

Gender differentials in advertisement consumption patterns among residents of South-South Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: The changing nature of communication landscape has posed a challenge for predicting advertisement consumption of consumers. The situation has been made more difficult with evidence from literature suggesting that gender plays a critical role in influencing human behaviour.

Objective: The objective of this study was to examine gender differentials in advertisement consumption among residents of South-South Nigeria.

Method: The survey researcher design was used to achieve the objectives of the study. A total of 405 respondents took part in the study. The respondents were sampled for the study through a multi-stage sampling technique. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. In the analysis data for the study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

Results: The result showed that gender significantly influences advertisement consumption in the areas of time of consumption, duration of consumption as well as message elements that attract attention to advertisements. For example, while male reported that they consume advertisements early in the morning, women reported consuming it at night. Also while men consume advertisements with formal tones, women consume advertisements with sexual and humour tones.

Conclusion: Gender plays a significant role in determining the advertisement consumption pattern of consumers.

Unique contribution: The study has examined advertisement consumption of consumers in a developing country from the perspective of gender.

Key recommendation: Based on the result of the study, the researcher recommends, among others advertisers should take into account the gender of their target audience when planning and implementing advertising campaigns.

Keywords: Advertisements, consumption, gender, Nigeria, patterns.

Introduction

Gender is regarded as a fundamental determinant that influences human behaviour. Scholars of different disciplines like education, political science, sociology and communication have all identified gender as essential in driving human behaviour (Akintan, 2013; Agbalajobi 2010; Akintan; Abeda 2011; Hamidon, 2015). Gender is a social construct. As a social construct, gender describes the social roles that men and women play in the society. The Convention on Biodiversity (2017) says that gender is not based on sex, or the biological differences between men and women, instead, it is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environments. Thus, depending on values, norms, customs and laws, men and women in different parts of the world have evolved different gender roles. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, (2003) corroborates that gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in families, societies and cultures.

Gender is likely to play a role in the manner consumers receive adverts and how they respond to same. Hasan (2010) in a study divided attitude into cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects. Hasan says that at the cognitive level, males scored higher than females in response to advert as a wise, useful and effective way of buying products. Ling and Yazdanifard (2014) say that cognition of an object is essential in deciding buying behaviour so females have lower cognitive attitudes, females also have a lower affective attitude which includes favoring, feeling happy and excited towards buying.

Brown (2011) notes that although men and women give similar ratings to ads, they respond differently to individual ads. According to him, men are more likely to enjoy ads featuring humour, distinctive creative styles, and sexual imagery, while women are more likely to enjoy ads featuring children or a slice of life. The situation in South-South Nigeria is deserving of scholarly enquiry because the zone is a beehive of commercial activities. The area, just like many parts of Nigeria, assigns gender roles to men and women. For example, while women are expected to take care of the house, the children and prepare the family meal, men are expected to provide for the home. Gender is, thus, likely to influence advert consumption.

Gender differentials are thought to exist regarding the way men and women process information. Yarborough (2000) says that there are fundamental differences in the way men and women process information. According to Yarborough, Women tend to process more extensively, more different pieces of information. Men tend to rely more on mental shortcuts. Yarborough revealed that in a study, a group of people were brought to a room and later asked to remember various items there. The result showed that women had much better memory for details than did men. Men might remember the big picture of an office like the location of a desk or a bookshelf. But women would remember more intimate details like a vase of flowers in the corner, or a picture of a husband and wife on a book case. Ifezue (2010) says that gender plays a critical role in advert. Ifezue gives an illustration of an advertised food product. In his illustration, Ifezue says that Food can mean very different things for men and women. Men are not taught to pay close attention to the nutritional value (fat and calorie) of what they

consume, particularly in the developing countries where literacy level is still considered low. Men are usually not expected to watch what they eat in the same way that women do. Men are often looked upon as strange when they attempt to regulate their diet carefully. Such differences are likely to affect advert consumption pattern between men and women. Therefore, this study sought to ascertain gender differentials in adverts consumption among residents of South-South Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

There is a growing demand for audience segmentation in advertising. Gender is regarded as one of the essential segmentation variables. This makes it imperative to provide empirical evidence concerning the role that gender plays in advert consumption. However, most studies focusing on the nexus between gender and advertising pay more attention to the portrayal of both men and women without looking at the advert consumption with particular attention to media, level of engagement, message effect and motivation for exposure. In addition, most of the studies did not provide information on how women and men respond to adverts. Although studies (e.g., Pornpitakpan, 2004; Petty, & Wegener, 1998; Yilmaz, Telci, Bodur&Iscioglu, 2011) have shown that media significantly influence consumer attitudes to advert and eventual possibility for purchase, not much is known concerning how men and women consume advert with particular attention to the media through which messages are consumed, the duration of consumption, the time of consumption and the reason for consumption, hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to determine adverts consumption of residents of South-South Nigeria. The specific objectives were:

1. To examine the influence of gender on the time of adverts consumption among residents of South-South Nigeria.
2. To investigate the influence of gender on the duration of adverts consumption of among residents of South-South Nigeria.
3. To find out the influence of gender on advert message components that attract the attention of residents of South-South Nigeria.
4. To determine the influence of gender on advert engagements among residents of South-South Nigeria.

Literature Review

Advertisement consumption answers the question: how does the audience consume advert messages? Consumption could be determined by the media through which adverts messages are received, level of engagement, message effect and motivation for advert consumption. In some instances, consumption is treated the same way as exposure.

Understanding the media through which people get exposed to advertisement messages is essential because it determines the success of advert messages. It is in recognition of the role of media consumption in advert consumption that Belch and Belch (2006) suggested that the basic task involved in the development of media strategy

is to determine the best matching of media to the target market, given the constraint of the budget. Belch and Belch (2006) add that the media planner attempts to balance reach and frequency and deliver the message to the intended audience with a minimum waste of coverage. Mann and Ahluwalia (2010, p. 1) sum up the critical role of media to adverts thus: “Great brands are built on great conversations. To have effective communication with the customer, it is a must to understand them and their media consumption patterns.” The assertion of Mann and Ahluwalia implies that an understanding of media consumption of consumers is fundamental in the study of adverts consumption. Such an understanding could also provide insights into advert engagements of consumers.

Advert engagement describes the levels of involvement in advert messages. Wang (2006) avers that advert engagement describes how consumers get involved in advert messages. Greenwald and Leavitt (1984) cited in Wang (2006) outlined four hierarchical levels of advert engagement to include: pre-attention, focal attention, comprehension, and elaboration. Greenwald and Leavitt argue that the progression from pre-attention (the lowest level) through elaboration (the highest) is assumed to be accompanied by the allocation of increasing capacity, which is required for increasingly abstract analyses of incoming information. The researchers argue that pre-attention uses little capacity. The second level, focal attention, uses modest capacity to focus on one message source, and to decipher the message's sensory content into categorical codes (object, name, word). Further capacity is required for comprehension, which analyzes speech or text by constructing a propositional representation of it. The fourth level of engagement elaboration, uses still more capacity to enable the integration of message content with the audience member's existing conceptual knowledge. Relating to the issue of engagement is message effect such as advertising recall, message involvement, message believability, attitude toward the message (AM), and attitude toward the advertisement (AAD).

Equally essential is the motivation for advert exposure. People do not just get exposed to advert messages; they are motivated. Oka, Okorie and Kehinde (2015) say that a consumer is ordinarily looking for a product he can benefit from and this happens through the consumer decision making process. Such needs could include discovering the existence of new products, discovering the valued added services to products, enhancing confidence in products, getting to know where to buy products, among others. It was, perhaps, in consideration of the motivation for advert exposure that Okoro (2013, p14) notes: “Advertising thrives on a promise: The good life. Happy Mooring. Great holidays. Happy homes. Clean breath. Super white teeth. Healthy gums. Wealth. Beauty.” The submission of Okoro is critical to the current study because the promises of adverts are geared towards meeting the needs of the consumers.

Another critical consideration in advert consumption is the message elements. Such message elements include; the visual comments, the nature of the copy, the sound effect, the language used, among others. The message is very cardinal in any communication engagement and this applies to advertising too. According to the Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation (2014) the message is what a person chooses to say about an issue, its solution and who the person is. It further reveals that to develop a message, information is needed to back up the arguments, clear knowledge of the audience is required, knowledge of the political environment and moment (controversies, big issues, fears, and what is considered left, right and center) is necessary. Closely

related is the product. The product is what marketers have to offer to consumers. Leon and Kanuk (2007) posit that products are the tangible or intangible creations of a particular culture. Leon and Kanuk add that tangible products include paintings, a cathedral, a piece of literature, a pair of chopsticks while intangible products are an oral tale, a dance, a sacred ritual, a system of education, a law, among others. For the purpose of this study, more attention was paid to tangible products. The product needs of consumers' plays a critical role in their advert consumption. Gender is one of the variables that have been examined vis-à-vis advertising. Over the years, researchers (Barry & Phillips 2015; Massar&Buunk, 2013; Fatima &Lodhi 2015; Kraljević& Filipović2017; Kalia&Ashutosh 2016; Lee, Hosanagar& Nair 2015; Promotosh and Sajedul, 2011; Soni, 2016; Hayta, 2013; Lafky, Duffy& Berkowitz, 2012) have examined different aspects that relate to the role of gender in human behaviour. The outcome of such studies reveal that gender plays an essential role in influencing human behaviour.

Theoretical Framework

This study used sex role theory. The theory was propounded by Eagly, in 1987. Eagly's social role theory of gender differences explains that the inherent physical differences between men and women led to a division of labour in society. More specifically, men are usually physically larger and stronger than women. Conversely, females tend to be smaller in size and not as physically strong as men. Eagly's theory cites these innate differences as causative factors in the development of gender roles for men (Eagly, 1987).

Its basic assumption is that differences and similarities arise mainly from the distribution of men and women into social roles within their society. The theory assumes that gender roles depict a society's distributions of men and women into breadwinner and homemaker roles and occupation. Eagly, Wood, and Diekman in (2000) argue that expectations about men and women necessarily reflect status and power differences. Thus, postulating gender roles recognize that cultures feature shared expectations for the appropriate conduct of each sex and that these expectations foster sex-differentiated behaviour. This theory provides the prisms for investigating gender differentials in adverts consumption patterns. This is because the theory shows that men and women are likely to differ in their advert consumption patterns because of the differences in their sex and biological makeup.

Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive survey for this study. This is because descriptive survey is usually the most preferred design when a study aims to explain or describe a phenomenon (Ale, 2020; Kari, 2020; Melugboet *al.*, 2020; Odii et al., 2020; Ogbonne, 2020). The population of this study was all the residents of South-South Nigeria. National Bureau of Statistics (2016) projected that as at 2016, the total number of residents of South-South Nigeria is 28,829,288. This population is presented in the below table.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/N	State	Population
1	Delta	5,663,362
2	Edo	4,235,595
3	Cross River	3,866,269
4	Rivers	7,303,924
5	AkwaIbom	5,482,177
6	Bayelsa	2,277,961
Total	Total	28,829,288

Source: National Population Commission 2016.

From the above table, it can be seen that the population of this study was made up of twenty-eight million, eight hundred and twenty-nine thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight residents of South-South Nigeria. The sample size of this study was 405 respondents. The researcher arrived at the sample size of this study in segments as expressed below:

Segment I

In the initial segment, the researcher made use of the Cochran formula (1963, p.75). With 95 percent (confidence interval - + 5%), the population estimate of 50% (.5) while the permitted margin of error was .05 (5 percentage points), the Cochran Equation '1' is expressed below:

$$n_0 = \frac{[Z/2]^2 (p q)}{e^2}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{[Z/2]^2 (P) (1-P)}{e^2}$$

Where: n_0 = sample size, Z^2 = confidence level (the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area α at the tails), p = rate of occurrence or prevalence (the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in a population), q = complement of p and e = margin of error. Therefore;

$$n = \frac{[1.96]^2 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2} \qquad n = \frac{3.8416 (0.25)}{0.0025}$$

$n = 385$

However, since there was no assurance of a 100 percent response rate, the researcher decided to oversample. A return level of 95 percent was adopted. The calculation is presented below:

$$n_2 = \frac{\text{minimun sample size}}{\text{expected response rate} \times 100}$$

Where expected response rate is 95%
 n^2 Sample size adjusted for the rate
 Where Minimum sample size = 385

$$\frac{385}{95} \times 100 = 405$$

The sample size for the study is 405 respondents.

Segment II

In segment two of the sampling, the researcher sampled for the allocation of respondents for the individual states. This was expressed thus:

$$\text{Delta } \frac{5,663,362}{28,829,288} \times 405 = 79$$

$$\text{Edo } \frac{4,235,595}{28,829,288} \times 405 = 60$$

$$\text{Bayelsa } \frac{2,277,961}{28,829,288} \times 405 = 32$$

$$\text{Cross River } \frac{3,866,269}{28,829,288} \times 405 = 54$$

$$\text{Rivers } \frac{7,303,924}{28,829,288} \times 405 = 103$$

$$\text{AkwaIbom } \frac{5,482,177}{28,829,288} \times 405 = 77$$

From the calculation above, the below table shows the areas and the number of respondents to be selected.

Table III: Sample selected for each of the states

S/N	State	Sample
1	Delta	79
2	Edo	60
3	Bayelsa	32
4	Cross River	54
5	Rivers	103
6	AkwaIbom	77
Total	6	405

Sampling technique

The multi-stage sampling technique was used for this study. This was implemented in the following stages.

First stage

At the first stage, the researcher considered the six states as clusters. The clusters are AkwaIbom, Bayelsa, Delta, Cross Rivers, Edo and Rivers.

Second Stage

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the state capitals in each of the states. This was because of two broad reasons. There are many media outfits like radio, TV newspaper and magazines in the state capitals more than any other place. In the second place, there are higher chances of selected people who are from different senatorial zones in the state capitals more than any other place in the state. Therefore, by limiting the study to state capitals, the researcher stood the chance of including people from different senatorial zones in the study.

Stage three

The stratified sampling technique was used to stratify the population into male and female. This was to ensure that both men and women were represented in the sample. Therefore, the strata were male and female.

Stage four

The researcher adopted the quota sampling to ensure that both men and women are represented in the sample. Therefore, 202 men and 202 women were selected. It should be noted that the 405 sample size was not even, so one was eliminated.

Stage five

This was the last stage during which the researcher purposively selected people who could read and write so that they could attend to the questionnaire instrument by visiting residential houses in the state capitals.

Instrument for Data Collection

The questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection for this study. The questionnaire is considered because it can generate a large volume of data. The instrument is divided into part A and part B. Part A elicits demographic data while part "B" centered on the psychographic information. The instrument was administered to the respondents between the hours of 4: 30 pm to 6 pm Monday to Friday so that most people were in their homes. The researcher made use of four research assistants who were briefed on how to administer the instrument. The research team collected the instrument immediately to avoid high attrition rate. The research assistants were postgraduate students of mass communication, University of Benin, Benin-City. To ascertain the validity of the instrument, it was validated by the supervisor. The instrument was also validated by three experts in mass communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts were requested to examine the logicity of the items as well clarity of presentation. Their comments were useful in preparing a final copy of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the use of a test-retest approach. A pre-test questionnaire of 20 copies were designed and administered to respondents in Enugu city which is outside the study area. After four weeks interval, the same pre-test copies of the questionnaire were administered again to the same respondents. The correlation coefficient was to measure reliability of consistent of the instrument and this yielded a figure of 0.75, an indication of high reliability

Method of data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of data for this study. Therefore, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were used among the descriptive statistics while correlation analysis and Chi-Square test of independence

were used to test the hypotheses of the study. The analysis was carried out with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

Results

Out of the 404 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to the respondents, 387 copies, representing 96%, were filled and returned. The gender analysis of the return rate showed that male respondents had 194 copies returned. This represents 50.1% while female respondents had 193 representing 49.9% of the sample. The results are hereby presented.

Table IV: gender and time of advert consumption

		Time of consumption					
			Evening	Afternoon	Early morning	At night	Total
gender	Male	Count	106	7	7	74	194
		% of Total	27.4%	1.8%	1.8%	19.1%	50.1%
	Female	Count	64	17	14	98	193
		% of Total	16.5%	4.4%	3.6%	25.3%	49.9%
Total		Count	170	24	21	172	387
		% of Total	43.9%	6.2%	5.4%	44.4%	100.0%

Table iv above sought to ascertain a cross tabulation between gender and time of advert consumption. The result shows that while male reported consuming advert early in the morning, women reported consuming it at night.

Table vi: Gender and duration of advert consumption

		Duration of Consumption				Total	
			0-15 sec	16-30 sec	31-59 sec	1>	
Gender	Male	Count	67	52	50	25	194
		% of Total	17.3%	13.4%	12.9%	6.5%	50.1%
	Female	Count	53	10	7	123	193
		% of Total	13.7%	2.6%	1.8%	31.8%	49.9%
Total		Count	120	62	57	148	387
		% of Total	31.0%	16.0%	14.7%	38.2%	100.0%

Table v above sought to ascertain the gender differentials in duration of adverts consumption. The results shows that women spend more time consuming adverts than men. While men consume between 0-15 seconds.

Table vi Gender and Message Components

		Message elements				Total
		Visual components	Textual component	Motion Language	used	
Gender Male	Count	25	28	28	113	194
	% of Total	6.5%	7.2%	7.2%	29.2%	50.1%
Female	Count	148	13	13	19	193
	% of Total	38.2%	3.4%	3.4%	4.9%	49.9%
Total	Count	173	41	41	132	387
	% of Total	44.7%	10.6%	10.6%	34.1%	100.0%

The result from the table above sought to ascertain gender differentials on the adverts message component that attract the attention of respondents. The result showed that while men are attracted by the language used, women are attracted by visual components.

Table 25: Advert engagement level

S/N	Items	Male		Female	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	I engage in pre-attention in advert consumption E.g I receive stimuli and its extensive immediate analysis that produces little or no lasting effect	3.1*	.67	3.2*	.98
2	I engage in focal attention in advert consumption. Eg not allowing comprehension of advert consumed.	2.0**	.78	2.5*	.99
3	I comprehend adverts that I consume.	2.9*	.89	3.1*	.90
4	I engage in elaboration in my advert consumption. Eg. I use more capacity to enable the integration of message content with my existing conceptual knowledge	3.1*	.98	2.9*	.056

*Accepted

**Rejected

The table above sought to ascertain gender differentials in advert engagement levels of the respondents. The result showed that both males and females agreed on the items as their advert engagement levels. However, there was a slight difference as males do not engage in focal attention in their engagement.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined gender differentials in advert consumption of residents of South-South Nigeria. South-South Nigeria is made up of Bayelsa, Edo, Cross-River, Rivers, Akwo-Ibom and Delta States. The study sought to achieve four objectives. The result revealed that gender differences exist in the time of advert consumption among the sample studied. Specifically, it was found that while men mostly consume advert in the evening, women consume advert at night. This result was found to be similar to that of Massar and Buunk (2013) whose study shows that gender plays a role in advert consumption up to the level of even interpreting advert messages. Similar results were reported by Promotosh and Sajedul (2011), Soni (2016) and Hayta (2013).

Also, the result of the study revealed gender difference in duration of adverts consumption of both male and female from South-South Nigeria. It was found that while men spend between 0-15 seconds consuming and advert, women spend longer duration of one minute and above. Lafky, Duffy, Berkowitz (2012) and Fatima and Lodhi (2015) reported a similar result.

Also, gender differences were found in the advert message component that attracts the interest of the sample studied. The result showed that while women are attracted by visual components, men are attracted by the tone of the messages. In particular, men express preference for former tone while women express preference for visual components. This result is contrary to that of Barry and Phillips (2015) who reported that no gender difference exists concerning how men and women process adverts and the indices that both men and women use in assessing adverts.

Finally, the result of this study showed that gender differential in adverts engagements among residents of South-South Nigeria. For example, unlike women, men engage in focal attention in advert consumption. That is, not allowing comprehension of advert consumed. Gender differences were also observed in the products that attract the attention of both men and women. The result of this study is consistent with that of Kraljević and Filipović (2017), Kalia and Ashutosh (2016), who reported that gender plays a critical role in consumer behaviour. The result of this study has, however, expanded that of Lee, Hosanagar and Nair (2015) who examined adverts engagements without paying close attention to the role of gender in mediating the advert engagement of consumers.

These results offer strong theoretical support for theories that explain the role of gender in influencing human behaviour. Precisely, the result of this study has strong support for sex role theory (Eagly, 1987). The theory postulates that gender plays a critical role in human behaviour, as such, men and women do not behave the same way. These postulations are supported by the result of this study.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the researcher concludes that gender plays an essential role in advert consumption of residents of South-South Nigeria. The researcher also concludes that men and women differ significantly in the time they consume advert, the duration of such consumption as well as message elements. These results have implications on advert placements. First, it has shown that placing advert should be done with consideration to the gender of the respondents. One important caveat, however, is that

advertising should who may be willing to rely on this result for their advert placement should also not neglect the marital status and employment status of their target as most of the respondents for this study were married as well as employed. Therefore, the basic contribution of this study is that it has provided specific information on how to place advert in South-South Nigeria. It is also expected that the result may equally guided advertisers in advert placements in other regions of the country and even other less developed countries.

Recommendations of the Study

This study makes the following recommendations:

1. Advertisers should segment their target based on gender
2. Adverts aimed at reaching men should be carried in the evening while those for women should be carried at night.
3. Advert messages meant for men should be as short and straight to the point as possible because men spend less time on adverts.
4. Advert message meant for men should project former tone while those meant for women should project visual element.

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