



EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN LOW DENSITY HOUSES: THE CASE OF MARLBOROUGH, ZIMBABWE

Alice Z Zinyemba^{1†} --- Irvine Manase²

¹Department of Business Studies, University of Zimbabwe, Borrowdale, Harare, Zimbabwe

²Department of Business Studies, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a research that was carried out to establish the buying behavior of low density households in Zimbabwe and how they are influenced by the various forms of advertising. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 75 respondents representing 75 households in Marlborough, Harare. The results of the study showed that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed that their decision to purchase a product was influenced by advertisements. They also indicated that they understood and preferred outdoor media more than television and print media which came second and third respectively in the order of preference. More than 75% of the respondents agreed that they bought advertised products more than those which are not advertised. The results also showed that consumers in Zimbabwe are slow in accepting and adopting the internet as a form of advertising. It can be concluded from this study that it definitely pays to advertise one's products. It is also important that an advert should carry a strong message that is convincing to the consumers as indicated by 50% of the respondents. It can also be concluded that the Zimbabwean market has not yet fully embraced online advertising. The study recommends that outdoor media should be used more than any other forms of advertising in low density areas as it is the most preferred and most understood media choice. It is also recommended that since more women than men do the purchases for households in low density areas advertisements should target women more than men.

Keywords: Advertising, Consumer behavior, Purchasing decision, Marketing communication, Low density.

JEL Classification: M10, O17, J16.

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Contribution/ Originality

This study contributes to existing literature on consumer buying behavior. It shows that the most preferred and understood media choice for advertising products among high income earners in countries like Zimbabwe is outdoor media. Since women more than men do the purchases for households advertisements should target women more.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years the Zimbabwean economy has not been performing well. The average capacity utilization for the manufacturing sector declined from 39.6% in 2013 to 36.3% in 2014 ([Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries Manufacturing Survey, 2014](#)). The advertising industry in Zimbabwe was also negatively affected.

Only a few advertising agencies had the capacity to advertise. Since 2002 advertising began to fall year by year, from more than nine hundred (900) companies advertising across the nation, to only one hundred and twenty (120) in January of 2008. Zimbabwe does not feature among the top 10 countries with vibrant advertising agencies on the ground ([Africa Media Development Initiative: Research Summary Report, 2010](#)).

The situation slightly improved after the signing of the Government of National Unity (GNU) agreement which brought some measure of economic and political stability. Most companies needed to rebuild their brands and this has to be done through advertising as it is the most used marketing communication tool in rebuilding a brand. Advertising has grown to be a multi-billion industry that has affected the buying behavior of billions of people world-wide. The most used promotional tool in marketing today is advertising ([Romaniuk and Sharp, 2004](#)).

The whole idea behind advertising is to persuade customers to purchase a product. The need to know consumer buying behavior in an unstable economy like the one obtaining in Zimbabwe becomes critical to marketers. The purpose of this study was to find out the effects of advertising on the buying behavior of households in low density areas of Zimbabwe and Marlborough was chosen as a case study.

1.1. Marlborough Low Density Suburb

There are three main reasons why Marlborough was chosen for the study and these are stated below.

1. Marlborough is located in one of the low density areas of which Harare has more than 85% literacy rate.
2. Marlborough is a low density up market suburb. In comparison to high density suburbs, the residents in Marlborough are high income earners. They can afford to spare some money on experimental or impulse purchasing, usually influenced by advertising.
3. The residents of Marlborough are well exposed to all kinds of advertising ranging from electronic media advertising through television and radio, internet, print as well as outdoor advertising. It can also be assumed that the residents of Marlborough have access to the internet either at work or at home.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Advertising

Advertising is a promotional tool used by marketers to communicate with consumers in various ways using various media. [Jalees \(2006\)](#) considers advertising as the most effective marketing tool for any organisation. [Milner \(1995\)](#) sees advertising as an influential communication force and a vital marketing tool that helps to sell goods, services, images, and ideas through a channel of information and persuasion. [Ayanwale et al. \(2005\)](#) define advertising as a non-personal paid form of thoughts, notions, products or services, and information that are endorsed through mass media by an identified sponsor to persuade or influence behavior. All these definitions point to the fact that the advertiser's primary objective is to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes and purchasing behavior. Companies advertise to remind, to inform and to persuade consumers to buy their products instead of buying from competition. This is achieved through communicating a particular message which should create awareness in the consumers and a shift in their attitudes ([Romaniuk and Sharp, 2004](#)). Lastly, advertising seeks to inform consumers of various things happening in the market. Basically there are two fundamental questions that advertising seeks to answer-

1. Who are the people who should be influenced? and
2. What specific information should be transmitted to them?

There are many media choices for advertising which include the internet, print, radio and television. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

2.2. Consumer Behaviour

The decision to buy or not to buy a product is purely based on consumer opinions. Consumer buying behaviour refers to the purchasing behaviour of consumers who are the individuals and households that purchase goods and services for consumption. Consumer behavior is also defined as the study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy and why they buy. It refers to the buying process that occurs to anyone who is willing to buy, from individuals to households, groups or organisations [Kotler and Keller \(2011\)](#). Factors influencing consumer behavior include culture, social class, reference groups and personal characteristics, among other things. It is therefore important to understand how consumer behavior is influenced by various forms of advertising.

3. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

3.1. Purpose

The purpose of the study was to establish the buying behavior of Zimbabwe's low density households and how they are influenced by the various forms of advertising.

3.2. Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To understand the effects of advertising on consumer buying behavior.
2. To identify the types of advertisements that motivates households into buying the advertised

products.

3. To establish how consumers respond to advertised products as against non-advertised products.
4. To discover the various elements of an advert that influence consumers' decision to purchase.
5. To establish the type of media which consumers respond to mostly and why?

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The target population for the study was the residents of Marlborough with about 952 households. A sample size of more than 30 is deemed representative where the target population and calculated sample size cannot match the time and resources available. Premised on this principle, the study was conducted on 75 respondents representing 75 households. Systematic random sampling was used in the selection of the respondents. A questionnaire was administered to all the 75 respondents.

Data was collected on the following variables: age, qualification, gender, marital status, employment status, source of information, media preferred and understood and factors looked for in adverts. Follow up interviews were held to clarify some responses to the open ended questions on the questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and content analysis for the qualitative responses. Correlation coefficient and Chi Square were used in the analysis of data. Cronbach Alpha was used to test for validity and reliability of the data collected. All 75 questionnaires were returned with only 5 (7%) returned uncomplicated. This leaves the data collected 93% reliable.

5. DEMOGRAPHICS

5.1. Gender

A total of 53 females from the total of 75 participants responded to the questionnaire giving a total of 69% females and 31%males. More women than men responded to the questionnaire. This shows that women do most of the purchases.

5.2. Age

Ninety five (95%) of the participants responded to the question on age. They were mostly middle aged. Twenty three (23% of them were aged between 36-45 and 28% were aged between 46-60 years. A significant 26.7% were over 60 years. One can conclude that household purchases in low density areas are done by mature people who are most likely householders.

5.3. Marital Status

Out of the 75 respondents, 5 of them were single contributing 6.7% to the total, 45 of them were married and contributing 60% to the total. 17 of the respondents were divorced (22.7%) and 7 were widowed contributing a total of 9.3% and only 1 was recorded as missing data (1.3%). Most of the residents in Marlborough are married. The implications for advertising are that most household purchases are done by married people.

5.4. Employment Status

Sixty (67 %) of the participants were formally employed and the rest (33%) were not in formal employment. This means that advertisers in low density areas of Harare should be aware of the fact that a significant number of residents are not formally employed

6. FINDINGS

6.1. Source of Product Information

The majority of the respondents, 44 (58.7%) acquired information on the products they buy from advertisements. A further 23 (30.7%) of the respondents acquired information from peers, 6 (8%) of the respondents acquired information from their personal knowledge and only 2 (2.7%) were recorded as missing data as shown in table 1.

Table-1. Source of Information

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Advertisements	44	58.7	60.3	60.3
	Peers	23	30.7	31.5	91.8
	Knowledge of brand	6	8.0	8.2	100.0
	Total	73	97.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.7		
Total		75	100.0		

It can be concluded from this table that advertising plays a very big role in providing information to consumers about what products to buy.

6.2. Attention to Adverts

The majority of the respondents (77%) pay attention to adverts no matter what type it is while the other 23% do not pay attention to adverts. This shows the important role of advertising influencing consumer behavior.

6.3. Preferred Media

The study looked at the preferred media choice that consumers understand. A total of 5 media choices were used namely television, radio, and internet, print and outdoor.

Table-2. Media preferred and understood

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Television	19	25.3	26.4	26.4
	Radio	3	4.0	4.2	30.6
	Outdoor	26	34.7	36.1	66.7
	Internet	6	8.0	8.3	75.0
	Print	18	24.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	72	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.0		
Total		75	100.0		

Table 2 shows that 35% of the respondents preferred outdoor media while 25% of the respondents preferred television. Print Media had a total of 24% and only 8 % of the respondents preferred Internet. Radio had the least preference with only 4%.

6.4. Factors Considered in an Advert

Table-3. Factors looked for in adverts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Convincing message	35	46.7	46.7	46.7
	Importance to me	5	6.7	6.7	53.3
	Appealing	7	9.3	9.3	62.7
	Appearance	28	37.3	37.3	100.0
	Total	75	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows what factors in an advert influenced them into making purchases after viewing or listening to an advert. The results show that 47 % of the respondents considered how convincing the message is to them. A significant 37% considered the appearance of the advert. Another 9% considered how the advert was appealing to them. Only 7% considered the importance of the product to them. This means that adverts must be both convincing and attractive in appearance to consumers.

6.5. Effects of Advertising on Consumer Behaviour

The study also sought to understand the effect advertising has on consumers’ decisions to purchase.

Pearson Correlation was used to analyze the relationship between paying attention to adverts and the extent to which advertising had influenced them to buy. A positive relation exists between the two variables which as shown in Table 4. The Pearson Correlation shows a positive relationship as signaled by .020.

Table-4. Effects of Adverts on buying behaviour

		Do you pay attention to adverts?	To what extent has advertising influenced you?
Do you pay attention to adverts?	Pearson Correlation	1	.020(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	75	75
To what extent has advertising influenced you?	Pearson Correlation	.020(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	75	75

6.6. Preferred Media

The study also sought to understand the types of media consumers preferred and understood

which would make them respond to an advert. Thirty five (35%) preferred and understood outdoor media adverts. Twenty five (25%) preferred and understood television. Print Media had a total of 24% followed by internet media with 8%. Radio adverts had 4%. The results show that the residence of Marlborough do not listen much to radio neither do they use much of the internet. Advertising should focus more on outdoor and television in order to influence consumer behavior.

6.7. How Consumers Respond to Advertised as Against Non-Advertised Products

Table 5 illustrates results from a correlation analysis of two variables; "Was the decision to buy purely yours and Do you agree to buy advertised products versus unadvertised products? The results as showed a weak relationship between the two variables analyzed (Pearson Correlation = 0.001)

6.8 Elements of an Advert that Influence Consumers to Purchase

The results show that a significant number of consumers (50%) considered the message in an advert as a crucial element in influencing them to make a purchase. Twenty one (21%) considered jingles and or visuals as an influential element in them purchasing an advertised product. Twenty nine (29%) considered their purchase of advertised products as being based purely on their wanting to experiment with both new and old products in the market.

6.9. Analysis by Crosstabs and Chi Square Tests

Chi Square test was carried out for some of the variables in the questionnaire which reflected a connection on the influence of advertising on consumer behavior.

6.10. Do you pay attention to Adverts? * Media Preferred and Understood?

A P Value of 0.011 was drawn from the Chi Square test of the two variables "Do you pay attention to adverts and Media preferred and understood?" and the test can be regarded as significant.

6.11. Do you pay Attention to adverts? * What Factors do you look for in Adverts?

Another Chi Square test was performed between the two variables, "Do you pay attention to adverts and what factors do you look for in an advert." The test performed as shown in Table 7 show a P-Value of 0.000, although the value is low the test can be regarded as significant.

6.12. Chi-Square Tests. Do you pay Attention to adverts? * How often do you Research on Advertised Products?

Lastly a Chi Square test was used to analyse the significance between the two variables; "Do you pay attention to adverts and how often do you research on advertised products?" A P-Value of 0.020 was realized and this renders the test as significant and relevant.

6.13. Reliability Test

Cronbach Alpha test was performed to establish reliability of the findings. For a study to be reliable it should record at least 0.6.

Table-5. Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.740	6

Table 5 shows an extract from the calculated reliability test which shows that the results were reliable.

7. CONCLUSIONS

A number of conclusions were drawn from the findings.

- a. There was a positive correlation of 0.020 between the two variables “Do you pay attention to adverts and to what extent has advertising influenced you to buy.” More than 50% of consumers strongly agreed that advertising influences their decisions to make purchases. It can be concluded from the study that the consumer’s decision to purchase is highly influenced by advertising.
- b. It can also be concluded that consumers prefer and understand outdoor media more than any other media and very often it influences them to make a purchase.
- c. Television and print media were the second and third media choices respectively within the Marlborough residence. Only a few residents preferred the internet and radio mediums.
- d. Zimbabweans are slow in adopting and accepting the internet as a media choice.
- e. More than 76% of the respondents agreed to buy advertised products against those that are not advertised. It can therefore be concluded that consumers in low density areas tend to buy advertised products as opposed to those products that are not at all advertised.
- f. It can be concluded from the results that messages in an advert are the most important when it comes to convincing customers on what to buy.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be made to both marketers and consumers.

- a. From the various tests and frequencies carried out it has been proved that when a firm advertises it is bound to realize positive returns from that effort. It pays to advertise.
- b. Outdoor media should be used to advertise to low density households as it has been proven that it is the most preferred and most understood media choice for low density consumers.
- c. Marketers should always ensure that their adverts carry a strong convincing message.
- d. Since more women than men do the purchases for households advertisements should

target women more than men.

- e. Since the Zimbabwean market is not ready to embrace online advertising it is recommended that marketers continue with outdoor and television advertising in low density upmarket areas of Zimbabwe.

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