

# Fast Food Tv Advertisements As Prompts For Teenage Consumption Behavior In Eldoret Kenya

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*Abstract: The study aims to conclusively establish the veracity or otherwise of the widely held notion amongst Capital Market Operators/Analysts in Nigeria that one index – The Premium Index (NSE PREMIUM) – of The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), out of a total of twelve Sectoral Indices currently on the NSE Board is actually the barometer that determines the direction of the All Share Index (ASI) at any particular trading day. The study covers the period from January 31– December 31, 2017. Data for the twelve month period were secondary in nature and were sourced from the Nigerian Stock Exchange. Analysis using the appropriate statistical tool; the coefficient of correlation  $\otimes$  was carried out. From the study, it was clearly established that a strong correlation actually exists between NSE PREMIUM and ASI which can be interpreted to mean that increased NSE PREMIUM is highly associated with increased ASI. Having established this strong correlation, the study concludes that it is high time, products designed to track this index were rolled out by operators in the Market.*

*Keywords: Nigerian Stock Exchange, NSE PREMIUM INDEX, All Share Index, Coefficient of Correlation, Tracking.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. FAST FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS

Fast food advertisements have been established to be effective tools of behaviour modification, especially among teenagers. Teenagers are at a critical stage of life where they are still forming personalities. This makes them vulnerable to all kinds of influence whether negative or positive (Solomon, Russell-Bennett & Previte, 2012). The frequent exposure to advertisements shapes the viewer's beliefs and conceptions of reality. Subsequently, the teenagers view what is propagated by the adverts as the authentic state of affairs. Marketers are aware of this phenomenon and utilize it to their advantage (Boyland & Halford, 2013). Advertising geared at this group is carefully crafted to ensure that every part of it appeals to a particular interest or desire of the teenagers. Therefore, the adverts are actions presented with the aim of acting as models. The people, who model these adverts; and are often celebrities, serve as social prompts. Advertisements provide

the means by which the behaviour of audiences is influenced through the images and messages presented.

Through observation, the modification of perceptions regarding products takes place in a way that privileges advertisers. The objective is on the creation of positive attitudes that will ultimately enhance sales. Given that television is still an authentic source of information for teenagers, it is exploited by advertisers to reach the intended audience. The personalities utilized are instrumental in provide models to the audience (Kotler, Schiffman, & Hanson, 2012). Various researchers have explored the concept of model influence in activating, channelling and aiding the behaviour of others. One of the earliest proponents of this concept was Bandura (1986). Bandura asserts that by example, people are motivated to behave in unpredictable ways. However, advertisers always strive to ensure that the models they utilize influence audiences in ways that will positively affect their endeavours by motivating their engagement with life aspects. The implication is that the models that are

dominant within a social milieu to some extent impact on the choices we make.

Therefore, this enlightenment has given immense power to advertisers who have maximized on the use of emotional messages and images to attract and retain attention. Study findings have revealed that emotions have the ability to bypass the reasoning of the brain thereby causing the making of emotional rather than rational decisions. As such, this becomes an effective technique that connects the emotions of the target audience to the products or services presented (Boelsen-Robinson, Backholer, & Peeters, 2015). Every advert is carefully crafted for a significant duration of time to assure its persuasion power.

## B. BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

The celebrities selected for the modelling of adverts are people who have the ability to persuade others to change their attitudes and preferences. Their actions are prompts due to the fact that they always imply that similar conduct or the adoption of their behaviour leads to great achievements (Gbadamosi, 2012). This prompting of behaviour has been heavily utilized by fast food marketers to adjust the behaviour of teenagers in a way that is beneficial for the sustenance of their enterprises (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman, 2016). The pursuit of this objective is to modify behaviour permanently so that teenagers will always associate the consumption of fast food with the success of the models who model the adverts. Notably, the advertisements strategies have maintained their grip on consumers in spite of the empowerment that audiences have garnered overtime due to accessibility of information regarding items (Strasburger et al., 2013). It is almost rational to argue the power of adverts will survive for decades to come. The only difference is that advertisers will have to work harder as compared to earlier years to devise creative strategies because of the nature of the information society.

## C. STRATEGIES OF BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

The Social Cognitive theory argues that the features presented by influential people during the modelling of adverts are not necessarily the reality. They are modified to enhance the persuasive nature of advert messages (Boelsen-Robinson, Backholer, & Peeters, 2015). The features are aligned to the objectives of the advertisements. The strategy of situating models in a way that appeals to the desires of audiences has been proven to be effective (Bibeau et al., 2012). The models target the emotions of audiences as feelings are the most powerful trigger of behaviour. The ultimate objective is to develop individual traits as well as alter pre-existing ones in favour of the goals of advertisers (Yousefi, & Moghimi, 2017). Modelling of adverts targets at prompting action through the employment of two fundamental steps:

- ✓ Extracting features from the model such as dressing style, walking style and eating habits among other traits.
- ✓ Integrating and using the extracted information into one's way of doing things which produces new instances of behaviour. For instance, one begins walking; talking and

dressing like a model in a certain advert and even incorporates the food choices of that model into their diet.

Also, emotion is another aspect that is utilized to enhance the outcomes of social prompting of behaviour. Empirical studies have demonstrated the power of emotion as a stimulator of reactions (Kemp, Bui, & Chapa, 2012). Audiences have been recorded to behave in unexpected ways because their emotions were exploited in some way. The challenge for marketers is to ensure that they manipulate emotions in a way that will positively impact on their audiences to elicit the desired reactions. It is on the basis of this reasoning that the people who model adverts focus on triggering positive emotions so that the intended audience will respond as anticipated (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy, & Goodman, 2016). Study findings have unveiled the effectiveness of relations established through emotional connections (Defever, Pandelaere, & Roe, 2011). In other words, observing others react emotionally to events activates audiences to react in identical ways when faced with similar situations. The implication is that it is possible to act as a result of observing the emotional experiences of models that one looks up to.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research utilized propositions advanced by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication. Given his background studies on human behaviour, his assertions provide rational arguments regarding the influence of adverts on human behaviour. According to him, there is nothing natural about human behaviour as it can easily be modified through any kind of experience (Bandura, 1986). There are mechanisms that appeal to the psychological and social aspects of human life leading to behaviour modification. These mechanisms aid in the elaboration of why people begin to purchase products after viewing an advert. Communication utilizes these mechanisms to cause consumers to view their products as the best. This can be referred to as prompting of behaviour.

On the other hand, there is also emphasis on the attainment of good results after consumption (Powell, Szczyпка, & Chaloupka, 2010). For instance, the celebrities are presented as leading wealthy live. They are also well-groomed and happy. All these aspects are implied as outcomes of consumption of the presented products. Thus, the power of social prompting of behaviour is undeniable. Every advert corroborates the notion of model acts bringing rewards. Consequently, such presentations are highly utilized in advertising campaigns.

Also, the concept of social prompting of behavior in Social Cognitive theory insists on the power of visuals in the influence of behavior. Visuals, as compared to words, are easily remembered and thus highly likely to positively or negatively impact the decision making process. This is why advertisements target the powerful sense of sight through the utilization of prominent figures such as celebrities who are not easily forgotten. Such public figures usually leave a lasting

effect on our minds (Bandura, 1986). It is hard to forget something that you saw as compared to something that you just heard (Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010). The concept of attention processes in Social Cognitive theory, on the other hand, states that people do not input all information from a source but select some elements and leave out others. This is the reason as to why advertisers go to any extent to ensure that their target audience will remember their product. They do this by employing many strategies to attract attention. The use of celebrities is one of these strategies.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have been conducted linking advertisements to consumption habits. Scholars have focused their attention on the mechanisms that adverts employ to encourage unhealthy eating in adolescents. This has been feasible through the propagation of unreasonable messages such as the endorsement of sedentary lifestyles that promote the consumption of unhealthy foods (Jordan, Kramer-Golinkoff & Strasburger, 2008). At the same time, the models have implied that the ideal figures and sizes as desired by teenagers can be attained through consumption of the modelled products. Over time, adolescents perceive that they need to behave as the models for them to gain what the models are presenting. Following that, over time, they learn to associate these desirable attributes to the consumption of the products (Pabalkar & Balgaonka, 2014). The argument is that the essential element that triggers consumer behavior in reference to specific products or services is the advertising message. The models positively impact on the messages they are transmitting to consumers. In this way, the advertisement acts as a stimulus for consumers who respond by either purchasing or not.

Researches have also provided evidence of how adverts are modelled to communicate the themes of fun and happiness. These have been rated to be the most suitable and persuasive employed by adverts targeted at adolescents and children (Powell, Szczypka & Chaloupka, 2010). In their study, Powell et al., 2010 stated that the themes of fun and happiness were utilized in 83% of the fast food adverts targeted at adolescents. This is an informed strategy as teenagers are at a stage in life where they like to derive pleasure in everything they engage in. These adverts provide a way in which they can achieve this desire by the consumption of particular foods. In addition, the nature of the themes also facilitated the manipulation of emotions to achieve the desired outcome (Kemp, Bui, & Chapa, 2012). The adverts analyzed by Powell et al., 2010 unraveled the use of emotional appeals and appeals to social enhancement. Social improvement is a significant aspect among all teenagers as they desire to lead celebrity-like lives. These lives are always laden with luxurious lifestyles.

A study carried out in the South African context by Mchiza et al., (2013) divulged similar results. The study sought to ascertain the influence of adverts on people through the frequency of airing and structuring of the content. Almost all the adverts were presented during prime times when all people were highly likely to be viewing TV. Additionally, most of them were endorsed by celebrities. Interestingly,

positive health implications were associated with the consumption of fast foods. Unlike alcohol advertisements that warned on the dangers of excessive consumption, these fast foods adverts did not mention or imply negative consequences on health associated with their consumption. Health claims were made in 11 % of the advertisements. The celebrities who modeled the adverts maintained that the outcome of consumption would be enhanced well-being, renewed energy, ameliorated performance, consumption of a balanced diet, as well as the strengthening of the immune system (Mchiza et al., 2013). The aspects of enhanced performance and renewed energy were emphasized as they were directly related to the youth.

Additionally, a study by Defever, Pandelaere, & Roe (2011) unraveled that many food advertisements are often targeted at the youth and do not promote sound health regardless of the claims on positive health declared. It was also observed that alcohol advertisements were presented when children were probably awake. This needs to be addressed by the relevant authorities. According to Defever, Pandelaere, & Roe (2011), varied situational variables can temporarily modify the priority of values as held by an individual. The outcome of this scenario is the transformation of behavior. Marketers are aware of this fact and as such bank on the power of associative advertising to sell their ideologies, products and services. Associative advertising is viewed as a situational variable that facilitates modification of behavior among audiences. The argument of their research is that advertising exhibits value that is desired by the target audience. Therefore, the models focus on making the audience view the values presented by the adverts as very important in adding value to their lives. Constant exposure to these adverts creates a drive that is highly likely to cause audiences to prefer certain products or services to others. The advertisements encourage positive engagement with audiences thereby promoting the development of positive perceptions.

## C. SIMILARITY TO THE MODEL

Study findings have proven that advertisers bank on the concept of similarity to the model to cause the target customer to associate attributes of the model to the product. This increases the level of attraction (Kotler, Schiffman, & Hanson, 2012). The selection of the models is usually systematic to ensure that it aligns to the expectations of the intended audience. A number of researchers have interrogated the aspect of celebrity endorsements and its impact on audiences. They have developed a number of theoretical constructs to explain on the concept of celebrity endorsements:

### a. THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS OF ENDORSEMENTS

- ✓ The Source Plausibility and attractiveness- This construct suggests that the credibility of a source enhances the effectiveness of an advert. Celebrities are viewed as authentic information sources and thus increase the level of persuasion of adverts (Roy, 2006). Attractiveness on the other hand is concerned with the model's physical approach in terms of character, likeability, and

resemblance to the receiver. The assumption is that an individual who performs well in one area is believed to achieve in others. Nevertheless, the impact on the perception of audiences is varied.

- ✓ Interpretation Model – The effectiveness of the model is dependent on the degree of clarity attained by the target audience in evaluating the meanings they link to the celebrity. These meanings are ultimately transferred to the product.
- ✓ The Match-up construct – This construct asserts that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement is dependent on the presence of a “fit” in relation to the product and the endorser. Thus, the physical lure of an endorser will enhance assessments of the brands’ features only if these features are congruent with the image portrayed by the endorser (Culbreath, 2012).

Hence, the effectiveness of advertisements is ascertained by endorsers’ attributes such as familiarity and trustworthiness among others. Endorsers present a set of meanings through their engagement with the public (Clinton, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008). For instance, one of the adverts on nodules employs OJ, a popular actor in the local television drama, “Tahidi High” and Cindy, who is not just a musician, but a beautiful lady. These selections are not just random choices. (Solomon, Russell-Bennett, & Previte, 2012). Therefore, the use of celebrity endorsement by advertisers in their presentation of fast food advertisements largely relies on the transfer-effect notion (Yousefi & Moghimi, 2017). Through this effect, the celebrity traits are transferred to the advertised products thereby positively impacting on consumer perception.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was employed to evaluate the extent to which the adverts prompted teenage behaviour in regard to fast food consumption. The ten advertisements that were observed were those that were aired between 6.00pm and 11.00 pm across Citizen, NTV, and K24 channels. These channels were selected because they have relatively good reception in most areas of the country. This time was appropriate because it is the period referred to as prime time when many people are postulated to watch (Kottak, 2016). Teenagers and celebrities modeled the adverts. The advert observation was undertaken for a period of one month to enable the identification of a trend.

#### A. FINDINGS

The teenagers viewed these adverts as attractive and developed the desire to consume those thereby preferring fast foods to other types of food. The implication is that they acted as suitable prompts for the modification of behaviour. There were several reasons for this scenario. The first includes attractiveness of the adverts. This attractiveness emanated from the use of beautiful models and also the environment in which the advert is modeled. The presentation style appealed and stimulated the desire to view the adverts positively and ultimately consume them. Celebrities are people who the

youth can identify with given that the age brackets between them are often close. As such, they are viewed as age mates. The adverts studied employed both male and female celebrities as well as singers. One of the adverts on nodules used a male celebrity who is an actor in “Tahidi High”, a local drama aired on Citizen TV. It also used a young, beautiful female musician. The “soft drink” and “chocolate” advert aired on both Citizen and NTV employ teenagers, while the “biscuit advert” uses a teenager, a child and a parent. All these categories of the population are people who the teenagers can associate with.

Also, these findings obtain validity through the exploration of the principles advanced by the theory regarding the prompting of behaviour (Bandura, 1986). The actions of these models serve as social prompts. Subsequently, they emphasize the worth of the products being modelled by implying that the success of the models of the adverts is partly because they consume the product. Additionally, the source of this information is credible given that a high percentage of teenagers look up to models to inform them about the various aspects of their lives. Thus, they have a great influence in encouraging consumption of the modelled products among many other available alternatives. Well-groomed and successful actors, comedians and musicians were popularly used to advertise fast foods. Ultimately, they acted as suitable prompts for the modification of behaviour.

### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Fast food advertisements on television are social prompts that persuade teenagers to consume fast food. They are modelled by celebrities and teenagers. Celebrities are chosen to advertise because they are confident, creative, persuasive and funny. In addition, teenagers associate fast food with being “cool” because the celebrities who advertise them are smart and look successful. The youth look at celebrities as being modern and successful and hence admire and want to be like them. The aspects of attractiveness, popularity, and fun were utilized by all the adverts to facilitate behaviour modification. The celebrities modelled the adverts in a way that was funny and portrayed their high level of creativity and confidence. Advertisers target the teenagers fundamentally because of the developmental stage they are in. They are easily persuaded to change their perspectives as compared to adults. In addition, they always have disposable income thereby translating to a high spending power. Furthermore, modification of behavior at this juncture increases the chances that these behaviors will be sustained in future and by extension transferred to their children. As observed in the adverts analyzed, multiple techniques and mediums are employed to reach teenagers to impact their fast food purchase behavior positively. They are also presented in a way that nurtures brand-building and influence food product purchase behavior.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Actors, models, and musicians among other celebrities should be encouraged to participate in the advertisements of nutritious foods. The positive effect they have on fast food advertisements will also be realized with these foods.

## VII. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Similar studies could be undertaken in other contexts that are different from the Kenyan context to build on the knowledge base on the topic. Furthermore, the revelations will corroborate the validity of the findings of the current study.

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