

**Review**

# The Negative Effects of Advertising in Nigeria

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Accepted 31 August 2021

Advertising has experienced a major milestone since its emergence from the eras of paintings and signs of caves, to that of the physical goods advertising on a radio, television and mostly with the internet playing a major role in taking advertising to the next level. In this perspective, the paper examines negative effects of advertising in Nigeria. The paper is exploratory in nature, as it utilises the descriptive research method whereby relevant literature, documents and records were consulted and analysed based on the existing literature in order to interrogate the subject under investigation. The paper is predominantly based on information derived from the qualitative data using secondary sources, such as relevant texts, journals, official publications, historical documents and the Internet, which served as tangible sources of insight into the analysis. However, the inquiry is strictly limited to data found in scholarly journals, books, Internet and libraries. The method was used to evaluate such findings with other existing literature on the subject matter. The method help findings in the works available, check the consistency of such findings, evaluates such findings with other findings. The paper discovered that advertising has made an impact in the creation of awareness about certain goods and services. As technology advances, new ways of life are also introduced. Again, Advertising has also given room to adulterated products which have succeeded in causing untold damages in the society. The paper concludes that without advertising, there will be little or no awareness about goods and services.

**Keywords:** advertising, awareness, effects, negative and Nigeria

**Cite This Article As:** Alhaji, M.L (2021). The Negative Effects of Advertising in Nigeria. Inter. J. Eng. Lit. Cult. 9(5):153-156

## INTRODUCTION

Advertising is as old as humanity and could be traced back to the ancient Europe and Asia. In ancient Rome, painted messages were left on walls touting variety of businesses. The early men also made use of drawings, paintings, and signs on caves and trees. During early advertising in Nigeria, a cobbler hangs a shoe on his doorway to indicate what is been done there. The evolution of the printing press and newspaper also improved the quality of advertising not to a very far extent. Though these forms of advertising were not captivating and lacked the finesse, it still succeeded in creating awareness to people. Since its beginning, which was from the early steel carving made by the ancient Egyptians, advertising (ads) has constantly improved and changed to suit news medium in order to increasingly inform audience. The development of the radio and television in the 1920s and 1940s respectively also

improved and changed the shape of the previous methods, which included newspaper and oral advertising.

Today, the internet has revolutionized and shaped ads in the most possible way. In comparing the old form of advertising with the modern form of advertising, the modern has shaped and transformed the old method. Based on the rapid technological advance, there are now online newspapers, online televisions and online radio stations, which are also platforms for modern advertising. The internet has made advertising easier and beyond what one can imagine. Currently, the traditional billboards are now electronically manipulated and information disseminated through them. Hence, advertising has experienced a major milestone since its emergence from the eras of paintings and signs of caves, to that of the physical goods advertising on a radio, television and mostly with the internet playing a major role in taking advertising to the next level.

## Definition

Arens *et al.*, in National Open University of Nigeria (2021) asserted that advertising is “a structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and typically persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services and ideas by identified sponsors through various media”. Advertising is a system whereby awareness are been created for certain goods and services. This is in a bid to arrest and influence the audience to turn to a particular good or service been advertised in order to gain satisfaction. In addition, Advertising is also the process of selling out products or services to an audience in which communication is intended to persuade the audience to purchase products, ideals or services. Advertising comes with a cost because the sellers have to find a way to persuade buyers to patronize them.

## Forms of Advertising

Advertising comes in two forms;

- i. Goods/products advertising
- ii. Service/non product advertising

Goods/product advertising is ads of tangible materials like soap, rice, pharmaceuticals, food stuffs etc. While service/non product Advertising are ads of intangible commodities e.g services of a teacher, church, hospital and others to mention but a few.

## The Impacts of Advert

Though, advertisement for the creation of awareness on goods and services, it has done more harm than good in leading to the underdevelopment of the society today. The theory of under development, which was formulated in the 1970s was used to demonstrate and in the analysis of why economic growth is been elusive in underdeveloped countries. Thus, according to this school of thought, the economies of underdeveloped countries were distorted to meet the needs of emerging capitalism in Western Europe.

Advertising has made an impact in the creation of awareness about certain goods and services. As technology advances, new ways of life are also introduced. These new ways of life are mostly aimed at developing the Third World Nations from the developed ones. As a result, it has brought major setbacks to developing countries as their old ways or patterns are abandoned in favour of the western way of life.

Mostly, advertising is aimed at the developing countries from the developed. The third world countries like Nigeria and Ghana, do patronize goods and services from the

developed countries in an attempt to develop it. But this has surprisingly, the patronage has hindered the growth and development of these countries. One reason is that developed countries like USA, China and Japan purchase raw materials from developing countries and sell them back as finished goods with high price tags thereby exploiting the Third World as a result. The Third World countries have been dependent on the developed countries for food, pharmaceuticals, clothes, shoes and mostly electronics, which are consumed and are in high demand in these countries.

Furthermore, the high price tag normally imposed on these countries has placed them in a state of perpetual dependence, thereby stifling and stagnating growth and development.. Hence, the Third World countries are underdeveloped. Similarly, capitalist societies and countries are mostly underdeveloped due to the high prices of goods and services, ownership, and private control. Capitalism been another major contributory factor, is a system whereby private or individual sectors are allowed to own and control the means of production. The main aim of this system is to make profit and is ready to make profit at any length. Through advertising, they get to create market for their products, which might be good or bad. The masses will be exploited as high prices will also be injected into goods and services. This will further broaden gap between the rich and poor thereby bringing about economic inequality.

The debate over the effects of communication on the developing countries dates back to about 30 years ago, that is in the 1980s. The mass media is tasked with the responsibility of teaching basic productive skills, complement formal education and promote adult literacy. This was supposed to increase urbanization, increase the rate of literacy and also enhance media participation in the underdeveloped countries. Political and economic development will also follow. Although, progress have been made in these areas but the standard of living of the people dwelling in the undeveloped countries has not improved. In essence, underdevelopment is the order of the day in under developed countries. This is aggravated by the fact that the mass media has often promoted capitalist ideologies and values and raised hopes of what the state couldn't provide.

Large companies and corporations advertising in underdeveloped countries have introduced different ethical values and change in consumer demand, which most of these countries see as a threat to its cultural identity. Advertising frequently uses psychological pressure in an attempt to lure and persuade the buyers for patronage which might be harmful as the certainty of the quality of goods and services are not certain.

Studies have proved that the cost of advertising exceeds that of sales by a small but significant percent. Advertising is an indirect cost which is added into distribution expenses. Some advertisers create misleading impression of their goods. They hype and

present a clever picture of their product with the motives of increasing their sales. This has in most case misled, deceived and creates a bad impression. It has further led to exploitation of people and when they tend to understand, they no longer patronize businesses and this affects the economic growth of that society. In an advert for example, Mr. Tunde may claimed that his product has the best of quality, saying it was made in Italy meanwhile, it was actually Aba made. This is a typical example of exploitation because with the claim that his product was made in Italy, he will increase the selling price. In addition, Advertising has also given room to adulterated products which have succeeded in causing untold damages in the society. Most of these damages are done by pharmaceutical and electronic industries and have immensely destroyed lives and properties. The products are often plastic and demoralize the name and structure of other advertisers and their company products

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Furthermore, advertising reduces the rate of competition amongst products. This means that it creates monopoly. Monopoly is an exclusive control over goods and services. It is a system whereby products (goods and services) are supplied by one source. This is usually done by the manufacturers and industrialists to increase their control over the market against public interest. Though it creates awareness, in this process, other options will be overlooked. This is usually followed up by the exploitation of people by this "monopolistic syndrome". It enables a one man or group control of almost everything and prices will be inflated persistently. Thus, it also makes small businesses to have restricted access. Due to limited resources, small businesses cannot properly advertise their goods and services. The large market been dominated by the large advertisers has made it impossible for the smaller and upcoming businesses to compete and eventually, they disappear from the market because of the high competition and the inability to cope. These small businesses are the root and foundation of the larger ones and when they no longer exist, it leads to stimulated growth. This is because the smaller ones attract more audience than the larger ones due to the financial capacity of most of the people dwelling in Third World countries.

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Moreover, advertising also creates misdirection of purchasing power. Advertisement of high-placed luxury goods influences the purchasing power of consumers. This results in people using corrupt means to increase their income for the purpose of getting things they that perceived as the necessities of life. In this context, Advertising creates social imbalance and corruption. The victims of this are mostly youths and the goods include cars, phones, dresses, shoes, etc. in a bid to belong to the higher class of the society. Ads can also be dangerous distractions especially on the highway. Most a times, billboard, pictures, posters, and electronic moving pictures are placed around places deemed too dangerous, which distract drivers and pedestrians. This can lead to a hazardous situation with potentially deadly consequences. It also invades public spaces like the hospitals and schools, which exposes children to many vices and exploitations above their ages. According to George Frank, it is becoming harder to escape from ads and their media. This can be seen in a setting where public spaces are occupied with billboards which individuals cannot escape from.

Advertising leads to high prices of goods and services. Effective advertising increases sales volumes. The advertiser must be paid for the advertisement of the goods and services and this will in turn gives room for higher prices of goods and services. The financial burden of the advert is usually placed on the consumer in the form of value added tax (VAT). This is common in a capitalist society where the private sector is in control of all the means of production of goods and services. This is also a way of exploiting and cheating people.

Advertising also demoralizes and corrupts the minds of children and youths. In this context, advertising exposes teenagers to horrid like pornographic videos and pictures, alcohol and ads on cigarettes. These ads are usually carried by the internet and television, which teenagers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are mostly exposed too. Hence, it has corrupted the minds and morals of children who are the foundation of the society and on, which the coming generation will look up to, thereby not creating a positive image that others will imitate. Though the root cause of these are the adults who have exhibited corrupted and immoral attitude in the view of these children and exposing them in a negative way. This has led to societal damage and ethics have been abandoned thereby causing juvenile delinquency, which is a cause of underdevelopment.

Advertising also gives an individual the wrong impression that everything needed in life can be

purchased; hence money should be our measure of success and prime goal. Advertisement also promises a false happiness provided the consumer can afford the payment of the particular goods and services. This a times leads to the purchasing of some goods and services that are not needed and essentials in the life of the consumers, thereby contributing to the production of unnecessary wastes that pollutes planet.

In addition, advertising has been an indispensable tool used by media organizations and other organizations to create awareness on certain products and non-products, which has done more harm than good in the society. A critical looks at the pharmaceuticals and electronics, which have succeeded in destroying lives and properties. Even in the case of the small businesses, they are the foundation of the bigger ones and people in the Third World countries do prefer to patronize than their counterparts due to unlimited resources and low income. When the larger ones eventually displaced them due to ability to advertise properly and create market for their goods, it creates social imbalance and inequality. Ads also create room for unwanted and fake products which have in most cases been dangerous to the society. Ads play a major role in underdevelopment. Without ads, there will be little or no awareness about goods and services.

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