



ABSTRACT

The recent surge of comparison advertising has raised a controversy about the effectiveness of such ads. This research work is on women's sentiment towards comparison advertising with focus on Ariel and Sunlight detergent brands. The research adopts survey research design, with the primary data sourced from structured questionnaires administered to

WOMEN'S SENTIMENT TOWARDS COMPARISON ADVERTISING: A CASE OF ARIEL AND SUNLIGHT DETERGENTS

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INTRODUCTION

There is a growing trend in media today toward the comparison of one brand against one or more competitive brands through explicitly naming them on a variety of specific product or service attributes (Shimp, 2016). Such advertising, usually referred to as comparison advertising, began in early 1970's (Ulanoff, 2015). While there have been occasional comparison ads in the past, they were not in as explicit terms as we find them currently (Wilkie and Farris, 2016). One notices comparison ads being aired on all forms of goods and services.

There are no laws which prohibit comparison advertising traditionally. However, industry self-regulations discouraged such a practice. An important reason for the current surge in comparison advertising has been the Federal Trade Commission's encouragement for such advertising. The FTC did so in the hope that this would provide consumers adequate information



to make buying decisions (Dougherty, 2016). Among the networks, the National Broadcasting Company was the first one to issue guidelines and accept comparison ads (Christopher, 2014). Since then many broadcasting stations have started doing so too.

Needless to say, comparison advertising, being a new practice, has become a controversial issue among advertisers, media, advertising agencies and government. As an example, reacting on TWA's comparison ad, an airline executive called the TWA campaign flagrant, neither good for the industry nor the public (Hugh, 2016). According to (Ogilvy and Mather 2017), a New York ad agency study:

Comparison TV commercials offer no advantage to package goods advertisers in persuasion or brand identification. In fact, they reduce the believability of claims, make consumers more aware of competitors, and add confusion to the message.

The above controversy has raised a furor among the advertisers. Over the past five years, according to an estimate

selected Ariel and Sunlight detergents users, secondary data were sourced from textbooks and other relevant publications. 60 users (30 each for the detergents) were selected as the sample using stratified method of sampling. Hypotheses were formulated for the study while SPSS was used to analyze and interpreted the data. Findings revealed that women's sentiment has great effect on comparison advertising and these sentiments usually affect their purchase decision of the products advertised. It is concluded that comparative advertising draws comparisons among manufacturers' competing brands and the use of comparative advertising is increasing in today's marketplace. The study recommends among others that business owners should be conscious of the content of their product advertisement and any message that will subject the product being advertised to negative criticism should be avoided to prevent such product brand from being negatively perceived by women.

Keywords: Women; Sentiment; Comparison advertising; Detergents



of National Advertising Division of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, complaints involving Comparison advertising have jumped to 38 percent of all complaints. The number of complaints filed by advertisers against competitors has risen in five-folds since the ad vent of comparison advertising.

Comparison advertising is an important form of advertising with legal, ethical, consumerism and promotional decision implications.

Generally comparison advertising may not be a bad idea but when customer begin to be sentimental about Ads then it becomes a matter of worries to the company. Most of these sentiments are common to the female gender, in most ladies joint females are known for discussing on one Ads or the other.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

To put comparison advertising in proper perspective, empirical and systematic research is required. Wilkie and Farris (2016) drawing on the concepts of behavioral sciences, concluded that comparison advertising was a powerful tool for the marketers. Prasad's laboratory research showed an enhancement in message recall via comparison advertising (Prasad, 2017). Clarke's empirical study indicated that advertising influences not only the sales of the brand advertised, but also the sales of other brands (Clarke, 2017). Based on this study, comparison advertising should help in sales gains for all the brands included in the ad. While these studies have been interesting and revealing, they hardly suffice to resolve the controversy surrounding women's sentiment towards comparison advertising. Apparently, comparison advertising requires further empirical insights and that is the reason why this research work is set out to examine women's sentiment towards comparison advertising.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to:

- a) Know the causes of women's sentiment towards comparison advertising
- b) Know the effect of women's sentiment on comparison advertising



- c) Know if women's sentiment can affect the purchase decision of product advertised

HYPOTHESES

H₁: There are causes for women's sentiment towards comparison advertising

H₂: There is relationship between women's sentiment and comparison advertising

H₃: Women's sentiment can not affect the purchase decision of products advertised

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Advertising

Advertising is a [marketing](#) communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell a product, service or idea. Sponsors of advertising are typically businesses wishing to promote their products or services. Advertising is differentiated from public relations in that an advertiser pays for and has control over the message. It differs from personal selling in that the message is non-personal, i.e., not directed to a particular individual. Advertising is communicated through various mass media,^[2] including [traditional media](#) such as newspapers, magazines, [television](#), radio, outdoor or [direct mail](#); and [new media](#) such as [search results](#), blogs, social media, websites or text messages. The actual presentation of the message in a medium is referred to as an advertisement, or "ad" or advert for short (David, 2018).

Commercial ads often seek to generate increased consumption of their products or services through "[branding](#)", which associates a product name or image with certain qualities in the minds of consumers. On the other hand, ads that intend to elicit an immediate sale are known as advertising on entities that advertise more than consumer products or services include political parties, interest groups, religious organizations and governmental agencies. Non-profit organizations may use free modes of [persuasion](#), such as a [public service announcement](#). Advertising may also help to reassure employees or shareholders that a



company is viable or successful. Modern advertising originated with the techniques introduced with [tobacco advertising](#) in the 1920s, most significantly with the campaigns of [Edward Bernays](#), considered the founder of modern, "[Madison Avenue](#)" advertising (George, 2018).

Advertising Objectives

According to Cuberock (2015), Advertising is one of the most creative fields and is a part of Marketing. In fact, Advertising has become so big that many [people](#) get confused about the differences between marketing and advertising. Nonetheless, the objectives of Advertising are completely different from Marketing. It is the objective of advertising to carry out communications between the [brand](#) and the customer. Before the adoption of digital marketing and advertising, most of the communication between the brand and the customer was one way. However, advertising objectives in summary include:

- 1) Introduce a product
- 2) Introduce a brand
- 3) Awareness creation
- 4) Acquiring customers or Brand switching
- 5) Differentiation and value creation
- 6) Brand building
- 7) Positioning the product – Product and brand recall
- 8) Increase sales
- 9) Increase profits
- 10) Create Desire
- 11) Call to action

Features of Advertisement

According to Williams (2015), “Advertising consists of all the activities involved in presenting to a group a non-personal, oral or visual, openly sponsored message regarding a product, service or idea; this message, called an advertisement, is disseminated through one or more media and is paid for by the identified sponsor.” Advertising is any non-personal promotion of ideas, goods or services of an identified businessman known as sponsor. The message which is presented or disseminated is



known as “advertisement”. The cost of advertisement is borne by its sponsor. The distinguishing features of advertising are:

- It is a paid form of communication
- It is a non-personal presentation of message
- The purpose of advertising is to promote idea about the products and services of a business
- Advertisement is issued by an identified sponsor

Comparison Advertising

Comparison advertising or advertising war is an [advertisement](#) in which a particular product, or service, specifically mentions a competitor by name for the express purpose of showing why the competitor is inferior to the product naming it. Also referred to as "knocking copy", it is loosely defined as advertising where “the advertised brand is explicitly compared with one or more competing brands and the comparison is obvious to the audience” (Ericsson, 2018). This should not be confused with [parody advertisements](#), where a fictional product is being advertised for the purpose of poking fun at the particular advertisement, nor should it be confused with the use of a coined brand name for the purpose of comparing the product without actually naming an actual competitor. (“[Wikipedia](#) tastes better and is less filling than the [Encyclopedia Galactica](#).”). In the [United States](#), the [Federal Trade Commission](#) (FTC) defined Comparison advertising as “advertisement that compares alternative brands on objectively measurable attributes or price, and identifies the alternative brand by name, illustration or other distinctive information.”^[4] This definition was used in the case [Gillette Australia Pty Ltd v Energizer Australia Pty Ltd](#).^[5] Similarly, the [Law Council of Australia](#) recently suggested that Comparison advertising refers to “advertising which include reference to a competitor’s trademark in a way which does not impute proprietorship in the mark to the advertiser.”

METHODOLOGY

This study covers Women’s sentiment towards comparison advertising focusing on Ariel and sunlight detergents for the purpose of accessibility,



distance and data availability. The study adopts survey research design and it employed both primary and secondary data. The population of this study comprised the users of both Ariel and Sunlight detergents in Bida; Primary data were sourced with structured questionnaires administered to the estimated sample of 60 respondents (30 each for the detergents) were selected as the sample using stratified method of sampling. Hypotheses were formulated for the study while data were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive (frequency and percentage) and Chi-square. The secondary data used was obtained from journals, textbooks and relevant publications. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula:

$$N = 70$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Were n= sample size

N= population size

E= level of significance (0.05)

In calculating the sample,

$$N = 70$$

$$n = \frac{70}{1 + 70(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{70}{1 + 70(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{70}{1 + 0.175}$$

$$n = \frac{70}{1.175}$$

$$n = 59.6$$

$$n = 60$$

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Decision rule: Accept the stated hypothesis if the calculated Chi-square value is less than the critical value of the Chi-square distribution table, otherwise reject. That is; Accept H_1 if $P \text{ value} \leq 0.05$, otherwise reject.



Test of Hypothesis One

H₁: There are causes for women's sentiment towards comparison advertising

In testing the hypothesis, the condensed response of the research question; there are causes for women's sentiment towards comparison advertising

Chi-Square Test Frequencies

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly agree	15	16.7	-1.7
Agree	21	16.7	4.3
Undecided	14	16.7	-2.7
Total	50		

Test Statistic

There are causes for women sentiment towards comparison advertising	
Chi-Square	18.612 ^a
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.088

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 16.7.

Having tested the hypothesis, the result shows a computed value of 11.720^a at a degree of freedom 2 and critical value of 0.023. Since P value 0.023 < 0.05, the researcher accept the stated hypothesis and further conclude at 5% level of significance that there are causes for women's sentiment towards comparison advertising

Test of Hypothesis Two

H₂: There is relationship between women's sentiment and comparison advertising

Chi-Square Test Frequencies

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly agree	7	12.5	-5.5
Agree	22	12.5	9.5



Strongly Disagree	14	12.5	1.5
Disagree	7	12.5	-5.5
Total	50		

Test Statistic

There is relationship between women's sentiment and comparison advertising	
Chi-Square	12.240 ^a
Df	3
A symp. Sig.	.007

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 12.5.

Having testing the hypothesis, the result shows a Chi-Square value of 12.240^a at a degree of freedom 3 and critical value of 0.007. Since P value 0.007 < 0.05, the researchers accept the stated hypothesis and further conclude at 5% level of significance that there is relationship between women's sentiment and comparison advertising.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H₃: Women's sentiment can affect the purchase decision of products advertised

Chi-Square Test Frequencies

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly agree	11	16.7	-5.7
Agree	26	16.7	9.3
Undecided	13	16.7	-3.7
Total	50		

Test Statistic

Women sentiment can affect the purchase decision of a product advertised	
Chi-Square	7.960 ^a
df	2



Asymp. Sig. .019

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 16.7.

Having testing the hypothesis, the result shows a Chi-Square value of 7.960^a at a degree of freedom 2 and critical value of 0.019. Since P value $0.019 < 0.05$, the researcher accept the stated hypothesis and further conclude at 5% level of significance that women sentiment can affect the purchase decision of a product advertised.

FINDINGS

- From the findings, the writers discovered that there are causes for women's sentiment towards comparison advertising.
- It was further discovered that there is relationship between women's sentiment and comparison advertising.
- Finally, the study discovered that women sentiment can affect the purchase decision of a product advertised.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and findings, the study concludes that comparative advertising draws comparisons among manufacturers' competing brands and the use of comparative advertising is increasing in today's marketplace. Also, there is a positive relationship between women's sentiment and comparison advertising which implies that women really develop sentiment towards advertisement of the various brands of product they come in contact with as they do their regular shopping activities. Finally, it is concluded that the sentiment formed by women towards product brands shape their purchase decisions in their buyer decisions making process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the finding of the study, it is recommended that business owners should be conscious of the content of their product advertisement and any message that will subject the product being advertised to negative criticism should be avoided to prevent such product brand from being negatively perceived by women.



Gender sensitivity as well as creativity should be borne in mind which will take care of women interest in developing an advertisement copy since they are the larger sector of consumer category. Finally, there is need for adequate training for advertising personnel and agents.

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