

The nigerian telecommunication advertising marketing essay



Deceptive advertising often happens within the marketplace thus It is often debated whether deceptive advertising is been practiced in the telecoms industry in Nigeria. This research tries to explore whether the Nigerian telecoms industry employs strategic deceptive tactics to combat competition for increased customer acquisition and retention or otherwise. This study offers originality through its scrutiny into and interpretation of this particular phenomenon. The background of study is stated and a literature review on the description of deceptive advertising, along with various deception tactics is elaborated on as argued by various researchers. The methodology is structured showing a qualitative method; collection of data is done through interviews with customers and marketers while the research findings pointed out a few deception tactics present in the Nigerian Telecommunication ad campaign which were strategically used. From this, implications and propositions for future research are drawn.

Keywords: Nigeria, Telecommunications, Deception /Deceptive advertising

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and Context of Study

Deception in reality is a more vital subject in marketing and consumer research than is shown in present literature. After much insight into the different but limited writings on deception in humanities, social sciences, marketing etc, this research came about “ The use of strategic deception in telecommunication advert campaigns in Nigeria”. Deception in advertising is described as a company’s misrepresentation to customers on the features of the product or service advertised thus the anticipated utility from making use of the product or service (Nagler, 1993). Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) policy states that an advert is seen as “ deceptive” if there is an omission, representation, practice or act organized by a corporation that is prone to deceive a customer.(FTC , 1984).

Hence, Successful advertising is however almost always persuasive advertising, persuasion is therefore defined as the means of attempting to change or modify the significant beliefs, values, actions and wants of consumers; social life is occupied by unconscious and conscious, strong or substantial shots at persuasion (John O’Shaughnessy et al, 2004). In a competitive market those who persuade consumers best are those with a higher possibility to win. Persuasion is very essential even in situations where competition is hopeless.

This research aims to explore the strategic use of deception in telecommunications advert campaigns, as a major technique for persuasion in a very competitive environment like Nigeria. This research has selected

telecommunication advert campaigns as sample of the study as it is said or believed to engage in a lot of marketing communications, especially TV and Print advertising. Nigeria has been recognized as the largest telecom market in all of Africa in the past years; its telecom sector is experiencing rapid transformation as a result of explosive progression and speedy infrastructure expansions. The telecom sector Liberalization along with augmented competition among operators have fetched significantly large benefits to the customers in terms of reduced subscription rates and heightened choice. However, the Nigerian Government is putting in all efforts to convert or alter the country's economy into an economy that is knowledge based (RNCOS, 2012).

According to the research carried out by (RNCOS, 2012) it was recognized that competition among several telecom operators is expanding as they seek new business growth and customer retention techniques to maintain and acquire higher market share. Therefore, operators are assertively driving placement of network infrastructure, which is however pushing investments in Nigeria's telecoms sector. The research also shows a summary of the competitive background, in which the top industry operators have been reported alongside their marketing techniques.

Currently, MTN, Airtel, MTEL, Etisalat and Globacom Limited lead the GSM industry in Nigeria (Tella et al, 2007). According to (NCC, 2012), MTN holds over 46% of the market share with 41, 641, 089 subscribers while Globacom holds over 22% of the market share with about 19, 886, 014 subscribers also Airtel holds 20% of the market share with 18, 028, 385 subscribers while Etisalat holds 12% of the market share with 10, 752, 230 subscribers. This <https://assignbuster.com/the-nigerian-telecommunication-advertising-marketing-essay/>

makes MTN the number one leader while Globacom the second leader in the telecoms industry.

Nigerian Telecommunication Advertising

Telecom advertising is a provisional section of the marketing procedure that is used to promote sales by triggering excitement and granting various incentives to customer, thereby persuading the customers to make a progressive decision. Advertising and promotions are the main methods utilized in selling telecom services to consumers in Nigeria. Advertising gives justification to use the services provided by a service operator whereas the sales promotions give incentives which are short term for the customers or subscribers to take on the services available (Ogungbe, 2011).

Telecom promotional campaign is often put together to persuade consumers that the products and services provided by the service operators are necessary for their satisfaction. Marketers attempt to convince consumers/subscribers by presenting draws, stringing to the rise of lucky winners of numerous gift items like power generators, refrigerators, cars, television sets, recharge cards, cell phones and cash awards. These are the kind of incentives Nigerians look forward to owning; therefore lots of consumers participate in the draw which considerably increases the service operators or providers sale. Consequently, the Telecom sales objective is generally met, just like other sales promotions, is to rise above the actual sales quota (Ogungbe, 2011).

Telecom sales promotions function directly with advertising which is a major part of marketing. It however incorporates a large number of techniques

which includes special price reduction, (Glo to Glo calls), competitions (projections in the course of a football match), games, rebates, premiums, gifts and lotteries etc. The promotional messages are generally passed across to consumers in a persuasive and convincing style and language via text messages, newspapers, television and radio (Ogungbe, 2011).

Deception in advertising has been of immense concern for a lot of policy makers and consumers. As soon as customers trust an advert to be factual when it is in fact false, customers may be hurt (Attas, 1999). Customers like their belief to be factual and if a customer is persuaded by an advert, then the customer might be interested in buying the product advertised or enter for the promotion advertised. Possibly more customers will purchase the product due to deceptive advert claims since they trust it to be of better significance i. e the customers tend to give more than the actual price for the product. (Attas, 1999). In addition, the company trades even more products at the standard price. This logic tries to propose that companies are firmly crafting and posting uncertain, deceitful ads; and customers are purchasing products and entering promotions trusting these companies deception; therefore companies are attaining a lot of revenue at the expense of a deceived populace. Which means, some companies many have executed a strategy meant to mislead customers into trusting that a product or service is more attractive than what it actually is just for the benefit of improved sales (Attas, 1999).

Research Aims

To examine the likely presence of deceptive traits in telecommunication advert campaigns in Nigeria for the sole purpose of persuasion to bridge competition,

To expatiate on the idea of strategic deception in advertising.

To explore the likely effects of deceptive advertising on consumers.

Research Objective

This research investigates the use of strategic deception in telecommunication advert campaigns and its likely effects on consumers. For this to be done, data will be collected via multiple research methods which are participant observation and compilation of telecoms advertising data in Nigeria. In-depth interviews will also be conducted by the researcher to gain more understanding.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1 Describing Deceptive Advertising

The notion of the terms “ deceptive” and deception are equivocal, socio – culturally structured ideas. The idea of deception is different across generations and across cultures. In social science Masip, Garrido, and Herrero, (2004) carefully checked several definitions or descriptions of deception, they projected an integrative description that defines deception as “ the planned effort, whether profitable or not, to hide, construct and influence in any way emotional or authentic information, by nonverbal or verbal method, so as to sustain or generate in the consumer an idea that the

communicator sees as false. This description integrates the ideas of a communicator's previous beliefs and intentionality.

In communication, all attempts of deception are intentional. Every marketing communication is planned, structured and carried out consciously, by professionals in communication. However a marketer is accountable for inactions and actions that have an outstanding probability of deceiving and misleading customers. Marketers are open to the skill and resources to completely teach themselves about the implications of deception in their marketing actions or activities. For marketers to be nondeceptive it compels them to teach or educate themselves so that they are in a situation to comprehend how and when their omissions or activities may mislead. By accepting this stage marketers can regulate their activities so as to prevent deceiving customers, except of course they intentionally want to mislead customers (Boush et al, 2009).

Several definitions of deception in advertising have been proposed by different regulatory associations, legal bodies and agencies. As stated above, the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) policy statement on deception states that an advert is seen as "deceptive" if there is an omission, representation, practice or act organized by a company that is prone to deceive a customer. (FTC , 1984). If these situations have happened, the FTC will scrutinize the attempt from the viewpoint of the customer, acting rationally under the specific situation. If the attempt influences directly or is intended towards a specific group, the FTC will investigate rationality from the viewpoint of the group. The omission, representation, practice or act should be material. "

Material" is if the act is liable to influence the customer's decision or
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behaviour with reference to the service or product presented by the business executing such practice. If the outcome happens to be that the customer's conduct is influenced, then the practice is seen as material. If material, then a customer may be harmed by such an act because the customer may take decisions grounded on the unspecified deception that the customers would have not shaped otherwise or their choice could have been distinct from the one actually taken (FTC, 1984).

FTC evaluates advertisements for their distinctive content, as well as the phrases, pictures and words which clearly and absolutely portray false or misleading claims. The FTC will examine both clear or explicit and implicit or absolute claims. An explicit or clear claim is a claim which is precisely made in the advert. Example, " Books supply knowledge" an implicit claim is subliminally made. This statement, " Books supply information which string towards knowledge" suggests rather than precisely attributing the book to knowledge. Materiality is vital in figuring out deceptive advertising. Any statement constructed in an advert must contain enough proof to back up the claim and should be connected to relevance.

The FTC stresses that the omission of specific information for an advert can be considered as deceptive since the non-inclusion of material information can string a consumer to arrive at a false or mistaken idea about a service or a product (FTC, 1984).

Example, if a company like Starbucks was to disseminate coupons for a free cup of coffee when a customer purchases one, but does not make it clear that prior purchase should be five dollars at least to redeem the coupon; this

is a clear example of a deceptive act, A previous purchase of five dollars at least to redeem the coupon is a material situation. The omission from the coupon is obviously deceptive and clearly forbidden by FTC. A consumer with the intention of using the coupon has been tricked for the benefit of the company. The consumer is intentionally misled into trusting that any purchase would do and has been taken into the store under false claim. This instance clearly shows why material omission is seen as deceptive by the FTC and is illegal by the law (FTC, 1984).

2. 2 Deception is Persuasion

Not all marketplace persuasion encompasses deception, but every marketplace deception takes place to persuade. In other words deception in the marketplace is persuasion (Miller & Stiff, 1988) and is influential to the persuasive aim of the marketer. It does not happen solely to influence consumer's idea as an aim in itself, nor does it happen to merely amaze, entertain or amuse. Marketplace deception tries to draw attention and establish feelings or moods, but the end result is constantly persuasion. Deception is a main social influence technique and a collection of central persuasion strategies. Any act of persuasion can involve deception. Any act of persuasion can be utilized as a "deception accomplice or collaborator" so that it boosts the realization of a deception passed on somewhere in an assumed statement, campaign or message.

Cialdini, (2001) and Pratkanis, (2008) expatiated on the kinds of persuasion techniques that research implies can boost persuasive effect. They can all be carried out through deception, and all can turn out to be an accomplice or collaborator of, deception, whether or not it is implemented through <https://assignbuster.com/the-nigerian-telecommunication-advertising-marketing-essay/>

deception or genuinely. Cialdini (2001) states that research points out that these persuasion techniques thrive mostly when they induce just System 1 processing by customers, which is when they soar beneath the deception – protection sensor or radar. He singled out six aspects that push people into making use of automatized outline corresponding responses to messages that are persuasive: a feeling of stress generally, being uninterested about the topic, feeling undecided, being in a haste, being unfocused, and being exhausted. This suggests that marketers will attempt to bring about situations differentiated by a number of or all of those aspects or factors when implementing a persuasion approach deceptively or for purposes of deception. While circumstances such as (cognitive fatigue, indifference, distractedness) may happen unintentionally in certain situations, deception drivers will lean towards creating those conditions. However, if these persuasion techniques do hang on creating situations that reduce and repress a person's deception defence ability, then these are essentially manipulative tactics.

2. 3 Deception Tactics

A lot of deception theorists declare that deceptions wholly consist of simulation and dissimulations. Anolli et al. (2002) states that there are four main kinds of deceptions: omission, lying, concealment and simulation. Bear it in mind that these are not equally restricted or exclusive; marketers in reality combine their use. Example, both omission and concealment are utilized to disguise and also aid in deceptive simulation. Johnson et al, (1993) took up a deception typology, from authors (Bell and Whaley, 1991). Johnson et al, (1993) described dissimulation as a strategy that delays

communication or information of a precise portrayal of the core deception. They described simulation as a strategy that promotes an inaccurate portrayal of the core deception. The concept of core deception is useful; it concerns the things the agent of the deception will attempt to distort, or to make a customer bias in their own mind. In the context of marketplace, it should be broadly defined. Obviously, deceptions can take place in the falsification of services and products being shopped by the agent, as well as their characteristics, risks, benefits, usage consequence and so on.

The deception crux or core can however, comprise of deceptive illustrations such as objects, statements and pictures about several components of some persuasion tactics utilized in the message or statement to boost its persuasive influence. It involves distortion of a substitute service and product to the precise one being marketed, example, a contending brand or substitute product type. It comprises of distortions of defective things that could occur if the customer does purchase the product being marketed, and of peculiar things that will occur from making use of the product. The deception crux or core also comprises distortions about the characterized transaction. It comprises of distortions made around things that a scientist or social critic has spoken about or might speak about the disadvantages and risks of the product. It comprises of distortions on how to track and acquire more on the product, and how handlers with distinct levels of capability and knowledge can utilize it securely and effectively under prospective usage conditions.

There are several deception tactics practiced today by marketers in

everyday marketing and in marketing communication such as:

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2. 3. 1 Disguise and Distraction

Disguise and distraction is known to subdue defensive cognitive reaction activities that need effort like counter arguing (Petty & Brock, 1981). In studies on persuasion, researchers normally engage subjects for the whole period of a persuasive message or information; firmly separate the distracter away from the persuasive information or message. Deceitful marketers utilize distraction more sneakily and strategically than that, by manufacturing distractions in an advert campaign that is timed and positioned to interrupt administration of particular discoveries in the ad about disadvantages, limitations and risk. Marketers' distractions are skilfully structured, pretested, and timed strategically to enable the deception of customers. Modern media communication present marketers with a breathtaking collection of attention getting technological abilities; before marketers spread adverts, promotional materials, website on an extensive basis, they research with, modify, pre-test and amend their utilization of these technological abilities to draw attention as proficiently as they can.

2. 3. 2 Omissions

Completely omitting information on a specific risk, disadvantage or limitation, is a common marketplace deception technique (Kardes, Posovac, & Cronley, 2004). Marketers leave out harmful revelations and establish their productions to stop consumers from contemplating on their evaluation criteria or decision making standards, to guarantee that an omission is ignored. Usually marketer's exhibitions give partial omissions or " half-truths". For a long time, people have mentioned a half - truth as an omission mixed among truthful surprises, as a main malicious form of deception,

frequently debating that half – truth is “ the darkest of lies”. To recognize that something vital is not being shown or portrayed, a customer requires having a noticeable and understandable mental pattern of expectancy about what should be unhidden. Strategist in communication obstruct this by reassuring customers into a sense of exigency or proposing that “ being decisive or critical” and taking swift action is superior to thinking and self discipline, and by separating their own advert and resources from those of immediate opposition whose adverts and resources can offer a different model of revelation that render the marketers omission obvious.

2. 3. 3 Language that Misinforms and Shuns Responsibility

A deceptive technique involves plans and methods to avoid the negative aftermath of being exposed and sanctioned. Guerin, (2003) examines research on how language is used by people to avoid negative aftermaths or consequences from what is being said. Strategies in linguistics for avoiding the negative aftermath for making deceitful statements are referred to as disclaimer, hedging, equivocation or mitigation. Guerin debates that avoiding negative aftermath means evading clear challenges. Marketers use unclear or hedging language to attempt avoiding the negative aftermath in the customer’s mind that follow skepticism. Marketers perform this responsively, that is, by awaiting the absolute disbelief on the presentation reliability to happen in the customers mind or to be voiced, (example to a sales representative), and however seek to provide response through some avoidance tactics. A large amount of marketers will attempt to do this preemptively. Guerin, (2003) examines how researches on equivocation, hedges and mitigation have moved on in different social science departments under

diverse names and several grouping techniques or schemes (e. g., Caffi, 1999; Holmes, 1990). Hedges involve presenting proactive “ explanation” or “ justifications” for one’s deceptive acts, separating one’s self from the exhibition and assertion of one’s social solidarity in conjunction with the target. A familiar form of hedging is to make use of modal vocabulary like “ possibly”, “ should”, “ maybe”, “ could”, and quantifiers like “ most likely”, “ a few”. These vocabulary permits a conclusive and positive phrase, to be utilized and then the definitive phrase should be qualified by including imaginable variations to it.

2. 3. 4 Visual and Verbal Distortion

Jointly, blatant verbal lying and blatant visual lying are exceptionally problematic for customers to handle because video and engineering communication technologies have outdone customer self-protection abilities. Verbal lying, is overtly expressing in words something regarding an actual thing or individual in a way that distorts that entity’s actuality. Visual lying is overtly portraying a visual image of an entity that is actually real, in a visually biased way that distorts its physical, obvious reality. The verbal lies of marketers are hard for consumers to deal with because identifying the lie as such is subject to having certain information in memory that signals the depiction as mistaken and fabricated. Technological manufacturing inventions have put consumers in a state where they frequently do not have the required technical information for questioning or trusting something a marketer states concerning a product as untruth. Likewise, technological inventions for perfectly changing visuals put customers in a situation of not being capable of determining for themselves when a particular thing in a

visual representation has been changed except they have word-perfect visual representation in mind of the actuality of that thing (Wheeler, 2002).

Consumers are more reliant for their recognition of visual and verbal lying built on the material of the lie on the forewarnings of other individuals who are further abreast of the reality, and can better sense lies. Marketers can now utilize the dramatically augmented technological ability as a deception means to make perfect changes to genuine visual representations. The formation of any visual representation includes persuasion and clarification. (Wheeler, 2002). Factually, it has constantly included a procedure in which a communicator chooses, highlights and cleans so that the portrayed representation is perfect in appearance than the actual referent. Paintings are conformed representations done over several sittings, stirring or blending together people and objects from various places. Photos and paintings have long shown two people in sync who on no occasion met in person, in a location where they on no occasion were.

2. 3. 5 Deceptive Framing

This strings us into a generally, frequent deceptive family of ploy labelled framing tactics. “ Framing” aggregates to presenting customers with an imperfect and distorted portrayal of a resolution problem that misinforms their opinion and examination of the challenge thus distorting their process of decision making entirely. To frame a purchase decision or evaluation for a customer, marketers show a narrow style of thinking that centres on just a few features of a more compound evaluation problem, attracts attention to the chosen framing of the marketer and states or suggests that the frame portrayed by the marketer is tangible and certainly the only sensible framing

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to make use of. Partial framing includes deliberating on some of the important features or utilization aftermath of a product, only evaluating the marketer's product carefully against some of the possibly practical substitutes and characterizing the losses and threats connected with a product in a distorted and partial or imperfect way (Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998)

2. 4 Deception Screening Devices

There are three methods designed as screening devices for deception in advertising, and they are normative belief method, consumer impression method and expectation screening process but this research is concerned with the consumer impression method discussed below.

2. 4. 1 Consumer Impression Method

This technique developed by (Gardner, 1975) focuses on consumer impressions. This method is not complex and it takes on commonly used copy- testing processes. It could be executed after a brief period of knowledge building acceptable procedures and questionnaires. In this process, consumers are presented with advertisements and then told to express (making use of well designed and managed procedures) what they thought the advertisements conveyed to them. A few questions would be utterly general while other would be specific. For example, it was theorized that an implicit safety demand had been laid that was not supported by product performance. The data gathered from consumer reactions is judged with the genuine claim and fact of the advertisement to find out if the needed qualifications are realized in order to determine whether the total ad is either non deceptive or deceptive.

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CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. 1 Research Philosophy

In line with construing the likely deceptive nature of ad campaigns put out by telecommunications companies in Nigeria, an interpretivist research idea or philosophy is assumed. With regards to (Bryman and Bell 2011) which depicts two philosophies “ positivist” and “ interpretivist”, it is stated that these are the major theoretical research outlook or viewpoint. The term Positivism is the method researchers adopt to formulate hypotheses from present theory and examines them to justify laws while Interpretivism tries to “ comprehend distinctions between human behaviour in our position as social factors” (Saunders et al, 2009). The role of this paper as interpretivist is supported by this research where a deceptive advert campaign can simply be realized subjectively and translated in its social context.

3. 2 Research Approach

With the near scarcity of prior investigations on the existence of the topic in question along with the nature of the study which is interpretative, an inductive and qualitative research method is adopted. When importance is put on in-depth interpretation of why, what and in which situation this phenomenon may happen, then this method is suitable (Carson et al, 2001). This however allows theories to be formulated from research findings in contrast to the method circled in deductive study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Nonetheless the inductive method chooses a bendable inclination with no predescribed theory to examine, suggestions generated from prior conceptions (Holloway, 1997).

Information gotten from qualitative approach is seen to clarify the people's feelings and encounters. In terms of this advertising research, a customer or marketers evaluation of an ad campaign is likely to reveal deceptive traits. This process suggests relative values and intrinsic disposition (Beh, 2009) which can or cannot be evaluated by a quantifying means.

In my opinion, researchers sense that human behaviour is too complex to formulate hypotheses, and establishes that the inductive method would be more helpful in this kind of research as it aids the acquisition of more understanding of the enclosed significance of the telecom ad campaign and its influence on the consumers. In addition, emerging theory after data has been gathered happens to be a satisfactory means to increase knowledge that currently exists (Bryman, 2001).

3. 3 Data Collection Method

For this research a multiple data gathering technique fits the flexible structure of this qualitative research. Moreover, the grouping gives an affluent picture of the research under study (Carson et al, 2001). Two methods would be used to collect data which are qualitative in-depth interview and participant observation.

3. 3. 1 In-depth Interviews

Beh, (2009) states that there is no particular order for selecting methods to fit research aims and objectives for interpretative technique. They are probably altered to comply with new data. According to (Kvale, 1996), the aim of this qualitative interview is to recognize subjects of the world from the theme's viewpoint. With reference to this, semi-structured in- depth

interviews are conducted in person and via email to obtain more information on the strategic use of deception in telecoms ad campaign and its likely influence on consumers.

Six interviews are carried out by email as a result of work scheduling and geographical location as well as given interviewee's time and ease of delivering responses. Open- ended questions are interchanged to promote in- depth responses, in the course of this, researchers direct messages of assistance, as (Kivits, 2005) identifies the significant