



YOUTH'S EXPOSURE AND UTILIZATION OF INTERNET ADVERTISEMENTS IN AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined youth's exposure and utilization of internet advertisements, in Awka metropolis, Anambra State. It adopted survey research design. The population of study includes all youth in Awka metropolis. An appropriate sample size of 400 was gotten from the population using probability sampling technique. Six research questions were used as primary data instrument. The finding shows that youths in Awka metropolis were exposed to the Internet advertisements, that majority of youths in Awka metropolis accessed internet advertisements mostly via their android/mobile phones. Also, WhatsApp is the social media platform that youths in Awka metropolis expose themselves to internet advertisements most; that social interaction drives Awka' youth to internet advertisements most, and their exposure to the Internet advertisements influenced them to buy and subscribe to advertised products and services. It is concluded that youths in Awka metropolis are not only exposed to Internet advertisements but also utilize them through buying and subscribing to the advertised products and services daily.

Keywords: Awka metropolis, Exposure, Internet, Internet advertisements, Utilization, Youth

INTRODUCTION

Internet is a medium of mass communication. With it, people can effectively communicate with one another, socialise, and transact businesses and services anytime, even from the comfort of their homes. This view is supported by McCarthy (2007), who posits that the world has been entirely permeated by information and communication technologies which now increasingly determine not only how humans communicate with each other but equally how they live their entire life.

Duru (2014, p. 7) defines Internet as a 'computer-based platform that enables the exchange of information among connected users worldwide', adding that its strength lies in its rich multi-media nature and inexhaustibility as well as the flexibility which it offers the user.

Agba (2001) further reiterates that uniqueness of internet is that it brings far greater information empowerment to humans. It could be because the Internet has continued to grow



in popularity since its invention owing to availability of numerous technological devices used in accessing it such as desktop computers, laptop computers, mobile phones, palmtops, and etc. Baran (2010) observes that Internet has become the most influential communicative force globally. His reason could be because the Internet helps people to live and relate effectively with their environments as well as to achieve economic, political, scientific and cultural aspirations.

According to Obiajulu (2008), access to the Internet is an essential variable in measuring social empowerment, enhancing one's active participation and self-assertion in the social milieu. Thus, Duru (2011) contends that sharing of texts, pictures, sounds, videos and graphics are parts of activities performed on the Internet.

This boils down to internet advertising or internet advertisements because they were placed on the Internet by identified persons with the aim of getting people to search and use them. Advertising is one prominent activity often carried out on the web with the primary purpose of attracting consumers (users) to buy products; goods and services. Thus, Nwodu (2017), while stressing that every media technology or content has a unique purpose it serves, describes advertising as a professional practice that involves the production of the commercial messages.

Statista (2018), an online United Kingdom weekly internet users reviewer adds e-mail, banking, communications, transactions, social media networking, news dissemination, watching of video clips and internet televisions, health, listening to internet radio/ audio services, government services, games upload and adding of content as forms of internet advertisements. There is no doubt that these various internet innovations gave rise to many internet or electronic terminologies like electronic mails (email), internet advertising, electronic books (e-Book), electronic journals (e-journals), to mention a few.

Adeleke (2016) further categorizes these internet advertising agents and products they market. The companies that deal on general merchandise or marketers of all kinds of goods and services are Jumia Nigeria, Konga, Dealdey, Yudala, Payports, Veonnet among others. Companies that deal on fashion and wears are Fashpa and Tracklist. The Glooing and others market groceries and food. Mall for Africa and others undertake delivery and logistics. The Dlx, Jijiing and others work for marketplaces. Also private property and property 24 companies are in real estate. Those in furniture are showrooming and furnishing. Sloting deals on electronics; Cheki Nigeria on automobile; while Wukan among others deal on travel. But there are also other internet platforms renowned for news dissemination, sports betting (Bet9ja, Nairabet), entertainment, etc.

Perhaps, this is why Deshwal (2016) posits that the rapid technological development and rise of Internet, new media and communication channels tremendously changed the advertisement business landscape. It has made it possible for people to largely depend on it (Internet) as the ultimate source of advertisements, information and communication. He gave types of online advertising as floating ads, expanding ads, wallpaper ads, trick banner ads, pop-up ads, pop-under ads. Others are, video advertising, advertising on social networks, mobile advertising, e-mail advertising, banner advertising, Google search advertising and a lot more.

McCoy, Galletta, Everard, Polak (2004) detailed some of the effects of these types of internet advertisements when they insisted that pop-up, pop-under, and in-line ads have essential effects on user perception and cognition. It could be why Li (2002, p. 2) posits "online



consumers are goal-oriented and perceive advertisements to be even more intrusive when viewed in other media”.

Among the world retinue of internet users are the youths, whom the United Nations (UN) classify as persons between the ages of 15 and 24; 18 to 35 by the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (the 1999 Second National Youth Policy Document of Federal Republic of Nigeria, p. 6.). Salako and Tiamiyu (2007) see the young generation (youth) as the most prominent users of these internet advertising and other information.

Okoye (2014, p. 18) supports this position, “The Internet is a relatively young invention and naturally the young who are usually adventurous and enthusiastic are jumping into it. The possible reason is having access to and being trained on the Internet is a gateway to such empowerment given that the Internet is at the heart of communications today”.

Also, Duru (2014) argues that students constitute an important segment of these young internet users and potential users since they are being trained to succeed within an information-based society. Hence, training on Internet is naturally indispensable to their success in this endeavor. Goldsmith and Lafferty (2002), while studying students’ use of internet advertisements noted that consumer (students) response to ads on web sites and their influences on them are impressive.

Chaubey, Sharma and Pant (2013) claim that internet advertisements motivate consumers to patronize goods and services. Also, that most companies and industries prefer to use it for advertising their products rather than use other media platforms like radio, televisions, and newspapers. Their reason is that internet advertising is less expensive in terms of money, time and other resources usually expended on it, wider geographical reach, easy result measurement, more targeted audiences, speed, informative, smooth audience engagement and product branding.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- Find the rate Awka youths exposed themselves to internet advertisements.
- Find out the various devices through which youths in Awka metropolis access internet advertisements.
- Find out the social media platforms through which youths in Awka metropolis expose themselves to Internet advertisements.
- Determine the need gratifications that drive youths in Awka metropolis to expose themselves to internet advertisements.
- Find out the extent to which youths in Awka metropolis utilize internet advertisements.
- Find out if the utilization is as a result of their exposure to the Internet.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

This study applied Uses and Gratification and Technological Determinism theories. Both theories are to cover any lapses either of them could have while exploring youth’s exposure and utilization of internet advertisements.



Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratification theory is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media content to satisfy particular needs. Onuegbu (2016) describes it as an audience-centered approach to understanding mass communication. It was propounded in the 1940's, when researchers became interested in why people engaged in various forms of media behaviour, such as radio listening or newspaper reading. These early studies were primarily descriptive, seeking to classify the responses of audience members into meaningful categories.

Uses and Gratification theory was used in this research because researchers, who use the approach theory, assume that audience members are aware of the impact of the media, and can articulate their reasons for consuming various media content. Herzog (1944) identified three types of gratification associated with listening to radio soap operas to include emotional release, wishful thinking, and obtaining advice.

According to McQuail (1983), this theory suggests that audience attitude toward media behaviour is an essential factor in media use, adding that original conception of its approach is based on the research for explaining the great appeal of specific media contents. In the mass communication process, uses and gratifications approach puts the function of linking need gratifications and media choice clearly on the side of audience members. That is, the Uses and Gratification theory is concerned with audience response to media contents such as advertising, news, etc. in the society) and tension free needs (use of the media as a means of escapism and to relief from tension).

However, Levy and Windahl (1984) add that there are many antecedent variables such as media structure, media technology, social circumstances, psychological variables, needs, values, and beliefs that all relate to the particular gratification pattern used by the audience. On his part, Swanson (1987) suggested that researchers should focus on (1) the role of gratification seeking in exposure to mass media, (2) the relationship between satisfaction and the interpretive frames through which audiences understand media content, and (3) the link between pleasure and media content.

Technological Determinism Theory (TDT)

Technological Determinism theory believes that growing technologies shape man's feelings, actions and thoughts. It was propounded by Marshal McLuhan in 1962, who believed that human beings act, learn, feel and think the way they do as a result of the messages they receive through the current technologies as the society moves from one technological age to another. Historically, these technologies started with the print (books, newspapers, magazines, etc.) to the radio, television, and currently, the Internet. That is, the current society believes, feels, learn and act in consonance with what they gather from these modern technological advancements. They were developed by humans, controlled by humans; yet they control humans. Thus Culkin (1967) says that users shape these tools, and they in turn shape the users

Webster (2017) says though there are different accounts of technological determinism, a view often associated with it is the technological imperative which involves rhetoric and underlying assumptions. He opions that technology has a controlling influence that is inevitable and unstoppable. It was further bolstered by Canole (2007,) who claimed that the introduction of new technologies has transformed the society.



Webster (2017) opines that educational technology leaders have an ideological orientation to technical change, and believed that it has an absolute autonomy and in charge in the society. Webster concludes that technological determinist assumptions and the technical imperative such as normative and unintended consequences were alive, well and significant in people's thinking. However, Goguen (2000,) while studying the social aspects of technology and science, said technological determinism is an autonomous force that changes society.

These theories are relevant to this study in that Uses and Gratification plays out in the advertisements while Internet is a major technology that drives all aspect of global business and undertakings.

REVIEW OF RELATED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Over the years, some researchers all over the world focused on youth exposure and utilization of internet advertisements. This section reviews three works of these researchers and their findings.

Padon, et. al.(2018)investigated Alcohol brand use of youth appealing advertising.The researchers further tested the association between the youth-appeal of marketing content of televised alcohol advertisements and the brand-specific alcohol consumption of both underage youth and adults.

The finding shows that brand CAY scores were (a) positively associated with brand-specific youth consumption after controlling for adult brand consumption; (b) positively associated with a ratio of youth-to adult brand-specific consumption, and; (c) not associated with adult brand consumption. It therefore, concludes that alcohol brands with youth-appealing advertising are consumed more often by youth than adults.

Gupta, et.al. (2017) studied the association between exposure to social media alcohol marketing and youth alcohol use behaviours in India and Australia. The study objective was to discover if young people aged 13 and 25 are exposed to, interact with social networking sites-based alcohol marketing and their level of alcohol consumption (use).

It discovered that India and Australia have different alcohol consumption features due to variations in socio-cultural norms. In India, it found that 35% of youths consume 1/3 of alcoholic drinks every day due to online alcohol advertisements they are exposed, whereas 45% of youths in Australia do the same thing. The teenagers drinking habits increase in both countries as a result of their exposure to alcohol advertisements on Internet.

Bakare, Owusu, and Abdurrahman, (2017) researched on the behaviour response of the Nigerian youths toward mobile advertising: An examination of the influence of values, attitudes and culture. The findings are that the youths are exposed to internet advertisements and also utilize them for their behaviors diverse needs.

The above literature shows that people expose themselves to internet advertisements and utilize them. However, information on Awka resident youths on the subject is not known. Therefore, this work seeks to examine the rate Awka youth expose themselves to and use internet advertisements.

METHOD

The research design for this study is descriptive research. Akubilo (2003, p. 58) says that a descriptive analysis collects data when the issue involved is related to opinion, attitudes,



beliefs and behaviours. The researchers chose the questionnaire as the instrument of measurement. It is appropriate for this study because it seeks to study ‘Youth exposure and utilization of Internet advertisements’ in Awka metropolis.

Awka, the capital of Anambra State, is the area of the study. A sample size of 400 was selected and the researcher’s adopted probability sampling. Instrument for data collection was the questionnaire used to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into two, section A and section B. The section A seeks to elicit information regarding the respondents’ bio-data, and the B section asked questions bordering on the research questions and objectives.

Thus, these researchers adopted structured or a close- ended questionnaire. It was chosen because it is a data collection tool mostly suited for descriptive surveys like this. This research instrument adopted was validated by three experts in communication.

RESULTS

The method of data analysis used in this research was frequency tables and simple percentages. A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire was administered and returned.

Table 1: *Respondents Demographic Characteristics*

Response/category	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	213	53%
Female	187	47%
Total	400	100%
Age		
18-20 years	79	20%
21-25 years	94	23%
26-30 years	99	25%
31-35 years	128	32%
Total	400	100%
Education		
O/L and FSCLC	161	40%
OND/NCE	102	26%
HND/BSc	123	31%
MSC/PhD	14	3%
Total	400	100%
Marital Statues		
Single	221	55%
Married	131	26%
Divorced	25	31%
Widow/widower	23	6%
Total	400	100%

Table 1 on the demographic characteristics of the respondents show that 53% (n=213) of them were male while 47% (n=187) were female. Male respondents were more than female respondents because males seemed to have more interest in internet business.



The age characteristics of the respondents indicates that about 20% of them (n= 79) were between the ages of 18 – 20 years. Those whose age bracket ranged from 21-25 years were about 23% (n= 94); the age bracket between 26 -30 years were about 25% (n= 99) while the age bracket between 31- 35 were about 32% (n= 128). The age brackets 31-35 were more in number.

Educational attainment of the respondents shows that majority of them were ordinary level / First school leaving certificate holders and HND/BA/BSC holders (n=161 or 40%, and n=123 or 31% respectively). However, OND/NCE holders account for 31% (n= 123), while MSc and PhD holders were about 3% (n= 14).

Marital status of the respondents shows that 55% (n= 221) of them were single, 33% (n= 131) were married, 6% (n= 15 and n= 23) were divorced and widow/widowers respectively. The singles were the majority because they seem to be more among the youth.

Occupational distribution of the respondents shows that majority of them were students and public servants (n= 163 or 41% and 151 or 37% respectively). However, business men / women accounted for 23% (n= 83) while artisans/technicians constitute 1% (n= 3)

Table 2: Respondents Exposure to Internet

Exposure to Internet	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Once a day	144	36%
About three times a day	73	18%
Once in a week	166	42%
I do not expose myself at all	17	4%
Total	400	100%

Data in table 2 indicate that 144 respondents representing 36% expose themselves to Internet once every day; 73 (18%) respondents are exposed to it about three times every day, 166 (42%) respondents are exposed to internet once every week, while 17 (4%) respondents did not expose themselves to the internet. As a result, 383 respondents who are exposed to internet were used subsequently for the study.

Table 3: Respondents' Exposure to Internet Advertisements

Exposure to internet advertisement	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Once in a day	120	32%
About three times a day	105	27%
Once a week	151	39%
I do not expose myself at all	7	2%
Total	383	100%

In the table 3 above, out of 383 respondents that expose themselves to internet advertisements, 120 representing 31% exposed themselves to internet advertisements every day; 105 (27%) expose themselves to internet advertisements about three times a day. Also, 151 (39%) expose themselves to the internet advertisements once every week; while 7 (2%) did not expose themselves to internet advertisements. People who were expose one in a week were in the majority.

Table 4: Devices Respondents use in accessing Internet Advertisements



The device often used in accessing the internet advertisements	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Laptop	83	22%
Android/mobile phone	136	36%
Palmtop	70	19%
Desktop computers	87	23%
Total	376	100%

Table 4 above indicates that out of 376 respondents who exposed themselves to internet advertisements. About 83 respondents representing 22% used laptop computers in accessing advertisements on the internet; 136 (36%) used android/mobile phones. Also 70 (19%) respondents used palmtop; while 87 (23%) used desktop computers to access the internet for advertisements. Respondents who used android/mobile phone to access the advertisement are in the majority.

Table 5: *Types of Internet advertisements respondents were exposed to*

Type of Internet advertisement exposed to	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Audio/Visual	92	24%
Texts	99	26%
Pictures/Images	98	26%
Graphics animations/cartoons	87	24%
Total	376	100%

In the table 5 above, out of 376 respondents that participated in the study, 92 representing 24% were either exposed to audio or video advertisements on Internet; 99 (26%) respondents are expose to texts advertisement on Internet; 98 (26%) respondents were expose to internet pictures and images advertisements; while 87 (24%) respondents were expose to internet graphics and cartoons advertisements. Respondents who were exposed to texts and pictures/images tied together.

Table 6: *Internet Platforms Respondents were exposed to advertisements*

Internet platforms I mostly view Advertisements	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Facebook	66	18%
YouTube	58	15%
Twitter	53	14%
Instagram	29	8%
WhatsApp	102	27%
Websites	31	8%
Blogs	37	10%
Total	376	100%

Data in table 6 above indicate the internet platforms youths in Awka metropolis expose themselves to advertisements most. They are as follow; Facebook had a record of 66 respondents representing 18%, YouTube 58 (15%) respondents, Twitter 53 (14%) respondents, Instagram 29 (8%) respondents, WhatsApp 102 (27%) respondents, Websites 31



(8%) respondents, and blogs 37 (10%) respondents. The respondents used Whatsapp platform more than any other platform.

Table 7: Reasons Youth in Awka Metropolis access Internet Advertisements

Reasons to access internet advertisements	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Information	81	22%
Education	98	26%
Entertainment	87	23%
Social interaction	110	29%
Total	376	100%

Data in the table 7 above, reveal that out of 376 respondents (100%) that participated in the study, 81 representing 22% access internet advertisements for information, 98 (26%) respondents access it for education; 87 (23%) respondents for entertainment, and 110 (29%) respondents access it for social interaction. Respondents for social interaction are in the majority.

Table 8: Youth in Awka Metropolis Utilisation of Internet Advertisements

Utilization of internet advertisements for	Frequency	Percentages (%)
To know of new products in the markets	91	24%
To know how to use some products	97	26%
To buy some products	96	26%
To share some products or ideas with family and friends	92	24%
Total	376	100%

Data in table 8 above showed 91 (24%) of respondents utilize internet advertisements to ascertain new products in the markets. It helps 97 (26%) of respondents to understand how to use some products; helps 96 (26%) of respondents to buy some products. Also, it helps 92 (24%) of respondents to share some products/marketing ideas with family and friends.

Table 9: Internet Advertisements Influence and Utilization of Advertised Products

Internet advertisements and utilization of internet advertised products	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Attracting me to buy or venture into a trade or services	101	27%
Increased my rate of buying or subscribing to products/services	118	31%
Decreased my rate of buying or subscribing to products or services	48	13%
Made me an expert or addict	109	29%



to products or services		
Total	376	100%

Data in table 9 above indicate how advertised products on the internet influenced the respondents' rate of utilization of advertised products. About 101 (27%) were attracted to buy or venture into a trade or services. Also 118 (31%) respondents had their buying and subscribing to products or services increased. It decrease the rate of buying or subscribing to products or services of 48 (13%) respondents; and it made 109 (29%) respondent experts or addicted to products and services.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study revealed that many respondents exposed themselves to internet advertisements. Thus 120 (30%) exposed themselves to it once in a day; 105 (27%) respondents about three times a day and 151 (39%) respondents once in a week. The outcome is in line with Erinn, Onuri and Omoniyi (2016) whose descriptive survey research on Attitude of Social Media Users to Internet Advertising shows youth's exposure in the majority. Also Holmberg (2011) in observational and explorative study discovered Children's exposure to online advertising.

On the devices used by the youth to access internet advertising 83 (22%) respondents used laptop, 136 (36%) respondents used android/mobile phone, 70 (19%) respondents used palmtop and 87 (23%) respondents used desktop computers. It indicates that youths in Awka metropolis used android/mobile phones most in accessing the internet advertisements. It corroborates the findings of Edegoh, Anunike and Nwagbara (2015) whose survey research work, Patterns of online media exposure among young people in Anambra State shows that majority of the respondents accessed the web through cell phone/handset.

On the social media platforms the youths were exposed to internet advertisements. The finding indicate that WhatsApp has 102 (27%) respondents; Facebook, 66 (18%) respondents; Youtube, 58 (15%) respondents among others. Findings from the study is that WhatsApp group chats took the lead. It differs from Gupta, Lam, Pettigrew and Tait (2018) whose cross-sectional (online survey) revealed that, association between exposure to social media alcohol marketing and youth alcohol use behaviours in India and Australia uncovered that the internet platforms where youths expose themselves to advertisements mostly are on YouTube. Similarly, in Asa (2013), Children and advertising on social media websites, conducted in the United Kingdom, 90% of respondents reported exposure to advertisements on Facebook. The reasons for the dissimilarities are locations and time of research. This study was conducted in Nigeria in 2018; the others were done in Australia and United Kingdom in 2018 and 2013 respectively.

Another finding of this study showed that the main gratification that made Awka Youths to expose themselves to the internet advertisements was social interaction. The need for information has 81 (22%) respondents, education has 98 (26%); entertainment has 87 (23%) respondents and social interaction 110 (29%) respondents. It supports Wu and Li (2017) in a study of effects of mass media exposure and social network site involvement on risk perception of and precautionary behaviour toward the Haze issue in China. They discovered that youths exposed themselves to online platforms and advertisements to communicate with other users (social interaction) more than any other need.



Also, another finding of this study in Table 8 is that Awka residents utilize internet advertisements mostly for direction on how to use the product. This finding is in line with Musa (2016) whose survey research, "How Kano State residents utilize Internet advertisements" discovered that the majority use internet advertisements to discover new and existing products in the market; this is followed by those that were taught how to use some products.

Another findings is the internet advertisements influenced youths in Awka metropolis by attracting them to buy or venture into trade or services (101 respondents representing 27%); This agrees with the finding of Acharya, Khanal, Singh, Adhikari, and Gautam (2015), who discovered that the more the youths are aware of something, the more they patronise or get involved in it.

CONCLUSION

The study therefore, concludes that Awka Youths are not only exposed to internet advertisements but also utilized them through buying and subscribing to the products and services advertised.

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