

AN EXAMINATION OF OPINIONS ON ADVERTISING TECHNIQUES, EVALUATION AND GRATIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

Advertisers clearly define their intentions before engaging in the series of planned activities that are aimed at promoting products, brands and services. Every advertising effort attempts to reach out to the target audience, attract patronage and earn economic profitability in the process. To be on top of their game, they take deliberate steps to determine if the method(s) deployed for such brand marketing have been effective in hitting the targeted mark or achieving the expected return on investment. This is because it will be directionless for corporate organisations to undertake an advertising campaign without adopting the right measurement mechanism. To this end, very advertiser devises ways of assessing their strengths, weaknesses, successes and otherwise of their campaign. It is also important to determine measurement techniques to ascertain their successes or otherwise in terms of sales, increased brand awareness, wider distribution among others. This research study evaluated the techniques deployed by advertising agencies to assess the success or otherwise of their campaigns. The study adopted the survey method to gather resourceful data from 130 respondents and five participants who were selected through census, for their opinions on the techniques used, and gratifications earned by advertisers in Rivers State. The study was anchored on the Uses and Gratification, Cognitive Evaluation and Public Opinion Theories. The data collected from the field were analysed using simple percentage template and the Miles and Hubermans' analytical format. The study found that advertising effectiveness is hugely dependent on the choice of techniques, advertisers adopt techniques for campaigns based on targeted gratifications. The study recommends that advertising agencies should adopt techniques based on the peculiarity of the brand, product or service being advertised and they should be more thorough in evaluating the outcome of their campaigns to ensure more effective results in the future.

KEYWORDS: Advertising, Advertising Agencies, Advertising evaluations, techniques, gratifications.

INTRODUCTION

Advertisers clearly define their intentions before engaging in series of planned activities that are aimed at promoting brands. Every advertising effort attempts to reach out to the target audience, attract patronage and earn earning economic profitability in the process. To be on top of their game, advertisers take deliberate steps to determine if the method deployed for brand marketing were effective in hitting the targeted mark or achieving the best return on investment. It will be directionless for corporate organizations to undertake an advertising campaign without adopting the right measurement mechanism. The reason is that every advertiser has a way of assessing their strengths, weaknesses, successes and otherwise of their campaign, this is perhaps the reason it is opined that although advertising campaigns require efficient techniques to run effectively, it is also important to determine measurement techniques to ascertain their successes or otherwise in terms of sales, increased brand awareness, wider distribution among others.

In some quarters, it is believed that the ultimate goal of advertising and brand marketing is to deliver persuasive communication that will be effectively convincing and capable of subtly luring another party to change opinions or attitudes (Meyers-Levy & Malaviya, 1999). Advertising accountability and return on advertising investment have become important issues for most companies. According to a survey by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), measuring advertising efficiency and effectiveness is the number one issue in the mind of contemporary advertisers.

Advertiser should regularly evaluate advertising results in terms the communication effects as well as the sales and profit effects. This is because advertising evaluation entails the measurement of the success of a planned advertising programme in terms of sales, increased product awareness, wider distribution among other objectives. Measuring the communication effects of an advertisement campaign is purely to determine the effectiveness of the message, media adoption and audience selection. This reasoning has made advertisers to indulge in pre-testing of their advertisements concepts before taking it to the media for a larger audience. In measuring advertisements, practitioners seek to find out how the campaign has affected the consumer in terms of product awareness and preference.

Creative research, pre and post evaluations are important activities in the advertisement campaign process because indulging in any form of communications campaign typically involves a significant investment in efforts and monetary resources. So testing and evaluation can help practitioners to minimize inherent risks and maximize the return associated with their efforts and other material investments. A professionally conducted evaluation is capable of unlocking new ways of thinking; open new business territories and ensure optimization of activities that can earn the brand huge economic profitability.

Similarly, once an advertiser acquires campaign concepts, efforts are made to optimise them for maximum effectiveness in the market. Pre-campaign efforts are capable of discovering seemingly small changes that can have significant impact on the resultant response of the audience to the message. Creative ideas are pre-testable to determine the direction that is capable of working best in the face of prevailing circumstances.

Also, at the end of the campaign, it is very fruitful to determine the effectiveness of the campaign activity through measures such as stock checks, profits accounts review, website clicks among others to get proper insight into the success or otherwise of the campaign.

Advertisers adopt a couple of techniques in pursuing their campaigns to ensure optimal return on investment. For a novice advertiser or un-savvy business owner, advertising may appear like a highly complicated and sometimes fruitless process. Advertisers adopt a couple of techniques in pursuing their campaigns to ensure optimal return on investment. For a novice advertiser or un-savvy business owner, advertising may appear like a highly complicated and sometimes fruitless process. Advertising is a creative, highly strategic process for reaching one's target audience. To some advertisers, promotions and rewards techniques are very efficient in achieving the campaign objectives, such advertisers ensure that consumers get something by connecting with their brands, they sometimes integrate coupons, games, sweepstakes, contests, and free gifts with purchases to get potential customers excited about their brand, for this type of practitioners, consumer participation is a major technique for advertising (Balderston, 2018).

The gratifications that come to advertisers after campaigns are in different shades; this is because the audience is an active seeker of media contents that best fulfil their needs or reinforce their existing beliefs and interests.

Apart from the fact that advertising can be used to introduce a product or service, brands and products that have crept into the market could enjoy the benefit of advertising to gain market expansion, increased sales and enhanced goodwill. Advertising also enables products to fight competition, eliminate middlemen, support salesmanship and educate consumers. Advertisers, like other media users seek to get value for their money and effort, this enables them to meet competition and stay in business. When advertisers choose a medium or a collection of it, they do so with the intention of making sales, earning increased product awareness, wider distribution among other objectives. The benefits derivable from advertising can be manifold. It is actually one of the most important components of the marketing process because advertising can be beneficial to manufacturers, traders, consumers and society as a whole.

Advertisers deploy a variety of techniques to relay information about their products, services and brands to their target markets. In deploying these techniques, advertisers seek to earn huge returns on investment through improved awareness, increased sales and enhanced customer loyalty among

others. To enjoy the gratifications that should accompany advertising campaigns, firms endeavor to deploy the right techniques to design and drive the campaigns. From available studies, many advertising agencies are not getting commensurate return on investment because of the adoption of wrong techniques.

A study conducted by El-Basit Shaheen, (2000) and submitted to the Technical University of Ilmenau, Germany, reported that improper or non use of the right advertising techniques could lead to a flop in advertising campaigns by adversely affecting the fortunes of the brand and the economic gains targeted by the firm. Since it is common knowledge that advertising is not a fruitless exercise, it is also commonsense that for every investment, there must be a return. Measuring advertising effectiveness has in the past been an elusive exercise. Will that be the case with the current work? If not, how do advertising agencies evaluate effectiveness and what gratifications are inherent in these measures? The concerns of this study are therefore embedded in optimizations on the subject matter.

Objectives of the Study

The study is anchored on the need to synthesize the opinions of advertising agency workforce on evaluation techniques and their derivable gratifications. Specifically, it seeks to:

- 1 Identify the forms and methods of evaluations advertising agencies in Rivers State deploy in their day –to- day practice;
- 2 Find out if these techniques are conventional and in line with known techniques.
- 3 Determine the techniques which are capable of measuring advertising goals.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratification Theory, the Cognitive Evaluation Theory and the Public Opinion Theory. The three theories are suitable to explain the study's focus on gratification, opinion and evaluation of media portrayals, social events, ideas and experiences among others. Looking at the focus and principles of these theories, and how they motivate people to form opinion about media messages, ideas and social events, their adoption for this study cannot be overemphasized.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) was introduced by Elihu Katz and Jay G. Blumler in the early 1970s as advancement in media research. This theory emerged as a response to the traditional effects model, which viewed audiences as passive recipients of media content. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), argued that media audiences actively seek out content based on their personal needs, motivations, and preferences. The theory shifted media studies from a focus on media effects to a focus on audience behaviour and media consumption choices.

An overview of the Uses and Gratifications Theory suggests that audiences do not consume media passively; instead, they actively engage with media to fulfill specific psychological and social needs. The theory categorizes these needs into five key areas:

Information and Education: The media serves as a tool for acquiring knowledge, staying informed, and understanding global events. News channels, documentaries, and online articles cater to this need.

Personal Identity: Individuals use media to shape and reinforce their beliefs, values, and self-concepts. They identify with characters, influencers, and narratives that resonate with their personal experiences.

Integration and Social Interaction: Media consumption allows individuals to connect with others by providing shared topics of discussion and fostering relationships. Social media platforms, television shows, and sports events contribute to social bonding.

Entertainment: The media serves as a source of relaxation and amusement, providing the audiences with an escape from daily stress. Movies, music, and online videos cater to this need.

Escapism and Diversion: Many individuals use media as a way to divert attention from personal problems, boredom, or routine life. Video games, fantasy novels, and immersive content fulfill this function.

According to McQuail (2010), by emphasizing audience agency, UGT contrasts with earlier models that viewed media consumers as passive recipients of information. The theory asserts that people actively select media content based on their needs and motivations, making media consumption a dynamic and personalized process.

Application of UGT has been widely applied across different forms of media, from traditional platforms such as newspapers and television to modern digital media, including social media, streaming services, and online communities.

Social Media Engagement: Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter fulfill social interaction needs by allowing users to stay connected with peers, join online communities, and participate in public discourse (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Streaming Services: Platforms like Netflix and YouTube cater to audiences' entertainment and escapism needs by offering personalized content, giving users control over their viewing experience.

Online News Consumption: Digital news platforms fulfill audiences' information and education needs by providing instant access to global updates and allowing users to select news based on personal interests (Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012).

Influencer Culture: People follow influencers and content creators based on shared values, lifestyle aspirations, and entertainment needs, reinforcing personal identity and social connection.

Advertising and Marketing: Companies use UGT to design targeted advertisements that align with consumer needs, for example, advertisements that emphasize storytelling can engage audiences emotionally, while informative content appeals to knowledge-seeking consumers. The application of UGT extends beyond media consumption to fields such as political communication, brand marketing, and audience engagement strategies. Businesses and content creators leverage UGT to craft messages that resonate with their target audiences, enhancing engagement and consumer loyalty.

Understanding Consumer Motivation: UGT explains the motivations behind consumer engagement with advertisements, social media content, and brand messaging. This understanding helps businesses tailor their marketing strategies. **Enhancing Audience Targeting –** Different demographic groups seek different gratifications, affecting how they interact with media. Brands can use this insight to develop personalized content that aligns with specific audience needs.

Optimizing Marketing Effectiveness, The theory provides valuable insights for digital marketing by identifying the types of content that are most likely to engage and convert audiences, advertisements that fulfill entertainment and social interaction needs are more likely to resonate with consumers.

Explaining Social Media Behavior: The theory helps explain why users engage with certain social media posts, whether for entertainment, self-expression, or social bonding. This insight is crucial for businesses leveraging social media marketing strategies. For instance, in digital advertising, UGT helps marketers understand why certain campaigns succeed. A campaign featuring emotional storytelling may be more effective for audiences seeking identity validation, while an educational campaign might appeal to those looking for information. Similarly, brands creating engaging social media content can benefit from understanding what gratifications their target audience seeks, leading to higher engagement and brand loyalty.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory is a sub-theory of Self-Determination, which explores how external events such as rewards, messages and social contexts among others, influence motivation. The theory posits that the psychological meaning of social events rather than their objective characteristics, determines their effect on motivation.

It originated in the 1970s with the contributions of psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, the theory focuses on how events, experiences and situations can impact an individual's sense of adoption and motivation by influencing their sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

The theory also examines how environmental events and social realities or portrayals are perceived as either informational, controlling, or a motivating. Further refinements and development on the theory which occurred in the early 1980s did not radically thwart the initial thinking of Deci and Ryan because focus was still directed at understanding how value or reward derived from ideas, messages and social events could impact motivation.

Salancik (2010) says that a core principle of the theory is the focus on external events that enhances a person's sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and that such experience is likely to increase motivation. According to him, events, ideas, messages or experiences that undermine people's needs, competences or relatedness can negatively affect motivation.

Some scholars have argued that while extrinsic rewards can increase motivation in the short term, they can also undermine intrinsic motivation by reducing a person's sense of control, and changing their perception of the reason for performing the task.

These scholars suggest that motivation is driven by the utility, enjoyment, and satisfaction derived from exposure to an experience or event, and (or) engaging in an activity while extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards like pay or praise.

Undertaking a critique on Cognitive Evaluation Theory, Harackiewicz, Manderlink and Sansone (2004) highlighted its limited applicability across cultural contexts, and the complexity of human motivation that may not fully align with the theory's dichotomous framework.

Cognitive evaluation theory delves into the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators on individual behaviour after exposure to experience, event, message or idea. The theory empowers people to make decisions, develop interest, cultivate meaning and opinions, as well as connections with the experience or event after exposure.(Abuhamdeh & Jalal, 2015).

According to Kruglanski and Lewis (2007) cognitive evaluation refers to the process through which a person's cognitive assessment or interpretation of an idea or situation determines whether it is satisfying or not. They hold that it involves assessing the significance, demands, and potential outcomes of a situation based on people's thoughts beliefs and other factors.

Relating cognitive evaluation to communication, Salancik (2010) asserts that the theory revolves around assessing an individual's ability to use cognitive functions such as attention and memory to communicate or understand communication messages effectively.

Salancik further posits that it requires more than language skills to evaluate how cognitive processes support communication in various contexts, and that cognitive evaluations can help identify specific deficits impacting message comprehension, acceptability, intervention, or feedback strategies.

Kruglanski and Lewis (2007) linked cognitive evaluation with advertising, asserting that it resonates around how consumers process and interpret information presented in advertisements which directly lead to the formation of beliefs, judgments, assessment, opinion and attitudes towards the product, service or brand.

Kruglanski and Lewis further held that cognitive evaluation is key to understanding how advertising works, and how to make it more effective. In discussing cognitive processing of advertisements, they opined that attention, comprehension and judgment are cardinal in forming opinions and beliefs about the product or brand.

Vallerrand and Reid (2021) said that discussing cognitive evaluation in relation to advertising, cognitive processing can influence message content, source credibility and consumer involvement. 'The argument appeal in the advertisement. The trustworthiness and expertise of the source such as celebrity endorsements have strong impact on the level of interest and engagement the consumer has with the product or brand'(p.129).

Also writing about cognitive evaluation in advertising, Reiny (2021) says that the theory motivates advertisers to create subtly persuasive messages that focus on arguments and appeals that are capable of triggering positive cognitive responses. According to him, the theory enables firms seeking a large share of the market to understand the target audience by tailoring their campaigns to the specific cognitive styles and preferences of the target audience, and to device means of measuring the effectiveness of the campaigns.

Public Opinion Theory Propounded by Walter Lippmann, a prominent American journalist and political commentator; the theory talks about the media's role in shaping public opinion. In Lippmann's seminal work, *Public Opinion* (1922), he proposed that individuals form opinions not based on direct experiences but through a "pseudo-environment", meaning a mental construct shaped by media, culture, and personal experiences.

According to him, this pseudo-environment often distorts reality and influences public decision-making. Lippmann suggested that individuals do not perceive the world directly but through a subjective, biased mental image constructed from personal experiences, media representations, and cultural stereotypes which often diverges from reality; and leading people to respond not to the actual world but to this constructed pseudo-environment.

Only about one year after Lippmann's propounded the Public Opinion Theory, Bernays (1923) lent his voice to it saying that the disconnect between the real world and the pseudo-environment can result in misinformed opinions and actions because individuals base their decisions on perceived realities rather than objective facts.

In discussing the stereotypes and cognitive limitations of the theory, Carey (1987) wrote that due to the overwhelming complexity of the world, individuals rely on stereotypes, simplified and generalized images or ideas to make sense of their surroundings, and that while such mental shortcuts help navigate people's daily life, they can trigger misconceptions and hugely hinder people's critical thinking of the world around them. Carey asserted that stereotypes are not always individual biases but can be culturally constructed and reinforced through media and societal norms. Curtis (1991) said that the media play significant roles in the shaping of public perception or opinion. According to him, the mass media play a pivotal role in constructing the pseudo-environment by selecting, framing, and disseminating information. He argued that news outlets, advertising media and others, through their portrayal of events, brands, personalities and issues, significantly influence public perception, and often lead to either acceptance or distorted understanding of reality. He says that Lippmann's idea about "manufacture of consent," implies that the media can shape public opinion by determining the topics, bends, biases and perspectives that dominate public discourse.

Eulau (1952) asserted that public consent or acceptance of media portrayals are not always a natural outcome of informed deliberation but can be engineered through strategic communication and propaganda. In his opinion, in complex societies, the public's limited understanding necessitates guidance from a specialized class of experts who interpret information and present it on to the masses. This perspective raises ethical questions about the manipulation of public opinion and the balance between expert governance and democratic participation.

Noelle-Neumann (1986) wrote that before Lippmann's eyes, the world and the pictures in his head were somehow quite different from that of later day thinkers. She stated that at the time Lippmann propounded the theory, the world was not yet 'truly global' but a Western-dominated world where the only means of mass communication was the press. "Radio broadcasting only began to be commercially and politically put to use around 1922, when his book was first published. The television and Internet did not exist. Nevertheless, Lippmann's diagnosis fits very well with our life experience which is surrounded, influenced and even formed by a pseudo-environment that the media (Internet included) as a whole creates"(p.45)

Noelle-Neumann says that Lippmann keenly saw the difference between the perceptions that a person obtains firsthand and those that come by other means, especially through the mass media. 'Lippmann also saw how this difference is blotted out because people are not conscious of it. He saw that people tend to adopt indirect experience so completely and to adjust their conceptions to it so well that their direct and indirect experiences become inseparable, so public opinion about media messages still remain largely unconscious' (p.209).

Conceptual Reviews

Advertising Evaluation: An Incursion: Human existence involves series of activities that test the efficacy of actions, practices and beliefs among others, so evaluation has remained a part of human

activities from time immemorial. In its simplest form, evaluation refers to the process of judging the value or worth of something. It involves making a systematic assessment of the merit, worth, or significance of something, it is often used to predefined criteria and standards. Evaluation can be used in various contexts, including programmes, projects, policies, and more, to determine their effectiveness and informed decision-making.

In the field of advertising, evaluation is a systematic process of assessing how well an advertising campaign performs when weighed against its objectives. Suyanyo (2006) says that evaluation considers various factors such as creative execution, its impact and influence on brand awareness, and consumer behaviour respectively. Evaluating advertisements also involves the study of impact and effectiveness of the message on sales and brand equity.

Suyanyo also affirms that when evaluating potential advertising, it is important to specify objectives for the advertising campaign in the broad areas of increasing brand awareness and driving sales. The objectives should be stated in terms of increasing brand awareness, numbers of impressions, unique views, and mentions using specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound 'SMART metrics' or[sic] something comparable. Evaluation is primarily concerned with the measurement of advertisement effect on consumer behaviour and attitudes. Borrowsky (2010) states advertising evaluation is about understanding your audience and their response to the advertisement itself. In today's fast and highly competitive business environment, it is necessary that businesses can understand how effective their advertising strategies are, to then articulate this effectiveness for the impact of advertising on consumer behaviour, brand awareness, and overall sales.

Borrowsky asserts advertising effectiveness is increasingly harder for corporations to measure in a market with an increasing number of advertising channels and methods. He then suggests when business organizations are looking to measure the effectiveness of their advertisements or other marketing initiatives, econometrics should prove useful. "By using statistical and mathematical techniques, econometrics can provide important insights into the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, and help managers and marketing professionals base their marketing decisions on empirical data" (p.459).

Evans (2019) contends that advertising evaluation, as the term indicates, encompasses the evaluation of the effectiveness of an advertisement or advertising campaign, and involves collecting and analyzing data for evaluating and measuring how well the advertisement meets its intended purpose.

Tsoncheva (2012) reasoned in a similar direction by stating that the integral elements of advertising effectiveness evaluation lies in measuring the potential effect of advertisement on consumer behavior and attitudes, stating that it also involves understanding the target market and its respective responses to the advertisement. He further argued that the environment today is so competitively advanced "that companies are supposed to continuously seek ways to strengthen their advertising efforts".

Mitchell, Russo, and Gardner (2020) suggested that assessing the impact of marketing/promotion can be accomplished through the application of assessment approaches. When determining advertising effectiveness, first you must create the advertising goals or objectives. Advertising goals typically are to increase brand awareness, drive sales, and/or change attitudes toward consumers. After the goals are established, that data can be gathered through the application of pre-established aggregate shared methods.

James (2007), states that advertising evaluation should inculcate Return on Investment. In his view, the evaluation mission should assess the financial benefits derived from the advertising expenditure to be able to ascertain whether the venture is worthwhile. In talking about advertising evaluation methods, James, listed pre-testing, post-testing and recall-test as steps that should be taken in undertaking advertising evaluation.

Antin, Dingus and Wiewille (1990) said that pre-test involves assessing the effectiveness of the advertising concept before the campaign is launched. They hold the opinion that such step can take the methods of a focus group discussion, surveys, lab tests, physiological testing among others.

Post-testing, according to them, should involve evaluating the campaign's performance after it has run, by deploying recall tests, recognition tests, inquiry tests, sales tests, tracking studies among others.

In their views regarding advertising assessment, Shinar and Parmet (2021) claimed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be useful in evaluating ad effectiveness. In agreement with Antin, Dingus and Wiewille, they contended that the methods must incorporate collection and analysis of numbers, such as online traffic, conversion rate, sales volume and social media use.

They listed qualitative methods capable of being used for advertising evaluation to include gathering insights through interviews, focus groups, and surveys to understand consumer opinions and attitudes toward the advertising campaigns.

Lee and Land (2018) assert that companies or advertisers should undertake creative implementation of advertising evaluation strategies by measuring the visuals, messaging, tone, and overall appeal in the campaign. Companies should evaluate the degree to which the advertisement has heightened awareness of the brand or product, in the interest of brand awareness, whether through customer consideration, or consideration and actual purchase. They further opine that to understand consumer behaviour and sales impact, advertisers should analyse how the campaign influences consumer purchase decisions, website visits, or other desired actions, and that they should assess the extent to which the advertisement has contributed to sales increase or other business outcomes. Advertising Evaluation: The Possible Challenges.

It is often said that every human activity faces one challenge or the other; this is true in the practice of advertising. From conceptualisation, launch, and evaluation of campaigns, some challenges have been identified by practitioners and scholars alike. Aren (2008) listed some challenges to effective advertising evaluation to include but not limited to budget constraints, attribution issues, complexities in data collection and analysis, and the constant evolution in the digital landscape. Aren further identified issues of fraud, view-ability, and inconsistency in marketing channels as other challenges that militate against accurate assessment of advertising effectiveness.

In discussing hiccups to advertising campaign evaluation, Lintas (2013) said that limited funds has great abilities to restrict the scope and scale of advertising efforts, and can make the gathering of data for accurate evaluation a difficult exercise. Also, collecting too much data can be overwhelming, and capable of making the assessment process very cumbersome, because of the difficulty in focusing on the most relevant metrics. Lintas further asserts that identifying and utilising the appropriate tools for data collection and analysis can be a challenge just as managing data by ensuring data accuracy, consistency, and proper storage is crucial for reliable evaluation or analysis. Ogbodoh (1990) had earlier reasoned like Aren and Lintas when he wrote that attributing sales leads to specific advertisements or channels, especially when the customer journey is complex, remains a significant challenge. In talking about the evolving digital landscape, he stated that keeping up with digital trends remains critical to effective evaluation of advertising campaigns because the digital advertising space is constantly evolving, requiring continuous learning and adaptation to new technologies and platforms.

Nwanenna (2003) listed some of the common obstacles and pitfalls in measuring advertising effectiveness, including lack of clear objectives, attribution issues with survey and sample size, time lag effect, and survey bias among others. Nwanenna mentioned that lack of clear objectives is still one of the primary issues in advertising effectiveness, stating "[W]hen firms do not have clearly defined objectives, it is difficult to determine whether the advertisement was effective or not" (p. 68). If the purpose of a firm is to increase brand awareness, for instance, the firm might examine other metrics and variables like reach, clicks, impressions (viewership), listenership, and frequency. If on the contrary increase sales is the objective, then look at the conversion rate, from actual potential customers to success because the campaign, worked (ROI). Sometimes not having a sense of this strategy has inhibited success in measuring an advertisement campaign as well (p. 68).

Furthermore, Nwanenna noted that difficulties in measuring the effectiveness of advertising campaigns had led some companies to be unable to measure their own campaigns' effectiveness. He stated that the various options with multi-channel and multi-device means that the consumer is continually exposed to the different touch-points prior to making a purchase decision, which makes it exceedingly difficult to determine what message or channel caused a purchase decision. Dunn and Barban (2012) also mentioned to do something to address the limitations of attribution, indicating multi-touch attribution and marketing mix modelling, which may help to evaluate the role of each advertising channel. Dunn and Barban also indicate that small sample sizes are a significant threat to the accuracy and reliability of advertising effectiveness research, stating, 'if the sample size is too small it may not be representative of the target audience. This will lead to skewed results.' (p. 325).

Techniques and Effectiveness in Advertising Campaigns:

The issues of techniques and effectiveness in advertising campaigns are intertwined; this is because techniques drive effectiveness. Techniques in advertising deals with the plethora of methods adopted by advertisers to create and place campaign messages across different media, with the grand aim of reaching the target audience while promoting products and services.

According to Levinson (2014), there are many types of advertising techniques that can be put into two broad categories: traditional techniques and digital techniques, where each category has its own strengths and weaknesses. In Levinson's view, traditional techniques may include methods used in print, broadcast, billboards, direct mail and in physical displays.

Cockcroft (2021) reasons in the same vein by saying that traditional advertising techniques adopt newspapers, magazines, flyers, and brochures while broadcast advertising leverages television and radio to create engaging commercials with audio-visual appeals. He listed other forms of traditional advertising techniques to include billboards, posters, and other types of physical displays in public spaces that aim to achieve high visibility.

According to Alison, Townsend and Emmerson (2009), the term digital advertising techniques refers to electronic and social media based means of advertising. Examples of the social media based platforms include Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to name just a few. They also identified search engine advertising as an alternative digital advertising techniques which optimizes websites for search engines and uses paid advertising to ensure it is visible in the top search results.

Allison et.al further stated that also in the category of digital advertising techniques is email advertising and online display advertising. Email advertising sends targeted emails to subscribers, promoting products and services, while online display advertising places advertisements on websites and apps, and targets specific audiences based on their browsing character, taste and online clicks.

Also lending a voice to advertising campaign techniques, Darics and Koller (2028) said that whether the advertiser adopted the traditional or digital technique, they should endeavour to portray the positive experiences of satisfied customers and endorsements to build trust around their brands. They said that in utilizing celebrities or influencers to promote products or services and using images or concepts as techniques to represent a product or brand, advertising firms can attract attention to their brands and spur consumer loyalty.

Darics and Koller further suggested that advertisers should employ humorous and engaging contents to attract attention, and trigger a situation of scarcity and sense of urgency by highlighting limited availability or time-sensitive offers. They opined that social proof that demonstrates the benefits of the advertised brands is an effective technique in advertising campaigns.

Also, while discussing advertising effectiveness, Cockcroft (2018) says that the effectiveness of advertising campaigns can be measured in the manner a campaign has satisfied tastes and appeals of consumers. He identified emotional appeal, credibility and trust, target audience identification and measurable results as key principles in measuring advertising effectiveness. Crockcroft maintained that emotional appeal evokes feelings and desires in the target audience, and that an effective advertising techniques should provide logical arguments by providing facts, data, and rational reasons to motivate brand trial and loyalty.

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Hamilton (2013) backed up Crockcroft by explaining that credible and trust in an advertising campaign effectiveness cannot be wished away because it establishes a brand that is credible and is positioned as a brand of authority. He said it is necessary for an ad campaign to identify a target audience with a campaign message that builds trust and confidence.

Understanding the characteristics and needs of the target audience, and tailoring messages to boost confidence, hope and trust in brand adoption is an effective technique in advertising campaign just as tracking and analyzing campaign performance to optimize future efforts is. Advertisers must endeavour to be strategic in choosing the technique to drive their campaign to ear the expected return on investment.(p.101).

Hidalgo-Downing (2014) asserts that the digital age and constant evolution in technology have saddled the advertiser with a new task of seeking digitised techniques to capture audience attention and trigger consumer loyalty. He viewed advertising as a crucial aspect of running a successful business, which should help firms to reach out to new customers, and show their products or services to the world. To him, an advertising campaign should penetrate convincingly and win loyalty for the brand if the firm must continue to have its head above water, and stand out above its competition.

Hackie (2020) said that modern advertisements should adopt online techniques in order to penetrate the emerging and diverse markets that are available in the society today. He stated that numerous opportunities are available online for firms to harness in selling their brands to the world. Aligning with the views of Hackie, DanFrank (2023) posited that it has become tremendously difficult for firms to penetrate the online market without adopting digital techniques to implement advertising campaigns. 'Advertising made use of offline devices in the past, this is no longer completely applicable, and advertising has gone highly digital. There are many ways companies can advertise their brands business online'(p.214).

Dominique (2012) says that while advertising online to gain popularity can earn patronage and deep penetration of the market, companies should offer incentives to potential targets as a technique to beat competition.

People love free things, offering a reward, prize or deal alongside the product or service is a great advertising technique that firms should consider. Only very few things are free in today's world, so the attraction of getting something extra without paying can draw in a lot of patronage from the target market.(p.67).

Dominique added that the technique of offering freebies can be made to come with every purchase or patronage, holding sweepstakes for customers, including coupons or discounts in random orders and a variety of other tactics aimed at creating a sense of excitement around the brand and getting people to become eager to participate in the excitement.

Conclusion and paper position

This study set out to find out how advertising agencies in Rivers State have adopted techniques to implement their campaigns and their opinions about how such techniques have affected gratifications.

To establish ongoing conversation in this study area, the researcher indulged in an extensive review of concepts in the areas of advertising campaign technique evaluation, campaign techniques effectiveness; advertising as a semiotic construct, advertising evaluation and return on investment, advertising and consumer opinion, advertising and possible challenges among others.

Three theories such as, the theory of Public Opinion, Cognitive Evaluation theory and the Uses and Gratifications theory that formed the theoretical thrusts of the study were succinctly explained and aligned to ongoing conversation in the area of advertising opinion on gratifications and techniques. Also several empirical works found to be relevant to the study reviewed with clear establishment of their corresponding similarities and, divergence and gap in knowledge.

The study adopted the survey design, and used questionnaire, a quantitative method and interviews, a qualitative method to collect data from respondents and participants. In constructing the questionnaire for the study, the researcher adopted the Explanation Study Design approach; this enabled the researcher to provide explanation to the data that emerged from the other methods that was used in implementing the study.

Since data for the study was gathered from a mixture of methods that threw up in both numbers and texts, the analysis of data was done using the simple percentage methods and the Miles and Huberman's template of data reduction, display and conclusion. The choice of both methods for analysis not only complied with laid down epistemic rules, it also ensure thoroughness and

understanding of the data. To ensure clarity, data was presented to provide answers to the research objectives.

The study took note of the fact that it is on the strength of validity and reliability that research data are accorded trust and acceptance. The researcher embarked on post data validation exercise by speaking to the chief executive officers of the advertising agencies that were surveyed to confirm their initial positions when interviews were conducted. This enabled the researcher to satisfy the criterion of rigour which is critical to social science research.

Looking at the findings above, the study concludes that techniques are critical in driving a successful advertisement, and that choosing and adopting the right technique while implementing an advertisement campaign is crucial to ensure good returns on investment. The study further posits that advertising techniques have a plethora of conventional methods, and that gratifications are measured in terms of monetary return on investment, brand visibility, increase in sales volume among others.

Advertising agencies in Rivers State adopt persuasive, brand or product-focused and audience-driven techniques that show up in the manner of colour psychology, composition, repetition, visual identity, alliance with demographic behaviours and values in order to attract profitability, brand loyalty, enhanced memorability and advertising campaigns effectiveness.

Although the advertisers adopt a mixture of techniques in driving their campaigns, the persuasive techniques were given more priority, especially when it is considered to be useful and effective in pulling customer attention, loyalty and return on investment. Repeated exposure to advertising messages was found to be an effective method to ensure brand recognition and recall because advertising campaigns can earn the expected return on investment if consumers are prompted directly through the use of persuasive techniques such as band wagon, celebrity endorsement among others.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended as follows:

1. Advertising agencies should adopt techniques based on the peculiarity of the brand, product or service being advertised
2. Advertisers should be more meticulous in choosing advertising campaign techniques for their campaigns
3. Advertisers should adopt a combo of techniques to ensure more impressive return on investment
4. Brand loyalty, visibility and economic profitability should be the driving forces for adopting advertising techniques.

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