

TESTIMONIALS IN TELEVISION ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF SELECT ANTISEPTIC PRODUCTS IN UYO URBAN, AKWA IBOM STATE OF NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The research was to ascertain the influence of testimonials in television advertising on the consumption of select antiseptic products among residents of Uyo Urban of Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria. The products were *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* soap. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the extent and type of influence that testimonials had on the patronage of the select antiseptic products and to ascertain other possible factors that influenced the patronage of these products. To achieve these objectives, the survey method was used for the study. The population of the study was 305, 961 being the population of the residents of Uyo and the sample size was 400, using the Taro Yamane's formula for determining sample size. The instrument used for the study was the questionnaire while the multi-stage sampling method was used to reach the final respondents. The research results revealed that consumers perceived the testifiers of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* soap to be credible and thus developed a favourable attitude towards those products so advertised. However, this positive attitude triggered by testimonials did not necessarily extend to actual purchase in most cases. Patronage tended to be influenced by other factors such as product quality, price, packaging and brand loyalty. Based on the findings, it is the conclusion of this study that testimonials in television advertising do not directly influence the purchase of antiseptic products, but to a large extent aid the consumers to recall the products so advertised and help them to develop a favourable attitude towards the products. It is therefore recommended that the advertisers should not channel all their resources into the advertisement of products, but should also strive to improve product quality and packaging over time.

Key words: Patronage, Experts, Satisfied Users, Celebrity, Endorser, Consumption

1. Introduction

Advertising is a form of marketing communication. It entails the persuasion of an audience or consumer to take some action with respect to products, ideas or services. More commonly, the desired result is to drive consumer behavior with respect to a commercial offering. For these purposes, advertisements often contain both factual information and persuasive messages.

Advertising has been with us for centuries, although it is a lot different from what it was decades ago. In representing the modern practices of advertising, Arens (2006, p. 7) defines advertising as "the structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products (goods, services and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media". Every mass medium is used to deliver these persuasive messages, including radio, movies, magazine, newspapers, video games, the internet, billboards and,

especially, the television, which is a unique medium of advertising, incorporating the elements of sound, picture and motion.

Television advertising, therefore, is a span of television programming produced and paid for by individuals and organizations and which conveys a message typically to market a good, idea, or service. It is usually between 15 and 60 seconds in length. Because of its audio-visual power, television advertising is generally considered the most effective mass marketing format.

As a result of the effectiveness of television and high competition among industrial firms and companies in the marketing of products, firms resort to the use of different advertising techniques, including testimonials. A testimonial entails bringing celebrities or experts or satisfied users to openly acknowledge the effectiveness of a good, idea or service. This is usually thought to be very convincing as the celebrity, expert or satisfied user attests to how others can benefit from the product.

The use of an endorser in advertisement has long been established as one of the strategies advertisers can use to make their products influential and it is also “...a mainstay in advertising” (Vivian, 2009). Testimonials from satisfied consumers can also come in the form of letters that appear in printed advertisements. The letters from long time users praise the good or service and how it has changed their lives for the better. In general, each comment focuses on one specific benefit that a product offers such as saving time, low cost, ease of use or speed of result.

The idea behind testimonial advertising is that the prospective customer should be favourably influenced to try a product when it has been praised by another “impartial” consumer or by a known personality whom the consumer may wish to emulate. The logic underlying testimonial is that if someone testifies that he has used a product and that the product satisfied him, another person would likely be willing to give the product a try.

This study is therefore important to ascertain how television testimonial advertising influences consumers’ choice and patronage of select antiseptic products, namely *Safeguard soap, Dettol and Harpic Toilet cleaner*. Considering the fact that other advertising techniques also influence the patronage and consumption of products, is it possible that consumers of these antiseptic products in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria patronize the products based on television testimonial advertising? Or is it that the patronage of these products is influenced by other factors outside television testimonial advertising? These, hopefully, will be answered in this study.

2. Brief Analysis of *Safeguard Soap, Dettol and Harpic Toilet Cleaner*

i. Safeguard Antiseptic

Safeguard is Procter and Gamble’s (P & G’s) largest global personal care brand. First launched as a bar soap in the United States of America in 1963, it is now available in other product forms such as body wash, liquid hand soap and sanitizer. *Safeguard* is currently sold in more than 15 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America with leadership market share in China and the Philippines.

The brand was launched in Nigeria in November 2011 with the inauguration of a factory at New Home Products Industries Limited (NHPIL), Matori, Lagos. The brand is positioned as a true champion of health brand with the aim of becoming the preferred germ protection antiseptic product for the entire family. Endorsed by the African Medical Association (AFMA), a fact reflected in its advertising campaign and partnering with the Society for Family Health (SFH), the *Safeguard* brand appears to be enjoying massive patronage.

ii. Dettol Antiseptic

Dettol is the trade name for a line of hygiene products manufactured by Reckitt Benckiser (Nigeria) Ltd, 12 Montgomery roads, Yaba, Lagos. *Dettol* has become the generic name for the

liquid antiseptic products category and enjoys 85% market share in the category. The brand is also present in various product forms such as soaps, hand wash, shaving cream, Jelly and plaster.

Over the years, the advertising technique used in the promotion of the brand has been testimonial by celebrities, satisfied users, experts and expert organizations. In Nigeria, the brand is currently endorsed by Kehinde Bankole (Nollywood actress) and the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA). The promotional campaign is centred on educating consumers on the need for protection from germs, while offering solutions to manage the problem of germs wherever and whenever they may occur. The advertisements have been focusing on the role of a mother in protecting her family from germs.

iii. Harpic Toilet Cleaner

Harpic is the brand name of a toilet bowl cleaner launched in England in the 1920s and now marketed by Reckitt Benckiser. *Harpic* was originally invented by Harry Pickup and the product was named after him. *Harpic* is available in about 47 countries and is promoted as a powerful cleaning product.

Harpic advertisements in the United Kingdom from the 1930s used the slogan “cleans round the bend” and the *Harpic* for the experts (2002) advertisement featured Tom Reynolds. In Nigeria, celebrity endorsers have been used in the advertisement of the brand, ranging from Nkem Owoh, Joke Silva and, currently, Chioma Chukwuka and Vera Ephraim. The promotional campaign is on women and how they can keep their toilets clean and looking like new every time with *Harpic* toilet cleaner. The advertising message says that detergent covers up the stains.

Reckitt Benckisser, the manufacturers of *Dettol* and *Harpic*, is the world's no.1 household cleaning product firm which came into being as a result of a 1999 merger between the UK's Reckitt & Colman and the Dutch group, Benckiser.

Area of Study

The study area of this work is Uyo, the capital city of Akwa Ibom State, in the South-eastern tip of Nigeria. Its metropolis sprawls into the adjoining local government areas of Itu, Ibiono Ibom and Uruan Local Government Areas. It has an area of 168km² with a population of 554, 906 people (National Population Commission, 2006). Uyo is bounded on the East by Abak Local Government Area, on the North by Abak, Ikono, Ibiono Ibom and Itu Local Government Areas, on the East by Uruan, Ibesikpo Asutan and Nsit Ibom Local Government Areas and on the South by Etinan and Mkpato Enin Local Government Areas. The population density is 1400/km².

Uyo became a state capital on 23rd September, 1987, the day Akwa Ibom State was created out of the erstwhile Cross River State, as the 21st State of Nigeria. The State lies wholly within the tropics along the South South corner of Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea, and situates on Latitudes 4^o32'1" and 5^o33'1" North and Longitudes 7^o25'1" and 8^o25'1" East. The state is bordered on the East by Cross River State, on the West by Rivers and Abia States, and on the North by Abia and Cross River States and on the South by Atlantic Ocean and the Southermost tip of Cross River State.

3. Statement of the Problem

In recent years business has attracted so much competition that there is great need for carefully designed and constructive messages that could be used to persuade a consumer to become loyal to a brand. Manufacturers of antiseptic products are aware of the ever increasing brand multiplicity and competition in the antiseptic industry and many of these brands use testimonial advertising. Similarly, there seems to be a heavy consumption of antiseptic products. Could it be that the heavy consumption is related to the use of testimonial advertising or has the heavy consumption arisen as a result of other factors?

To this end, one wonders if actually the testimonial creative approach used by most antiseptic brand advertisers can and do influence consumer patronage of the advertised brand. In other words, to what extent does the testimonial creative approach adopted by different brands of antiseptic product influence consumer patronage of same?

4. Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do consumers of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products perceive the testimonial advertising of the products on television to be credible?
2. To what extent do testimonials in television advertising influence the patronage of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products?
3. What kinds of influence does testimonial advertising have on consumer patronage of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products?
4. What are the other possible factors that influence the patronage of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products?

5. Significance of the Study

The study of testimonial in television advertising and consumer patronage of select antiseptic products is very significant as its findings will bring testimonial advertising to the center stage and provide useful data on the influence of testimonials on consumer patronage of select antiseptic products.

The findings would also help advertisers to assess the use of celebrities, experts or satisfied users in their marketing campaigns by ascertaining their appeal and relevance to a brand's image and the testifier's or endorser's influence on consumer patronage.

As Uyo city is a typical Nigerian Society, the findings, it is hoped, can be generalised for respondents in similar cities in Nigeria.

Furthermore, this study is significant to the academic community, since future advertisers and creative agents generally spring out from this community. The findings will add to the existing body of knowledge and also serve as a reference material for future researchers on testimonial advertising.

6. Definition of Terms

The following terms are used operationally in this work.

- i. **Advertisement:** A structured and composed message on antiseptic product paid for on television with the aim of marketing *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic*.
- ii. **Testimonial Advertising:** The technique of advertisement of in which experts, celebrities and satisfied users are made to endorse *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic*.
- iii. **Techniques in Testimonial:** The tools applied in the production of testimonial advertisements on television for *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic*.
- iv. **Consumers:** Individuals in Uyo Urban who buy *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic*.
- v. **Consumption:** This is the usage of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* by residents of Uyo Urban.
- vi. **Products:** These refer to *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* that are purchased for use by residents of Uyo Urban.
- vii. **Credibility:** The attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of the testifiers that would make consumers in Uyo Urban believe them.

- viii. **Testifiers:** These are celebrities, experts and satisfied users who endorse *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* products on television. ‘Testifiers’ is used interchangeably with “endorsers”.

7. Television Advertising

The very first television advertisement appeared on July 1, 1941, during a baseball game on a local New York channel. The ten-second advertisement was on ‘Bulova watches’ and cost a mere four dollars. It completely revolutionized television. Due to the overwhelming success of the Bulova advertisement, other companies began to realize that they needed to jump on board with their marketing as well.

The effects of television advertising upon the viewing public (and the effects of mass media in general) have been the subject of philosophical discourse by such luminaries as Marshall McLuhan. Human beings yearn for community and shared experience which is also why the social media have become such a powerful force. As culture grows and becomes more diverse, television continues to be the means to provide shared experiences.

Television over the years has the power to create and strengthen almost anything. Despite technological advancements such as digital video recorders (DVRs) or the multiple screens, laptops, phones and tablets, it has been observed that people are actually watching television more than ever. Television has held the title of the largest mass medium used for advertising for more than 60 years, and that designation has not been overtaken even with the growth of the internet. Television is an important component of a media plan because of its pervasiveness, impact and targeting abilities (Currie, 2012).

On that strength, good television advertising messages are especially important in today’s costly advertising environment. Anyanwale, Alimi and Anyanbimipe (2005) assert that the relevance of advertising as a promotional strategy depends on its ability to influence consumers not only to purchase, but to continue to purchase and eventually develop brand loyalty. Television advertising is ideal when the advertiser intends to demonstrate the product or service; it offers great flexibility in the fact that one can combine interaction of the sight, sound and motion. These effects can be used to catch the attention of audience members and then reinforce their retention rates by repeating the message using both audio and video. Hence, television advertisement remains the best for testimonial advertising, especially in the advertisement of select antiseptic products, to demonstrate the change that occurs when the products are used or consumed.

McConnell and Brue (2002) state that in order to make rational decisions, consumers need information about product characteristics and prices. Television advertising is a low cost means of providing such information. Baran (2004) adds that television commercials, by virtue of the fact that consumers could see and hear products in action, are different from advertisements in other media. Thus, the ability to demonstrate the product- to do the future test- leads to the unique selling proposition (USP) of television advertising.

8. Advantages of Television Advertising

Television has the intimacy of radio and the believability of personal participation. It has an intimate approach which becomes more appealing and attracts the attention and interest of the people (Currie, 2012). Television is considered to be the king of advertising media. Its advantages include:

- i. **Multi-sensory appeal:** Television has always been able to appeal to multiple senses through its combination of texts, images, sound and motion. While the development of effective television spots requires significant planning and the use of experienced and often expensive, production experts, the value can be very significant as well. It is its multi-

sensory appeal that allows television advertising to remain a viable option for many advertisers.

- ii. **Reach:** One of the benefits of television advertising is its ability to communicate with a very large audience. Television advertising works well to attract attention, generate awareness and establish preference for products. As a result of the broad audience targeted by advertisers – particularly through major television networks – television advertisement provides general rather than very specific messages; hence, advertisers find television as a media tool suitable to reach out to as many as possible.
- iii. **Ability to target different demographic segments:** Despite the large audience reach of television, it is important to note that the ability to target market segments has grown significantly over the years. Even television networks offer a wide range of programming options where advertisements are most likely to be viewed by specific audience segments. With cable television, advertisers can narrowly target specific market segments by placing their advertisements on specific programmes.

9. Drawbacks of Television Advertising

Despite its various advantages, television as a medium of advertising and marketing communication has several disadvantages, especially for smaller advertisers.

i. Cost

Television has the highest absolute cost for any traditional media. Before organisations can buy spots to run their advertisements, they have to pay for production. Setting up an internal advertising department can save money for big companies but many (small) companies use agencies that develop the creative concept and message and they cost huge amount. This is in addition to the cost of airtime.

ii. Fleeting nature of message

Unlike the print media, such as newspapers and magazines, the broadcast media - television and radio - have fleeting messages. A television commercial runs for 30 to 60 seconds and then it is gone. Thus, the advertiser has to repeat the advertisement exposing the target audience to it at least three to six times to ensure recall. This further raises the cost of television advertising.

iii. Waste

Efficiency is the key to effective advertising. Ideally, advertisers want to spend money to deliver a message to an audience that has a high percentage of people in their target market. An advertiser with a narrow target market who runs a television advertisement on a popular show with a broad audience would have to pay for a lot of people outside his target market. Also, a small business in a local community running an advertisement on the local television affiliate means the advertiser pays to reach audience members in neighbouring communities served by that affiliate.

10. Testimonials in Advertising

Testimonial is a written recommendation from an expert or celebrity or satisfied customer affirming the performance, quality and/or value of a good, idea or service. Testimonials are intermediated word of mouth-marketing. Word-of-mouth advertising is one of the most effective ways of calling attention to a product because it comes from people who have used and liked the product. In advertising, a testimonial consists of a person's written or spoken statement extolling the virtues of a good or service.

Bovee and Arens (2002) explain that a testimonial is the use of satisfied customers and celebrities to endorse a product in advertising. These celebrities are often individuals recognized in the society (typically an athlete or an entertainer). Advertisers have attempted to quantify and

qualify the use of celebrities in their marketing campaigns by evaluating their appeal and relevance to a brand's image and the celebrities' influence in consumer buying behaviour.

Testimonials in advertising provide the much needed social proofs to the potential consumer, because it is hard to sing one's own praises and it hardly works when the producer does it. Therefore, in testimonial advertising, the advertiser has a third party saying what he (the advertiser) cannot say about his product.

Reece (2000) asserts that famous people can give the commercial special appeal. The product and the testifier must 'go together'. The viewer or listener must believe that the celebrity has actually used the product and is really expressing his/her own feelings. According to Arens (2006, p. 396), "the true testimonial – where a satisfied user tells how effective the product is – can be highly credible in both television and radio advertising."

Shimps in Khatri (2006) gives a run-down of commercial methods of presentation under the individual-oriented structure. According to Shimp, individual-oriented structures are those in which the emphasis of the commercial is on an individual who is endorsing the product, acting as a spokesperson for the product or shown in association with or consuming the advertised product. These categories include:

- i. **Celebrity Endorser:** The message is endorsed by an individual recognized as a celebrity for his or her accomplishments. The celebrity must express a preference or liking for the product.
- ii. **Spokesperson:** In this type of testimonial, the message is presented by the celebrity in a manner similar to a presentation by a radio announcer or off camera television announcer.
- iii. **Typical Person Endorser:** Here, the focus is on an individual (not a celebrity) who expresses a preference or liking for the product.
- iv. **Personality:** This focuses on an individual who is not verbally endorsing the product or acting as a spokesperson. The primary attention of the commercial is devoted to an individual portrayed in various roles.

According to Reece (2000), there are five different types of testimonials:

- i. **Customers:** Also known as "satisfied users", this is by far the strongest category of testimonials.
- ii. **Celebrities:** Celebrities may not always be as believable as customers because they are paid. They generally increase awareness as the popularity of the celebrity would be transferred to the product brand.
- iii. **Experts:** Testimonials from experts like doctors, engineers, scientists, nutritionists etc help to boost businesses. Even though they might be paid, they are still credible as it would probably work.
- iv. **Experts' Organizations:** Testimonials from experts' organizations such as trade associations, professional bodies, magazines in a relevant field, a chamber of commerce, newsletters etc carry a lot of weight because people believe that their opinion cannot be bought.
- v. **Media:** The media are, perhaps, the most overlooked one. Comments by a national newspaper about a product or featuring a company's press coverage can provide a strong endorsement about a product or company in the minds of the customers. Advertisers also place extra emphasis on media coverage – including placing press clippings on the website. This can increase credibility with advertisers and also lead to subsequent media opportunities when seen by those in public relations.

Considering these typologies, testimonials can come from different sources, but the source to use depends on the product and strategy. Satisfied customers are the best sources of testimonials

because their sincerity is usually persuasive (Arens, 2006). However, this statement cannot downplay on the use of celebrities. For example, in the television advertisement of *Harpic* toilet cleaner, the celebrity endorser – Joke Silva – does not only extol the virtues of the product, but also demonstrates its use. She actually pours the *Harpic* into the toilet bowl, scrubs and then flushes. This engenders believability.

Notwithstanding, celebrity testimonial has challenges. Burke (2002) writes that the credibility of celebrities is damaged for two basic reasons: circumstance and over exposure.

The circumstance has to do with the lifestyle of the celebrity. For example, if the celebrity's image in the society is tarnished or the celebrity diminishes in fame as a result of being convicted in a law court for drug use, rape or/and any other vices, the image of the product will be affected.

Over exposure entails the celebrity endorsing for too many products or ideas. Such celebrities are usually termed opportunists. It is believed that they are endorsing just for the money and thus, the credibility of the testifier is lost.

11. Features of a Good Television Testimonial

Testimonials should always reflect the honest opinions, findings, beliefs or experiences of the endorser. They should not contain any representation which would be deceptive or cannot be substantiated.

The endorsed message need not be phrased in the exact words of the endorser, unless the advertisement affirmatively so represents. However, the endorsement must not be presented out of context in order not to distort in any way the endorser's opinion or experience with the product. An advertiser should use an endorsement of an expert or celebrity only when it has good reason to believe that the endorser continues to subscribe to the views presented.

Also, where the advertisement indicates that the endorser uses the endorsed product, then the endorser must have been a bona fide user of the product as at the time the endorsement was given. Thus, according to Reece (2000), testimonials are to possess the following characteristics:

- i. **Specific benefits of the products and services:** The aim of a testimonial is to build confidence in a prospect to a point where consumers are ready to take actions. People cannot take actions on some vague comment, but if they see a specific benefit of the product or service that is relevant to them, then it will be remembered and most likely acted upon. The customers telling what the product did for them will help others know that the product or service actually works.
- ii. **Should be from someone with whom the audience can relate:** For example, when targeting mothers with children under ten, the testifier should list the ages of her children. The positive body language, voice tones and enthusiasm of a real person talking about a real situation cannot be contrived.
- iii. **Should be credible:** The first name, last name and location of the testifier or endorser should be included, if possible. This way, the audience would know that the testimonial came from real people who used what they endorsed.

There are two potential means of acquiring the content (testimonials): one is for the advertiser and client to prepare a script in advance, and for them to read this off and autocue when recording. However, the most useful content and dynamic testimonials come when the provider is asked questions. This technique generates spontaneity and increases the credibility of the testimonial, as the viewer sees the testifiers' emotional reaction while revealing the experience. It doesn't look rehearsed or overly polished, and viewers are more likely to associate with the provider.

- iv. **Should be comparative:** It is important to choose testimonials that compare the endorsed product with a product comparable to it. If the testimonial is focused on a problem that a viewer has, then the viewer would be guided through a solution and the outcome.
- v. **A good testimonial is concise:** Most consumers do not have the patience to sit and watch testimonials that last for ten minutes. In fact, with this length, it is nigh on impossible to retain the viewer's interest for the entire duration of the testimonial advertising on television. Therefore, the testimonial should last for between 30 seconds and one-minute in duration. This will deliver the most impact. To maximize the impact during this time, the content needs to be clear, concise and compelling.
In all these, consideration must be given to the environment in which the advertiser operates. Reece (2000) also provides basic rules for testimonial application:
 - i. **Avoid over-editing:** Testimonials work best when they are in 'real' language. Those small language quirks help the audience connect and demonstrate they are real.
 - ii. **Use testimonials that fit:** Appropriate testimonials should be placed along with a particular point that the advertiser is trying to make.
 - iii. **Adjust objectives:** If a prospective customer discovers that another customer's worries have been proven groundless, the person would be more confident to make purchase.
 - iv. **Do not use fake testimonials:** In a bid to sell products, do not use fake testimonials. While testimonials are crucial, it is not worth the risk to fake them.
 - v. **Encourage specifics:** Rather than, "we saw a big improvement", the endorser should be made to state what the improvement was.

12. Concepts Underlying Testimonial Application

Okorie and Aderogba (2011) expatiate on the concepts that explain the function and importance of testimonial:

i. Source credibility

Source credibility suggests that the effectiveness of a message depends on the "expertness" and "trustworthiness" of the source. The central goal of advertising is the persuasion by the source. In order to convince the target audience of the attractiveness of the company's brand, the credibility of the testifier is of essence.

Researchers and scholars in marketing communication have identified three components of credibility: knowledge or expertise, trustworthiness and appearance or attractiveness (Baker and Churchill, 1977).

ii Transfer of meaning

The effectiveness of the testifier depends on the meaning he/she is bringing to the endorsement process of the brand (McCracken, 1989). Individuals are full of different meanings emanating from age, gender, lifestyle etc. Thus, it is evident that testifiers convey not one but a variety of meanings.

First, the meaning associated with the testifier makes the testifier the endorser of the brand. Thus, the meaning attributed to the celebrity becomes associated with the brand in the minds of the consumers. Secondly, in the consumption process the consumer acquires the brand meaning. The third stage of the model shows the importance of the consumer in the endorsement process. For example, Kemi Bankole, the celebrity endorsing *Dettol*, has acquired a cultural meaning of sophistication and charisma, homeliness and attitude. This meaning is then transferred to *Dettol*, which she endorses.

i. Match up hypothesis

The match up hypothesis suggests that the effectiveness of an endorsement depends on the existence of a fit between the endorser and the endorser brand (Khatri, 2006). Thus, if there is no match between the celebrity or testifier and the brand, the effectiveness of the advertisement is not guaranteed. For example, *Guinness Extra Smooth* refused to renew the endorsement contract with 2face Idibia due to the latter's sexual escapades for fear that it may have negative effects on its brand and ultimately affect the brand's credibility (Durojaiye, 2009).

13. Review of studies

Over the years, various studies have been carried out in a bid to determine the influence of testimonials in advertising on consumer patronage. Some of these studies are reviewed below:

Study 1: Osei, Appiah (2007). Typical User Testimonial Advertisement on Black and White Browsers' Evaluation of Producers on Commercial Websites. Do they really work? *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 47, Ohio State University.

In this study, 200 black and white undergraduate and graduate students (137 blacks and 123 whites; aged 18-34, median age 21) from a large public Midwestern university participated in the study. Research showed that choosing the "right" endorser for an advertisement is a necessary and sufficient condition for endorsement effectiveness at least for black browsers. According to Appiah, although the race of the product endorser has tentatively no effect on white browsers, black endorsers are the appropriate characters to use when targeting black audiences with typical user testimonials.

The findings demonstrated that black endorsers positively influenced black browsers' responses while also demonstrating that white character testimonials on a site are no more effective than a site without testimonials. In particular, the result revealed that black browsers identified more strongly with black character testimonials and are more likely to believe a site was targeting them when the site contained black testimonials and recalled more products information which in turn leads to patronage.

Study 2: Dix, Steve (2009). Sports Celebrity Influence on Young Adult Consumers. Available at [http://www. SteveDix@cbscurtin.edu.au](http://www.SteveDix@cbscurtin.edu.au). Accessed November 4, 2013.

According to Dix, sports celebrities can be perceived as role models and influence young adult consumers' purchase and behavioural intentions. Sample was drawn from students at a large university in Western Australia and a total of 249 students voluntarily participated in the survey. The usable response from 207 students amounted to 83% response rate.

The result this study shows that a celebrity athlete-endorser has a positive influence on young adult's product switching behaviour, complaint behavior, positive word of mouth, brand loyalty. This suggests that celebrity athletes' endorsers have an impact on young adults' decision to switch brands, their tendency to talk about brands in a positive manner and their inclination to complain about the advertised products.

Study 3: Ogar, Veronica Imaji (2011). The influence of testimonial in television advertisement on consumers: A study of elephant blue detergent. An unpublished B.A. Project submitted to the Department of Mass Communication, Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar.

Ogar attempted to ascertain whether the use of testimonial by "Chief Zebrudaya" had had any effect on consumers buying habit of *Elephant Blue Detergent*. Using the survey method, a total

of 200 respondents participated in the study. Out of the 197 respondents who returned the completed questionnaire, 67 (34.0%) were females and 130 (65.99%) were males.

Based on the study, a total of 136 (69%) respondents were interested in the personality used and this prompted them to make purchases while 61 (30.97%) respondents made purchases because of the product quality and not the personality used. Furthermore, it was found that 197 (93.40%) respondents correctly identified Chief Zebrudaya as the personality in *Elephant Blue Detergent* advertisement. The result shows that the use of personalities in the advertisement of *Elephant Blue Detergent* influences cognitive recall of the product and thus, patronage.

14. Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study was hinged on the following theories:

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) was propounded by R. E. Petty and J. T. Cacioppo in 1986. The model states that there are two routes - the central route and the peripheral route in a communication process (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). The central route is involved when the receiver actively processes the information and is persuaded by the rationality of the arguments. The peripheral route is involved when the receiver does not expend the cognitive energy to evaluate the arguments and process the information in the messages but is guided more by peripheral cues. These cues can include source credibility, the style and the format of the message, the mood of the receiver and so forth.

With the central route, persuasion is most likely to occur when the receiver is led to have predominantly favourable thoughts about the advocated position. Two factors are important in leading the receiver to have either favourable or unfavourable thoughts. The first is the agreement between the receiver's initial position and the recommended position. The second factor is the strength of the argument. The stronger or more carefully defined the argument, the more likely it is that the receiver will be favourably disposed to the message.

Under the peripheral route, persuasion will not depend on thoughtful consideration of the message but on the receiver's use of simple decision rules or heuristics. These principles are activated by cues in the persuasion situation. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the three major heuristics are credibility, liking and consensus.

Elaboration Likelihood Model emphasizes the importance of understanding audience members before creating a persuasive message. Thus, using the central route, the advertisers must make sure that the testifier's or endorser's story or message is very factual and convincing. Also, using the peripheral routes the testifier used must be credible and one whom the audience like, especially in the case of celebrity endorsements.

Elaboration Likelihood Model is relevant to this research as it gives some insight into the process underlying advertising effectiveness through the principles inherent in the theory. The two cues underlying the theory (central and peripheral routes) will help determine the patterns of subjectivity employed by consumers in determining their attitudes towards an advertisement.

Likewise, Elaboration Likelihood Model helps to "describe the process that results from a motivational state" (Bittner and Obermiller, 1985, p 421). According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), Elaboration Likelihood Model has important implications for advertising in that different kinds of appeals may be effective under different kinds of conditions in different kinds of audiences.

The Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Propounded by Leon Festinger in 1957, the cognitive dissonance theory holds that if a person has cognitions (thoughts) about himself or his environment that are inconsistent with each other, that is, if one cognition (thought) implies the opposite of the other, a state of dissonance exists.

Also, it states that the state of dissonance is uncomfortable because it arouses psychological tension, and therefore attempts are made to reduce it by changing either or both cognition or by adding new cognitions.

The cognitive dissonance theory is a relatively straight forward social psychology theory which replaces previous conditioning or reinforcement theories by viewing individuals as more purposeful decision makers. In a competitive market, consumers usually have two or more choices when it comes to selecting products and services. A consumer may use a particular product because he or she believes the advertising for that product which claims that the product is the most effective of its kind in the job that it does.

The consumer may see a competitor's advertisement that seems to prove that this competitive product is better. This creates dissonance. The consumer must now relieve the uncomfortable feeling that the dissonance brings about and will often do so by switching brands. The theory acts as a double edged sword, though, because while advertisers want to create dissonance for non-users of their products, they do not want to create it for those who do use their product.

Testimonial advertising is a viable technique an advertiser can use to reduce cognitive dissonance in the minds of potential consumers and create balance. By using advertising messages that highlight other customers' satisfaction and positive experiences with the product, an advertiser can reiterate that his product is a good choice. Also, the use of celebrity or expert who is liked and adjudged by the target market to be credible would help reduce dissonance and increase patronage and brand loyalty.

15. Research Methodology

The research technique adopted for this study was the survey. The survey method was considered appropriate since the views of consumers of *Dettol*, *Harpic* and *Safeguard* formed the source of data for the study. The questionnaire was the measuring instrument.

The population of the study comprised all the residents of Uyo urban. According to the National Population Commission, the 2014 estimated population of Uyo urban is 305,961. Using the Taro Yamane's formula for determining the sample size, the sample was 400.

Employing the multi-stage sampling, the researcher made use of two sampling methods at the different stages. At the first stage, cluster sampling was used. Uyo urban was divided into eight clusters, with each cluster representing the different axes in Uyo urban as shown below:

Table A: Clusters and Respondents

Cluster	Sample size
Wellington Bassey Way Cluster	50
Aka Road Cluster	50
Itam Cluster	50
Federal Housing Estate Cluster	50
Ewet Housing Estate Cluster	50
Osongama Housing Estate Cluster	50
Shelter Afrique and extension cluster	50
UNIUYO cluster	50
Total	400

To reach the final sample, the researcher adopted the available sample. Thus, the first 50 people in each cluster that met the criteria of being respondents were administered the questionnaire.

Data for this study were collected personally by the researchers by administering the questionnaire on the subjects in offices, homes, churches and other informal gatherings. The exercise lasted for three weeks. The researchers took out time to explain to the respondents when necessary, and in cases where respondents were not able to complete the questionnaire immediately, a date was agreed upon for the researchers to return and pick it up.

16. The Findings

All the 400 copies of the questionnaire administered were appropriately completed and returned. Of the 400 respondents, 159 (40%) were male while 241 (60%) were female.

Similarly, 48% respondents fell between the ages of 16 and 25; 29% were in the age-range of 26 and 35; 16% were between the ages of 36 and 45, while 7% respondents fell between the ages of 45 and above.

On occupation, students constituted a greater number of respondents with 46%. Subjects who were unemployed were 10%; those who were employed made up 19% of the sample while the self-employed were 25%.

On exposure to advertisement of the three products, 283 respondents said they were exposed to *Harpic* advertisements; this represented 59% of the respondents. Seventy one percent of the respondents were exposed to *Dettol* advertisements while 45% respondents were exposed to *Safeguard* advertisements.

Table i: Respondents' ability to identify testifiers

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	307	77
No	93	23
Total	400	100

Seventy seven percent of the respondents were able to identify the celebrities and experts used in the advertisements of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* soap. However, 23% of the respondents were not able to identify the testifiers used.

Since 77% respondents were able to identify the testifiers in the advertisements, these respondents were then asked to rate the credibility of the testifiers.

Table ii: Credibility rating of testifiers in select antiseptic products

Rating	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high	45	15
High	166	54
Average	84	27
Low	3	1
Very low	9	3
Total	307	100

Table ii shows that 15% of the respondents rated the testifiers' credibility very high, 54% rated high, 27% rated average, 1% rated low, while 3% of the respondents rated the testifiers' credibility very low.

Table iii: Testimonials aid in product recall

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	295	74
No	105	26
Total	400	100

Does testimonial aid in product recall? Data in Table iii indicate that 74% of the respondents said that the use of testimonials helped them in product recall, while 26% of the respondents said it did not.

Table iv: Extent that testimonials aid in product recall

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	73	25
Regularly	72	24
Occasionally	141	48
Rarely	9	3
Total	295	100

Table ii indicates that 25% of the respondents were always aided by such advertisements to recall these antiseptic products, 24% were aided regularly, and 48% were aided occasionally while 3% of the respondents were rarely aided. This suggests that testimonials in television advertising help people to recall the products advertised. Testimonials may aid in the recall of the product so advertised, yet they do not significantly influence product patronage.

Table v: Testimonials influence product patronage

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	168	42
No	232	58
Total	400	100

Table v: Extent that testimonials influence product patronage

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	33	19
Regularly	57	34
Occasionally	75	45
Rarely	3	2
Total	168	100

Table iii shows that of the 168 respondents who said they were influenced by testimonials in their purchase of antiseptic products, 19% were always influenced; 34% were influenced regularly, 45% occasionally, while 2% of the respondents were rarely influenced.

Table vii: Kinds of influence testimonials have on respondents

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Actual purchase	84	21
Positive attitude	207	52
Dislike	1	0
Indifference	108	27
Total	295	100

Table viii: Other factors that influence patronage

Factor	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Product quality	195	49
Price	102	26
Packaging	70	17
Brand loyalty	33	8
Total	400	100

Responses in Table iv indicates that product quality, price, packaging and brand loyalty influence the patronage of antiseptic products 49%, 26%, 17% and 8% respectively.

17. Discussion of findings

Research Question 1

To what extent do consumers of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products perceive the testimonial advertising of the products on television to be credible?

The answer to Research Question 1 is found in Table ii. The data indicate that the respondents perceive testimonials in television advertising to be highly credible in that they believe that the testifiers being satisfied users, experts and celebrities, are telling the truth. Consequently, they (the consumers) accept the testimony of the satisfied users, celebrities or experts.

This implies that the choice of Chioma Chukwuma and Vera Ephraim by the advertisers of *Harpic*, Kemi Bankole and the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) by advertisers of *Dettol* as well as the African Medical Association (AFMA) and the Society for Family Health (SFH) by advertisers of *Safeguard* is a plus to the products. According to McCracken (1989), the effectiveness of the testifier (celebrity, expert or satisfied user) depends on the credibility he/she brings to the endorsement process. Thus, the credibility attributed to the testifier becomes associated with the products in the minds of the consumers after exposure. In order to convince the target audience of the attractiveness of the product, the credibility of the testifier is of essence.

If a person is unable to elaborate on a message extensively, going by the Elaboration Likelihood Theory, then such may still be persuaded by factors that have nothing to do with the actual content of the message itself (Moore, 2001). This emphasizes on the high credibility of the testifier (satisfied user, expert and celebrity). In the peripheral route, people rely on cues such as source attractiveness, perceived credibility of the source and message length (Petty and Cacioppo, 2006).

In relation to the cognitive dissonance theory by Leon Festinger, people go through a cognitive process when they evaluate messages. This cognitive evaluation includes an evaluation of source credibility attributes. The motives of the audience to accept advertising messages are higher when the testifier's credibility is high. According to Khatri (2006), high credibility source prompts less counter argument on the part of the receiver. Thus, the more credibility a receiver ascribes to a

testifier (satisfied user, expert or celebrity), the more credibility the same receiver will ascribe to a message from that source.

Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that advertisers of antiseptic products in Nigeria are using testifiers with high credibility. The use of women (celebrities and satisfied users) capable of taking care of the home front as well as doctors and expert organizations, speaks expertise and trustworthiness – the core attributes of credibility.

Research Question 2

To what extent do testimonials in television advertising influence the patronage of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products?

The findings on Table v indicate that the majority of the respondents are not influenced by testimonials to patronize antiseptic products. Tables iii and iv, however, indicate that the use of testifiers (celebrities, experts, and satisfied users) aids consumers in product recall.

Although product recall is important in the purchasing process, it does not constitute the actual purchasing which is what advertisers actually desire. Much as it is necessary for consumers to recall products through advertisements, the recall may amount to nothingness if the purchases are not made.

However, based on the low marginal difference of 16% between respondents' influenced and those not influenced, the researchers decided to distribute the respondents according to gender to ascertain if gender difference has a role to play. The result reveals that male respondents are more influenced by testifiers of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* than female respondent. Testimonials by female celebrities are bound to influence the male population more while testimonials by male celebrities influence the female population more.

As opposed to past studies reviewed in the course of this work, the respondents are not influenced to patronize the antiseptic products as a result of testimonials given by celebrities, experts and satisfied users. This is supported by the postulations of Petty and Cacioppo that there are two routes to persuasion in the communication process. Based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (in relation to this study), consumers of antiseptic products actively process the information in advertisements through the central route and are persuaded to purchase by the rationality of the arguments and not always as a result of peripheral cues.

From the findings, the testifiers of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* can be said to be credible based on the three core attributes of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness. This credibility is then transferred to the product based on the meaning transfer model. However, these testimonials do not wholly influence them to patronize the antiseptic products. This means that there are other factors which influence consumer patronage aside from testimonials in television advertisements of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard*.

Research Question 3

What kinds of influence does testimonial advertising have on consumer patronage of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products?

Testimonials in television advertising elicit different kinds of influence in the consumers. Based on the data presented in Table iii, respondents state that testimonials in television advertising help them to develop a positive attitude towards the antiseptic products. Although, testimonials in television advertising may not always be successful in eliciting actual purchase in consumers, it is successful in triggering positive attitude towards the product.

This result is validated by the findings of Dix (2009), that “celebrity athlete endorsers have an impact on young adults” tendency to talk about brands in a positive manner. Also, Adeyanju (2012) affirms that celebrity endorsement helps to trigger acceptability of the product.

The use of celebrities, experts and satisfied users in the advertisements of antiseptic products help the consumers to develop a positive attitude towards the products which in turn leads to product recall. This positive attitude towards the product is usually as result of transferred liking for the source or testifier to the product.

Based on the cognitive dissonance theory, consumers usually have two or more choices when it comes to selecting products and services. In the market place, there are other products in the same class with *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* soap competing for patronage. The use of testimonials helps the consumers to develop a positive attitude towards the product brand which helps to eliminate cognitive dissonance in the minds of the consumers.

In as much as testimonials in television advertising may not always be successful in influencing consumer patronage of the *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard*, it has, to a large extent, helped the consumers to develop a positive attitude towards the product which in turn leads to product recall. This means that when antiseptic products are endorsed by celebrities, experts or satisfied users, consumers tend to like and recall the products. Thus, when evaluating products during purchase decisions, he/she is bound to recall this product and after due evaluation may purchase the product.

Research Question 4

What are the other possible factors that influence the patronage of *Safeguard*, *Dettol* and *Harpic* antiseptic products?

The answer to Research Question 4 is found in Table vii. The findings indicate that different factors propel different individuals to patronize *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* aside testimonials from celebrities, experts and satisfied users. The majority of the respondents are most influenced by product quality which lends credence to the argument that advertising can only sell a bad product once. Other factors which influence the patronage of the antiseptic products are price, packaging and brand.

Consequently an advertiser must have in mind the demographics of the target market such as gender, age-range, occupation and even the psychographic composition to be able to position the product in a way that would influence patronage. A research by Martin, Wentzel and Tomczak (2008) found that the effectiveness of testimonials depends on the degree that consumers are influenced by normative pressure and the quality of the product features highlighted.

This result is also supported by the findings of Adeyanju (2012) that testimonials alone do not influence patronage or acceptability of the product but the incorporating of various intermingling factors such as music and graphics playing complementary roles. Based on the uses and gratifications theory by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, the audience are conceived as active, as they selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain media messages on the basis of their needs, beliefs, satisfaction etc.

Thus, the consumers of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* soap do not neglect other antiseptic products because the three products under study are advertised by celebrities, experts or satisfied users. Rather, they patronize after evaluating other complementary factors such as the effectiveness of the product (product quality), their financial buoyancy (price), general outlook (packaging) and being accustomed to the product (brand loyalty).

18. Summary of Findings

This study ascertained the influence of testimonials on consumer patronage of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* soap. The findings of the study were as follows:

- i. The consumers of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* antiseptic products perceive the testifiers of these products to be highly credible. The credibility of the testifiers is thus transferred to the product brands.
- ii. The consumers of *Harpic*, *Dettol* and *Safeguard* antiseptic products are not wholly influenced by testimonials to patronize these products, but are aided to recall products so endorsed.
- iii. Although testimonials in television advertising may not always be successful in eliciting actual purchase by consumers, they are successful in triggering a positive attitude towards the product. This positive attitude, depending on the prevailing circumstances, can lead to patronage.
- iv. The majority of the respondents are most influenced by product quality, and less from testimonials in television advertising. Other factors that influence patronage include price, packaging and brand loyalty.

19. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that testimonials in television advertising do not directly influence the consumption of antiseptic products but to a large extent aid the consumers to recall the products so advertised and make them to develop a favourable attitude towards the products.

It is further concluded from the findings of the study that testimonials alone do not influence consumer patronage. Other incorporating factors such as product quality, price, packaging and brand loyalty also influence the patronage of these products.

20. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- i. The main criteria for the selection of endorsement are: credibility, attractiveness and match up which are important for the successful advertisement. Thus, it is recommended that advertisers should consistently use them over time to create the link between the brand and the testifier. Advertisers should not channel all their resources into the advertisements of products but should also strive to improve product quality, price and packaging over time.
- ii. From the study, the gender of the testifier also has a role to play in influencing the consumers to patronize. Thus, proper market survey should be undertaken to ascertain the demographic variables of the target consumers before selecting the testifiers to be used.

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