

## **ADVERTISING INDIGENOUS HERBAL PRODUCTS: A CASE OF FOUR HERBAL COMPANIES IN THE SWEDRU MUNICIPALITY, GHANA**

**Joseph Yaw Atombo-Mensah & Abena Abokoma Asemanyi**  
University Of Education, Winneba, Ghana

---

**ABSTRACT:** *This study looks at Advertising of indigenous herbal products using Swedru Municipality as a case study. The research was designed to examine the extent to which advertising tools are used to reach consumers with herbal products and how consumers respond to these tools. Qualitative content analysis was employed for the study. The Methodology for the study dealt with the sample chosen and the research instruments used. A sample of thirty-two (32) respondents was chosen for the study. In-depth interviews and documents were the research instruments used. Based on the outlined objectives, it was found out that advertisement is one of the major communication tools that can influence the buying attitudes of consumers. The study was able to establish that advertisements of herbal products should be done frequently with appropriate advertising tools and persuasive messages for the fact that it draws consumers' attention to the products, thereby giving market power to the firm. It is therefore very important for the herbal firm to fully focus on effective advertising tools like radio, television, outdoor and other traditional forms to advertise the herbal products because advertising is a powerful means for creating awareness and positive perception in the minds of consumers.*

**KEYWORDS:** Indigenous herbal products, advertising, Ghana

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Advertising in diverse ways has helped many indigenous herbal producers in some countries to reach the level of contemporary distribution through the use of advertising tools (Arnes, 1994). Over the past few periods, companies around the world achieved the art of mass marketing or selling highly standardized products to masses of customers. In the process, they developed effective mass-media advertising techniques to support their mass-marketing strategies (Kotler, 2009).

In Ghana, marketing as a tool has raised some Ghanaian products into the international level and therefore creating a chance for the organization to introduce many new products into the country while other made-in Ghana products are not making head way in the marketing sectors. In spite of this, consumers are being exposed to a greater variety of marketing communications from different sources. Moreover, customers do not distinguish between message sources the way marketers do. In the consumer's mind, advertising messages from different media such as television, magazines, or online sources blur into one.

However, there are many factors advertisers may consider when introducing a new brand of product into the market. These considerations may differ from either producer to producer or advertisers to advertisers depending upon the environment. These may include the type of product need to be advertised, the demand of the consumers, means by which the product gets to the market and consumers, availability of quality raw materials and skilled labour.

Again, many questions may also contradict in the mind of the producer: “How can we reach our customers?” but also “How can we find ways to let our customers reach us?” With these, the communications process should start with an assessment of all the potential interactions that target customers may have with the product and the company. For example, someone purchasing a new computer may talk with others, see television commercials, read articles and advert in newspapers and magazines and try out computers in the store. Marketers must assess the influence that each of these communications experiences will have at different stages of the buying process. This understanding will help them allocate their communication strategies more efficiently and effectively. According to Vakratsas and Ambler (1999), an effective marketing communication process is concerned with the identifications of target audience, determination of the communication objectives, designing of the message content, selecting the means for communication, defining the media mix, budget and priorities and measuring the effectiveness of effort.

Achumba and Osuagwu (1994) posit that marketing is important for the success of any organization, whether service or product oriented. Clarke (2006) confirmed that marketing performance is central to success in today’s fast moving competitive markets, and measuring marketing performance is critical to manage it effectively. The process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling the product or service has become complex in recent times due to globalization. There is also the need to exceed the expectation of customers since satisfied customers are the priority of the organization (Kotler, 2000). As a result of this, organizations who are static in promoting their products through one way marketing communication will realize the need to institute strategies that will help them gain an in depth understanding of the market, particularly with regards to their competitors and customers. Organizations will achieve this objective effectively by considering the total marketing environment and the kind of marketing communication tool to use in the distribution of made-in Ghana Herbal product.

In Ghana, there are number of production firms which range from production of different consumable products, domestic items, brewery products and herbal products just to mention few. All these products will not be patronized effectively without marketing communication. Some advertisers in Ghana have also recognized few ways of projecting advert and now incorporate various advertising elements to improve their market outreach or coverage, new product ratio, price positioning, competitive orientation to survive and grow. Although marketing tools plays a vital role in the performance of products distribution, many research efforts in the area of marketing practices in developing economies have emphasized on macro issues and the management structure of an organization as the measure of performance in terms of market share, growth, efficiency and well-being of consumers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most of the works done in product marketing have concentrated on the mainstream businesses such as pharmaceutical industries, brewery industries, and cosmetic products in Ghana. Little is known about challenges that confront producers of indigenous herbal products on how they commercialize their products. Therefore, the researchers take interest to investigate how indigenous herbal producers and marketers blend the advertising tools to reach their consumers. As pertains in most developing countries, indigenous Ghanaian marketers experience lack of trained manpower, poor infrastructural development, lack of adequate or sufficient capital, and also face intense competition from superior foreign companies (Li, Edwards & Lee, 2000). The lack of competence and appreciation for promotion was noted by Ogechukwu and Latinwo (2010), in the case of Nigeria, where they noted lack of understanding, the need for, and the manner of application of the marketing concept. Kotler (2005) also noted that the shift from mass marketing to targeted marketing, with its corresponding use of a richer mixture of communication channels and promotion tools, poses a problem for marketers. According to Clow and Baack (2007), producers and marketers do not take into consideration the brand of products that satisfies the consumers. Schultz (1993) is of the view that customers do not “distinguish between message sources the way marketers do”.

According to Teixeira (2014), attention is an important material for measuring effective advertising. He moves on by saying that consumer attention can only be gained when effective advertising tools are used orderly. Belch and Belch (2007) argue that positioning of advertisements on media is precise and well-targeted to consumer segments which drive higher response among listeners. In a study of productions, Allan (2014) examined the impact of media on consumable products, cosmetics, domestic items, and other brewery products. He researched what kind of advertising media is effective for advertising brewery products, cosmetics and domestic items.

Resnik and Stern (1998) also noted that few studies attempt to distinguish informative effects from persuasive effects in advertising. Scholars and researchers have come up with theories in their attempt to explain how advertising messages are received, processed and acted on by their target audience (Belch and Belch, 2001 and Shimp, 2000). However, this study seeks to fill the gap created by finding out the kind of effective advertising tools used to advertise indigenous herbal products and how consumers are reached with these products.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Examine the advertising tools used by marketers of indigenous herbal products.
2. Identify how consumers respond to the advertising tools used.

### **Research Questions**

On the basis of the research problem, the following research questions are to be addressed:

1. What are the advertising tools used by marketers of indigenous herbal products?
2. How do consumers respond to the advertising tools used?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Advertising**

Advertising is the immediate promotional tool usually use by marketers to persuade their target customers (Korkeamaki, 2014). It is communication between the seller and the buyer through different media such as newspapers, flyers, magazines, internet, television, radio and outdoor media such as billboards and banners. The aim of advertising is to create awareness and establish the product in the mind of customers. Advertiser has its goal of communicating some specific message to targeted group and the success of the product is measured by how well that message is conveyed (Gerber, Terblanche-Smit & Crommelin, 2004).

### **Features of Advertising**

Advertising consists of all activities presenting to a group of non-personal, oral or visual, openly sponsored identified message regardless of a product, service, or idea. The message, called an advertisement, is disseminated through one or more media and is paid for by an identified sponsor. Stanton (2011) noted the following features of advertising: provides information, paid communication, non-personal presentation, publicity, persuasion, target oriented, art, science and profession, the element of marketing mix and creativity.

### **Functions of Advertising**

Advertising facilitates large-scale marketing. It is a medium of mass communication. Manufacturers supply information about new products through it. The fact that companies spend millions of cedis on it through TV, radio, internet, and newspapers, indicate its benefits in sales promotion (Wells et al 2003). Advertising is within the scope of a promotion, which is one element in the marketing mix. It is getting popularity in presenting high competitive and consumer-oriented marketing. The real objective of advertising is effective communication between producers and consumers. The following are the main functions of advertising as noted by Wells et al (2003): preparing ground for new product, creation of demand, facing the competition, creating or enhancing goodwill, informing the changes to the customers, neutralising competitor's advertising and barring new entrants.

### **Different Media Alternatives**

This table summarises the advantages and disadvantages of advertising media

**Table: 1**

<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
Television	Good mass-market coverage; low cost per exposure; combines sight, sound, motion; appealing to the sense.	High cost to prepare a run ads; short exposure time and perishable message difficult to convey complex information.
Radio	Good local acceptance; high geographic and demographic selectivity; low cost; can use sound, humour.	No visual excitement; short exposure message; difficult to convey complex information.
Newspapers	Flexibility, timeliness, good local market coverage, broad acceptability; high believability.	Short life span, poor production and quality, can't target specific audiences, can't control ad position on page.
Outdoor	Flexibility; high repeat exposure; low cost; low message competition; good positional selectivity.	Little audience selectively, message must be short and simple creative limitations.
Internet	High selectivity, low cost, immediacy, interactive capabilities through video and audio.	Small, demographically skewed audience, relatively low impact, audience control exposure.

Source: Williams F. Arens Contemporary advertising, 7th edition pg. 268

### **THE AIDAS MODEL**

The study adopted the Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action and Satisfaction (The AIDAS Model) process of Advertising as the theory for this research. According to Mackay (2005), several advertising formulas are in existence today but one of the most commonly used is the acronym AIDAS which means Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action and Satisfaction. This refers to specific techniques necessary to implement when creating an advert. The various stages in buying process help consumers to know which products he or she should go for. Again, he explains the acronym AIDAS where Awareness deals with getting the attention of the target customers. Cunningham (1993) also view awareness as something used to attract the reader's or viewer's attention. For instance in print advert, it might be a photograph or illustration, bold type, white space around the art and words of the advert that may create awareness to customers. Mackay (2005) indicates Interest in the field of advert as creating concern in the product by giving product information and how to help satisfy the needs and wants of the individual. The third stage of the process in advertising is Desire. Creating desire in the customer to possess a product is an important aspect in advertising. Therefore this is done by emphasizing the benefits of the product and how it will satisfy the needs and wants. Demand is another stage of the AIDAS model. This is to convince customers to make a purchase. The final stage of the model is satisfaction. According to Mackay, this is where the customer buys the product and becomes satisfied with the product.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Approach and Design**

Qualitative Research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). To achieve this, the researcher uses a qualitative research method. The study therefore thrives on qualitative research techniques to investigate how indigenous herbal producers and marketers blend the advertising tools to reach their consumers. A research design is a strategy, a plan, and a structure of conducting a research project (Patil, 2013). According to Yin (2009) the case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

### **Sampling Strategy and Size**

The management and the workers of four companies and twenty consumers of the herbal products were purposively sampled for the study. The non-probability sampling method is helpful when working with small samples such as a case study where the case has to be particularly informative (Saunders, 2007). The sample size for the research was thirty-two (32) for both marketers and consumers. The researcher selected three (3) workers from each company and twenty (20) consumers.

### **Data Collection Instrument and Analysis**

The data collection instruments employed in this study were in-depth interviews. According to Yin (2009), interviews, which are guided conversations, are one of the most important sources of case study information because it focuses directly on case topics (target and insightful). In this study, interviews were used, with a semi structured interview technique. This enables the researcher to investigate the “what”, “why” and “how” of a problem. Data collected through the interview guide were analysed using thematic analysis approach. According to Brawn and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis is defined as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The interview analysis is limited to the responses gathered from thirty-two (32) respondents according to its relevance to the research questions. The subject for the study is divided into sub-headings to throw more light on questions asked on field. The first part deals with management and staff of the four Herbal firms that is (Lucky Herbals, Obedey Herbals, Adom Wura Herbals and Nyamenaye Herbals) while the second part deals with consumers of indigenous herbal products.

### **Research Question 1: What are the advertising tools used by marketers?**

In approaching the first research question, a thematic analysis was done on twenty four herbal products advertisements and were analysed according to the medium obtained from the literature on advertising tools. The media included radio adverts, television adverts, radio and television

adverts, newspaper adverts, print media adverts and internet adverts. Other medium adverts which did not fall under any of the stated medium were also analysed. The media and the number of times each occurred are represented in the table below.

**Table 2. Advertising tools used by marketers.**

Medium	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Radio	3	15
Television	2	10
Radio and Television	4	20
Outdoor media	6	30
Print media/Newspaper	1	5
Online/Internet	1	5
Other	3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

The data collected on the field revealed that all the four firms considered in this study use at least one or more of the advertising tools already existing in literature. Some firms also use all the advertising tools such as radio, television, newspaper or print media, internet, transport and others. According to some management and staff, herbal products adverts must be well packaged and presented to the consumers. However, some firms still engaged in the traditional ways of advertising their herbal products which they claimed was to be one of the most effective ways of reaching the immediate consumers. The study again shows that most firms started herbal products adverts through the traditional form of ad. These include selling them in buses, horns over stationed vehicles at transport stations and through community centre public address systems. For some of the herbal companies, this is still a very efficient way of advertising herbal products because the traditional ad has helped them to reach the level in which they are now. Therefore, for them they still blend the traditional and modern form of ad to achieve the firm's objectives and goals.

### **Research Question 2: How do consumers respond to the advertising tools used?**

An equally important aspect of the study is to find out how consumers or audience respond to the advertising tools used to advertise the herbal products in the Swedru Municipality. This objective was achieved by giving the respondents room to mention some of the herbal products they have come across and also means by which they got to know the products. From the various descriptions given, the researcher was able to deduce particular advertising tools the consumers respond to. The thematic categories of media used for the analysis were employed here to help find out which of the media mostly responded to and what contributes toward the responses.

To better analyse the responses, a frequency distribution table was used to present the advertising tools that consumers respond to in advertising herbal products.

**Table 3. Frequency distribution of Consumers response to Advertising tools used.**

<b>Medium</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Radio	10	50
Television	7	35
Outdoor media	3	15
Print media/Newspaper	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

The table indicates that most of the participants listen to radio programmes and adverts. From the study, it indicates that radio adverts are given much attention by listeners. Ten (10) respondents respond or give attention to radio ads representing fifty percent (50%) out of the total percentage. This was followed by Television adverts which were responded by seven (7) respondents representing thirty-five percent (35%). Consumers who respond to outdoor media were three (3) respondents representing fifteen percent (15%) respectively. It was interesting to note that none of the respondents responded or paid attention to print (newspaper) adverts. This could be due to the fact that the participants of the study do not access newspapers as part of their regular media or the fact that herbal products ads are not commonly published in the newspaper.

### **Basis for consumers responding to advertising tools**

Consumer response to advertising helps advertisers to determine the effect of an individual advertisement (Kotler, 1997). In order to measure the effects of advertising tools in terms of established objectives, it is necessary to examine individual responses to the advertisements. The attitude response theory stipulates that consumers have varied reasons for availing themselves to and giving attention to particular media (Beerli and Santana, 1999). This theory is based on an analysis of the process of attitude formation and change, and of factors which influence such attitudes. The attitude that is formed towards the ad help in influencing consumer's attitudes toward the herbal products until their purchase intent (Goldsmith and Lafferty, 2002). The cognitive response depends on how individuals process information of idea toward a particular herbal product (Adelaar, 2003). Consumer buying behaviour is based on the concept and idea that he or she simply decided to purchase a herbal products which is in line with the Interest and Desire stage of the AIDAS model. The major aim of advertising is to create positive attitude towards the ad and the brand until consumer purchases that product and through this positive attitude create emotional response in the mind of consumer (Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002).

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Summary of Findings**

This research examined the advertising tools used by marketers to reach the target consumers of herbal products in the Swedru Municipality. It also investigated how consumers respond to the advertising tools used by marketers to reach them with herbal products. The researcher employed thematic analysis to analyse responses obtained from the respondents. The study also analysed a number of adverts done through the use of advertising tools within the period the research was conducted. In-depth interviews were employed for collecting data from the field.



The study revealed that marketers employ various forms of advertising tools in order to increase sales, production and reach target audiences with effective messages about the products. As asserted by Bovee and Arens (1996) the aim of advertising is to inform the firm's objectives and the value proposition to the customers as well as increase the level of awareness and respond to the brand. The model that formed the basis of this research was AIDAS model of Advertising.

Data was collected from two main sources, management and staff of the companies and consumers. From the interview conducted, it was revealed that advertisement is the heart of every successful herbal firm. It was also realized that target consumers could be influenced to pay attention to or watch adverts when advertisers involve certain advertising elements. These elements motivate consumers to change their buying attitude positively which include advertisement involving demonstration, celebrities, testimony, and sponsorship advertising through radio, television and other media as well as through some traditional media. From the research, it was also found out that advertisement affects the consumer motives, attitudes and perceptions. In this essence, advertisement helps the consumer to remember, locate, identify and make a choice from competing products. Consumer attitude is the most important activity which needs to be undertaken by the firm that wants to be successful. Hence, knowing the consumer attitude would enable the marketers to determine how advertising programs would be design to influence consumer buying attitude or their decision making process positively.

### **Conclusion**

Advertising tools as an effective media used to reach consumers should be packaged well to project the image of the firm and the product. Advertising herbal products should be carried out frequently with catchy elements because it attract consumers attention to the products and serve as a powerful means of selling consumers goods.

The use of advertising tools in the field of marketing communication influences consumer perception, cognition and buying attitude toward the products. Therefore, herbal firms should consider using all the various tools of advertising as their major promotional tools in the aspect of promoting products and sales. Since herbal products are local products that are produced and prepared in Ghana. Following the findings of the study, the effective combination of medium to project or reach the target audiences was radio and television. This is because television projects attractive messages and demonstrates the products on the screen. It provides both audio and visual images for the audience to see the reality and aesthetic nature of the products. The findings of the study also concluded that advertiser could use certain elements or styles in their television adverts to motivate their target consumers to give some attention to herbal products. Radio which is also used as a pervasive medium can be found and reaches almost every corner of the urban and rural areas in Ghana than television and other media like newspapers, billboards and internet. All the media used are good but radio was found to be the most appropriated medium for accessing advertisements of herbal products in the study.

### **Recommendations**

Based on recent findings on the topic, advertising indigenous herbal products and consumer response to the advertising tools used, the following recommendations have been made.

- Firms should focus more on both the traditional and modern ways of advertising because these are both powerful means through which herbal products could be brought to the attention of the consumer.
- Marketers of herbal products should choose effective types of advertising tools that would benefit the firm as well as promote sales.
- Packaging as defined by Appiah (1997) as a silent salesman should be well taken note of to communicate the herbal product to the target consumers and also attract consumers to respond to the products.
- There is the need for marketers, to study consumers buying attitudes, motives and perception about advertisement so as to design the advertisement to meet their needs.

### **REFERENCES**

- Achumba, I.C. and Osuagwu, L. (1994). *Marketing Fundamentals and Practice*, Rock Hill: USA: Al-Marks Educational Research, Inc.1-400.
- Adelaar, T. (2003). Effects of Media Formats on Emotions & Impulse Buying Behavior. *Journal of Information Technology*, 18, 247–266.
- Amoani, R. (2005). *Marketing communications management : concepts and theories, cases and*. England: Oxford Publications.
- Appiah, S. (1997). *A Complete Guide to Graphic Design*. Accra: Pentecost Printing
- Arnes, W. F. (1994). *Contemporary advertising*, 5th edition Irwin Inc. U. S. A.
- Arnes, W. F. (2000). *Contemporary advertising*, 7th edition Irwin Inc. U. S. A.
- Bovee, C. L & Arens, W. F. (1996). *Contemporary Advertisement: Light wear and soiling to the front cover: (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Publisher: Irwin.
- Bowen, D. E. (2009). Services Marketing and Management: Implications for Organizational Behaviour. *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, 10: 43-80.
- Carriger, C. H. (2000). Factors male and female Hispanic students perceive as barriers and motivation for participation in post-secondary education for three community college sites (Texas A & M University, Ph.D., 2000). *DAI*, 61 (4), 1270A. (University Micro.lms No. 99-68895)
- Clarke, V. (2006), "Econometric Measurement of the. Duration of the Advertising Effect on Sales," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 13 (November) 345-357
- Crabtree, B. F. & W. L. Miller. (1992). *A Template Approach to Text Analysis: Developing and using codebooks. Doing Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications: 93-109.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). U.S.A: Sage Publications Inc, Thousand Oaks.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). U.S.A: Sage Publications Inc, Thousand Oaks.
- Ennis, R. H. (1999). Critical Thinking And Subject Specificity: Clarification and needed research. *Educational Researcher*, 18(3), 4–10.

- Gerber, C., Terblanche-Smit, M. & Crommelin, T. (2004). Brand Recognition in Television Advertising: The Influence of Brand Presence and Brand Introduction. *Acta Commercii*, 14(1). Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ac.v14i1.182>
- Goldsmith, R. E. & Lafferty, B. A. (2002). Consumer Response to Websites and their Influence on Advertising Effectiveness. Internet research. *Journal of Electronic Networking Application and Policy*, 12(4), 318-328.
- Korkeamaki, J. (2014). *Attracting New Customers and Retaining Current Customers through Integrated Marketing Communications*. University of Applied Sciences, Haaga-Helia
- Kotlar, P., Armstrong, G., Sounder, D & Wong, M. (2009). “*Principles of Marketing*”, European Edition, Financial Times Press. Prentice Hall
- Kotler .P. & Armstrong G. (2006). *Principles of Marketing*. 11th edition, Page 463, 464.
- Kotler P., A. (2000). *Principles of Marketing*. (9th ed), Prentice Hall: LA.
- Mahoney, J. (2006). *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*. National Science Foundation RED 94-52965
- McMillan, J. H. & Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in education: A conceptual understanding*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Parker, S. J. (1993). A prescription for AM radio programming. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 2: 29-33.
- Stanton, S. J (2009). Effects of implicit motives on brain activation in response to facial expressions of emotion: An fMRI investigation. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 3, 333-343.
- Vakratsas, D. & Ambler, T. (1999). “How advertising works: what do we really know?”, *Journal of Marketing*, 63 (January), 26-43
- Wells, W., Burnett, J. & Moriarty, S. (2003). “*Advertising: Principles and Practice*”. 7<sup>th</sup> edition Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall
- Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (2000). *Mass Media Research: An introduction*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Yin, R. K. (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Fourth Edition. SAGE Publications. California.