

**AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF NIMC ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE ELECTRONIC
MEDIA: FREE WILL VS FEAR APPEAL ADS**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research work was carried out by OGALEYE, MERCY OREOLUWA at the Department of Mass Communication, Mountain Top University, Ogun State, Nigeria under my supervision.

(Signature and date)

Mrs. S.F Richard

Supervisor

(Signature and Date)

Prof. Babatunde Oni

Head of Department

DEDICATION

This work is humbly dedicated to God Almighty for His unending love and mercies that has helped me all through this journey. Also, I dedicate it to my loving parents for their support and commitment, and to all lecturers of the Department of Mass communication in Mountain Top University who have impacted me greatly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study was based on Audience perception of NIMC advertisements on the Electronic media: Free will vs Fear appeal ads. The aim of the study was to compare Mountain Top University students' perception of the NIMC fear appeal advertisements on NIN SIM linkage, that was placed on TV and the free will advertisement by telecommunications networks during the period of November, 2020 to January, 2021, thereby determining which was more effective. In line with the objectives of this research, the instrument of data collection used was the structured questionnaire, distributed to a sample size of 310 out of the 1,385 students of the school. The data gathered was thereafter analysed, presented and interpreted using the descriptive data analysis technique; by presenting the data in tables. The results from the data analysis showed that the audience found the free will advertisements by telecommunications network more effective because it didn't threaten their actions and it was more rational. This project therefore recommended that audience actions should not be influenced by the imposition of threat except in cases of susceptibility to one's physical body, health, and life. Organisations should understand the motive behind their advertisements and thereby be aware of the fact individuals have varying choices and perceptions which should not be influenced by manner of threat.

Keywords: *Audience, Perception, NIMC, Free will, Fear appeal, advertisements.*

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

According to the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON, 2012), advertising is communication through the media about products, services, and ideas, paid for by an identified sponsor. Communication in this context is information transfer initiated by a sponsor about an organisation's output to the target audience. The process of communication begins with a sender passing across a message through the media to the receiver. Advertising, therefore, entails all elements of communication being involved whereby information about the product, service, or idea is transferred from the sender, usually backed up by the initiator of the advert, through the media to the audience.

Advertising through a mass medium could be in form of audio, visual, and audio-visual messages addressed to the audience to influence them to either buy a product, perform a service, or act favourably towards an idea. The media is relevant in advertising because it serves as the channel through which the message is passed. Without the infusion of media, the message would not travel as extensively as desired by the sender; hence the travel time would unnecessarily be delayed. The forms of communication media are **print media** (newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, booklets, letters, etc.), **broadcast media** (radio, television, film, etc.), **outdoor media** (signboards, hoardings, wall-printing, banners, vehicles, etc.), the **internet** and word of mouth (Jaideep, 2018). **Word of Mouth** is when a consumer's interest in a company's product or service is reflected in their daily dialogue. It is an indirect medium of communication whereby individuals unconsciously promote an organisation's product or service without the consent of the advertiser. It has been

observed to be the most effective, as virtually every day, humans, in one way or the other, talk about products and services during their course of interaction; and through this, the audience gets to be aware of the products or services without being exposed to the product or service's advertisement. Advertising can utilise either the print, broadcast, outdoor or internet media of communication to address the target audience. Nevertheless, the media that best suits the target audience is advisably employed, as this will pass the message more effectively, thereby influencing the idea behind advertising.

Advertising is a deliberate action taken in order to create awareness of a product or service. Advertising does not only intend to create awareness; it goes further to influence an action from the audience. There are elements involved in the process of advertising which are termed the AICDA – Awareness, Interest, Credibility, Desire, Action (Hewlett, 2014). Advertising begins by creating awareness of a product or service in such a convincing manner that the interest of the target audience will be aroused to believe in the product or service's credibility, thereby developing their desire for it and, finally, their decision to act. Every advertisement, in general, has a call to action for its target audience. And such actions could be to make a purchase, perform a service, or buy an idea.

The call to action required from the audience is embedded in the structure of the message. Harold Lasswell's model of communication answers the questions of Who says **what**, on what channel, to whom and with what effect? (Lasswell, 1948). The "What" in the model refers to the **message**. In developing the message of advertising, various strategies are usually employed. These strategies are ways in which the message is created to influence action by its target audience. In advertising, these strategies for developing the message are termed "Advertising appeals".

Advertising appeals are modified strategies usually embedded in the message, used for deriving action from the audience (Sanjeev, 2009). The goal of developing such methods is to increase the awareness of a brand, interest, desire, and action (Belch, 2001). From Belch's assertion, advertising appeals are formulated to make the target audience aware of the presence of an organisation or a product, arouse their interests, stimulate their craving and desire for it, and finally, influence their actions – which is based on the type of advertising appeal employed.

Advertisers nowadays build methods based on numerous forms of advertising attractions, such as sexual, emotional, and humorous appeals, etc. (Belch, 2001). The choice of advertising appeals is dependent on the motive of the advertisement. Types of appeals such as humour, social, endorsement, musical, and scarcity appeals will be examined subsequently at the surface level.

- **Types of Advertising appeals**

Humour appeal advertising is an advertising strategy that persuades people to like a product or organisation by making them laugh and feel good. For instance, a cosmetic company uses a curly cream on a dog's hair to make the dog look pretty, although it isn't human. Such an ad appeals to the emotions of the audience. **Social appeal advertising** is an advertising strategy that makes people feel the need to do something to belong, more like the idea of the bandwagon effect. Everyone wants to feel included or part of a particular trend (Tidio, 2018). Brands like Coca-Cola, Heineken, or Budweiser are well-known for their commercials showing people coming together for family dinners, major sports events, or celebrations. These companies connect the beverages they are promoting to these friendly gatherings, so the consumers will too. **Endorsement appeal advertising** is a strategy used by advertising professionals to influence more responses to their ads by using celebrities to endorse a product. Some organisations prefer to use celebrity endorsements.

For example, the second leading network service provider in Nigeria, Bharti Airtel, uses Lateef Adedimeji. The Tecno phone uses a popular music artist-Wizkid, amongst others. (Ranjbarian, *et al*, as cited in George 2014) opined that "using celebrities can help companies to create unique ads and engender a positive effect on the attitude and sales intention towards the brand". **Musical appeal advertising** is an advertising strategy that uses music to create a rhythm that sounds appealing to the ears of the audience. An example of an organisation that makes use of musical appeal to invoke faster response is the advertisement for Airtel on the code *444 # and the Honeywell Noodles "*Bam Bam La La*" advert. These advertisements have a very attractive musical appeal with rhymes and melody. **Scarcity appeal advertising** is a strategy used to hurry the audience into making a particular decision, whereby a particular product is limited and at the risk of finishing. It boosts the customer's sense of value and encourages them to buy on the spur of the moment. But basically, this research is focused on fear appeal and free-will advertisements.

Fear appeal advertisements compel the audience to take certain actions to avoid certain repercussions. While, **free-will advertisements** point out the benefits promises that will be gotten from the purchase of a product or performance of a service, without enforcing a purchase.

- **The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC)**

The research is based on the study of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) advertisement for SIM registration. According to the NIMC profile, it was established by the NIMC Act No. 23 of 2007, which was mandated to establish, own, operate, maintain, and manage the Nigerian National Identity Database, assign a Unique National Identification Number (NIN) (NIMC, 2019). The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) mandated mobile network users to furnish personal data and submit biometric scans to aid the registration of their SIM

numbers in April 2010. To fulfill its mandate, it confirmed its obligation to developing, overseeing, operating, and preserving a secure National Identity Database, as well as issuing the National Identification Number (NIN) to all Nigerians and legal residents (NIMC, 2019). "Section 27 (1) and (2) of the Act, 2007 also requires all government and private agencies offering services as defined in the NIMC Act to require citizens and legal residents to have a NIN before receiving services" (NIMC, 2019).

The NIMC advertisement on SIM registration on the television medium is a fear-appeal advertisement. The content of the advert on the TV platform was quite fearful, and for virtually every program streamed on TV, the advert was slotted in, reminding people to register their SIM cards to avoid blockage of their SIMs. The NCC mandate became more intense at the end of the year 2020 when the NCC placed an order that phone numbers of those who do not have SIM cards connected to their National Identity Number (NIN) will be suspended. (NIMC, 2019). The organisation is perhaps of the opinion that with the order given to citizens to register their SIMs to avoid repercussions (blockage), there will be an immediate response.

Through network advertisements, the NIMC also made use of free-will advertisements. The adverts were done more persuasively and appealingly without coercion. Their use of this free-will advertisement was prevalent on every telecommunication network service. Before every call was made, the advert was slotted in, appealing to users of telecoms services to register their SIM cards. SMS was also sent to users. Yet audience response cannot be established, and this is what this research seeks to find.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The call to action of any advertisement is a determinant factor of the advertising appeal to be adopted. The call to action of the NIMC advertisement was for the audience to link their SIM numbers with their NIN, and those without NIN should register. The NIN advertisement sponsored by the NIMC adopted the fear appeal approach on the television media to enforce an immediate action from the audience. It also adopted the free-will approach, making it prevalent on the telecommunications media to persuade the audience to perform the call to action. Fred D. Sheffield and Carl Hovland's Individual Differences Theory posits that individuals have different perceptions of things and react to messages on the media differently depending on their psychological needs.

Based on the Individual Differences theory, and the fact that the fear appeal approach was adopted, this study attempts to analyse the fear appeal advertisement of the NIMC in comparison with the free will advertisement of the NIMC, to measure audience perception and the effectiveness of the advertisement appeals on selected audiences.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The principal objective of this research is comparing audience perception of the NIMC fear appeal and free will methods of advertisements and finding out which technique has an immediate effect on the audience. Below are specific objectives to be derived:

1. To compare audience perception of the usefulness of the NIMC free will and fear appeal advertisement.

2. To compare the response rate of the audience to the NIMC free will and fear appeal advertisement.
3. To compare the audience perception of the semantics of the NIMC free will and fear appeal advertisement.
4. To compare the audience perception of the effectiveness of the NIMC free will and fear appeal advertisements.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the perceptions of the audience on the usefulness of the NIMC free will advertisement compared to its fear appeal advertisement?
2. To what extent did the audience respond to the NIMC free will advertisement in comparison with the fear appeal advertisement?
3. What are the perceptions of the audience on the semantics used in the NIMC free will advertisement compared to the fear appeal advertisement?
4. What are the perceptions of the audience on the effectiveness of the NIMC free will advertisement in comparison with its fear appeal advertisement?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings from this study will be of benefit to organisations as it will serve as an essential tool in selecting advertising appeals, based on the choice and perception of their audience.

The research will as well benefit the audience in general, as it will widen their knowledge on different appeals to advertisements, which will thereby influence their responses to advertisements placed on the media.

Also, the research study will be of great use and benefit to other researchers who will be interested in advertising appeal-related topics as it could serve as a source of literature review for them as well.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is focused principally on two (2) advertisements appeals; fear appeal advertisements and free will advertisements.

It is thereby limited to the Television and telecommunication network media. The research is based on the NIMC advertisements between November 2020 and January 2021.

The study population is Mountain Top University Undergraduate students from 100 to 500 level.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

To establish a broader understanding, concepts used in this study are defined operationally.⁰⁰

Perception: relates to an individual's feelings and opinions about a subject matter of interest.

Audience: The audience in this study refers to Mountain Top University Undergraduate students.

NIMC: National Identity Management Commission.

Electronic media: refers to media that uses electronic devices; which is usually broadcast to a wider community. The electronic media in this study are Television and Telecommunications media respectively.

Advertisements: refer to the promotion of products (goods and services) on the media.

Fear appeal advertising: is an advertisement strategy by which advertising professionals persuade the audience to do something to avoid repercussion. Here, the audience is scared of the impending risks, and this possibly makes them succumb to the threat.

Free will advertising: points to the benefit promised that will be gotten from the purchase of a product, or performance of a task, without enforcing a purchase.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails the conceptual framework of the research study – “*Audience Perception of NIMC advertisements on the Electronic Media: Free will ads vs Fear appeal ads.*” Therefore, the gathering of relevant data and breaking down of concepts by the researcher will give a better understanding. Subsequently, two relevant theories - Fear appeal and Perception theory will be discussed to build the theoretical framework for the research.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The concepts to be reviewed for further understanding are:

1. Audience exposure level to Advertisements
2. Usefulness of Advertisements
3. Audience Perception of Advertising
4. Advertising Appeals
5. Effect of Advertising Appeals on audience patronage.

2.2.1 AUDIENCE EXPOSURE LEVEL TO ADVERTISEMENTS

The term "exposure level to advertisements" refers to the frequency with which consumers are exposed to a product. People's perceptions frequently depend on how "exposed" they are to advertisements in their environment. Exposure levels have a close relationship with consumers' cognition, which produces higher recall. Higher levels of advertising exposure provide a greater

opportunity for advertising viewers to sense and process the advertising information at a deeper level in their minds (Changizi, 2008). Respondents' recall is significantly higher in three exposures than in the first and second exposure. Furthermore, respondents who have been exposed to advertising more than four times have a much better recall than those who have been exposed to the same advertisements three times. Also, as the number of advertising exposures increases, so does the respondents' recall.

Viewers eventually gain a better grasp of the commercials until they reach a particular level of exposure. After that degree of exposure, the impact on viewers and brand perception begins to wane (Changizi, 2008). The first stage is the "what is it?" stage, which is characterized by inquisitiveness, ambiguity, and a lack of awareness of the advertisement. At the second stage of ad viewing, this stage motivates viewers to comprehend the ad message. The "what of it" stage is the name given to this stage. In the third ad exposure, the entire advertisement that is being watched is analysed. Three ad viewership creates favourable thoughts in the subconsciousness of consumers, which leads to a positive ad and brand mindset. After three advertising exposures, viewers' minds begin to form negative thoughts, causing them to adopt a negative attitude. However, both attitude and recall are optimal on third exposure.

Visual exposure to an object regularly can change an observer's choice of it, initially dramatically raising preference and then gradually decreasing preference (Changizi, 2008). He further states that overexposure to a thing signal to the brain that the thing is plentiful and hence not worthwhile, reducing the individual's preference for it. This implies that the rate at which audiences are exposed to advertising content in the media affects their preference for it. Therefore, if audiences are over-

exposed to advertisement content, they might get over-familiar with the advertisement, thereby reducing the value of the content.

Deeba's study on Audience Perception about the portrayal of women in Pakistani Electronic Media (2007), shows that what the audience is exposed to subconsciously shapes their perceptions of things. He, therefore, describes that it has become clear that the media encourages and advertises women's very unhealthy trends such as severe dieting and other negative eating habits. The majority of the media depicted slender, emancipated women. They can influence people's subconscious minds in this way. And women continue to spend their money to acquire the impossible image they see in media advertisements all the time. Women's bodies are being presented in the media as being beautiful, even if they are tiny and unnaturally thin. Women who are exposed to particular forms of media, such as television and radio, and are more likely to get breast cancer, will engage in some form of dieting, exercise, or improper eating practices to attain this appearance. Deeba's study, therefore, shows that what the audience is exposed to subconsciously shapes their perceptions of things.

2.2.2 USEFULNESS OF ADVERTISEMENTS

Usefulness, according to Artha (2012), means the quality of being of practical use. In other words, it can be termed "utility". In advertising, an advert is useful if its contents are of benefit to the audience, and this, in turn, shapes their perception and determines the effect it has on them. The Uses and Gratification Theory supports the idea that audience members deliberately search out mass media to meet their personal needs. Media users, according to the theory, have the freedom to choose how they can use the media and how it will influence them. This theory is more related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The Uses and Gratification Theory is deterministic and relies on

the audience's free choice. The media can be utilized in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. This thesis is based on the idea that there is no such thing as absolute truth. The audience is considered to have complete control over the impact of the media on them because the effect may be customized. The theory is linked to the psychology of human needs, motivations, and influence.

Ajit et al, in their study on Consumers' Attention to the Brief Summary in Print Direct-to-Consumer Advertisements: Perceived Usefulness in Patient-Physician Discussions, hypothesized that advertisements are useful to consumers if their contents affect their daily lives. He further stated that, when the public is exposed to a direct-to-consumer advertisement for a drug they may be taking, the content of the advertisement (based on the utility of the drug) may be personally relevant to them. Consequently, consumers may pay greater attention to such an advertisement. Personal relevance may be manifested by a consumer's perception that the message is personally "needed, important, and meaningful"; in turn, this perception may influence the consumer's reaction to the advertisement (Zaichkowsky 1994, as cited in Ajit et al., 2003).

2.2.3 AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING

A psychology professor, Yolanda Williams, defined perception as our way of recognizing and interpreting the information we have gathered through our senses. It also involves how we react to a situation with the facts we have. It's how we handle situations (UKEssays, 2018). In advertising, this means that once the audience is exposed to the advertisement, their perception is formed based on the information gathered.

The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON, 2012) defined advertising as "communication through the media about products, services, and ideas, paid for by an identified sponsor". Advertising, therefore, entails all elements of communication being involved whereby

information about the product, service or idea is transferred from the sender, usually backed up by the initiator of the advert, through the media to the audience. While there are many aspects of advertising psychology to consider, such as aesthetic appeal and message, one of the most important considerations to consider when developing an advertisement is perception (Crystal, 2021).

In advertising, perception refers to a customer's impression of a product or service. When an audience sees or learns about a particular product or service, the complete process of audience perception begins. This cycle repeats itself until the consumer develops an opinion about the product. This perception is reinforced by advertising, which increases requests for the product. Unlike the true characteristics of a product, which can be determined through study and data, a product's perception might be impressionable and fleeting (Crystal, 2021). Perception may be an effective weapon in advertising to persuade buyers that they can be a certain person, look a certain way, or feel a certain way while using a given product. The perspective of an audience is also crucial in determining the type of image a company wishes to project. For example, when a retail clothing store uses low-quality plastic hangers to display garments on crowded racks, the audience assumes the brand is low-quality. The audience creates a different perception of the brand when the identical clothes are displayed well, with back-lit mannequins, neatly placed, good quality beautiful hangers, and so on. Audience perception concerning the research under study refers to the opinions and feelings the audience has towards the NIMC fear appeal and free will advertisements. Their perception is a determinant factor of the end-product of this research because the research is centred on the dependent variable – audience perception. And one major element of audience perception is exposure level.

2.2.4 ADVERTISING APPEALS

Advertising appeals are modified strategies usually embedded in the message, used for deriving action from the audience (Sanjeev, 2009). The purpose of these strategies is to raise brand recognition, interest, desire, and action (Belch and Belch, 2001). From Belch's assertion, advertising appeals are formulated to make the target audience aware of the presence of an organisation or a product, arouse their interests, stimulate their crave and desire for it, and finally, influence their actions – which is based on the type of advertising appeal employed. The choice of advertising appeals is dependent on the motive of the advertisement. However, the advertising appeals to be considered in this study are free will and fear appeal advertisements.

- **CONCEPT OF FREE WILL ADS**

Free advertisements appeal to the benefits promised that will be gotten from the purchase of a product, without enforcing a purchase, but mere persuasion. It could also be termed "**rational appeal**". The term "rational appeal" refers to a purchase that is motivated by direct explanations of a product's benefits (Kotler, 1991 as cited in Long-Yi, 2011). The benefits that customers may receive are the focus of the rational appeal. It emphasises that a product or service could achieve the function and benefits consumers' desire. Because it appears to deliver information plainly and directly related to a product, which captures customers' attention more easily and develops a better advertising attitude, the advertising attitude generated by logical appeal/free will is better than that generated by emotional appeal (Aaker & Norris, 1982 as cited in Long-Yi, 2011).

The product can be emphasized by its benefits in free will advertising, where the consumers' self-benefit is the central premise and the function or benefit desired by consumers of the product or service is articulately presented in advertising.

The NIMC Free Will Ad

The NIMC used free will ads through network advertisements. Without using force, the advertisements were convincing and appealing. The NIMC advertisement using free will was more explicit in its content. This free-will advertisement was widely used across all telecommunication network services. The advertisement was played before each call, persuading users of telecoms services to register their SIM cards with their NIN. It was also sent as an SMS to users.

The content of the advertisement was:

*Dear Customer, kindly link your SIM number to your National Identification Number (NIN). Forgot your NIN? Dial *346# to retrieve your NIN. Thank You.*

Figure 1 depicts an example of the content of the NIMC free will advertisement that was placed by telecommunication networks:

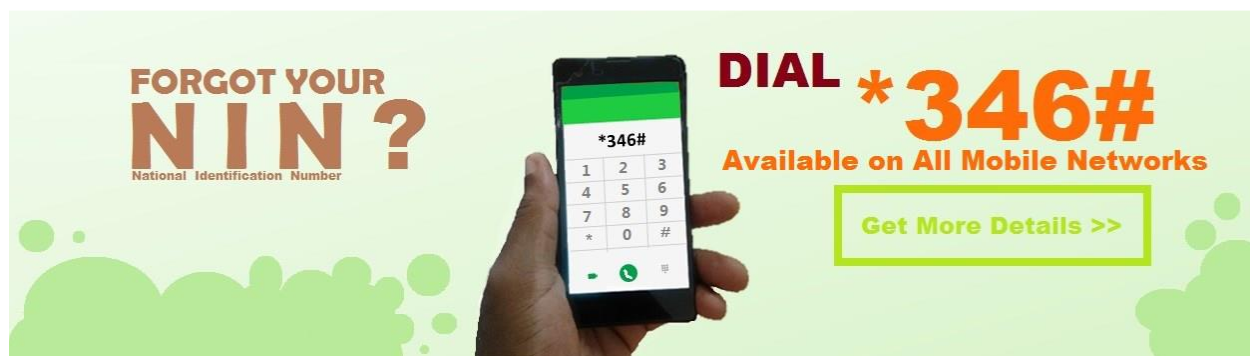


Figure 1

Source: NIMC home page

- **CONCEPT OF FEAR APPEAL ADS**

Fear appeal advertisements: Fear appeals are built upon fear. Fear is defined as "an unpleasant emotional state marked by the anticipation of pain or considerable anguish, as well as increased autonomic activity, particularly distressing the nervous system. It is the feeling of agitation or

dismay; something that is the object of anxiety or alarm "(Merriam-Webster, 2002). It is "an emotional response to a threat that expresses, or at least implies, some sort of danger" (Tanner et al., 1991). It creates tension and anxiety and causes people to seek ways to aid the reduction of these feelings (LaTour & Zahra, 1988).

Fear appeal advertisements compel the audience to take certain actions to avoid certain repercussions. *Physical fear appeal* and *social fear appeal* are the two common types of fear appeal ads (Sternthal & Craig, 1974). Physical fear appeal ads arouse fear and vulnerability about one's physical body, health, and life. These types of fear appeal ads include ads about the dangers of smoking, drinking, and driving, texting and driving, etc. Whereas, social fear appeal ads stimulate fear concerning violations of social norms and regulations of the law. For example, anti-smoking ads may not only emphasize the physical threats that come with smoking but also warn of social disadvantages, such as the threat of social exclusion (DeWall, *et al*, 2011). The NIMC advertisement on TV registration of NIN is a social fear appeal ad. Thus, fear portrayed in advertising works as a motivator to follow the message's instructions to alleviate fear-related unpleasant tensions.

The NIMC Fear Appeal Ad:

The NIMC advertisement on SIM registration on the Television medium is a fear appeal advertisement. The content of the advert on the TV platform was quite fearful; and for virtually every program streamed on TV, the advert was slotted in, reminding people to link their SIM numbers with their NIN to avoid blockage of their SIMs. The organisation is perhaps of the opinion that with the order given to citizens to link their SIM numbers to avoid repercussion (blockage precisely), there will be an immediate response. But this assertion cannot be justified, because at the moment we never can tell the rate of turnover to the advertisements.

Figure 2 is an example of the content of the NIMC *social fear appeal*. An offshoot of the TV ad.

NIMC threatens Nigerians with consequences over NIN

January 19, 2021 in News, Nigeria 1 min read

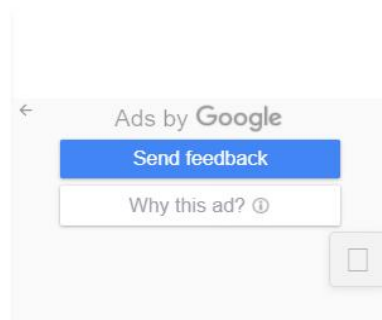


Figure 2

Source: TVC news page

2.2.5 EFFECT OF ADVERTISING APPEALS ON AUDIENCE PATRONAGE

In this research study, the effectiveness of advertising appeals on audience patronage is focused on fear appeals and free-will advertising.

The use of fear as a marketing tool raises the question of how serious the threat should be. As a result, several marketing analysts have questioned the usage of fear appeal advertising messages, claiming it is too difficult to apply correctly (LaTour *et al* 2003). However, as a result of the rise in various social issues and behaviors, many practitioners are rethinking their use of fear appeals in social ads, as it appears that other forms of advertising appeals are not having the desired

behavioural impact. An increasing body of data demonstrates that well-designed, well-targeted, theory-based behaviour modification interventions in advertising can be beneficial (Fishbein, 2000).

Arthur and Quester (as cited in Marlize, 2010) researched to better understand the role of fear in determining advertisement efficacy when fear appeals are used. They also looked into the role of coping assessment in assessing consumers' responses to fear appeals, as well as to whether or not these methods are equally applicable to diverse sectors or individuals. It is worth noting that fear appeals can be a potent motivator for enhancing awareness and changing attitudes when used in conjunction with high effectiveness messaging. According to Arthur and Quester's research, the higher the terror appeal, the more successfully it affects attitude and behaviour.

Not only was it observed that the fear appeal is effective, found out that the rational appeal/free will advertising is preferable to the emotional appeal/free will advertising because it appears to provide information explicitly and immediately tied to a product, it grabs consumers' attention easily and endears a positive attitude toward advertising (Aaker and Norris 1982 as cited in Long-Yi 2011). It is therefore noteworthy that the emotional appeal concerning this research paper is the negative emotional appeal – the fear appeal. The hypothesis that rational appeal/free will advertisement has a more pronounced positive impact on advertising behaviour than emotional appeal thereby supports the fact that the effectiveness of advertising appeals is not limited to fear appeal only.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theories to support this study are:

1. Fear Appeal Theory
2. Perception Theory

2.3.1 Fear Appeal Theory

According to the Fear Appeal theory by Gjalts-Jorn, Robert and Gerjo (2013), studies of threatening or fear-arousing motivational messages (also known as fear appeals in social psychology) can only display an impact on behaviour if both efficacy and danger are effectively exploited, and that This effect can be seen as a combination of threat and efficacy in terms of their impact on behaviour (Gjalts-Jorn *et al*, 2013). A threat is a potential for harm that is defined by the sternness of the threat and the level to which one is vulnerable to it (and a threatening communication is a message conveying one or both of these elements). Efficacy is a function of the effectiveness of a possible response in preventing harm (response efficacy) and one's ability to put that response into action – (Gjalts-Jorn *et al*, 2013). However, meta-analyses repeatedly identified the main effects of threat and efficacy, without evidence for the hypothesized interaction effect, showing that a higher level of threat simply leads to more behaviour change. (De Hoog *et al.*, 2007).

Threat and Behaviour Change

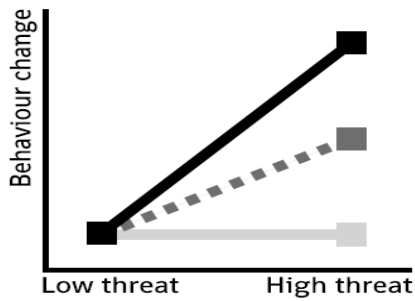


Diagram 1 : Gjalt-Jorn et al (2013)

The graph in diagram 1 above depicts the theoretical impact of fear appeals (the effect under high efficacy is represented by the black line, the line in grey shows the effect when efficacy levels are disregarded, and the dotted line indicates the major effect when efficacy levels are disregarded).

This theory, therefore, states that *"the higher the fear appeal, the more effectively it affects attitude and behaviour."*

Diagram 2 is a model that explains how fear appeal affects behaviour.

Model on Fear Appeal Effect on Behaviour

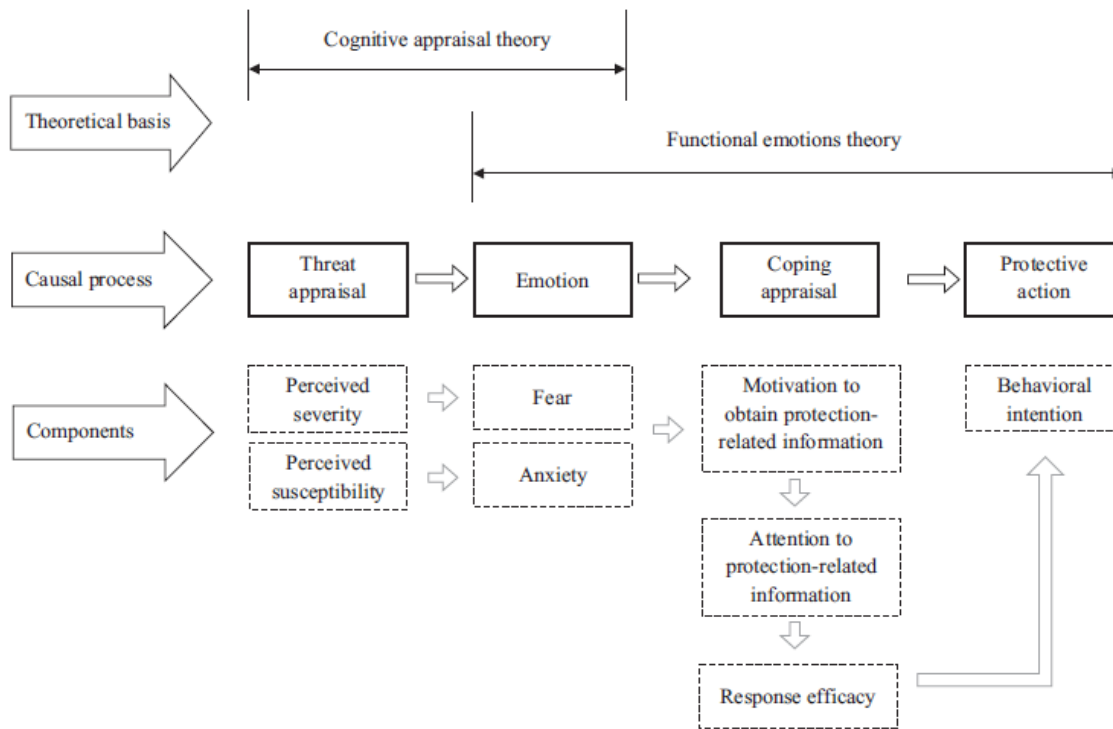


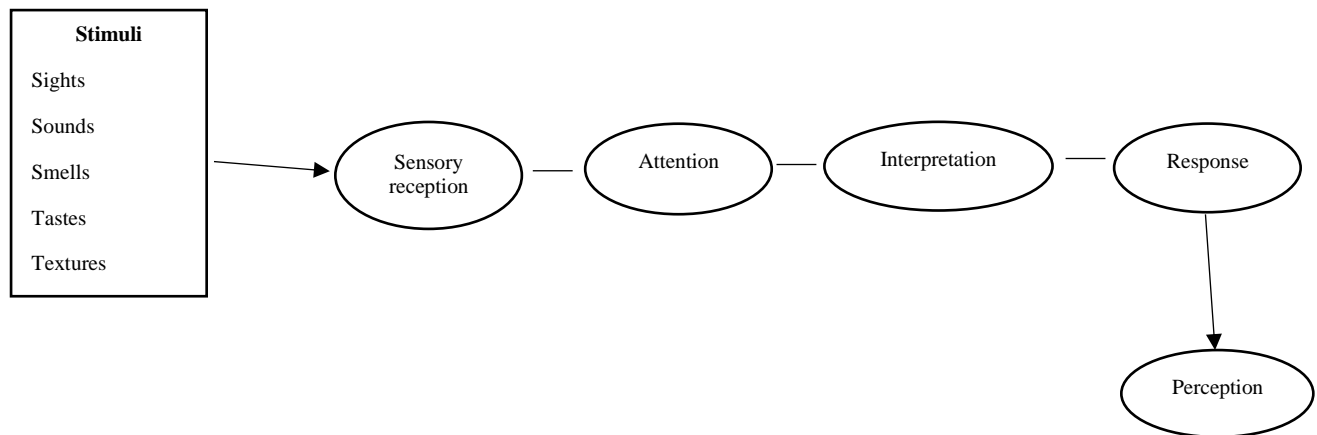
Diagram 1: So J. et al (2016)

The model above in diagram 2 explains the effect of fear appeal on audience behaviour. It shows that threat appraisal which comprises of perceived severity and susceptibility will lead to emotions which are fear and anxiety; thereby leading to motivation to cope amidst the threat, which will finally lead to the audience carrying out a protective action to avoid repercussion.

2.3.2 PERCEPTION THEORY

A psychology professor, Yolanda Williams, asserts that perception is our ability to perceive and evaluate information obtained via our senses. This also involves how we react to a situation with the facts we have. It's how we handle situations (UKEssays, 2018). Another phrase that is frequently used to describe perception is sensation. However, the terms are frequently interchanged; sensation refers to the brain's re-evaluation of information from the outside

environment. Perception is the act of perceiving and identifying something with our senses, which then allows us to absorb the information, uncover emotions, and respond to the circumstance we are in. The next diagram explains the process through which the audience forms their perception about a particular phenomenon as modelled by Tapsell (2009).



Source: Tapsell (2009)

The two forms of perception theories are the self-perception theory and the cognitive dissonance theory. But for the drive of this research paper, the self-perception theory best explains the phenomenon. According to the **Self-perception theory, by Daryl Bem (1967)**, individuals come to "know" or understand better their behaviors, feelings, and other personal states primarily by studying their actions and/or the contexts in which this behaviour occurs.

The success of marketing or persuasion strategies is usually based on the self-perception principle. The foot-in-the-door technique, for example, is a popular marketing strategy for persuading target consumers to purchase goods. This technique's basic principle is that if a person agrees to a little request (such as filling out a short questionnaire), he or she will be more likely to agree to a larger request that is connected to the original request (e.g., buying the related product). The theory is that making an initial commitment to a little request will alter one's self-image, justifying agreeing

to a larger request later. People infer that they would choose such products because they observe their actions (paying attention to and following through on the first request) and the sense in which they act (no apparent reason to do so).

2.4 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

ZHOU et al (2009) conducted a study on *“The Influence of Involvement on Information Processing of Rational Advertising Appeals”*. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Foote, Cone, and Blending (FCB) Grid model were used to investigate how the mix of personal connection and product involvement affects information processing of rational advertising appeal in 32 (14 males and 18 females) college student volunteers using eye-tracking technology. It was concluded that as the degree of personal participation or product involvement increased, the participants were able to access more advertisement information. As a result, it was proposed that rational advertising appeal be used primarily for the communication of high-product-involvement products, which could only be effective if personal involvement was likewise high.

Marlize (2010) in his study *“The Effect of Fear Appeal HIV/AIDS Social Marketing on Behaviour”* aimed at assessing the impact of HIV/AIDS-related fear-based advertising appeals and whether the use of fear enhances the chance of acceptable behaviour in a given target segment. Four focus groups discussions were used in a qualitative study to investigate in-depth replies. A quantitative experimental investigation was undertaken after the focus groups. The sample for the qualitative was 40 respondents in total and the quantitative was 360 respondents in total. A model for calculating the influence of fear appeal on behaviour was built based on the results of the experimental study as well as information from the literature. It is proposed that if a threatening stimulus (fear appeal) increases the level of fear experienced by individuals, and the coping

response is effective in removing the fear while the individual is capable of doing so, the stimulus will be effective in altering the individual's attitude toward the stimulus and behavioural intent. Susceptibility and severity, which are threat assessment variables, will thus impact behavioural change indirectly through the interceding variable - fear, but response efficacy, self-efficacy, and coping appraisal variables will influence behavioural change directly and will have a moderating effect on determining individuals' responses to fear appeals.

As a result, he concluded that fear appeals, when combined with high-efficacy messaging, can be a powerful motivator for improving understanding and changing attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS. Adolescents' susceptibility to the disease has an impact on their behaviour. The SEM model's findings revealed a causal link between susceptibility and fear, with susceptibility having the biggest impact on fear. Concerning this research study, the susceptibility of the audience to blockage of SIMs if not linked with their NINs should influence a coping response.

In a study put forth by Long-Yi (2011) on *"The Impact of Advertising Appeals and Advertising Spokesperson Advertising Attitudes and Purchase Intentions"*, 450 questionnaire was distributed to the University students of Taiwan. He found out that rational appeal / free will creates a marketing approach that is better than emotional appeal because it appears to provide information overtly and directly related to a product, and it attracts consumers' attention more easily and generates a better advertising attitude. He, therefore, arrived at the hypothesis that in comparison to emotional appeal, rational appeal has a greater favourable impact on advertising attitudes. It is therefore noteworthy that the emotional appeal concerning this research paper is the negative emotional appeal – fear appeal. In the result from Long-Yi's study, the hypothesis was

maintained. About this research study, the free will advertisement /rational appeal advertisement appears to be more effective as it is more explicit in its content.

Another study put forth by Asemah et al (2013) on "*Audience perception of the Portrayal of Women in Advertising*" sought to establish how the female gender perceives themselves in advertising. The fact that every individual has varying perceptions was the rationale for this study. The survey research design was used, applying the questionnaire instrument. Women are unfavourably presented in television advertising, according to the findings of the respondents. More importantly, the data suggest that women are dissatisfied with the way they are represented in television commercials. The conclusion was that women find the way they are represented in television advertisements to be bad. As a result, the article recommends that women be portrayed in a positive light when advertising items.

Gjalt-Jorn *et al* (2013) in their study "*Threatening Communication: A Critical Re-analysis and a Revised Meta-Analytic Test of Fear Appeal Theory*", opined that fear appeals only operate when both efficacy and threat are sufficiently high, according to the theory. Base levels of efficacy and threat, however, vary between individuals. Individuals can be unresponsive (low threat, low efficacy), avoidant (high threat, low efficacy), proactive (low threat, high efficacy), or responsive (low threat, high efficacy) to any given behaviour (high threat, high efficacy). This baseline effectiveness and hazard values, of course, vary by population. Self-efficacy can range from low to high for any given behaviour-population combination. Their study combines the main elements of cognitive assessment and functional theories of emotions to understand how the two threat-related emotions, fear, and anxiety, can mediate the threat and coping appraisal processes and thus lead to adaptive responses to fear appeals. It is pertinent to note that we are not only talking about

fear when we talk about threat-related emotions; anxiety is also a potentially significant emotion. Just as in the instance of the NIMC advertisement, everyone that has a SIM card is vulnerable to a high threat of having their SIMs blocked. But those who have not linked their SIM cards to their NIN are more susceptible to the threat posed by the NIMC than those who have linked theirs. And this, in one way or the other, influences their response to the advert.

D’Hooge et al (2015) conducted a study on *“The Effectiveness of Threat Appeals in Commercial Advertising: The moderating impact of product type”*. The study employed the experimental research method to see how successful threat appeals in commercials are at changing people's perceptions of the ad and their willingness to buy it. Hedonic and utilitarian products were evaluated to see if product type had a moderating effect on threat appeal effectiveness. The experimental investigation found that an ad with a threat appeal elicited a much greater attitude toward the ad and buy intention than a similar ad without a threat appeal. As a result, it was suggested that the threat appeal's positive effect is larger for utilitarian products than for hedonic products.

SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Title of Publication	Year of Publication	Name of Authors	Methodology Used	Result and Recommendation
The Influence of Involvement on Information Processing of Rational Advertising Appeals	2009	ZHOU et al	ELM and FCB Grid model	It was concluded that as the degree of personal participation or product involvement increased, the participants were able to access more advertisement information. It was therefore proposed that rational advertising appeal be used primarily for the communication of high-

				product-involvement products, which could only be effective if personal involvement was likewise high
The Effect of Fear Appeal HIV/AIDS Social Marketing on behaviour	2010	Marlize	Focus Group Discussion and Experimental methods	He concluded that fear appeals, when combined with high efficacy messaging, can be a powerful motivator for improving understanding and changing attitudes. He, therefore, recommended that the messages should have a high level of threat to ensure their effectiveness.
The Impact of Advertising Appeals and Advertising Spokesperson Advertising Attitudes and Purchase Intentions	2011	Yong-Li	Survey-Questionnaire	He arrived at the hypothesis that rational appeal has a more significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes than emotional appeal. It is therefore noteworthy that the emotional appeal related to this research paper is the negative emotional appeal – fear appeal. He further recommended that organisations should determine the types and attributes of a product instead of immediately emphasizing consumers' dependence on emotions.
Audience perception of the Portrayal of Women in Advertising	2013	Asemah et al	Survey-Questionnaire	The conclusion was that women find the way they are portrayed in television advertisements to be bad; as a result, the article recommends that women be portrayed in a positive light when advertising items; because there is already a stereotypical perception of the portrayal of women in advertising which can only

				be changed if they are being portrayed well.
Threatening Communication: A Critical Re-analysis and a Revised Meta-Analytic Test of Fear Appeal Theory	2013	Gjalt-Jorn <i>et al</i>	Meta-Analysis	Fear appeals only operate when both efficacy and threat are sufficiently high
The Effectiveness of Threat Appeals in Commercial Advertising: The moderating impact of product type	2015	D'Hooge <i>et al</i>	Experimental Research method	The experimental investigation found that an ad with a threat appeal elicited a much greater attitude toward the ad and buy intention than a similar ad without a threat appeal. As a result, it was suggested that the threat appeal's positive effect is larger for utilitarian products than for hedonic products.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of an advertising appeal depends on the intent of the advertiser. If the advertiser has authority and wants to influence an action that includes susceptibility and vulnerability to disease, fear appeal ads could suit best. Free will ads are also very realistic, as proven in the self-perception theory. Once an individual is committed to the previous instruction of an advert, he can move further to do the exact action required by the advert.

Therefore, the advertising appeal that best suits the call to action of every advertisement should be employed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the adopted method of data collection for the research study. It examines the instruments of the selected research design and reasons for such selection. It also states what it takes in selecting the study population and the reduction to its sampling size for ease of the research process.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design adopted for this study is a descriptive survey design. It makes use of the responses gotten, to arrive at a reasonable conclusion as regards the subject investigated. The survey is a very cost-effective way of finding out what people do, think and want (Mathers *et al*, 2009).

3.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In the course of this research, the instrument adopted was the structured questionnaire, which was distributed to the respondents in Google form via an online format. The Questionnaire was used because it is suitable for accessing the perceptions of the selected audience. The questionnaire is an instrument that is designed to gather the information that will be subjected to further analysis. It has been well validated and tested for reliability, and there may well be normative data available as a baseline for you to compare your results with (Mathers *et al*, 2009).

3.3 STUDY POPULATION

The researcher's study population consists of Mountain Top University Undergraduate students from 100 to 500 level, which is **1,385** (MTU Academic Affairs, 2021).

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

In calculating the sample size, Taro Yamane's formula with a 95% confidence level was used.

Taro Yamane's formula :

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = Sample size

N = Total Population

e = Sampling error (which is usually 0.05)

Now, substituting the values into the formula:

$$n = \frac{1385}{1+1385(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1385}{1+1385(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1385}{4.4625}$$

$$n = 310$$

Therefore, the sample size is 310.

Since the total population of MTU students is **1,385** then the sample size is 310. Therefore, questionnaires were distributed to the students and the required **310** responses were used by the researcher for the analysis.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The researcher employed the **convenience sampling method**, due to the fact that all 1,385 students have e-mails. There are 2,770 e-mails of students which comprises 1,385 institutional mails and 1,385 alternative mails (MTU Web Developer, 2021). The Web Developer of the university offered a database of their institutional and alternative email addresses. The availability of the database of the students' mails made it convenient for the researcher to distribute the questionnaire.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The questions were structured and the questionnaire was distributed online to over 1,300 students through their mails. Due to the sample size stated, the researcher extracted the data gotten from the first 310 respondents, which was thereafter analysed.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The instrument used for this research was verified by experienced professionals in the department, who declared it most suitable for the objectives stated.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is centred on the discussion of the data gathered and its analysis. The analysis and findings are from the result of the 310 questionnaire items which were completed by MTU students, who expressed their different perceptions on the NIMC advertisements. The different perceptions obtained are presented in the following tables and thereafter, the discussion of findings. The demographic data of the respondents were analysed to provide an insight into the type of respondents who participated in the study. Other sections of the data analysis were done in line with the research objectives.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1.A. Response Rate

The researcher targeted 310 respondents based on the sample size. The questionnaire was distributed online to over 1,300 students through their e-mails, within the period of 10 days. Due to the sample size stated, the researcher extracted the data from the first 310 respondents, making a **100%** response rate.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The study looked into the demographic profile of the respondents by establishing the gender of the respondents, their levels and colleges in school. The findings are discussed subsequently.

Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	133	42.9%
Female	177	57.1%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis. 2021

Table 4.1

The Table 4.1 above revealed that 133 (42.9%) of the respondents were male, while 177 (57.1%) of the respondents were female. This shows that the females have a higher percentage of participation.

Table 4.2: Levels of Respondents

LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
100	75	24.2%
200	77	24.8%
300	78	25.2%
400	76	24.5%
500	4	1.3%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2021

Table 4.2

From Table 4.2, the demographic data for level shows that 75 (24.2%) of the respondents are at the 100 level, 77 (24.8%) are at the 200 level, 78 (25.2%) are at the 300 level, 76 (24.5%) are at the 400 level and 4 (1.3%) are at the 500 level. The result shows that students across all levels participated in the research. The responses gotten from the 500 level are lower than the other levels because the 500 level students have the least population of just 6 students, which is 0.4% of the total population.

Table 4.3 College of Respondents

COLLEGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
CBAS	121	39%
CHMS	189	61%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2021

Table 4.3

The demographic data in Table 4.3 summarizes the colleges where respondents belong. The result shows that the College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS) has 121 respondents while the College of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences (CHMS) has 189 respondents. With this, we have 61% of respondents from the CHMS, which is beneficial to the researcher because the subject under study is social science related.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Table 4.4: Respondents' Awareness of the NIMC Advertisements

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	242	78.1%
No	38	12.3%
Maybe	30	9.7%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2021

Table 4.4

From Table 4.4, we have 242 respondents who confirmed their knowledge of the NIMC advertisements on NIN SIM linkage. 38 of them are not aware of the NIMC advertisements, while 30 of them are indecisive. As a result, we have 78.1% of the respondents who are knowledgeable about the NIMC advertisements on NIN SIM linkage.

Table 4.5: Respondents' exposure to the NIN SIM linkage Advertisement on TV

EXPOSURE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very well	88	28.5%
Averagely	118	38.2%
Not so well	75	24.3%
Not at all	28	9.1%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2021

Table 4.5

Table 4.5 shows that we have 88 respondents who said they have come across the NIMC advertisement on TV very well. 118 of them said they have come across it averagely. 75 of them have not really come across it, while 28 of them have not come across it at all. Going by this, there are 28.5% of respondents who have come across the advertisement very well. Those who have come across it on an average level have a percentage of 38.2%.

Table 4.6: Respondents' exposure to the NIN SIM linkage Advertisement by Telecommunications network

EXPOSURE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very well	185	59.8%
Averagely	69	22.2%
Not so well	44	14.1%
Not at all	12	3.9%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2021

Table 4.6

Table 4.6 shows that we have 185 respondents who have come across the NIMC advertisement on their Telecommunications networks very well. 69 of them have come across it averagely, 44 of them have not really come across it, while 12 of them have not come across it at all. Going by this, there are 59.8% of respondents that have come across the advertisement very well, which shows

that most of the respondents were exposed to the advertisements through telecommunications networks more than TV.

Table 4.7: Respondents’ perception of the necessity of the advertisement

NECESSITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
It was necessary for security purposes	168	54.3%
It was necessary before phone calls were made	75	24.3%
It was necessary before text messages were sent	21	6.9%
It was necessary before JAMB registration was made	45	14.5%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2021

Table 4.7

The result in Table 4.7 shows that 168 of the respondents deem the NIMC advertisement on NIN SIM linkage necessary for security purposes. It constitutes 54.3% of the sample size.

Table 4.8: Respondents’ perception of the usefulness of the NIMC Telecommunications advertisement

USEFULNESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
It was useful because it reminded me to link my SIM number with my NIN	180	58.2%
It was useful because it gave me the code when I forgot my NIN	73	23.7%
It was not useful to me at all	56	18.1%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2021

Table 4.8

Table 4.8 shows that 180 of the respondents are of the perception that the NIMC telecommunications networks advertisement was useful because it reminded them to link their

SIM numbers with their NIN. This number of respondents constitutes 58.2% of the sample size. This shows that the advertisement was useful to a great extent.

Table 4.9: Respondents’ perception of the usefulness of the NIMC TV advertisement

USEFULNESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
It was useful because it threatened that my SIM will be blocked if I didn’t link it with my NIN	160	51.5%
It was useful because it reminded me to link my SIM number with my NIN	106	34.2%
It was not useful to me at all	44	14.3%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2021

Table 4.9

The result from Table 4.9 shows that 106 of the respondents deemed it useful as it reminded them to link their SIM numbers with their NINs; 160 of the respondents (taking a percentage of 51.5%) attested to the fact that the TV advert threatened to block unlinked SIM cards, and only a few (taking a percentage of 14.3) of them said it was not useful at all. This shows that the advertisement was useful to some extent.

Table 4.10: Respondents’ attitude to the NIMC telecommunication network Ads

REACTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
I read/listen to it attentively	69	22.1%
I seek further enquiries	56	18.2%
I follow up on the advert	39	12.7%
I adhere as stated in the advert	46	14.9%
I ignore the advert	100	32.1%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2021

Table 4.10

The result in Table 4.10 shows that 100 respondents (constituting 32.1%) ignore the advert on their telecommunication networks. 22.1% of the audience, constituting 69 of all the respondents,

read/listened attentively. This explains why, despite its usefulness, respondents still ignore the advert.

Table 4.11: Respondents’ attitude towards the NIMC TV Ads

REACTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
I watch it actively	53	17.2%
I ignore it	121	38.6%
I change the station immediately	45	14.6%
I seek further enquiries	39	12.7%
I follow up on the message	25	8.1%
I adhere as stated	27	8.8%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2021

Table 4.11

The result in Table 4.11 shows that 121 of the respondents, constituting 38.6% of the audience, ignore the advert placed on TV.

Table 4.12: Respondents’ reaction towards the NIMC telecommunication network advertisement

REASONS FOR RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
I took action on the advert because the advert didn’t bombard me with a deadline before the blockage of SIMs	68	21.8%
I took action on the advert because it provided me with a code to retrieve my NIN	72	23.1%
I took action on the advert because I felt it was necessary	111	35.8%
I didn’t take any action on it	59	19.2%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2021

Table 4.12

Table 4.12 examined why respondents responded to the NIMC telecommunication network ads. The result shows that 111 (35.8%), constituting a majority of the respondents, responded to the NIMC telecommunication network ads because they felt it was necessary. 72 of them responded

because it provided them with a code to retrieve their NINs; 68 responded because the advert didn't bombard them with the deadline for blockage of SIMs, and 59 of them didn't take any action on it.

Table 4.13: Respondents' reaction towards the NIMC TV advertisement

REASONS FOR RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
I took action on the advert when I heard the deadline for the linkage	66	21.3%
I took action on the advert because of the threat to block unlinked SIM cards	88	28.5%
I took action on the advert because I felt it was necessary	76	24.3%
I didn't take any action on it	80	25.9%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2021

Table 4.13

Table 4.13 examined why respondents responded to the NIMC TV advert. The result shows that 88 respondents responded to the advertisement because of the threat to block unlinked SIM cards; 80 of them didn't take any action on it; 76 of them felt it was necessary, and 66 of them responded when they heard the deadline for the linkage.

Table 4.14: Semantics of the NIMC Advertisements

STATEMENTS	RESPONSES					TOTAL
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
The statement “blockage of SIMs” in the NIMC TV advertisement was a threat to the audience	163	90	34	15	08	310
The threat made the TV advertisement fearful	85	123	64	25	13	310
The statement “forgot your NIN, dial *346#” in the NIMC telecommunications network advert directed you to link your SIM number	125	99	60	19	07	310
The direction in the telecommunication network advert was more appealing to you	90	123	61	20	16	310

Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2021**Table 4.14**

Table 4.14 presents the confirmation of four statements about the semantics (tone and meaning) of the NIMC adverts on TV and telecommunications networks. It answers the third research question of this research study. For the first two questions, 163 respondents strongly agree and 123 agree that the words used in the NIMC TV advert were fearful. For the last two statements, 125 respondents strongly agree and 123 agree that the words used in the telecommunication network advertisement were more appealing to the respondents.

This shows that the audience perception is in line with the content analysis done on the two different advertisements in Chapter 2 of this research study.

Table 4.15: Perceptions of the audience on the effectiveness of the NIMC free will advertisement by telecommunication networks compared to its fear appeal advertisement on TV

NECESSITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Fear appeal ads on TV was more effective	57	28.1%
Free will ads by Telecommunications networks was more effective	140	45.2%
Both were effective	87	28.1%
None was effective	26	8.4%
TOTAL	310	100%

Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2021

Table 4.15

Table 4.15 shows that 18.4% of the audience selected fear appeal ads on TV as the most effective. 42.5% of the audience had the perception that the NIMC free will advertisement was more effective. Although 28.1% chose both, the option with more responses from the audience was the free will advertisement by telecommunications networks, bringing us to the conclusion that the free will advertisement was more effective.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

RQ 1: What are the perceptions of the audience about the usefulness of the NIMC free will advertisement compared to its fear appeal advertisement?

It was first established that the audience knew about the NIMC advertisements on NIN SIM linkage, thereby having a good percentage of them qualified for the subject discussed. From the results gotten from the comparison, most of them have come across the NIMC advertisement on telecommunications more than they have on TV.

About the usefulness of the advertisement, Table 4.8 shows that 253 of the 310 respondents said the Free Will advertisement by the telecommunications networks was useful, with only 57 saying it wasn't useful at all. Table 4.9 shows that 266 of the 310 respondents said that the Fear appeal ads on TV was useful, with only 44 saying they weren't useful at all.

Therefore, the conclusion of the researcher as regards the usefulness of the advertisement is that the selected audience find the NIMC advertisement on NIN SIM linkage useful. This relates to Ajit et al's (2003) study on Consumers' Attention to the Brief Summary in Print Direct-to-Consumer Advertisements: Perceived Usefulness in Patient-Physician Discussions which hypothesized that advertisements are useful to consumers if their contents affect their daily lives

RQ 2: To what extent did the audience respond to the NIMC free will advertisement in comparison with the fear appeal advertisement?

The second research question sought to compare the extent to which the audience responded to the NIMC free will advertisement and fear appeal advertisement. The following tables (Table 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.13) questioned the respondents based on this subject. To access this, there was first a

question on respondents' reaction when they see the NIMC telecommunication network advert. And based on the result, the audiences tend to ignore the advert, although they term it useful. The next question was on respondents' reaction when they come across the NIMC TV advert. And based on the result, the audience tend to ignore the advert, although they term it useful. This fact relates to Changizi's (2008) assertion in his study on Effects of Unconscious Exposure to Advertisements that more than three exposures to an advertisement could lead to a negative attitude from the audience.

The third and fourth questions were centered on why respondents took action on the NIMC telecommunications network and TV advert. The result showed that the audience was prompted to respond to the advertisement because they felt it was necessary.

Therefore, it can be said that although the audience ignored the adverts on both platforms, they still responded to them because they felt it was necessary.

RQ 3: What are the perceptions of the audience of the semantics used in the NIMC free will advertisement compared to the fear appeal advertisement?

This research question is summarised under the five-point Likert scale represented in Table 4.14. It sought to establish the tone and meaning of the language used in the NIMC adverts on the two platforms. Four questions were asked under this research question. The first two were on the semantics of the NIMC TV advert; while the last two were on the semantics of the NIMC advert by telecommunications networks.

The result from the first two questions shows that the respondents agreed that the NIMC advertisement on TV was a fear appeal ad. The result from the last two questions shows that the audience agreed that the NIMC advertisement by telecommunications network was a free will ad.

RQ 4: What are the perceptions of the audience about the effectiveness of the NIMC free will advertisement in comparison with its fear appeal advertisement?

Finally, the researcher sought to compare the audience perception of the effectiveness of the NIMC advertisement on TV and telecommunications networks. Although previous questions have sought their perceptions of the usefulness, their reactions, and the semantics of the advertisements, it is necessary to know which of the advertisements was more effective.

The result shows that 45.2% said the NIMC free will advertisement by telecommunications network was more effective compared to the fear appeal ad on TV which took just 18.4%.

With this, we can conclude that the NIMC free will advertisement by telecommunications network was more effective than the fear appeal advertisement.

RELATED TO LITERATURE

The result of this research can be related to a study put forth by Long-Yi (2011) on "*The Impact of Advertising Appeals and Advertising Spokesperson Advertising Attitudes and Purchase Intentions*". He arrived at the hypothesis that when compared to emotional appeal, rational/free will appeal has a more beneficial impact on advertising attitudes. It is therefore noteworthy that the emotional appeal concerning this research paper is the negative emotional appeal – fear appeal. In the result from Long-Yi's study, the hypothesis was maintained. Concerning this research study,

the free will advertisement /rational appeal advertisement appeared to be more effective as it is more explicit in its content.

RELATED TO THE PERCEPTION THEORY

The result of this research can be related to the Perception Theory, which states that audiences have varying perceptions of things based on their psychological needs. Therefore, despite the inclusion of fear in the NIMC advertisements, the audience still deems the free will advert more effective; where they are free to react and make decisions based on their needs. In our world today, people do not want to be forced to do things. They prefer doing things that are related to their needs.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a detailed description of the findings under the following headings: summary of the study and findings, conclusion, recommendations, and limitations of the study.

5.1 SUMMARY

The study on audience perception of NIMC advertisements on the electronic media: Free will vs fear appeal ads, aimed to examine the actions of the selected audience towards the advertisements placed on TV and Telecommunications networks. It has been observed that the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) played up advertisements on TV and telecommunications networks for the audience to link their SIM numbers with their NINs. The audience was thereby questioned about what they felt about the two advertisements and which was more effective.

To achieve the research objectives, the researcher employed the quantitative research method by conducting a survey, thereby adopting the use of a questionnaire to access the opinions of the selected audience concerning the subject. The audience selected was Mountain Top University students; 310 responses were taken via the Google forms questionnaire.

Chapter One gives us an introduction to advertising and its various forms. It introduced the NIMC from its inception till now, and what instigated their advertisements on the linkage of SIM numbers with National Identification Numbers (NINs). The researcher also explored the general knowledge of advertising appeals as it assigned prominence to the fear appeal and free-will advertising, which

is the main focus of the study. The chapter thereafter established the objectives of the research study; understanding was also made possible by the operational definition of terms.

In Chapter Two, the researcher simplified the subject by breaking down the concepts that are associated with the study. Subsequently, the chapter reviewed past literature which is essential to the study and also connected to it. Furthermore, related theories were defined and their relativity to the research was pointed out. The researcher made use of two theories, which are the Fear Appeal Theory and the Perception Theory. While the former explains how individuals are more affected by content in the media that has a high threat, the latter explains how individuals have varying perceptions of things irrespective of the circumstances.

Chapter three tells us about the research methodology employed in the process of the research. As stated earlier, the quantitative research method was employed and questionnaires were set online via Google forms and were distributed through mails. The target population and sample size were also explained in the chapter.

The fourth chapter centred on the analysis of the data that was gathered from the respondents. The researcher was able to access the opinions of the audience with the questionnaire. Afterwards, all their responses were collected and presented in tables. This chapter analysed, interpreted, and discussed the findings of the research.

Chapter five discussed the summary of the whole project; the conclusion and the researcher's recommendation concerning the use of advertising appeal to suit advertising purposes.

Summary of Result

The result of the research showed that the audience did not regard the fear appeal advertisements of the NIMC on NIN SIM linkage on TV as they imposed a threat on them. They believe that every individual has varying choices which should not be influenced by threats. They, therefore, preferred the free-will advertisement of the NIMC by the telecommunications network, because it was more rational and didn't threaten them.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study has proven that while the NIMC advertisement on TV had a high threat, the audience was not moved to link their SIM numbers with their NINs. But the advertisement by telecommunications networks was more effective on the audience as there was no threat added, and the repetition of the advert registered it in their minds, making them link their SIM numbers with their NINs.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher believes that audience response to advertisements is a thing of choice. Audience actions should not be influenced by the imposition of a threat, except in cases of susceptibility to one's physical body, health, and life. Organisations should understand the motive behind their advertisements and thereby be aware of the fact that individuals have varying choices and perceptions which should not be influenced by any manner of threat.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited because the researcher narrowed down the media of advertisements to TV and telecommunications networks, and was not able to review different forms of media of the NIMC advertisements. Also, the research was limited because the researcher could not contact the NIMC organisation on the response of the audience to the linkage of their SIM numbers with their NINs.

For further research, other researchers can therefore expand the scope of the study to cover other forms of media such as Twitter, Facebook, etc. Also, the NIMC organisation can be contacted to evaluate the effect of the advertisements in terms of audience responses.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

**TOPIC: AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF NIMC ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE
ELECTRONIC MEDIA: FREE WILL VS FEAR APPEAL ADS**

Dear respondent,

My name is Ogaleye Mercy; a final year student of the Department of Mass Communication, Mountain Top University. I am currently researching on Audience Perception of NIMC Advertisements on the Electronic Media: Free Will Vs Fear Appeal Ads, from November 2020 to January 2021.

The questionnaire below is an instrument of the research which is in partial fulfilment of my B. Sc programme. Kindly fill it out correctly. Please note that your honest answer is expected and will be appreciated. The researchers will make use of these responses only for the research in question.

Thanks for your anticipated response.

SECTION A (BIODATA)

This section requires that you fill in your biodata, please tick correctly.

1. What's your gender?

Male Female

2. What level are you?

100 200 300 400 500

3. What's your college?

CBAS CHMS

Audience Awareness

4. Do you have an idea of the NIMC advertisement about NIN SIM linkage?
 Yes No Maybe
5. How well did you come across the NIMC advertisement of NIN SIM number linkage on TV?
 Very well Averagely Not so well Not at all
6. How well did you come across the NIMC advertisement of NIN SIM number linkage by your telecommunication networks (MTN, Airtel, 9mobile, and Globacom)?
 Very well Averagely Not so well Not at all

SECTION B

RQ 1: What are the perceptions of the audience on the usefulness of the NIMC free will advertisement compared to its fear appeal advertisement?

7. The linkage of SIM numbers with NIN was necessary
- For security purposes
 - Before phone calls were made
 - Before text messages were made
 - Before any JAMB registration was made
8. NIMC telecommunications network advertisement was
- Useful because it reminded me to link my SIM number with my NIN
 - Useful because it gave me the code when I forgot my NIN
 - It was not useful to me at all
9. NIMC TV advertisement
- Threatened that my SIM will be blocked if I didn't link it with my NIN
 - Was useful because it reminded me to link my SIM number with my NIN
 - It was not useful to me at all

SECTION C

RQ 2: To what extent did the audience respond to the NIMC free will advertisement in comparison with the fear appeal advertisement?

10. What do you do when the NIMC free will advertisement is introduced by your telecommunication network?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| I read/listen to it attentively | <input type="checkbox"/> | I ignore the advert | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I seek further enquiries | <input type="checkbox"/> | I follow up on the message | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I adhere as stated in the advert | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

11. I took action on the NIMC telecommunication network advert

- Because the advert didn't bombard me with a deadline before the blockage of SIMs
- Because it provided me with a code to retrieve my NIN
- Because I felt it was necessary
- I didn't take any action on it

12. What do you do when the NIMC fear appeal advertisement comes up on TV?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I watch it actively | <input type="checkbox"/> | I ignore it | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I change the station immediately | <input type="checkbox"/> | I seek further enquiries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I follow up on the message | <input type="checkbox"/> | I adhere to it as stated | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. I took action on the NIMC TV advert

- When I heard the deadline for the linkage
- Because of the threat to block unlinked SIM cards
- Because I felt it was necessary
- I didn't take any action on it

SECTION D

RQ 3: What are the perceptions of the audience on the semantics used in the NIMC free will advertisement compared to the fear appeal advertisement?

As regards the table below, **SA** in full means Strongly Agree, **A** means Agree, **UN** means Undecided, **D** means Disagree and **SD** means Strongly Disagree

QUESTIONS	SA	A	UN	D	SD
14. The statement “blockage of SIMs” in the NIMC TV advertisement was a threat to the audience					
15. The threat made the TV advertisement fearful					
16. The statement “forgot your NIN, dial *346#” in the NIMC telecommunications network advert directed you to link your SIM number					
17. The direction in the telecommunication network advert was more appealing to you					

SECTION E

RQ 4: What are the perceptions of the audience on the effectiveness of the NIMC free will advertisement in comparison with its fear appeal advertisement?

18. Which of the NIMC advertisements prompted you to link your SIM number with your NIN?

- Fear appeal ads on TV
- Free will ads by telecommunications networks
- Both
- I wasn't moved by any of the advertisements

19. Which of the NIMC advertisements do you prefer?

- Fear appeal ads on TV
- Free will ads by telecommunications networks
- Both
- None of the above

20. Which of the NIMC advertisements do you think was more effective?

- Fear appeal ads on TV None of the above
- Free will ads by telecommunications networks
- Both