



EFFECT OF ADVERTISING ON CUSTOMERS' PATRONAGE OF PEACE MASS TRANSIT LIMITED IN CALABAR, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined the effect of advertising on customers' patronage in Peace Mass Transit Limited in Calabar. It sought to explore the relationship between advertising (on radio, television and billboard) and customers' patronage. The research design used for this study is the survey method. Primary data were collected using questionnaire instrument. Data analysis was done using Pearson's correlation method. Based on the results, it was revealed thus, radio, television and billboard advertisement had a significant relationship with customers' patronage. Therefore, the following recommendations were made: the company should devise effective strategy on how advertising will lead to growth of the organization; the management should be monitoring the activities sales product so that marketing objectives could be properly determined; the organization should implement policies on advertising and how it could be well planned.*

KEYWORDS: Advertising, Radio advertisement, Television advertisement, Billboard Advertisement, Customer Patronage



INTRODUCTION

Commercial road transportation services comprise all transport facilities in which passengers do not use their personal means of transportation to travel. It includes shared taxis cars, buses, lorries and trailers. Commercial road transport service is the most commonly used mode of transportation in Nigeria today (Robert, 2004; Etim *et al.*, 2021). This is due to the inefficient, ineffective and sometimes absent railway transport services as well as expensive air transport services. This strategic location has brought a large number of road transporters into Calabar City leading to high completion among the road transport service providers. In order to gain high-market share and patronage, some of the companies have engaged in competitive advertising (Giles, 2008; Etuk *et al.*, 2022).

Most authors have suggested that the primary aim of an advertiser is to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes and buying behaviour (Ewuola, 2004; Etuk *et al.*, 2022). Companies spend lots of money in advertising with a view to keeping customers interested in their services believing that advertising may have the potential to contribute to the passengers' choice of their services among others. The proliferation of different brands of commercial transport services has led to the cut-throat competition for increased market share being witnessed currently among the operations in the commercial road transport industry. It is believed that advertising has the potential to helping companies realize and retain their position. Advertising strategy has remained the one best way firms gain competitive edge in the market (Busair, 2002; Mpuon *et al.*, 2023).

To survive in the competitive marketing environment, both small and large organizations need to adopt advertising strategies in order to attract and retain customers, hence long term relationships and growth performance in terms of productivity. Increased revenue, increased client base and customer patronage are measures of growth of any organization in the competitive market such as Peace Mass Transit. Unfortunately, the issues of marketing are becoming more complicated as competition continues to change worldwide. Due to the fierce marketing competition by transporters, effective advertisement may be helpful in stimulating customers' purchase intent of their products. The problem of advertising is how to achieve the goal. In spite of the invaluable role of advertising in achieving the sales volume target of the company, it has problems to be addressed. It has been observed that most companies like Peace Mass Transit are still inflexible and reluctant to the use of advertising or have failed to advertise as most agencies are not allowed, such that at the end they fail to improve on the sales volume. Besides, the companies are not consistent with their advertising policies and the policies that could make impact on their customers have not been effective. It appears that wrong and ineffective media to execute their advertising policy have been the bane of the company. Thus, how has Peace Mass Transit used advertising to drive the sales over the years?



LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the following theories: Resource Advantage (R-A) theory and Resource Base View Theory (RBV). The Resource Advantage (R-A) theory is a general theory of competition that describes the process of competition. Hunt and Morgan (2014) proposed this theory. R-A theory stresses that firms should develop strategies arising from their unique resources. Hunt and Morgan (2014) said that R-A theory is associated with the importance of (1) market segments, (2) heterogeneous firm resources, and (3) comparative advantages or disadvantages. Market segments are defined as intra-industry groups of consumers whose taste and preferences with regard an industry's output are relatively homogeneous.

Similarly, when firms have a comparative disadvantage in resources, the occupied position of competitive disadvantage will then produce inferior financial resources. Also, R-A, which highlights and emphasizes on valuable, rare resources, is one that enables a firm when competing for a market segment and patronage to move upward and or to the right in the market place position. This means that valuable, rare resources enable firms to compete by being, relative to competitors, more efficient and/or more effective. It also minimizes the value chain and highlights the importance of value creation as a key component of strategy R-A theory, thus providing an explanation for the chain that some firms are superior to others in performing value creation activities. Superior performing firms (in terms of value creation) have comparative advantages on resources; R-A theory places great emphasis on innovation, both proactive and reactive. The former is innovation by firms that, although motivated by the expectation of financial performance, is not prompted by specific competitive pressure. It is genuinely entrepreneurial in the classic sense of entrepreneurship. Active innovation also contributes to dynamism.

Advertising

Advertising is simply the process of creating awareness about the existence of goods and services to a target audience. It is an Inertia that is capable of any type of product because of its persuasiveness (Odigbo, 2018; James & Inyang, 2022). According to McLuhan (2011), advertising is defined as "any non-personal communication means of idea or products by using mass communication media such as television, newspapers, magazines, cinema, radio, etc, and is implemented through a specific sponsor, for a fee paid to influence consumer behaviour." According to Lewis (2021), advertising is a form of non-personal method of communicating information through various media. Kumar and Raju (2013) view advertising as any paid form of non-person communication about an organization, a good, service or an idea by an identified sponsor. Katle (2007) suggests that the objective of advertising is to induce immediate action, to create liking and preference for a product or organization, and to create awareness about a product or service. Some advertisements also seek to build a respected corporate identity for a company, product and brand name or make all familiar to the public (Iko & Uwais, 2016; Anyadighibe *et al.*, 2021). These definitions can tell one that advertising is a persuasive communication because it tries to persuade the readers, viewers or listeners to take the sponsor's point of view and also take some appropriate actions towards the object of advertisement (Derrick & Rose, 2018; Etuk *et al.*, 2021). Advertising is not undertaken by management just for fun or to keep products or services. It is principally involved in persuasion or advocacy, giving information using media that are paid for to get through to the mass



audience with the identity of the advertisers being clear. Advertising has the mandate to sell the advertiser's goods and help the consumers to shop wisely (Caren *et al.*, 2019; Etim *et al.*, 2021).

Advertising is to communicate information about a good, service or idea and thus stimulate demand. According to Katle (2007), one function of the mass media which is becoming increasingly important in the modern world is the economic function of advertising. Again, the world is fast becoming a common market place of ideas. Many multinational companies have come to realize that people have the same basic needs and desires (Inyang *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, they have heeded to calls for global marketing and can promote their goods and services using advertisements. Advertising is one of the major sources of communication between the producers and the user of the products. A company's product no matter the quality and performance will not generate the expected revenue until they invest in promotional activities that are capable of informing, educating and persuading consumers about the product. One of the tools used in achieving this is advertising (Lewis, 2021; James & Inyang, 2023; Etuk *et al.*, 2022). According to Owen (2014), advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor through a mass media. Giles (2008) also stated that advertising is controlled identifiable information and persuasion by means of mass media.

Informative Advertising

Derrick and Rose (2018) define informative advertising as advertising aimed at creating brand awareness and knowledge of a new product or new features of existing products. Advertising serves as a major tool in creating product awareness in the mind of a potential consumer to take eventual purchase decision. An advertisement may seek to inform customers of where to buy the product, the price of the product, and how to use the product safely and economically (Takana, 2014; Mpuon *et al.*, 2023; Etuk *et al.*, 2022). Ugbor (2013) noted that television is one of the strongest mediums of informative advertising and, due to its mass coverage and pictorial display, can influence not only the individuals' attitude, behaviour, lifestyle and exposure but in the long run affect even the culture of a country. Other means of advertising aimed at bringing product awareness to consumers include radio, newspapers and magazines, telephone, cable, satellite, wireless, web pages, billboards, signs and posters. In general, the role of advertising is to inform both loyal and potential consumers of the benefit, function and/or the price of the goods or services, to persuade consumers to buy or patronize the goods or services and to remind those who are already using the product or services of the continuous existence of the product in the market (Katle, 2007; James *et al.*, 2022).

Persuasive Advertising

The primary aim of advertisers is to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes and buying behaviour (Kumar & Raju, 2013; James & Inyang, 2022). Persuasive advertising is aimed at creating liking, preference, conviction, and purchase of a product. Some persuasive advertising use comparative advertising which makes an explicit comparison of the attributes of two or more products. The ultimate aim of persuasive advertising is to convince or persuade the customer to think favorably about the company or to buy its products. Companies spend lots of money to keep customers interested in their products. They also need to understand what makes potential customers behave the way they do and to use the advertising tool to bring to the customers' awareness the efforts put in place by the organization



in meeting the expectations of the customers. Most organizations believe that this may have the potential to contribute to brand choice among customers. In addition, one of the major roles of advertising is to impact on consumer buying behavior (Owen, 2014; Inyang & James, 2022; Etim *et al.*, 2023). Most organizations are now involved in the study of consumer behavior because it tends to explain why consumers act in particular ways under certain circumstances, and tries to determine the factors that influence consumer behavior especially the economic, social and psychological aspects. The essence of the study is to enable them put in place strategies that will influence consumer buying decision and of all the marketing tools and persuasive advertising is known for its long-lasting impact on consumers' mind, as its exposure is much broader (Smith, 2010; Etim *et al.*, 2020; Etuk *et al.*, 2022; Anyadighibe *et al.*, 2022). The success of any product depends on its level of acceptance in the market. This is the reason many organizations employ different effective marketing tools, especially advertising, to enhance product acceptance. Persuasive advertising, therefore, provides a means for fighting competition by demonstrating the product's strengths and superiority over others with the hope of improving the company's patronage and market share.

Radio Advertising

Radio advertising is a form of advertising via the medium of radio. Its ability to reach a wider population of consumers scattered over a large geographical area makes it very effective and efficacious. It is a good channel for marketing Fast Moving Consumer Product Brand (Udochi, 2013; Etim *et al.*, 2023; Inyang *et al.*, 2022). Airtime is purchased from the station or network in exchange for airing the commercials. Radio has the limitation of being restricted to sound and proponents of radio advertising often cite this as an advantage. Radio is an expanding medium that can be found not only on air but also online. It is the most economical among other media as it is cheap to buy. Even the poorest man in the remotest part of Nigeria can afford to purchase a pocket radio and listen to current news. Its audio characteristics makes it much more a communication media as both the literate and illiterate can appreciate its means of transmitting adverts and news; news can be transmitted in many local languages. Radio has a high believability than the print media in Nigeria (Ugbor, 2013). Radio has the disadvantage of being fleeting except for repeated programmes and commercials. It has clusters and listeners will have to identify a particular brand advertisement from numerous adverts at different time intervals. It is known as advertising bombardments. Of course, it is an audio medium unlike the television that is audio-visual. By audio, it means that one can only hear but not view a radio advertisement or other programmes.

Television Advertising

A television advertisement or commercial is a form of advertisement in which goods, services, organizations and ideas, are promoted through the medium of television. Television is an audio-visual medium as goods and services being advertised can be seen by the target audience and this earns it more believability than the radio and print media of advertising. Although it is costlier than the radio, it is regarded as a prestige media as those who can afford a television in Nigeria are regarded as wealthy organizations. It has immediacy as one of its characteristic too. It also has clutter and is as well transitory like the radio. It is not as portable as the radio. But these days, technology and phones have been built with television enabling features which consume data for transmission. Most advertisements are produced by an outside advertising agency (Katile, 2007). An infomercial is a long-format television commercial, typically five minutes or longer. The main objective of an infomercial is to create an impulse purchase, so



that the consumer sees the presentation and then immediately buys the product through the advertised toll-free telephone number, email or website. Infomercials describe, display, and often demonstrate products and their features, and commonly have testimonials from consumers and industry professionals. According to Lewis (2011), advertisers spread commercials across a number of programmes reaching many more viewers. Networks now own different “spot” commercials for many products in the same show. A spot has to stand out and be remembered and this brought about creativity in television advertising owing to the large number of advertisements, and many products with the same quality and cost. The unique selling proposition and brand awareness became ever more important.

Billboard Advertising

For a billboard to contribute to the success of a product, it has to be designed so that the customer passes through the five phrases of the AIDCA theory, with all being equally important. The AIDCA theory implies that the billboard should inject memorable and believable message that will trigger consumers to act in a certain way. Billboard has a high visual impact as large life size billboards are installed in strategic places and highways all over Nigeria. It has low cost compared with television and radio in terms of production. It also has high product visibility as large pictures of the advertised company brands can be perceived and understood by anybody without having to ask much questions; advertisement can be seen in countless billboards and more so in Nigeria. Its disadvantages are that it is only effective outdoors. Unless one travels out, it is very difficult to see a billboard except if one by chance sees it in a television programme or movie. It can distract a driver on the highway and make him lose concentration on the steering; it wears out easily and litters the environment.

Commercial Road Transport Services

Road transport is the most commonly used mode of transportation in Nigeria and accounts for more than 90% of the sub-sector's and 3% contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Road transport activities involve the conveyance of passengers en-masse or in small numbers, the transportation of animals, farm produce and merchandise. Nigeria's road networks are poorly maintained and overused as alternative modes of transport are poorly developed. Most people, therefore, rely of commercial road transportation services for the movement of people, goods and services. Commercial road transportation services comprise all transport facilities in which passengers do not use their personal means of transportation. It includes shared taxis, cars, buses, lorries and trailers. Commercial road transport service is the most commonly used mode of transportation in Nigeria today. This is due to inefficient, ineffective and sometimes absent railway transport services as well as expensive air transport services. Caren, Haynes and Palms (2019) state that commercial transportation is of importance to passengers due to the fact that it offers opportunity to move people, goods and services from one location to the other with ease. It also enhances the quality of life in societies on the condition that it provides safe, efficient and inexpensive transportation services. Besides, the ease of use (availability) and cost effectiveness of commercial transport services is imperative to guaranteeing a resilient economy and improving mobility. Societies also benefit from the availability of public transportation services as it lessens traffic congestion on our roads, saves money and creates and sustain jobs within communities. Owen (2014) refers to road transportation as the engine of the economy. This is because without road transportation, the entire economy will suffer stagnation as road transportation helps to bridge the gap between producers, suppliers and industrials users as well as individual commuters. Also, Smith (2010) notes that not much



success can be accomplished in manufacturing, distribution of goods and services including the movement of people without transportation as road transport accounts for more than 90% of the country's goods and passengers' movements.

Advertising and Patronage

Several authors in marketing have stated that the major goals of advertising are to inform, educate and persuade the consumer about the company's image, products or services. The proliferation of different brands of commercial road transportation has led to the cut-throat competition for increased market share being witnessed currently among the operators in the industry. Most customers have expressed dissatisfaction by services rendered by Peace transport providers as a result of delays in taking off, discomfort in the seating arrangement, overloading, rude behaviors of drivers, poorly maintained vehicles, over speeding and excessive charges, among others. In some cases, the services provided are grossly insufficient, ineffective, and inefficient to meet the expectations of the consumer. In view of the competitive environment in the transport industry, advertising has a high potential in helping companies that have repositioned themselves in attracting new customers and retaining their existing ones. This hopefully will in no small measure lead to increase in customers' patronage as well as market share.

METHODOLOGY

The design employed in this study is survey research design. This design allows for one time only observation that involves as many variables as necessary for the research but does not give room for the researcher to manipulate the independent variables to produce effects on the dependent variable of the study. This research was conducted on Peace Mass Transit, which is a private organization operating in Calabar, Cross River State. Data for this study was gathered from primary sources and through the use of structured questionnaires from customers of Peace Mass in Calabar. The study employed Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis to measure the relationship between the variables tested in the study.



ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₁: Radio advertisement does not have a significant effect on customers' patronage.

Table 1: Radio Advertisement Does Not Have a Significant Impact on Customers' Patronage

Correlations		Radio advertisement	Customer patronage
Radio advertisement	Pearson Correlation	1	.326
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	153	158
Customer patronage	Pearson Correlation	.326	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	153	153

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 1 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between radio advertisement and marketing performance, with an r-value of .326 and a probability value (0.000) less than 0.05 significance level. It reveals that there is a significant relationship between radio advertisement and customers' patronage.

Hypothesis 2

H₂: Television advertisement does not have a significant effect on customers' patronage.

Table 2: Television Advertisement Does Not Have a Significant Impact on Customers' Patronage

Correlations		Television advertisement	Customer patronage
Television advertisement	Pearson Correlation	1	.115*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.112
	N	153	146
Customer patronage	Pearson Correlation	.115*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	
	N	153	136

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 2 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between television advertisement and customers' patronage. With an r-value of .115 and a probability value (0.035) less than 0.05 significance level, it reveals that there is a significant impact of television advertisement on customers' patronage.



Hypothesis 3

H₃: Billboard advertisement does not have a significant effect on customers' patronage.

Table 3: Billboard Advertisement Does Not Have a Significant Impact on Customers' Patronage

Correlations		Billboard advertisement	Customer patronage
Billboard advertisement	Pearson Correlation	1	.172
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028
	N	153	172
Customer patronage	Pearson Correlation	.172	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	155	153

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 3 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between billboard advertisement and customers' patronage. With an r-value of .172 and a probability value (.028) less than 0.05 significance level, it reveals that billboard advertisement has a significant relationship with customers' patronage.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study empirically examined advertising and customers' patronage. In Hypothesis One, it was revealed that radio advertisement has a significant impact on customers' patronage. The finding is in line with the works of Rajagopal (2012) who posited that radio advertising is a form of advertising via the medium of radio. Radio has the limitation of being restricted to sound and proponents of radio advertising often cite this as an advantage. Radio is an expanding medium that can be found not only on air but also online. It is the most economical among other media as it is cheap to buy. Even the poorest man in the remotest part of Nigeria can afford to purchase a pocket radio and listen to current news. Its audio characteristics make it much more a communication media as both literates and illiterates can appreciate its means of transmitting adverts and news; news can be transmitted in many local languages. Radio has a high believability than the print media in Nigeria (Nsoju & Nkamnebe, 2016). Radio has the disadvantage of being fleeting except for repeated programmes and commercials. It has clusters and listeners will have to identify a particular brand advertisement from numerous adverts at different time intervals. It is known as advertising bombardments. Of course, it is an audio medium unlike the television that is audio-visual. By audio, it means that one can only hear but not view a radio advertisement or other programmes.

In Hypothesis Two, it was revealed that there is a significant impact of television advertisement on customers' patronage. The finding is in line with the works of Ukaegbu (2013) who posited that television is an audiovisual medium as goods and services being advertised can be seen by the target audience, and this earns it more believability than the radio and print media of advertising. Although it is costlier than the radio, it is regarded as a prestige media as those who can afford a television in Nigeria are regarded as wealthy organisations. Most



advertisements are produced by an outside advertising agency. According to Ukaegbu (2013), advertisers spread commercials across a number of programmes reaching many more viewers. Networks now own different “spot” commercials for many products in the same show. A spot has to stand out and be remembered and this brought about creativity in television advertising owing to the large number of advertisements, and many products with the same quality and cost.

In Hypothesis Three, it was revealed that there is a significant relationship between billboard advertisement and customers’ patronage. The finding is in line with the works of Nwosu (2011), who posited that for a billboard to contribute to the success of a product, it has to be designed so that the customer passes through the five phrases of the AIDCA theory, with all being equally important. Billboard has a high visual impact as large life size billboards are installed in strategic places and highways all over Nigeria. It has low cost compared with television and radio in terms of production. It also has high product visibility as large pictures of the advertised Peace Mass Transit brands can be perceived and understood by anybody without having to ask many questions. PMT advertisements can be seen in countless billboards across Calabar and more so in Nigeria. The major findings of this study include:

- i. Radio advertisement has a significant relationship with customers’ patronage of Peace Mass Transit.
- ii. Television advertisement has a significant relationship with customers’ patronage of Peace Mass Transit.
- iii. Billboard advertisement has a significant relationship with customers’ patronage of Peace Mass Transit.

CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study examined the effect of advertising on customers’ patronage in Calabar. The study revealed that radio advertisement has a significant impact on the customers’ patronage of Peace Mass Transit (PMT); there is a significant impact of television advertisement on customers’ patronage; and there is a significant relationship between billboard advertisement and customers’ patronage. Advertising strategy has remained the one best way firms gains competitive edge in the market. Advertising seems to cut across the entire gamut of consumer products. The following recommendations are made:

- i. The company should devise effective strategies on how advertising will lead to the growth of the organization.
- ii. The management should be monitoring the activities of the sales product so that marketing objectives could be properly determined.
- iii. The organization should implement policies on advertising and how it could be well planned.



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