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Persuading the Vulnerable: A Study of the Influence of Advertising on Children in Southern Nigeria

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Abstract

In today's world of advertising, children and youths seem to have more decision-making powers as they represent a significant market to advertisers. Modern advertisers no longer rely on persuading parents to buy products for their kids; rather they target their adverts directly on children/youths. Based on this, the study investigates the influence of advertising on children/youths buying decision in southern Nigeria, using cultivation theory as the bases of its argument. The study employed survey research design, with questionnaire as its instrument. Findings revealed that pictures, graphics and sound effects are the major factors that attract children in advertisements. It was also revealed that, to a large extent, children are influenced by advert messages and they in turn influence the buying behaviour of their parents. The study recommended that parents should monitor and explain the intent of advertisement to their children, in order to reduce some of these influences.

Key words: advertising, children, vulnerable, parents and buying behaviour

Introduction

In recent times, most advertisement on our national television and radio are targeted at children. Adverts on noodles (like Indomie, Honeywell etc.) and beverages/drinks (like Chi-exotic, Bobo etc.) are common on the electronic media. This shows that manufacturers are adopting a marketing strategy that target a vulnerable segment of the society. Confirming this statement, Story and French (2004) noted that children have become the major target of serious advertising campaigns, due to their influences on buying behaviour and the propensity of becoming adult consumers of the products in future: Even though most of the food advertised are not in conformity with the dietary requirement for children as a result of their predominantly high level of sugar and fat.

While these advertisements might not necessarily be a problem, the constituents of the food advertised have high calories, fat and sugar which might be inimical to the health and well-being of children. **Story and French (2004) citing** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1996), and Perry, Story, Lytle (1997) observed that the eating behaviours established by children when they are young grow with them into adulthood and constitute serious health and chronic disease risk. It is a common case that most adults in Nigeria, when sick and in need of hospital check up, are diagnosed with diabetes or hypertension. These health conditions are related to excess intake of sugar or high body cholesterol. It is true that food choices are influenced by a variety of means, but advertising constitute one of these means, especially those targeted at children. Since, they influence the nature of household purchases.

Beder (1998) citing Amy (1996) observed that “young children are increasingly the target of advertising and marketing because of the amount of money they spend themselves, the influence they have on their parents spending (the nag factor) and because of the money they will spend when they grow up. Whilst this child-targeted marketing used to concentrate on sweets

and toys, it now includes clothes, shoes, a range of fast foods, sports equipment, computer products and toiletries as well as adult products such as cars and credit cards”.

In Australia, children below 18 years spend an average of \$31.60 each week and influence over 70% of their parents purchases on clothes and fast food. In US, on the other hand, over 57 million school age children and teenagers spend about \$100 billion each year on their own and influence the spending of their family's money on sweets, food, drinks, video and electronic products, toys, games, movies, sports, clothes and shoes. In addition, children below the age of 12 spend more than \$11 billion of their own money and influence their family buying decisions amounting to \$165 billion on food, household items like furniture, electrical appliances and computers, vacations, the family car and other spending (Beder, 1998 citing Powell & Zuel, 1993; Wagner, 1995; and McGee & Heubusch, 1997).

Shifrin, Brown, Dreyer, Ginsburg, Milteer, Nelson and Mulligan (2007) further noted that “young people view more than 40,000 adverts per year on television alone and increasingly are being exposed to advertising on the Internet, in magazines, and in schools”. On the average, children expose themselves to more than 3000 adverts per day on television (TV), on the Internet, on billboards, and in magazines. Consequently and increasingly, manufacturers are aiming at younger and younger children in order to stick the name of their brands in their minds. This is not unconnected to the fact that advertising is a \$250 billion/year industry with over 900 000 brands to sell, and children and adolescents are attractive consumers. Increasingly, manufacturers are looking for new avenues to capture the fancy of young consumers via the Internet, in schools, and even in bathroom stalls (Shifrin, et al., 2007 citing *Strasburger 2001; Goodman 1999; McNeal 1992; Quart 2003; and Span 1999*).

As it stands today, there seem to be more adverts targeted at children because of their influencing power. According to Media Smart (2010), within the family circle, today's children seem to have more autonomy and decision-making power compared to their counterparts in previous generations; this means that children are vocal about what they want their parents to buy. They do this using pestering system- a decoy used by children to nag their parents to buy things they ordinarily do not want to buy. Marketing to children, therefore, is an indirect way of creating a pester power for children because advertisers know the force behind it. Terry (2008) noted that pestering or nagging can be divided into two categories—“persistence” and “importance.” While persistence nagging is a plea, that is repeated over and over again, it is not

as effective as the more sophisticated nagging called "importance nagging", which is a method that appeals to parents' desire to give their children the best, and it plays on parent's guilt of not having enough time for their kids.

The essence of this study, therefore, is to examine the influence of advertising on children and how these adverts in turn influence their buying behaviour, especially in the areas of food and household purchases.

Statement of the Problem

Advertisement targeted at children in our society is on the increase. Common among these adverts include: "Mama Wey Cook Indomies, she do good" advert; "Honeywell noodles, bam bam la la" advert; "B without B B is like a train without an engine" advert, meaning *Bread* without *Blue Band* butter is like a train without an engine; "Chi Ooo Chi-exotic ooo, you chi-exotic and your life comes around" advert; "Bobo fast energy" advert; "Pick, it is in you" advert; "Detol, if I don't take care of them, who will?" advert; "Sleep well Pampers" advert; "Cowbell, our milk advert" and so on. The list is in-exhaustive and readily comes to one's mind once they are aired. There are other forms that these adverts have taken, ranging from school bags, books, drawing materials, school signboards, and billboards to other subliminal forms.

The major issue with these adverts is that children, especially those within 8 years and below are cognitively and psychologically defenceless against the message of advertising. Due to their age, they do not understand the notion of intent to sell, and as such, accept the claims of advertising line- hook and sinker. In fact, in the late 1970s, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in US held hearings on the effect of advertising on children and concluded that it was unfair and deceptive to advertise to children younger than 6 years. Some Western countries like Sweden and Norway forbid all advertising directed at children younger than 12 years, while Greece bans toy advertising until after 10 pm. Denmark and Belgium greatly restrict advertising aimed at children (Shifrin, et al., 2007 citing *Kunkel, 2001; Strasburger, 2002; Unnikrishnan & Bajpai, 1996; Macklin & Carlson, 1999; Federal Trade Commission, 1981; Valkenburg, 2000*). In Nigeria, however, such restrictions have not been enforced to the later, hence, the prevalence of adverts directed at children, which in turn exercise influence on their spending (Beder, 1998 citing Amy, 1996).

It is on these bases that this study sought to examine the influence of advertising on children and how these adverts in turn influence their buying behaviour in Nigeria, especially in the areas of food and other household purchases.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of advertising on children and the attendant influence on their buying behaviour in Nigeria. Other specific objectives of the study include:

1. To find out what attracts children in advertisement.
2. To ascertain the extent to which children are influenced by the advertisement they are exposed to.
3. To find out the extent to which these adverts influence children's buying behaviour.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What attracts children in advertisement?
2. To what extent are children influenced by the advertisement they are exposed to?
3. To what extent do these adverts influence children's buying behaviour?

Significance of Study

This study will be of immense benefit to parents as they will come to understand the extent advertising influences the choice of their children and how these children turn to directly or indirectly influence them (parents) in their buying behaviour. The study will equally add to the body of knowledge existing in the area of advertising targeted at children and serve as a veritable reference source for scholars and researchers alike.

Definition of Terms

In the course of this study, certain words used were explained for easy understanding of the subject under investigation.

Advertising: This concept would be defined from two perspectives; the marketing and communication perspectives. In regards to the marketing point of view, the American Marketing Association (AMA) sees advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and

promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor; while the angle of communication, sees advertising as any controlled, identifiable information and persuasion by means of mass communication media (Gbadeyan, 2009).

Furthermore, Kotler and Armstrong (2003) defined advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or service through mass media such as newspapers, magazine, television or radio by an identified sponsor. Also, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) defined advertising as “a communication in the media, paid for by an identifiable sponsor and directed to a target audience, with the aim of imparting information about a product, service, idea or cause” (Ukwueze, 2008: 272).

Buying Behaviour: This is the physical manifestation of buying decisions upon which a consumer decides to patronise one product against the other in a case of competition.

Children: A child is a person under the age of twelve (12), at times the age is extended to all those under fifteen years (15) years. According to the broadcast code for advertising children refers to person less than twelve (12) years of age. However, the age fixed for children differs from one country to another, in Nigeria seventeen (17) years and below is the official age for children.

Children Advertisement: This refers to any identified message sponsored with the major aim of persuading children into demanding for such product/service. It refers to any commercial message that is determined by the broadcast as being directed to children.

Parents: This refers to mature adults. The term parents is not only restricted to a child’s biological parents but extends to any adult/guardians that a child can pester to buy him/her a product or service.

Empirical Review of Literatures

Most advertisements on food and household utensils are mainly targeted at children. Some scholars argued that this action is as a result of the easy to persuade minds of children. In a study conducted by Brand (2007) on “Television Advertising to Children” it was observed that children spend most of their time watching television during prime time (between the hours of 7.00pm–8.00 pm), and are exposed to advertisements during these periods. As such, the findings of the study revealed that the cognitive development of children hinders their understanding of television adverts and respond to them literarily, the way they see the adverts. It was also

revealed that younger children cannot differentiate between animated and real-life characters and cannot tell the difference between what is real or fake. On the issue of pester power, it was observed that the use of pester power by children is usually appreciated when advertising is part of a larger marketing mix, including in-store displays and labelling (Brand, 2007).

On the media used to advertise to children, Onwubere (2010), in his study on “Nigerian Children and the New Media: What Social-Economic Implications?”, revealed that Nigerian children are highly exposed to new media, which has serious economic implications for the children themselves, their parents, their immediate society. Furthermore, Gbadeyan (2009), in his study on “Children’s perception on television commercial in Lagos state, Nigeria” concludes that there is need to examine the age which children should be exposed to television commercials because of the influence it has on them.

As a result, Bartsch and London (2000), and Baran (2004) argued that children are simply not intellectually capable of interpreting the intent of most of the advertisements they neither watch, listen to or read, nor are they able to rationally judge the worth of the advertising claims. Also, it has been argued that advertising creates materialism among children and erode virtues like spiritual upliftment and intellectual growth (Wulfemeyer & Mueller, 2007; Greenberg & Brand, 1993). This is because children do not interpret advertisement in the same pattern as adults do, and as such, manufacturers devise fanciful means to capture the attention of children (Ettah, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on cultivation theory propounded by George Gerbner and colleagues (1978, 1980, 1986). The idea behind cultivation theory states that exposure to a great deal of media will promote individuals to hold certain conceptions of reality. That is to say media cultivate or create a world view that becomes an individual’s reality. The perceptions of reality are reviewed to be in line with what information is displayed with most consistent and persistent images that are displayed. Even though the perception derived from the media may be inaccurate, the observation may become an implanted reality.

Cultivation analysis posits that people's ideas of themselves, their world and their place in it are shaped and maintained primarily through television. According to Baran (2009. p. 428):

Social construction of reality provides a strong foundation for cultivation analysis, which says that television "cultivates" or constructs a reality of the world that although possibly inaccurate becomes accepted simply because we as a culture believe it to be true. We then base our judgments about and our actions in the world on this cultivated reality provided by television.

Cultivation analysis which was developed by Gerbner and colleagues (1978, 1980, 1986) is based on five key assumptions: That television is essentially and fundamentally different from other mass media; That television is the "central cultural arm" of society as a culture's primary story teller; That television does not teach facts and figures but builds general frames and references; That the major cultural function of television is to stabilize social patterns in that culture are reinforced and maintained through television images (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli, 1978. p. 178); That the observable, measurable, independent contributions of television to the culture are relatively small.

The relevance of this theory to the study is that most of the advert messages viewed by children are directly retained by them as a picture of reality, since they do not understand marketers' notion of intent to sell. Children, therefore, see adverts on the media (television) as a perfect picture of reality, upon which they carry out their buying decisions and pester their parents to buy such advertised products.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design. Survey allows for the study of people's opinion over a given issue. Anaekwe (2007: 34) opined that, "survey research is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions on practice, beliefs, attitudes etc. The purpose is to describe systematically the facts, qualities or characteristics of a given population, event or area of interest concerning the problem under investigation".

The population of this study comprises of children (youths) in Southern Nigeria. Based on the 2006 National Population Commission, the total population of children (below eighteen years) in Southern Nigeria was 5,176,900.

In selecting the sample size for the study, the researcher used the Australian Calculator provided by the National Statistical Service (NSS) for sample size determination. With

confidence level of 95%, 0.5 error limits and a population of 5,176,900, a sample size of 384 was arrived at.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the representatives of the sample. In the first stage, southern Nigeria which is already in clusters comprises of three geo-political zones namely, south-south, south-east and south-west. In the second stage, simple random technique was used to select two states from each of the zone, meaning that six (6) states were selected in all. In the last stage, the researcher purposively selected the state capitals of each of the selected states due to some reasons such as high level of literacy, high media exposure, etc. Below are the states selected and the copies of questionnaire distributed in their state capitals.

Geo-Political Zones	Selected States	Capitals	Number of questionnaire administered
South-South	Edo	Benin City	64
	Cross River	Calabar	64
South-East	Enugu	Enugu	64
	Imo	Owerri	64
South-West	Ogun	Abeokuta	64
	Ondo	Akure	64

The enumerated areas as provided by national population commission guided the distribution of questionnaire. Each enumerated area contained ten (10) households from which houses were selected purposively for the administration of the questionnaire instrument (Onyebuchi, 2013).

Data Presentation and Analysis

The researchers distributed 384 copies of the questionnaire, but were able to retrieve useful 376 copies. This represented a 97.9% return rate and a mortality rate of 2.1%. The success rate of this return is attributed to close monitoring of copies of questionnaire by the researchers. Collected data were analysed using simple frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Research Question 1: What attracts children in advertisement?

In order to respond to this research question, tables 1-4 were analysed as they addressed the attraction of children to advertising messages.

Table 1

The use of cartoons and illustrations attracts children to advert messages.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	40	10.6	10.6	10.6
Disagreed	30	8.0	8.0	18.6
Undecided	1	.3	.3	18.9
Agreed	91	24.2	24.2	43.1
Strongly Agreed	214	56.9	56.9	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

The use of cartoons and illustrations attracts children to advert messages.

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.0878
Std. Deviation		1.35853

Table 1 indicates that 40 and 30 respondents amounting to 10.6% and 8.0% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that the use of cartoons and illustrations attracts children to advertisement. One (1) respondent amounting to 0.3% was undecided. However, 91 and 214 respondents resulting to 24.2% and 56.9% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the use of cartoons and illustrations attracts children to advertisement. Considering the mean and standard deviation of 4.0878 and 1.35853 respectively, it means that the table is a “yes” decision.

Invariable, 56.9% strongly agreed that the use of cartoons and illustrations attracts children to advertisement.

Table 2

The combination of musical sounds and pictures attracts children to advert

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	16	4.3	4.3	4.3
Disagreed	29	7.7	7.7	12.0
Undecided	2	.5	.5	12.5
Agreed	118	31.4	31.4	43.9
Strongly Agreed	211	56.1	56.1	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

The combination of musical sounds and pictures attracts children to advert

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.2739
Std. Deviation		1.08908

From table 2 above, 16 and 29 respondents resulting to 4.3% and 7.7% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that the combination of musical sounds and pictures attracts children to advert. Two (2) respondent amounting to 0.5% was undecided: While 118 and 211 respondents constituting 31.4% and 56.1% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the combination of musical sounds and pictures attracts children to advert. With the mean and standard deviation at 4.273 and 1.089 respectively, it means that the table is a “yes” decision.

The implication is that, 56.1% strongly agreed that the combination of musical sounds and pictures attracts children to advert.

Table 3

The use of children in most advertisement attracts children to these advert

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
Disagreed	6	1.6	1.6	2.9
Undecided	2	.5	.5	3.5
Agreed	121	32.2	32.2	35.6
Strongly Agreed	242	64.4	64.4	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

The use of children in most advertisement attracts children to these advert

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.5665
Std. Deviation		.71617

Data presented in table 3 revealed that 5 and 6 respondents summing up to 1.3% and 1.6% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that the use of children in most advertisement attracts children to these adverts. Two (2) respondents amounting to 0.5% was undecided, while 121 and 242 respondents resulting to 32.2% and 64.4% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the use of children in most advertisement attracts children to these adverts. Statistical analysis shows the mean and standard deviation of 4.5665 and 0.71617 respectively, meaning that the table is a “yes” decision.

Invariable, 64.4% strongly agreed that the use of children in most advertisement attracts children to these adverts.

Table 4

The use of colours and graphics in advertisement and packaging of products capture the attention of children to these advertisement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	117	31.1	31.1	31.1
	Disagreed	162	43.1	43.1	74.2
	Undecided	20	5.3	5.3	79.5
	Agreed	43	11.4	11.4	91.0
	Strongly Agreed	34	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

The use of colours and graphics in advertisement and packaging of products capture the attention of children to these advertisement

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		2.2420
Std. Deviation		1.25749

Table 4 shows that 117 and 162 respondents constituting 31.1% and 43.1% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that the use of colours and graphics in advertisement and packaging of products capture the attention of children to these advertisement. Twenty (20) respondents amounting to 5.3% were undecided. However, 43 and 34 respondents resulting to 11.4% and 9.0% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the use of colours and graphics in advertisement and packaging of products capture the attention of children to these advertisements. Considering the mean and standard deviation of 2.2420 and 1.25749 respectively, it means that the table is a “no” decision.

Invariable, 43.1% strongly disagreed that the use of colours and graphics in advertisement and packaging of products capture the attention of children to these advertisements.

Weighting scale

The “yes” or “no” decision taken at the end of each table is determined by the mean statistics, which when rated 3.0 and above is a “yes” decision, while when rated below 3.0 is a “no” decision. For every “yes” decision in each of the aforementioned tables (1-4), it is rated 25%. Given that three (3) tables scored “yes” decision, it means that they scored 75% (25×3).

Generally, therefore, it means that 75% of the respondents are of the view that several factors attract children to advertising and they include: The use of cartoons and illustrations; the combination of musical sounds and pictures; and the use of children in most advertisements.

Research Question 2: To what extent are children influenced by the advertisements they are exposed to?

In response to this research question, tables 5-8 were analysed as they address the extent of influence of advertisement on children.

Table 5

The advert that children watch alters their views about what they want

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
Disagreed	19	5.1	5.1	6.4
Undecided	9	2.4	2.4	8.8
Agreed	117	31.1	31.1	39.9
Strongly Agreed	226	60.1	60.1	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

The advert that children watch alters their views about what they want

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.4362
Std. Deviation		.87097

From table 5 above, 5 and 19 respondents resulting to 1.3% and 5.1% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that the advert that children watch alters their views about what they want. Nine (9) respondents amounting to 2.4% was undecided: While 117 and 226 respondents constituting 31.1% and 60.1% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the advert that children watch alters their views about what they want. With the mean and standard deviation at 4.4362 and 0.87097 respectively, it means that the table is a “yes” decision.

The implication is that, 60.1% strongly agreed that the advert that children watch alters their views about what they want.

Table 6

The advert that children watch makes them to ask for things they ordinarily would not

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	17	4.5	4.5	4.5
Disagreed	7	1.9	1.9	6.4
Undecided	4	1.1	1.1	7.4
Agreed	126	33.5	33.5	41.0
Strongly Agreed	222	59.0	59.0	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

The advert that children watch makes them to ask for things they ordinarily would not

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.4069
Std. Deviation		.95881

Table 6 revealed that 17 and 7 respondents summing up to 4.5% and 1.9% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that the advert that children watch makes them to ask for things they ordinarily would not. On the other hand, 4 respondents amounting to 1.1% were undecided. Whereas 126 and 222 respondents constituting 33.5% and 59.0% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the advert that children watch makes them to ask for things they ordinarily would not. The mean and standard deviation analysis were at 4.4069 and 0.95881 respectively, meaning that the table is a “yes” decision.

Invariably, 59.0% strongly agreed that the advert that children watch makes them to ask for things they ordinarily would not.

Table 7

Most of the request from children to their parents are based on what they hear or see

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	13	3.5	3.5	3.5
Disagreed	22	5.9	5.9	9.3
Undecided	7	1.9	1.9	11.2
Agreed	129	34.3	34.3	45.5
Strongly Agreed	205	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Most of the request from children to their parents are based on what they hear or see

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.3059
Std. Deviation		1.00906

In presenting the data for table 7, it was shown that 13 and 22 respondents amounting to 3.5% and 5.9% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that most of the requests from children to their parents are based on what they hear or see from advertisements. While 7 respondent resulting to 1.9% were undecided, 129 and 205 respondents resulting to 34.3% and 54.5% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that most of the requests from children to their parents are based on what they hear or see from advertisements. Considering the mean and standard deviation of 4.3059 and 1.00906 respectively, it means that the table is a “yes” decision.

Invariable, 54.5% strongly agreed that most of the requests from children to their parents are based on what they hear or see from advertisements.

Table 8

Children make request from parents based on different issues other than advertisement

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	115	30.6	30.6	30.6
Disagreed	163	43.4	43.4	73.9
Undecided	10	2.7	2.7	76.6
Agreed	54	14.4	14.4	91.0
Strongly Agreed	34	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Children make request from parents based on different issues other than advertisement

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		2.2793
Std. Deviation		1.28341

Table 8 indicates that 115 and 163 respondents amounting to 30.6% and 43.4% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that children make request from parents based on different issues other than advertisements. However, ten (10) respondents amounting to 2.7% were

undecided. Whereas 54 and 34 respondents resulting to 14.4% and 9.0% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that children make request from parents based on different issues other than advertisement. Since the mean and standard deviation is 2.2793 and 1.28314 respectively, it means that the table is a “no” decision.

Invariable, 43.4% disagreed that children make request from parents based on different issues other than advertisement.

Weighting scale

Applying almost the same weighting scale, the “yes” or “no” decision taken at the end of each table is determined by the mean statistics, which when rated 3.0 and above is a “yes” decision, while when rated below 3.0 is a “no” decision. However, in this case, for every “yes” decision in each of the aforementioned tables (5-8), it is rated 25% plus “very high”, “high”, “low” and “very low” attached. In a situation where only one table scores “yes” then it is “very low”. If two tables, then it is “low”. If three tables, then it is “high”, but when it is four tables, it is “very high”. Given that three (3) tables scored “yes” decision, it means that they scored 75% (25×3), plus a high value attached.

Generally, therefore, it means that 75% of the respondents, to a high extent, agree that advertising has influence on the children exposed to them.

Research Question 3: To what extent do these adverts influence children’s buying behaviour?

Responding to this research question, tables 9-11 were analysed as they address the extent of influence of adverts on children buying behaviour.

Table 9

Most of the purchases made by children are based on the adverts they are exposed to.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	11	2.9	2.9	2.9
Disagreed	9	2.4	2.4	5.3
Undecided	2	.5	.5	5.9
Agreed	50	13.3	13.3	19.1
Strongly Agreed	304	80.9	80.9	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Most of the purchases made by children are based on the adverts they are exposed to .

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.6676
Std. Deviation		.85392

Table 9 above revealed that 11 (2.9%) and 9 (2.4%) respondents strongly disagree and disagree respectively that most of the purchases made by children are based on the adverts they are exposed to , while 2 (0.5) respondents were undecided. However, 50 and 304 (80.9%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that most of the purchases made by children are based on the adverts they are exposed to. Given that the mean and standard deviation is 4.6676 and 0.85392 respectively, it means that the table is a “yes” decision.

Invariable, 80.9% strongly agreed that most of the purchases made by children are based on the adverts they are exposed to.

Table 10

Most things bought by children are inimical to their health, but they still buy them because of the adverts they have been exposed to .

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	8	2.1	2.1	2.1
Disagreed	8	2.1	2.1	4.3
Undecided	4	1.1	1.1	5.3
Agreed	52	13.8	13.8	19.1
Strongly Agreed	304	80.9	80.9	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

Most things bought by children are inimical to their health, but still buy them because of the adverts they have been exposed to .

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.6915
Std. Deviation		.78691

From table 10 above, 8 and 8 respondents resulting to 2.1% and 2.1% strongly disagree and disagree respectively that most things bought by children are inimical to their health, but still buy them because of the adverts they have been exposed to. Four (4) respondents amounting to 1.1% was undecided. However, 52 and 304 respondents constituting 13.8% and 80.9% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that most things bought by children are inimical to their health, but still buy them because of the adverts they have been exposed to. With the mean and standard deviation at 4.6915 and 0.78691 respectively, it means that the table is a “yes” decision.

The implication is that, 80.9% strongly agreed that most things bought by parents are inimical to their children's health, but they have no choice because their children have made request for them.

Table 11

To avoid pestering(nagging), parents buy products for their children, they ordinarily would not want to buy

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagreed	6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Disagreed	8	2.1	2.1	3.7
Undecided	4	1.1	1.1	4.8
Agreed	60	16.0	16.0	20.7
Strongly Agreed	298	79.3	79.3	100.0
Total	376	100.0	100.0	

Statistics

To avoid pestering(nagging), parents buy products for their children, they ordinarily would not want to buy

N	Valid	376
	Missing	0
Mean		4.6915
Std. Deviation		.74514

Data presented in table 11 revealed that 6 (1.6%) and 8 (2.1%) respondents strongly disagree and disagree respectively that parents buy products for their children; they ordinarily would not want to buy, in order to avoid pestering. Four (1.1%) respondents were undecided; while 60 (16.0%) and 298 (79.3%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that parents buy products for their children, they ordinarily would not want to buy, in order to avoid pestering. Statistical analysis shows the mean and standard deviation of 4.6915 and 0.74514 respectively, meaning that the table is a “yes” decision.

Invariable, 79.3% strongly agreed that parents buy products for their children; they ordinarily would not want to buy, in order to avoid pestering.

Weighting scale

The same weighting scale used in research question two is applicable here. The “yes” or “no” decision as determined by the mean statistics rates 3.0 and above for a “yes” decision, while when rated below 3.0 is a “no” decision. In this case, for every “yes” decision in each of the aforementioned tables (9-11), it is rated 25% plus “very high”, “high”, “low” and “very low”

attached. In a situation where only one table scores “yes” then it is “very low”. If two tables, then it is “low”. If three tables, then it is “high”, but when it is four tables, it is “very high”. Given that three (3) tables scored “yes” decision, it means that they scored 75%, plus a very high value attached.

Generally, therefore, it means that 75% of the respondents, to a very high extent, agreed that advertisements do influence children’s buying behaviour and that children influence their parents buying behaviour based on the nature of advertisements they are exposed to.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of data to research question one revealed that 75% of the respondents said that the use of cartoons and illustrations, the combination of musical sounds and pictures, and the use of children in most advertisements attract them to these adverts. It was revealed that 75% of the respondents, to a high extent, are influenced by the nature of advertisements they are exposed to. Further analysis also revealed that 75% of the respondents, to a high extent, agreed that advertisements do influence their buying behaviour and that they in turn pester their parents to buy things they have seen in most advertisements.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concludes that advertising do have influence on children who in turn influence their parents buying behaviour in most cases. Therefore, it should no longer be the interest advertisers, media practitioners, and government to look at advert influence, rather parents/guardians should make it a point of duty to ensure that they are not being influenced negatively by their children.

Based on this, it is recommended that:

1. Parents should monitor/watch out for advertisements that are misleading. This can be done by watching/listening to media advertisement with their children and discussing advertising content with their children, in order to reduce its influence.
2. Schools should implement media literacy curriculum, this should be designed to equip children with skills to understand commercial messages and what to look for in any advertisement. To make this more effective, parents and other members of the community need to be educated on media effect.

3. Children should be encouraged to source for other contents in the media outside advertisement.
4. Products that are not meant for children such as drugs and those labelled keep out of children reach should not be advertised directly to them.
5. Since children like advertisement on foods, advertisers should not encourage or promote unhealthy eating or drinking habit. They should also ensure that their adverts do not contain any misleading or incorrect information about nutrition.

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