands in Nigeria. Aside from economic challenges that have affected purchasing power among consumers, thereby forcing them to reduce beer consumption, entrants of new brands and companies appear to have dealt a big blow to dominant beer brands. Today, the spin doctors behind top beer brands appear to be working with anxiety and panic in order to remain relevant. Perhaps mostly hit are premium brands like Star, Heineken, Gulder, and Guinness Stout, which have lost market shares to mid-range brands like Golberg, 33, Trophy, Hero, Life Beer, and other cheaper brands (ThisDay Live, 2022). To maintain and possibly increase its market share, Heineken adopts various advertising strategies to facilitate patronage. Its popular "It's more than a feeling" television commercial is one of its strategies to maintain and seduce potential consumers. The target of this study is to ascertain the perceived effect of this television commercial on the patronage of the product among sports fans in Enugu metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Advertisement messages or advertisements on television last only as long as it is being presented on the screen. If a viewer is not watching or listening at the exact moment the advertisement is presented, the message is gone and wasted as far as the viewer is concerned. In order to be able to influence viewers' preference positively towards their services and packages, television advertisers or television advertisement directors need knowledge of the viewers and how they react to certain factors under different situations. Most modern television advertisements are not directed by the dictates of psychological principles. This is a problem because the viewers are humans and they have their cognitive or mental processes, if the television advert is not well designed, it will turn the people off instead of attracting them. Understanding the psychology of the viewers is an aspect that needs to be researched. However, given the level of competition among these beer brands, there are unique advertising strategies adopted by them. Heineken for instance utilizes a slogan in its television commercials "Its more than a feeling" to influence, seduce and attract patronage. However, there is uncertainty on the knowledge, perception, and effect of this commercial on the patronage of football fans in the Enugu Metropolis. This study is therefore motivated to find out the market penetration of Heineken to this category of consumers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the course of this study:

1. To what extent are sports fans aware of the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu Metropolis?

2. How do sports fans perceive the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu Metropolis?
3. What is the effect of Heineken television commercial on the patronage of the product among sports fans in Enugu Metropolis?

Literature Review

The Concept of Television

Television is electronic equipment with a screen glass that allows messages, pictures, and motions to be heard and seen in it (Hornby, 2014). Sandra (2018), defines television as an audio-visual gadget that is used for news broadcasts, advertising of goods and services, dramas, shows and other services. According to William and George (2013), a television is a piece of equipment with a screen glass that shows, broadcasts, and programmes with moving pictures and sound. William (2016) gives six types of television service categories as network television service, local television service, syndication television service, cable television service, broadcast television service, and direct satellite television service. Network television broadcasts programming over airwaves to affiliate stations across the country.

The Concept of Advertisements/Commercials

Advertising is the non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products (goods, services, and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media (Aliede (2013) cited in Benson, 2015). Usually, advertisement is directed to groups of people, not individuals. This is the more reason it is not personal. Advertisements could be segmented as it could be for youths, the married, the unmarried, the rural and urban, educated and uneducated, etc members of a given society. Most advertisements are persuasive so as to win converts who are lured to patronize goods, services, or ideas (Emetumah, Okorie, Duru, Macaulay, Nnosike & Etumnu, 2022). Often, it could be to convince people about a particular product that will benefit them. Some advertisements, however, aim at providing information about the existence of a good, service, or idea. The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) (1998) defined advertising as a form of communication through the mass media about products, services, or ideas paid for by an identified sponsor. Alcohol advertising is the promotion of alcoholic beverages by alcohol producers through a variety of media. Along with nicotine advertising, alcohol advertising is one of the most highly regulated forms of marketing. Some or all forms of alcohol advertising are banned in some countries (Williams, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Strong Theory of advertising.

Strong Theory

John Philip Jones created the strong theory in 1991. The theory views advertising as a powerful tool for changing consumer attitudes as well as the sale of goods and services. It is based on the supposition that people cannot process information intelligently and that advertising can influence a target audience's knowledge, beliefs, or behavior to some extent (Jones, 2015). From this standpoint, Jones holds that advertising has some inherent persuasive powers that can induce positive purchase behaviour towards a product that has not been tested previously. The relevance of this theory to this study is that advertising can now change a consumer's perception; in this case alcoholic product, by persuading and motivating him or her to act in a way that they otherwise would not because it is assumed that they are unable to process information intelligently. This would further translate to long-term changes in purchasing decisions.

Related Empirical Studies

Nweze (2021) analyzed the influence of television advertising in promoting MTN products in Enugu metropolis. The main objective is to find out if the residents of Enugu Urban Area have access to television, to determine the frequency of exposure of residents of Enugu to MTN advert messages on television, to examine the impact of MTN television advertisements on residents of Enugu Urban Area. The type of research design for this study is descriptive survey design. The population consist all the areas in Enugu State. They are: New heaven, Abakpa-nike, Ogui new Layout, Achara Layout and Independence Layout. The study presented that Advertising is without doubt a very important promotional tool, its importance can be understood from its ability to attract attention and having drawn customer's attention, it provides information that can prompt them (consumers) to further actions which means that it encourages continuous patronage. The researcher recommended that MTN-NG should intensity efforts in nourishing good customers' relationship. There should also be growing movement towards integrating all the messages created by their various communication agencies and sent out by various departments within the company in order to achieve consistency. In order for MTN to prosper against its rivals, they have to be innovative and alert to whatever subtle move made by other competitors in order to continue occupying its leadership position.

Adams (2017) examined the effect of television advertisements of mobile telecommunication companies in Nigeria on viewers' choice preference. One hundred and twenty-seven (127) participants were randomly selected from a university community. There were 67 males and 60 females in the study. The mean age of participants was 28.31 (SD = 5.04). The study adopted the Single factorial design. Two hypotheses were tested in the study and the results of hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant effect of television advertisement of mobile telecommunication networks on viewers' preference, $F(1, 125) = 0.625, p = .431$ ($p > .05$); while the result of hypothesis two showed that there was a significant effect of age on viewers' preference of televised advertisement of mobile telecommunication networks.

Joel and Lawrence (2017) carried out a study on the relationships between television beer advertising and drinking knowledge, beliefs, and intentions. The research was guided by a theoretical model specifying that awareness of advertising, and not mere exposure, is necessary for it to have an effect on beliefs or behaviors. Participants were a random sample of 468 fifth- and sixth-grade schoolchildren from a northern California community. Data were collected in the home with a combination of self-administered questionnaires and structured interviews. Non-recursive statistical modeling indicated that awareness of television beer advertising was related to more favorable beliefs about drinking, to greater knowledge of beer brands and slogans, and to increased intentions to drink as an adult. The effects of advertising awareness on knowledge, beliefs, and intentions were maintained when the reciprocal effects of beliefs, knowledge, and intentions on awareness were controlled. The findings suggest that alcohol advertising may predispose young people to drinking.

Malachy (2020) carried out a study to establish the relationship between exposure to TV commercials and preference for beer brands among male bank employees. The Survey method and purposive sampling technique were adopted. One hundred males were interviewed using a questionnaire administered in five out of the eight banks. Ten persons were also orally interviewed. The study revealed a relationship between television advertising of beer and consumption rate. TV advertising had a reasonable influence on consumer brand awareness and interest to drink beer. However, the most determinant factor for consumer preference was quality. However, price increase can make 2% of the sample to think twice on consuming such brand.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to determine the influence of television advertising on consumers of alcoholic products. The justification for adopting this design is because of the nature of the study. It involves investigating the subjects in their natural setting without manipulating them. The population of the study constitutes all sports fans in Enugu metropolis. Enugu metropolis comprises three local government areas, namely; Enugu East, Enugu North, and Enugu South. The population for this study is therefore all sports fans drawn from the major viewing centers in Enugu metropolis. In the course of the study, 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed to sports fans at various sports centers in Enugu state and 380 were retrieved. The questionnaire was deployed as an instrument for data collection and was face validated by an expert. Cronbach alpha statistic was used to test the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach alpha yielded a numerical coefficient of 0.73 which is acceptable. The method of data analysis employed was frequency distribution and mean analysis to either accept or reject a response.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to 400 respondents however 380 were later retrieved and analyzed. The corresponding response rate is $0.95 = 95\%$. This analyzes was done in a tabular form using frequency distribution and mean analysis for clear understanding.

Research Question One: To what extent are sports fans aware of the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu metropolis?

Presented below is table one which shows the respondents view on the extent of their awareness and exposure to television commercial of Heineken in Enugu metropolis.

Table 1: Respondents' response on their exposure to Heineken television commercial

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
I am sufficiently aware of the television commercial by Heineken	180	200	-	-	380	3.4	Accepted
I am sufficiently knowledgeable to television adverts on Heineken beer	136	244	-	-	380	3.3	Accepted
I receive most of the information about Heineken through the television	67	85	108	120	380	2.2	Rejected
Heineken commercial flashes often on the screen during crucial matches	160	110	47	67	380	2.9	Accepted
						2.9	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2022*

The table above indicates that at a mean value of 2.9, respondents accept the idea that they are aware of and informed about Heineken's commercial through the television. It further entails that they are sufficiently informed about the advertisements carried out by Heineken beer to influence patronage.

Research Question Two: How do sports fans perceive the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu metropolis?

Presented below is table two which shows the respondents perception on the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu metropolis.

Table2: Respondents’ response on their perception on Heineken’s television commercial

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
Heineken’s television commercial is excellent and catchy	190	120	50	20	380	3.3	Accepted
Heineken’s television commercial is timely	129	169	82	-	380	3.1	Accepted
Heineken’s television commercial is the best compared its rivals’ commercials	90	110	99	9	380	2.3	Rejected
Heineken’s television commercial is highly strategic	200	147	33	-	380	3.4	Accepted
						3.0	Accepted

Source: *Field Survey, 2022*

Result from the data analysis in table 2 established that sports fans hold a positive perception on Heineken’s television commercial. This is because the mean value exceeded the 2.5 benchmark. The analysis clearly shows that the strategic, catchy, and competitive television commercial of Heineken holds an acceptable by the sampled sports fans in Enugu metropolis.

Research Question Three: What is the effect of Heineken television commercial on the patronage of the product among sports fans in Enugu metropolis?

Presented below is table three which shows the respondents perceived effect of Heineken television commercial on the patronage of the product among sports fans in Enugu metropolis

Table3: Respondents’ response on their perceived effect of Heineken television commercial on the patronage of the product among sports fans in Enugu metropolis

Option	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
Heineken’s television commercial makes me patronize their product	21	59	287	13	380	2.2	Rejected
Heineken’s television commercial makes Heineken my favourite beer	41	43	296	-	380	2.3	Rejected

Heineken's television commercial makes me willing to patronize their product	49	62	189	80	380	2.3	Rejected
Heineken's television commercial induces me to always recommend it to friends and fellow sports fans	68	62	198	52	380	2.9	Accepted
						2.4	Rejected

Source: *Field Survey, 2022*

Result from the data analysis in table 3 established that Heineken's television commercial has no effect on the patronage of the product by sports fans in Enugu metropolis. This is because the mean value is less than the 2.5 benchmark. The analysis clearly shows that irrespective of the strategic and timely television commercials of Heineken, it does not induce them to buy the drink. A close hypothesis that can be said to be the cause is price and habit. Compared to Heineken, there are other affordable beers and many of the sports fan may have established their loyalty to the consumption of other beer brands.

Discussions of Findings

The first objective of this study is to ascertain the knowledge and awareness of sports fans on the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu metropolis. The findings of the study showed that majority of the respondents who are sports fans are aware of the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu metropolis. This entails that Heineken has significantly its brand through television commercials among sports fans. This is in line with the findings of George (2019) who analyzed the level of customers awareness on television commercial of Hero in Imo state. He found out that customers are indeed aware of Hero through television commercial. This research is also in line with the findings of Tunde and Fred (2018) who carried out a study on the level on customers' awareness of Tummy Tummy noodles through television commercial and found out that the awareness of customers is traced back to the consistent television commercial of the company.

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the perception of sports fans on the television commercial of Heineken in Enugu metropolis. Findings from the actualization of this objective shows that the strategic, catchy, and competitive television commercial of Heineken holds an acceptable by the sampled sports fans in Enugu metropolis. This is in with the findings of Lema (2019) who explored the impact of advertisement on consumers brand preference in the beer brand market in Adama city. The structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 384 respondents, out of which 346 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed. These respondents were selected by using stratified probability sampling method. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics like correlation and multiple regressions. The finding revealed that there are positive and significant relationships between advertising media, source of advertisement, characteristics of advertising messages and brand preference of beer. Even though it has high influence in overall view, among advertising media TV is the most influential media in brand preference of beer in Adama city context.

The third objective of this study is to ascertain the effect of Heineken television commercial on the patronage of the product among sports fans in Enugu metropolis. To actualize this objective, the researcher generated data through questionnaires and analyzed it with mean statistics. The study found that consumers are not persuaded to purchase Heineken despite the company's well-timed and strategically placed television advertisements. Price and habit are a plausible theory that could be the cause. There are more reasonably priced beers than Heineken, and many sports fans may already have developed a commitment to drinking other beer brands. This finding was not however in line with the findings of Musah and Michael (2017) who determined the effect of television advertising on consumer patronage of selected consumer

goods in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria and found out that television advertisement positively influences customer patronage. This is not also in line with the findings of Nweze (2021) who analyzed the influence of television advertising in promoting MTN products in Enugu metropolis and found out that television advertising contributes positively to the promotion of MTN products in Enugu Metropolis.

Conclusion

Advertising is a powerful tool for attracting customers and keeping them in mind. It also has a big impact on consumers' preferences for particular beers. Customers remember and trust the advertisements for their brands. They can use this recall to help them decide what to buy. In this study, it was found that Enugu sports fans are aware of the Heineken television commercial, hold a positive perception of the television commercial. However, it was revealed that Heineken television commercial does not affect the patronage of sports fans in Enugu metropolis. The conclusion that was drawn from the findings is that Heineken television commercial is widely known by sports fans in Enugu metropolis but their level of patronage and loyalty is in doubt. This is likely caused by the fact that the price of Heineken may not be pleasant to majority of the sports fans. Secondly, most of those sports fans are already loyal to other beer brands.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are communicated

1. Heineken commercials should use celebrities, and experts to advertise their products and to get more sales volume and market share. The companies should select the celebrities that have greater credibility and fan following.
2. The advertising mechanism should be customized to reflect different cultures in Nigeria. They should not assume one line of advert will influence all customers across continents.

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