# CONSUMERS’ PERCEPTION OF TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

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A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO COMMMUNICATIONS AND MULTIMEDIA DESIGN PROGRAM, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, YOLA.

FALL 2016

# DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for seeing me through this journey. To my amazing family, especially my loving parents Mr. Julius Ayuk Tabe and Mrs. Lilian Agbor Bakia who continuously encouraged and supported me through their words of wisdom. A special feeling towards my siblings Ayuk-Bakia, Pascaline, Ayamba, Manyo, Agborarah and Nalova who contributed in their own way and were with me every step of the way. To my beautiful JAZMIN, your source of motivation to me will be forever be in my heart.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I cannot thank my instructors for their enormous support and inspiration; Prof. Joseph Rishante and Mr. Abba Tahir. I bid my deepest appreciation for all the learning opportunities provided by them.

My completion this research study could not have been possible without the help of some of my schoolmates; Green, Faridah, Anthony and Eugene. To Mr. Tunde, Mr. Donald, Aunty Mercy and Aunty Patience, thank you for making out time from your busy schedules to help me carry out my research methodology. You deserve nothing but the best! Thanks to my one of a kind instructor Dr Presly Obukoadata for always being available even when it involved last minute items. Your understanding towards my chaotic work ethic will not be forgotten.

Finally, to my loving parents Mr. and Mrs. Julius Ayuk Tabe, I would forever be appreciative of all the time, effort and resources put into making sure that I achieved this milestone. Even when circumstances were difficult, it was with great ease and comfort to know you were always willing to provide help whenever it was needed. My heartfelt thanks.

# CERTIFICATION

We certify that this project was conducted by me Ayuk-Tabe Ayuk Nkongho, ID Number: A00015007, of Communications and Multimedia Designs Program of The American University of Nigeria, under our supervision.

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# ABSTRACT

This research study surveys how certain advertising strategies affect consumers’ perception of truth in them with outcomes drawn from publics in Yola, Adamawa, Nigeria. There are two research questions raised and the literature review focuses on what consumers perceive to be truth in advertising. The theoretical framework for this study uses past experiences and advertising exposures as the key elements for evaluation. The sample size for this study were 200 respondents from the American University of Nigeria, Federal University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa Television, Fombina FM Radio and TV Gotel. Questionnaires were used as the research instrument. The results from the study shows that majority of the respondents have a negative approach towards how advertising practitioners display certain aspect of realism in their productions. The virtue of honesty and frankness were highly overemphasized to be what truth should be all about in the strategic and creative planning of advertisements. The outcome gotten from this research study revealed a positive attitudes towards the impact of advertisements in economic activities. However, the feeling towards how trustworthy and sincere advertisement content are, is a trait that advertising practitioners should resolve.

# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

# Background to the Study

Humans by very nature seek after the best in all endeavors. As a result, they get easily caught up with the “better option” rather than being content with where they are and what they have. Advertisers have exploited this human psychology to their advantage. Several advertising contents have challenged the consumers’ perception of the ideal message, otherwise called the truth. The whole essence of advertising is to create attention, desire, action and interest in the consumers. Sexual, factual and emotional strategies are a few methods that advertises use to appeal to consumers.

In an effort to woo consumers, advertising exaggerates the difference between the perceived product and the reality of the product. This is very common amongst competitors. They tend to include more than available information on a perceived benefit and exclude all the disadvantages. Cohesion cannot be used as a tool in making consumers to buy something they don’t need, but effective advertising can increase consumer wants and desires.

This research evaluates the level at which consumers agree with the various creative techniques used by advertising practitioners.

For example; the advertised hamburgers, which are usually larger than life, though appetizing, TV commercials for video games, where the trailers have high computer generate imagery (CGI) and graphics that cannot be matched in real life and the various Coca-Cola and Pepsi advertisements.

Enticingly, advertising connects a good to a need, suggesting that by consuming a particular good or service, a need will be achieved. It is within this frame that consumer’s derive their own meaning of what is truthful and what is deceptive. Various research studies have presumed that advertising could resurface consumers hidden needs as well as create new ones, if the advertisement is effective enough. However, consumer's limited level of reasonability usually restricts the number of brands with high memorable capacity in a given category. In this scenario, advertising has to be exceptionally brilliant in order to occupy that portion of the consumers mind in order to create brand equity through resonance, recall and loyalty. Brand equity is the conscious remembrance of a product or service by a consumer towards a particular good or service. Therefore, when asked about brand of a certain product (sodas), the consumer will quickly answer with that which he or she is most aware of.

Advertising stresses the importance of a connection between their identity to the brand and the brand itself. It creates an environment for consumers to purchase the goods and service for ambitious purposes e.g. (my hair style has to be the best).

In a more practical orientation, attention is paid to satisfy a certain need or desire, advertising prompts first purchase by motivating and generating occasions. It creates a feeling such as “the time has come” or that of “the due date is close”, providing an inner desire to purchase a product.

In advertising, the type of behaviors related to the usage of a particular good or service can be extended to the social obligations of the consumer. This is particularly effective when a purchase has a social meaning attached to it e.g. (if I buy the Rolex watch, they would know that I have arrived). This idea of showcasing oneself sometimes is as a result of consumers using the

general opinions of others to satisfy their egos. Advertising is sometimes considered a form of art because of its use of colors words, emotions and various media in its field of creative production.

# Statement of the Problem

Advertising has received a lot of criticisms from those who believe that there is noticeable level of deception or selective disclosure. Truth is often questioned when it comes to marketing and promoting strategies. Hence, this study evaluates consumers make out of their perception of “truth” in advertising.

# Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to;

* + - Determine the extent to which advertising contains truth.
    - Ascertain consumer’s perception of truth in advertising.

# Research Questions

* + - To what extent does advertising contain truth?
    - What is the consumers’ perception of truth in advertising?

# Significance of the Study

Consumers’ perception of truth directly influences their purchasing power and relationships towards products and services. This study is important as it is a form of continuous research and is aimed at improving efficient and effective procedures in advertising industries through consumer criticisms and responses. The study is significant to advertising agencies and practitioners who are directly involved with advertising policies and techniques.

# Scope of the Study

This study assesses the aspects of advertising which consumers find to be true and those elements in advertising which affect their judgment. It surveys opinions and ideologies of consumers through questionnaires amongst 200 Yola residents.

# Limitation to the Study

Such research study requires a mass sample size such as the entire Adamawa state or the country as a whole. However, the timeframe given to do this dissertation was inadequate. Therefore, the data is only retrieved from the samples from the Yola-south. Nevertheless, the various challenges faced was alleviated through the use of a purposive sample size.

# Definition of Terms

1. **Image Manipulation –** This is a digital method of changing the appearance of a picture or photo by retouching certain power lines for purposes such as advertisements, modelling and artwork to achieve a desired effect.
2. **Photoshop –** It involves an editing process of making images look more attractive.

Photos are air-brushed to demonstrate the idea of perfection.

1. **Honesty –** when something or someone exhibits right and appropriate behaviors, he or she is considered to be honest. Anything can demonstrates truthfulness and virtuous attributes is honest. Honesty simply means sincerity.
2. **Influence –** Influence is the ability of a thing or person to have a gripping force on opinions and actions.
3. **Puffery –** When an information or message content is over exaggerated, it is considered puffery.
4. **Truth -** It refers to the state of an object or someone portraying factual and real contexts.
5. **Creativity –** being creative involves standing out. It gives room for memorability since it develops a kind of uniqueness that people simply cannot forget them.
6. **Perception –** It can be defined as a way of observing, interpreting and understanding something or someone based on their attributes.

# CHAPTER TWO

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

# Introduction

This section reviews related literature necessary for the study of consumer perception of truth in advertising. Therefore, this review discusses important concepts such as creativity and truth, prior related studies on truth in advertising as well theories that support the concept of truth in advertising.

# Review of Important Concepts

For the past twenty five years, advertising scholars have written extensively on the core of the subject matter which is creativity. However, a word as simple as truth is hardly mentioned in most of these reviews written by various esteemed art directors and expatriates in an effort to understand the relationship between. Various traits of disagreement arose from several published articles which suggested that the elements of originality vary according to the perceptions of consumers and that of advertising agencies. However, in the most of this articles, the process of connecting truth and creativity has not been addressed.

In the advertising industry, there is a diverse sense of thinking which is creates the link between creativity, truth and communication. This will be further explained by focusing on the writings of art philosophers. This chapter will also dig into the view of advertising practitioners who established how truth is essential in creating advertisements, how these truths, being obvious

to the practitioners, are seen in three different ways by the outside public; the way of life, the product and the consumer.

# Truth

[(www.a](http://www.aaf.org/)a[f.org](http://www.aaf.org/) n.d.)In order to buttress how important the concept of truth is to advertising practice and profession, the American Advertising Federation considers truth so critical that the organization lists it first among its governing principles, “Advertising shall tell the truth, and shall reveal significant facts” ([www.aaf.org](http://www.aaf.org/) n.d.). Although some people see truth in advertising to be a moral principle guiding advertising, it also transmits to the foot mark for a brands’ financial success. Nevertheless, if an advertising message is considered misleading or dishonest, the consumers mind will devise a negative bias towards that particular product. (Mackey 1998) Hugh Mackey in The Good Listener puts the concept this way, “It’s not what our message does to the reader, but what the reader does with the message”. Does the audience accept the truth; does it live up to their expectations; does it pass their common sense test; and, most importantly, does the message overcome the wariness of a buyer towards a seller? (Lee Earle 2011)One of the first researchers to investigate this phenomenon of mistrust among consumers, suggested that false or untruthful advertising “turns us into a community of cynics [who] doubt advertisers, the media, and authority in all its forms” (Lee Earle 2011).

According to (Tom 2004), a Western discussion about truth and art can be traced back to the early Greeks and Romans. Plato denies the capacity of art to tell truth, insisting works of art, music, and poetry should be judged on the basis of how they portray emotions. (Tom 2004) The poem for example triggers a multitude of feelings for a reader, one that has an emotional

representation, and a sense that rings true. The famous philosopher Emmanuel Kant considers this validity of truth to be multi-dimensional. (L. Zuidervaart 2004) Distinguishes “aesthetic validity (beauty) from epistemic validity (truth) and moral validity (goodness or rightness)”. Creativity in art, as it is in advertising, is a process of trial and error. And, for both, the solution is based on a simple objective. Does this work have meaning within a broader context? Does it have what (L. Zuidervaart 2003)refers to as a life-giving disclosure? Collingwood confirms this observation by saying the artist only succeeds when he or she affects an audience. For all of the arts, creator(s) try to predetermine how an audience will react. For all these creative people, will the intended target be engaged; will the audience find it relevant; will it be deemed meaningful; will the truth be seen as having import?

# Creativity

Talent and creativity work hand in hand with each other. However, there difference between both forms of art are considered to be critical and distinct. With talent, the architects work is not dictated by a specific product or service because there is no one to answer to. The creator is the sole mastermind behind the work produced. Sometime with talents profitability can be the motive for production, but at the end of the day, talents do not need clients or account executives to be fruitful. While in advertising creativity, the brand is the sole master minder behind the productivity of the practitioner.

According to Oscar Wilde as quoted in Reid, King, and Delorme (1998) (O’Connor 1996) “The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.” Scholars have found creativity to be among the most complex of human. In advertising, these same questions have confused scholars. As Reid, King, and Delorme observed (1998) creativity is one of the least scientific aspects of advertising and at the same time one of its most important criteria. (O’Connor 1996)The decision

of what “is good” and what “is not good” in marketing communication is largely determined by perspective and principles. For many marketing customers, “good” means delivering against “ROMI” (return on marketing investment). ROMI simply describes the consumers’ unwillingness to go through anything less than expectations of product. However, for many advertising agencies, the concept of “good” is likened to winning creative awards (e.g., Cannes, Clio, One Show, etc.). For these agencies, this kind of recognition serves as the currency of their success. (Erickson 2015)While clients and agencies may not agree on the distinct meaning of “good,” there is still a strong agreement from both that creativity plays a critical role. But one question remains, before an advertisement goes to an awards judge, or for that matter a client, what makes the creators— the art director and copy writer perceive the work as good when examining the writings and thoughts of prominent agency practitioners, one word emerges time and time again, a word as simple as “truth.” (anderson 2005)For these practitioners, truth is fundamental to creating engaging and relevant marketing communication. For these creativities, a solution begins with a truth: whether about a product, a consumer, or a way of life. While truth is not the sole indicator of the good, the bad, or the dreadfully awful in advertising, for these practitioners the existence of a truth can serve as a basic litmus test, a key starting point in evaluating a creative message. Jon Nelson, Executive Creative Director at Carmichael Lynch, states it simply, “All the best ads are based on truth” (anderson 2005). To confirm this view, Scott Donation (scott n.d.) , an advertising executive on returning from the Cannes Advertising Film Festival, noted, “The best advertising reveals truth and insights, and not just about brands but as with music, art, and fiction” (Advertising 2002).

# Review of Related Studies

Many scholars have shown interest in the importance of truth in advertising from the consumer’s perspective because it has attracted a great deal of attention from practitioners as well as scholars themselves. Weiss (2011) conducted a study on truth in advertising with a specific focus on campaign adverts, he found out that, 91 percent of voters reported encountering information they considered false or misleading during the campaign; 56 percent say this occurred frequently; and 54 percent believe its prevalence is increasing.

According to (Robin A. Coulter 2001)advertising is arguably the most visible component of the marketing mix to the consuming public. On any given day, the typical U.S. consumer is exposed to between 3,000 and 5,000 advertise- ments (Bower 2000). Given the pervasiveness of advertising in the United States, it is not surprising that researchers have theorized about and investigated consumers' attitudes toward and opinions about advertising for more than three decades. (Robin A. Coulter 2001) In their seminal work on attitudes toward advertising, Bauer and Greyser (1968) suggest that advertising has two broad effects on society: economic and social. Their work and that of Pollay and Mittal (1993) have served as a foundation for researchers examining consumers' attitudes toward advertising.

If the basic purpose of advertising is to persuade and not just communicate, then an advertising message must connect emotionally with the intended target. This emotional appeal can be more important than a rational or functional benefit many times. This truth goes to what Heidegger refers to as aesthetic validity, or what Collingwood calls an emotional representation; how people identify with feelings based on personal experiences.

(Erickson 2015)Ernie Schenck, a creative director at Hill Holiday, acknowledges this emotional truth as being insightful, intelligent, and displaying an understanding of human nature (Pattero and Schenck, 1998). There are many examples of this approach in product categories such

as fashion, athletic shoes, or automobiles. In these cases, a marketing message appeals to an audience based on desire, delight, or aspiration. (1998)The work taps into an experience from childhood. The appeal is not to “buy the car because it is a child’s toy.” Rather, the message is based on the creator’s knowing one of life’s celebrated little emotional moments, and helping the consumer re-connect with it. Much attention has focused on the incidence of misleading (deceptive or untruthful) advertising in the various media, both at the national and state level. Conferring (Casey 1981) in a mail survey conducted for 314 residents of two California cities to measure consumer perception of the prevalence of misleading advertising. Information was obtained concerning the extent of misleading advertising in the various media, for 30 products and services and for three age groups. The findings indicate that over half of the sample viewed "most" or "all" mail and telephone advertising as misleading, and that 38 percent of the respondents regarded "most" or "all" television advertising as misleading. Newspaper advertising was considered the most credible. (Casey 1981) Findings indicate that "most" or "all" advertising for products and services was viewed as misleading by 30 percent of the respondents. Findings for actions taken concerning misleading advertising indicate that nearly half of the sample had registered a complaint to the store or person advertising and that 29 percent of the respondents had complained to a manufacturer. Also, findings for the age groups indicate that two out of three respondents regarded "most" or "all" advertising directed at children as seriously misleading. Advertising directed at senior citizens was viewed as seriously misleading by 45 percent of the sample, and advertising directed at young and middle-aged adults was viewed as only slightly less misleading.

# Theoretical Framework

For this study, two models are used as the basis for examining consumers’ perception of truth in advertising from i) Usage experience and ii) advertising exposure. This models describe

the uncertainty consumers have towards brand attributes. From this theoretical framework, we develop how consumers decisions of brand choice are derived from their past usage experience and their exposure towards advertising.

The survey questions are carefully estimated and deduced in order to find how several promoting advertising strategies affect brand choice in the long and short run especially since the sample used for this dissertation is random sampling. With this models, the significance levels of their responses determine the findings of what consumer perception of truth actually is. (Keane 1996) Note that our assessment strategy requires us to specify explicit behavioral models of consumer choice behavior, derive the implied relationships among choice probabilities, past purchases and marketing mix variables, and then estimate the behavioral parameters of each model (Keane 1996).

# Relevance of Theory to the Study

The theories stated in 2.4 are relevant to the study because the research methodology deals directly with the respondents. The questions used for the survey ask consumers their experiences and approaches towards advertisements. The responses will be distinct in that every individual had their own unique occurrences and gives room for variety of information which will be of interest to policy makers in many fields where decisions such as marketing and industrial techniques are re-evaluated.

# CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

# Introduction

This study focuses on consumers’ perception of truth in advertising. In this chapter, the practical methods used in examining consumers’ perception of truth in advertising is explained. This chapter describes the sampling size and techniques, the population used in the study, the methods of data analysis and how data was collected for presentation.

# Research Design and Instruments

The survey design was used for this study because it interacts directly with the population. With the survey questions, consumers are straightforward in their answers about how they feel about truth in advertising. This design is often used when the population is large and only a specific sample can be used for the study. The process therefore involves allocating the sample size, identifying the population and determining suitable methods of data analysis.

# Population of the Study

The main focus groups for this study are consumers from a few learning institutions and several media houses in Yola, Nigeria, and the population of this study is gotten from large sets of this sets. The media house employees are only charge with advising organizations on where and how to advertise. They are not directly involved with the advertising contents. Therefore, it is important to see how certain mass communication experts’ view advertising, considering that it is part of their work field. Classifying these population is important because these individuals have are considered to have the most exposure and are more accessible. The population targeted female and male individuals who are 18 years old and above because at this stage, they are considered to be

capable of making accurate decisions on their own. Adding the learning institutions and media houses, the population is 11,400 according to their 2016 administrative staffs.

# Sample size and Procedure

The sample size for this study is 200. The sampling technique used for this study if purposive sampling because copies of questionnaire were used. With this study, copies of questionnaire are selectively handed out only to those who can directly influence and contribute to the study. With this study, the respondents are purposively drawn from the American University of Nigeria (AUN), the Federal University in Yola (FUTY) and staffs from TV Gotel, Adamawa television (ATV) and Fombina FM Yola.

# Description of Data Gathering Instrument

The questionnaire is the main data gathering instrument used for this research. The same structure and contents of the questionnaire was administered to each respondent. The questionnaire is structured in two sections (section A and section B). Section a focuses on collecting data in regards to demographics. While section b focuses on questions that relate to the research questions and objectives. Questions 5-11 provide answers for the first research question because it demonstrates the consumers viewpoint on the extent to which advertising contains truth. Questions 12-15 answers research question 2 which gives room for consumers to express their thoughts and opinions about what they consider to be in fact truth in advertising.

# Method of Data Collection.

The questionnaires were self-administered by the researcher to the respondents over a period of three days. Between the hours of 11am- 4pm on the first day, questionnaires were handed out to AUN students and the researcher waited to receive them immediately. From 10am-5pm on the second day, the media houses were visited and questionnaires were administered. The researcher planned to collect them the following day because workers there could not halt and stop what they were doing. Between 11am-5pm on the third day, the researcher went to FUTY, to distribute the questionnaires and waited to receive them immediately. On returning from FUTY, the researcher went to the various media house to collect the questionnaires handed out the previous day. The same amounts of questionnaires handed were accurately retrieved and all filled out.

# Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

The supervisors guiding the researcher, as well as other faculty members guaranteed the reliability of the instrument used. They scrutinized the items on the questionnaires and established that it reflected the objectives and uniformity of the study.

# Method of Data Analysis

The statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data gathered in tabulating, calculating frequency and correlation amongst certain variables. The outcome of the results is distributed on a frequency table and transformed into percentiles for easy calculation. It was tested at a statistical significant values of 0.05.

# CHAPTER FOUR

**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

# Introduction.

This chapter explains and discusses the outcome of the results achieved based on the performance of the methodology described in chapter three. In this chapter, the results are defined in percentage tables.

# Data Analysis Table 1: Gender

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Male | 85 | 42.5% |
| Female | 115 | 57.5% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

From Table 1 above, 42.5% of the sample size were males, while the bigger chunk of the sample size (57.5%) were females.

# Table 2: Age Group

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| 18 – 20 years | 10 | 5% |
| 21 – 25 years | 73 | 36.5% |
| 26 – 30 years | 50 | 25% |
| 31 – 35 years | 17 | 8.5% |
| 36 – 40 years | 27 | 13.5% |
| 41 and above | 23 | 11.5% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

From Table 2, it is discovered that 5% of the respondents are from the ages of 18-20years old. 36.5% are between 21-25 years old, 25% are between the ages of 26-30 years old, 8.5% are from the ages of 31-35 years. It is also seen that 13.5% of the sample size are between the ages of 36- 40 years old and 11.5% are from 41 years and above. It can be derived that majority of the sample are between 21-25 years old.

# Table 3: Organizations of respondents

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| The American University of  Nigeria (AUN) | 58 | 29% |
| Federal University of  Technology, Yola (FUTY) | 75 | 37.5% |
| Adamawa Television  (ATV) | 15 | 7.5% |
| Fombina FM radio | 17 | 8.5% |
| TV Gotel | 20 | 10% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

Table 3 shows the various organizations from which the questionnaires were administered. 37.5% which is the majority, are from FUTY, followed by AUN which has 29%. TV Gotel comes next with 10%, Fombina FM radio with 8.5% and ATV with the least sample size at 7.5%.

# Table 4: Occupation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Students | 137 | 68.5% |
| other | 63 | 31.5% |

From table 4 above, 68.5% of the total sample size are students, while 31.5% are of other working criteria’s.

# Table 5: Frequency of advertisements watched

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Regularly | 116 | 58% |
| Not regularly | 67 | 33.5% |
| Undecided | 17 | 8.5% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

From table 5 above, 58% of the respondents agreed to be frequents advertisement viewers. 33.5% do not watch advertisements regularly, while 8.5% where not sure of their status.

# Table 6: Influencing power of advertisements

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Yes | 123 | 61.5% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | 60 | 30% |
| Undecided | 17 | 8.5% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

Table 6 demonstrates that majority of the sample size which is 61.5% believe that advertising can indeed influences the consumers purchasing power. 30% do not think that advertising influences purchasing power and 8.5% are undecided.

# Table 7: Influencing purchasing power

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Cumulative percentage |
| Strongly | 120 | 60% |
| Not strongly | 57 | 28.5% |
| Indifferently | 23 | 11.5% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

From table 7 above, 60% of the respondents strongly agree that advertising influences how they purchase goods and services. 28.5% of the sample sizes’ purchasing power are not strongly affected by advertisements, while the least percentage (11.5%) are totally indifferent about the idea.

# Table 8: Truth in advertisement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Yes | 98 | 49% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | 90 | 45% |
| Indifferent | 12 | 6% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

Table 8 shows the closeness between those who believe that advertisements portray truth and those who do not. 49% agree that advertisements portray truth while 45% do not agree and only 6% were indifferent.

# Table 9: Means of selling goods and services

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Yes | 149 | 74.5% |
| No | 37 | 18.5% |
| Undecided | 12 | 7% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100** |

On table 9 above, it is found that 74.5% of the respondents see advertising as a means of advertising goods and services, 18.5% do not see advertising as a means of selling goods and services, while 7% are undecided.

# Table 10: Patronage to advertisement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Yes | 78 | 39% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | 97 | 48.5% |
| undecided | 25 | 12.5% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

Table 10 shows that 39% of the sample size respondents have patronized certain products as a result of an advertisement. 48.5% have not patronized a product based on an advertisement and 12.5% of the respondents were undecided.

# Table 11: Regrets on advertisement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | [-Frequency | Percentage |
| Yes | 54 | 27% |
| No | 139 | 69.5% |
| Undecided | 7 | 3.5% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

In table 11 above, majority of the respondents which contribute 69.5% of the total sample size, do not have regrets on any given advertisement. However, 27% have their regrets and a little portion of 3.5% were undecided.

# Table 12:Scale of measurement of advertising power

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| 0-5 | 69 | 34.5% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 06-10 | 131 | 65.5% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

From table 12, 65.5% of the respondents see advertisements to have a huge power of the consumers buying strengths. 34.5% do not rate its power to be very influential.

# Table 13: Medium of advertisement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Billboards | 20 | 10% |
| The internet | 46 | 23% |
| TV | 78 | 39% |
| Radio | 17 | 8.5% |
| Newspapers | 12 | 6% |
| Magazines | 27 | 13.5% |
| Total = | 200 | 100% |

Table 13 shows that 10% of the respondents indicate that billboards are the preferred media for advertisements, 39% state that TV is the most favorable media for advertisements, 8.5% agree with radio being the best media of advertisements. Moreover, 6% of the respondents see newspapers as the best media for advertisements and 13.5% agree with magazines.

# Table 14: Meaning of truth

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Frequency | Percentage |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Saying it as it is (honesty) | 116 | 58% |
| Disadvantages and advantages | 84 | 42% |
| **Total =** | **200** | **100%** |

From table 14 above, 58% perceive truth in advertising to be honesty. When adverts say things as it is, these consumers believe it to be true. 42% of the correspondents perceive truth in advertising to be when advantages and disadvantages are both demonstrated.

# Discussion of Findings

* + 1. **Discussion of findings in respect with demographics**

Table 1 showed that 57.5% of the respondents were females and 42.5% were males. This indicates an improvement in the stereotypical norm which rose from religious and cultural believes of this society (Adamawa), where by women stay at home to cater for the family, while the men are presumed to be the ones responsible to go out and find work in order to sustain the family. Therefore, this statistics indicates that women are slowly moving up and getting educated and more informed. However, this means that in the survey carried out, the opinions of men was less achieved.

On table 2, majority of the sample study that majority of the questionnaire were completed by the age groups of those between 21-25 years old with 36.5% and 26-30 years old with 25%. These are the millennial’ segment of society and as such they tend to be more inclined with media activities. Getting feedback from this group of persons is beneficial to the media specialist because they provide the most traffic on media platforms. The other majorities are from the ages of 18-40 years and above.

From this crowd, especially those above 30 years old, they have the most resources available. As such, it is important to understand their opinions about how they perceive advertisements.

Tables 3 and 4 show the organizations and occupations of the respondents who took part in filling out the questionnaires. Majority of the respondents were from the federal university of technology (FUTY) with 37.5%, followed by AUN with 29% and students were the majority class of people who partook in this exercise with 68.5%. Students are considered to be the most advertisers because they greatly indulge themselves in word of mouth (resonance) through the social media. This study shows various social classes and groups of people with similar perspectives. Since majority of them are of certain degree accumulation (be it primary, secondary, bachelors and many more), they have the basic know-how and are open minded and exposed to sound information for this particular study. Therefore, they indicate quality results for this study.

# Discussion of findings in regards to research questions

**Research question 1: To what extent does the advertising contain truth?**

The data presented in **Table 5** shows that 58% of the respondents watch advertisements regularly. This is more than half of the total sample size of the study which indicates that the respondents used for this study actually pay attention to the advertising sector of the media. **On table 6 and 7,** 61.5% and 60% of the correspondents strongly agree to the notion that advertisements strongly affects their purchasing power. This indicates that with majority of them, when deciding to purchase a product, the advertisement greatly influences whether or not he or she would purchase that particular good or service. Depending on how convincing and believable the advertisement is to the consumer, their purchasing power will either be affected negatively or positively.

**Table 8** concentrates deeply into answering this research question as respondents are directly asked about how much truth they believe is portrayed in advertisements. There is a close difference between those who say yes to advertising containing truth with 49% compared to those who say no to advertising containing truth with 45%. This outcome demonstrates the level of those in disbelief and those who believe in advertisings credibility. Based on this outcome, it is safe to say that advertising would have hit the benchmark and lost its trustworthiness. Consumers are losing their confidence in the quality of the information provided by them in advertisements.

Despite the fact that majority see advertising as a means of selling products and service in **table 9**, with 74.5% of the respondents saying yes, if many of them do not believe in its message, they would not purchase he products. Therefore advertising becomes ineffective. This is evidently seen in the outcome of **table 10** where majority of the respondents say no to having patronized a product as a result of an advertisement with 48.5%. However, **table 11** indicates that majority of the respondents have no regrets on purchases made as a result of an advertisement with 69.5% which considerably a very high score in correspondent to the total sample size.

# Research question 2: What is the consumers’ perception truth in advertising?

Based on the results from **table 12**, majority of the respondents evaluate the power of advertising to be above 5 on a maximum scale of 10 with 65.5%. This shows that consumers are conscious on the impact advertising has in the business environment and how influential it has become in determining what, where, why and how people spend their resources and earnings. From the feedback gotten from the correspondents, majority approve that the television is advertising best media outlet as seen in

**table 13.** Technology is rapidly taking over communication procedures and strategies. In trying to reach out mass audiences, the television is the most accessible and affordable media channel.

The results from table 14 are similar in context. In clearly defining what they perceive to be truth in advertising, majority of the respondents described truth to be honesty i.e. saying it as it is according to their individual opinions. 58% of the correspondents perceive honesty to be their understanding of truth in advertisements, while 42% perceive truth in advertising to be stating both the advantages and disadvantages of a product or service. Both answers are very similar. Consumers do not want to be negatively surprised or caught off guard when they purchase a product and it does not live up to their expectations. From the feedback, respondents to not mind if detriments are included in the advertising package. They would rather be informed about what to anticipate, so they know exactly what they are spending on and would not have any reason to point blames when things go wrong.

# CHAPTER FIVE

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

# Summary

The basic influences of consumers’ perception in advertising are persuasion, skepticism and information. The meaning and perception of truth in advertisement has grown to become an issue as most of what is presented as facts is not literally “true” in the sense of what is portrayed to be believed. Credibility strongly influences consumers brand choice and if the level of trustworthiness is not build on a positive note, consumers will react negatively based on their previous experiences and how sincere they perceive the advertisement to be. Creativity and honesty can work hand in hand without necessarily affecting results and outcomes. Puffery, deception and not total disclosure are factors which affect the meaning and perception of truth in advertising.

# Conclusion

From the research studied, a lot of consumers are open to the idea of advertising as a means of promoting and attracting clienteles to products and services. However, there is a form of uncertainty and assurance towards the procedures involved in creating advertisements. This study faced certain challenges because the accuracy of the results is limited to the number of people who took part in the survey.

# Recommendations

* + - Time duration of optimum results should be stated.
    - Also, disclaimers such as “this product might not work for every skin type” is very essential with skin care products.
    - The images used should be more realistic (real world outcomes and appearances).
    - A test advert should be created as a sample to verify of the presence of truth in it (total disclosure) affects the outcomes or results of the product.
    - Answer the questions of what consumers perceive to be truthful with the varying products.

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# QUESTIONNAIRE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MULTIMEDIA DESIGN INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a final year student of the Department of Communication and Multimedia Design of the above named University. Presently I am conducting a research, which is a requirement for a class, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor’s degree in Communication and Multi Media Design. I wish therefore to seek your honest opinion, by answering the questions below. Your response shall be treated with outmost confidentiality and will be used for this study only.

Kindly tick **(√)** your answers in the boxes provided and write your answers where necessary.

# SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Gender

Male Female

1. Age Group

18-20

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
|  |

21-25

26-30

31-35

36-40

OTHER:

1. Name of Organization/Institution
2. Occupation

# SECTION B: ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

1. How often do you watch advertisements?

REGULARLY NOT REGULARLY UNDECIDED

1. Do you believe in the influencing power of advertisement?

YES NO OTHER UNDECIDED

1. To what extent does advertisement influence your purchasing power? STRONGLY NOT STRONGLY INDIFFERENT
2. Do advertisements portray Truth?

YES NO INDIFFERENT

1. Is advertisement a means to selling out products and services? YES NO UNDECIDED
2. Have you ever patronized a given product or service as a result of an advertisement? YES NO UNDECIDED
3. Do you have any regret on any given advertisement? YES NO UNDECIDED

If yes, kindly explain why;

1. On a scale of 0 - 10, how will you evaluate the power of advertisement?
2. What is your best media of advertisement? (TV, RADIO, NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINE, BILL BOARDS, FLIERS AND HAND CARDS, THE INTERNET ETC)
3. State the reason for your answer to question 13?
4. Based on your own perspective, what is the meaning of truth in advertisement?
5. Will you encourage business enterprises to key into the practice of advertisement?