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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN IN MARKETING MTN'S 5G HANDSETS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the influence of advertising campaign in marketing MTN 5G handset. The objective of the study among others include; to determine the importance of media mix in product advertisement; to ascertain how MTN applied advertisement in the lunch of their 5G handset. The study was anchored on the AIDA model. A random sample of 215 was selected from male and female users of MTN products. Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency and simple percentages as the basis of calculation. The finding of the study revealed that the awareness level of respondents to MTN 5G handset advertising was 100%. It was further observed that MTN employed the use of different marketing strategies such as free 30GB data bundle, free new sim card and others. The researchers therefore recommended that media mix is an important key element in product marketing and acceptance. It was also recommended that there is the need to employ rightful advertisements for the promotion of goods and services.

Keywords: Advertising, advertising campaign, influence, MTN 5G handset, marketing, handset

Introduction

Corporate organisation advertise varieties of goods and services each passing day with the view of getting the attention of the customers as well as striving towards sustaining customer-organisation relationship. Annual needs and wants are regularly changing and this calls for a changing marketing and advertising approach. However, new insight, new tools new opportunities and challenges emerge in the changing world of the customers. Organisations produce goods and services which are targeted at the customers. Therefore, customers interest is the crucial consideration in any successful marketing or advertising communication process (Delvin, 2020). The sole aim of marketing and advertising communication is to position a product or service in the mind of the customers. Once the individualis exposed to the product, the next thing is to start considering the value of the product/service to be accepted based on the information provided (Jumbo et al., 2020). Further, advertising has to do with engaging audience with a view to differentiating product and services, reinforcing beliefs and experiences, informing availability through awareness creation and finally persuading audience to behave in a particular way (i.e.) taking an active step towards purchasing the product.

The major for any individual or organisation to be in business is to make profit well enough to pay off all overhead cost and remain meaningfully in business despite the competitions in the marketing environment. Indeed, recognition must be given to the fact that one of the greatest challenges confronting organisations is to take appropriate decisions regarding the conduct of sales activities. Such questions as who needs our product? Who are the potential customers? Can the existing customers meet up with our new product class? These and many more challenge the organisation as they prepare to go into a sales

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activity of their product/services. There are also uncontrollable external factors that can frustrate product sales.

Communication is therefore a key tool which organisation can take advantage of towards influencing the decisions of consumers to go for their product. This is where advertisement plays a crucial role. He must amplify the use of different media of communication such as the print and broadcast media of radio, television, newspapers, magazine and the internet to communicate the product to the potential customers (Okenna, 2018) importantly, a coalition of media forces must interplay towards ensuring that the audience are properly informed about the product. Different communication channels of advertising appeal to different audience. This means that product advertisement achieve improvement result and product acceptance when there is a combination of media channels to reach out to the heterogeneous and scattered audience locally, nationally and globally. The use of combine media for marketing promotion introduces us to the concept of integrated marketing communication (one) strategy to draw customer's attention to a product.

As a promotional strategy, advertising serves as a major tool in creating product awareness and conditioning the mind of a potential customer to take appropriate buying decision (Obodo 2018; Emetumah et al., 2022). Organisations that are not interested in investing on advertisement are gradually risking failure. In line with the ongoing discussions, MTN, as a network service provider is faced with the uphill task of reinforcing and rebuilding its sales force through the one strategy for it to successfully position its latest 5G handsets in the market. Presently, other network providers as Airtel, Glo, Etisalat are all in the 5G brand competition to occupy the market. The strategy of using the media to achieve product break though in this regard form the thrust of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Introducing a new product into the market is one of the biggest challenges facing organisation. The challenges include a determination of the right media to use in communicating the product to customers, such media must have a strong appeal on the audience and persuade them to take active action towards the purchase of the product. There is also the problem of designing the right marketing communication approach that can positively influence customers in the direction of purchase or use of the product. In this regard, advertising must do more than merely informing and entertaining but must change or reinforce an attitude or behaviour. It is therefore the aim of this study to assess the influence of advertising in marketing MTN's 5G handsets in Imo State.

Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are;

- 1. To determine the importance media mix in product advertisement.
- 2. To ascertain how MTN applied advertising in the lunch of their 5G handset.
- 3. To find out how advertising influence on the sale of MTN 5G handset.
- 4. To ascertain the relevance of advertising in brand development.

Literature Review

Concept of Advertising Campaign

Advertising is one of the elements in the promotional mix in marketing. Advertising messages do influence public perception of products. An advertising campaign is a series of advertisement messages that share a single idea and theme which make up an integrated marketing communication (Elsore, 2021). In the words of Idedia (2018), an advertising campaign is a set of advertisements that work together to promote a product or service. Essentially, advertisement campaigns are used to build interest or excitement about a particular product or service by informing the public about its value, with the aim to prompt action purchase of the product ideally, advertising campaign is a designed and structured strategy with a specific brand message that is spread across different platforms through different media of communication such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, internet and the outdoor media.

To understand the role of advertising and promotion in today's business world, it is important to recognise how a firm can use all the promotional tools to communicate with its customers. Some of the key promotional tools used in the advertising communication mix are; advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and branding (Mujuiwa, 2018). Absolahim (2019) writes that advertising campaign helps promote the product positively in the minds of the audience. Absolahim further stated that credible product advertising is persuasive and not manipulative or deceptive, and that its message informs the audience about the product's position and allow customers to develop differentiated images of the product.

Advertisement through different media platforms have become the most commonly used technique to create a favourable image for the product while also creating an enabling environment for new product/service penetration into the market sphere (Uwadiegwu, 2019) All kinds of advertising comprises both information and influence. Advertising campaign is not just the transmission of messages utilised for announcing a circulation to the public via the media, rather it is a constructive presentation and adoption of a product, services institution or an ideal through effective media mix approach.

Functions of Advertising Campaign

Every advertising campaign aim to connect with the audience in a way that encourage them to try out a brand product, know more about the company or take some action. This is the primary objective of an advertising campaign.

Another crucial function of advertising campaign is to inform and influence consumers behaviour through creating brand awareness while also drawing sales. And building brand development.

Another salient function of advertising campaign is to remind potential customers about a particular brand. This type of advert promotes consistency in product use.

A good advertising campaign helps in customers loyalty towards a particular company's product or service. The process of advertising campaign involves a strategic approach of identified target audiences, designing the brand message and selecting appropriate media channels (Ordor, 2020).

Consumer Behaviour Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour describes the actions and decisions that people or households make when they choose, buy, use and dispose of a product or service. Customer's behaviour constitutes of how the customer's emotions and attitude reflect their purchase, use and disposal response to products and services. According to Weller (2020), consumer behaviour observes how people choose, use and discard

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products and services encompassing their emotional, cognitive and behavioural reactions. Consumer behaviour encompasses mental and physical actions that customers engage in when searching for, evaluating, purchasing and using products and services.

Consumers actions and inactions towards a particular product or service is the function of diverse variable mix. Such variables includes;

Culture; Cultural factor has a strong influence on consumer buying behaviour. Cultural factors include the basic values, needs, wants, preferences and perceptions (Udu, 2018).

Market factor is another determinant of consumer response to product/service. Market forces come into play if there is a short supply of the product in the market. This will impact strongly on consumer response towards the product or service.

Motivation is another strong factor. The advertising method emphasises on the products unique selling point (USP) as a persuasive mechanism to grab the attention of the audience. The benefit to be derived from a product or service has a lot to do in influencing customers attitude towards the product.

Knowledge is important in product purchase. Knowledge builds perception. The degree of knowledge gathered about a product influences audience response type towards product knowledge therefore is a crucial factor in determining consumer behaviour.

MTN Nigeria Historical Development

MTN Nigeria began operation in August 2001. As of February 28, 2002, the company has approximately 250,000 subscribers and is currently adding on average value. MTN Nigeria communication PLC is a subsidiary of MTN international. The mobile communication outfit is the leading telecommunication company in Nigeria, and established during General Olusegun Obasanjo.s regime. The history of MTN can be traced to South Africa at the down of democracy in 1004 as a leader in transformation (Udu, 2018).

Since the inception of MTN in Nigeria the company has demonstrated a strong sense of commitment to the development of telecommunication and other allied telecommunication infrastructure in Nigeria. It has continually embarked in manpower development, training and retraining of resource persons to meet with present day's challenges in the world of telecommunication (Kunle, 2019).

MTN 5G Handset

MTN offers to its numerous customers the latest smartphone device known as MTN 5G handset Router. This is a high speed broad brand router compatible with 5G, 4G and 3G. As a promotional strategy to market the product, MTN bundled a new Sim and 30GB data plan to woo customers to go for it. With the 5G network, there is easy access to video calls, send MMS, screen YouTube videos, send and receive heavy emails attachment and download music, while also having the opportunity of enjoying the usual voice call and messaging services.

How MTN 5g Differs From other Smartphones

Studies conducted by smart communications Ltd in 2023 revealed that the technology used to deliver data to other smartphones such as 3G and 4G remains the same, 5G takes speed and connectivity to new and exciting places. The search furthers showed that 5G can deliver data up to 10x faster than 4G. that means

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Hyper fast, downloads, virtually lag free mobile gaining and super smooth video chatting. 5G phones can use both 4G and 5G technology. This will allow easy access to 4G network coverage regardless of where we maybe in the country. The biggest difference between 4G and 5G is latency. 5G promises low latency under 5 million seconds while latency ranges from 60ms to 98ms (Uka 2023). Another strong difference of 5G from 4G is the higher frequency spectrum and longer bandwidth.

Empirical Studies

Rines and Beckit (2018) in a research study entitled 'advertising role in product promotion found that advertising generate reliability hence creating positive feelings for a brand. Based on this finding, Rines and Beckit suggest that creative effort should be invested in message contents of adverts for the purpose of generating volume sales for both new and existing products. Furthermore, Colman and Tedna (2020) researching on the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication in brand promotion noted that the best form of marketing strategy is to involve all parameters of marketing communication mix to appeal to the different segments of the audience. By this approach, the need value for a product can be realized, no matter the stage at which the product is in the market. Colman therefore recommended an aggressive marketing approach to register a product in the market through a coalition of media mix technique.

Joseph (2024) investigated the attitudes of undergraduate students at the University of Benin towards the advertising campaigns of MTN, a prominent telecommunications company in Nigeria. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research aims to understand the effectiveness of MTN's advertising strategies and their impact on the target audience. Through surveys, the study examines students' perceptions, preferences, and engagement with MTN advertisements, considering factors such as message clarity, creativity, relevance, and overall brand perception. The findings will provide valuable insights for MTN's marketing strategies and contribute to the existing literature on advertising effectiveness in the Nigerian context.

Aka et al. (2015) carried out a study on Advert Exposure on Consumer Purchase Decision: An Empirical Study on MTN Nigeria. The study's goal was to investigate the connection between consumer preference for MTN's services over those of rival brands and the exposure to advertisements. A total of 172 academic staff members from Covenant University and Crawford University answered the research questionnaire using the survey instrument. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables was ascertained using the Pearson correlation. According to their research, customers' preference for MTN services over those of rival brands is strongly correlated with the exposure of MTN advertisements. Additionally, the intensity of an advertisement has a significant impact on consumers' awareness of the product. They revealed that the managers of the relevant telecommunications network (MTN) should effectively manage and maintain advertisement strategies in order to get attention through colorful and captivating advertisements. They also suggested that advertisements should be more customer-friendly and easily understood by laypeople. This was a crucial recommendation regarding the network's advertising.

A study on the effects of Gulder advertisements on the social behavior of students at Enugu State University of Science and Technology was carried out by Maduagwu (2013). The study's target population consisted of Enugu State University of Science and Technology students from which a sample size of 100 was drawn. Eighty respondents in all finished their surveys. Her research indicates that the majority of people, especially students, who live in today's urban cities are influenced by advertising. Everybody and for most of our lives, we see and hear advertisements, even if you do not watch the television, you will listen to the radio51and this advertisement structures the behavior and attitude of people if in relation to their perceptions. She also noted that whatever impact advertising causes depends on the state of mind of the students.

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Theoretical Framework

The sole aim of advertising is to help develop potential customers to adopt to a particular brand preference in the midst of other competitive brands in the market. Advertising theories generally helps to provide a vivid explanation on how advertising can be a potential instrument in bending the minds of the audience towards a specific product.

This study is anchored on the AIDA model, propounded by Elino Lewis in 1958. The acronym AIDA stands for Action-Interest-Desire and Action. This is one of the earliest models of consumer behaviour. The model relies on the assumption that the purchase of a product does not come suddenly, rather it goes through a systematic stage which the potential customer passes through before exercising action in the purchase of the product. Cassey (2021) writes that the AIDA model presents a realistic account of the interpersonal activities of an individual from the point of being exposed to the advertised product and to the point when the decision to purchase the product is made. Cassey further gave a run of the four distinct stages of the consumer behaviour process. The stages are;

- 1. **Awareness:** This is the primary stage of advertising. Awareness means bringing the product or service to knowledge of the targeted audience. Awareness creation can be through the media such as the radio, television, newspaper, internet, outdoor media or through any other interpersonal means.
- 2. **Interest:** The message of the advertising concerning the product or service must be persuasive enough to attract the interest of the audience. The advert content must be attention grabbing to hold the interest of the audience to pounder over the product.
- 3. **Desire:** The moment attention is created, the need to pounder the unique selling point of the product, (USP) is point into consideration. Thus, every product has a special benefit it is offering to its users, which makes it stand out from other competing products of similar brands. It is the intensity of the benefit to the individual that produces the effect of purchase of the product.
- 4. **Action:** Action the end result of the 3 earlier stages recorded. Action at this stage means the final decision to purchase the product or service after considering the intensity of the benefit to be derived from the product.

The impact of the theory to this study is a holistic attempt to provide an explanation to the fact that product advertising must not be mere communication process, but must be persuasive enough to stimulate active purchase of the product. This implies that for the penetration and sales objective of MTN 5G handset to be achieved, the benefit of the product must be emphasized so as to stimulate appropriate attention, desire and purchase.

Methodology

The survey design was used to gather data for the study. The study has a population of 5,167,722 from the National Bureau of Statistics 2020 report. The researchers applied the purposive sampling technique to sample 300 MTN users who formed the sample size of the study. After the face-to-face questionnaire distribution, only 295 valid copies were returned signifying a high return rate of instrument. This implies that 98.3% questionnaire was returned valid, while 1.7% were invalid; and could not be used for the study.

The purposive sampling technique was used by the researchers as a way of obtaining best information to realise the objective of the study. The percentage method was used for the data analysis.

Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion

The final analysis was calculated based on the valid 295 questionnaire retrieved. The data generated were analysed using tables, frequency and simple percentage values. Data analysis and interpretation was based on the research questions of the study.

Research Question One: What is the importance of media mix in product advertisement?

Table 1: Respondents response on Awareness of MTN's 5G Handset

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	
Yes	295	100%	_
No	-	-	
Total	295	100	

Source: Field survey, 2024.

The table 1 above showed that the 295 (100%) respondents of the study are aware of MTN's 5G handset. This implies that respondents are Aware of MTN's 5G Handset.

Table 2: Respondents response on Source of awareness

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
Radio	34	11%	
Television	58	19%	
Newspaper	57	19%	
Fliers	45	16%	
Billboard	31	11%	
Internet/ Social media	37	13%	
Others	33	11%	
Total	295	100	

Source: Field survey, 2024.

The above question in table 2 sought to find out the source of respondent's awareness of MTN's 5G handset. From the above table, the major sources of information for respondents are television and newspaper. Television stood at 58 (19%) while newspaper stood at 57(19%) respectively. This means that television and newspaper were the major sources of information for respondents.

Table 3: Frequency of watching/listening or reading MTN advertisement on 5G handset

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
Very often	62	21%	
Often	138	47%	
Somewhat often	58	20%	
Not often	37	12%	
Total	295	100	

Source: Field survey, 2024

The table revealed that a total number of 138 (47%) of the respondents identified their exposure level to MTN advertisement on 5G handsets as often. This means that respondents watch/listen or read MTN advertisement on 5G handset often as indicated by the analysed data.

Table 4: Respondents response on whether the advert influenced their interest in the product

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
Strongly agree	98	33%	
Agree	86	29%	
Disagree	51	17%	
Strongly disagree	60	21%	
Total	295	100	

Source: Field survey 2024

The result of table 4 above showed that the majority of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that the advert on MTN's 5G handset influenced their interest in the product. This implies that the advert content was persuasive enough to grab audience attention.

Research Question 2: How did MTN apply advertising in the launch of their 5G handset?

Table 5: Respondents' response on How did MTN apply advertising in the launch of their 5G handset

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
Free 30GB data bundle	41	14%	
31 days free data use	118	40%	
Price reduction	38	13%	
Free new SIM card	98	33%	
Total	295	100	

Source: Field survey, 2024.

Table 5 revealed that the most popular strategy used in the marketing of MTN 5G handset is the 31 days free data plan given to those who patronize the product. The implication of this finding is that the 31 days free data plan was the major the advertising strategy employed by MTN in launching their 5G handset.

Research Question 3: How did advertising influence the sale of MTN 5G handset?

Table 6: Respondents response on whether adverts are very informative

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
Strongly agree	101	34%	
Agree	102	34.5%	
Disagree	38	13.5%	
Strongly disagree	54	18%	
Total	295	100	

Source: Field survey, 2024

The table 6 above revealed that the majority of the respondents representing 102 (34.5%) and 101 (34%) indicated strongly agree and agree respectively that adverts are very informative. This implies that information from the adverts of MTN 5G handset was highly informative as to influence the sale and penetration of the product.

Research Question 4: What is the relevance of advertising in brand development?

Table 7: Respondents response on the relevance of advertising in brand development

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Providing information about	79	27%
the use of the product		
Creates awareness and builds	90	31%
Knowledge about the product		
Promotes sale of the product	95	32%
Others	31	11%
Total	295	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

The table 7 revealed audience response to the relevance of advertising in brand building. From the result, it was revealed that 95 (32%) said it promotes sales, 90 (31%) said it creates awareness and builds knowledge about the product. The implication of the finding showed that advertising is key to success of a product. This revealed the statement of about advertising "refuse to advertise and kill the product.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion in this study was based on the analysis of responses of the respondents on the questionnaire administered to them. Their responses were also linked to the theoretical framework of the study.

In research question one; which tried to ascertain the importance of media mix in product advertisement. The research showed that due to the different media use in advertising campaign, there was an observed 100% awareness of MTN 5G handset. The observation realised from this data is in consonance with the assertion of Osiemele (2018) that the effect of employment of different media for the purpose of reaching out to the audience is significance in promoting sales and advancement of new product penetration. Again, the 100% awareness of the product showed that the message content of the advert was informative and persuasive enough to arrest the attention of the audience. The process of arresting in the contest aligns with the AIDA model which formed the theoretical foundation of the study.

In research question two, which asked to know how MTN applied advertising in the launch of their 5G handset. The result revealed that MTN employed different marketing strategies to persuade audience to accept their products. Such strategies include free 30GB data bundle, 31 days free data use, price reduction and free new sim card. This finding is in agreement with the suggestion of Osegie (2018) that one of the best ways to promote a product is through the use of promotional ads. These ads are incentives that influence product sales.

In research question three. Majority of the respondents about 102 (34.5%) somewhat agree that the advertising of MTN 5G handset influenced them towards the purchase of the product. The finding is supported by Midwell and Kellan (2020) who asserts that effective and well planned information is key to the success of any form of advert. Such an advert Midwell suggest has the ability to attract the attention of

the audience, create the desired interest and activate positive response in line with the AIDA model of advertising.

In research question four. Which sought to determine the relevance of advertising in brand development. The finding showed that advertising has the capacity to provide information about the use of the product, create awareness and build knowledge as well as promote sales.

This finding is supported by the assertion of Belch and Belch (2012) who clearly state that essential characteristics of advertising as educative, informative and the realization of high return on investment through volume product sales.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that through advertising, awareness is built and buying decision is developed as a measure of the effectiveness of the advertising campaign. It is also safe to conclude that effective advertising creates a lasting image of the advertised product/services in the mind of the audience.

Recommendation

In line with the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that;

- 1. Creative advertising could be more meaningful when an effective media mix approach is employed. This can effectively be achieved through an understanding of the appealing nature of the media to the diverse audience needs
- 2. Since marketing strategy and advertising practices aids sales, there is the need to ensure the employment of rightful ads. to support brand acceptance.
- 3. Since advertising influences sales, there is the need to employ qualitative and seasoned advertising practitioners to help in designing messages.
- 4. As advertising promotes brand development, advert messages should be properly crafted in line with unique selling point of the product so as to sustain and provoke the attention of the audience to go the product.

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