

UDC: 659.148.4:159.922

**DRAMA AND COMMUNICATION IN TELEVISION
ADVERTISING: A STUDY OF MTN’S “SUNRISE” AND
INDOMIE NOODLE’S “MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER
PLACE”**

Ekeanyanwu, Nnamdi Tobechukwu, PhD

Senior Lecturer and Director, Department of Mass Communication, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

Igwe Chigemezu

(B.Sc [Hons] Mass Communication)

Angela Osarieme Igbinoba

Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The paper examines audience perception of the effectiveness of drama in television advertisements/commercials and how this aids audience recall, retention and its impact on patronage. From the results, 78.5% of the respondents agree that “Sunrise” actually communicates MTN’s message of love while 87.5% of the respondents said that Indomie Noodle’s message of sharing was well understood. Despite these positive responses, 75% of the respondents state that “Sunrise” did not endear them to MTN products while 68% said that the “Make the World a Better Place” did not also influence them to buy Indomie noodles. These responses contradict the position of MTN and Indomie firms’ position that more profits accrued to them during the period of running both adverts (commercials).

Keywords: Drama, Viewers, Perception, Television, Advertising, Commercial, MTN, Indomie Noodles, Communication.

Drama and Communication in Television Advertising: A Study of MTN’s “*Sunrise*” And Indomie Noodle’s “*Make the World a Better Place*”

From our first cry at birth, our existence depends on our ability to inform others or persuade them to take some action which ordinarily they will not do. As we develop, we also learn to listen and respond to others’ messages (Arens, 2004:8). Have you ever wondered why Beauty’s disgust for the Beast turned to love? Why Cinderella felt more beautiful when she was in the presence of the Prince? How the Queen was able to persuade Snow White to eat the poisoned apple? How the villagers got so attracted to the Pied Piper of Hamelin that they willingly became his followers thereby abandoning their village in the process? The answer is that these timeless tales and characters illustrate the simplicity, complexity and potency of communication which is at the heart of advertising, and therefore the importance of drama as a necessary tool for effective communication in television commercials cannot be overlooked.

In this day and age, it would indeed be a miracle to go through a day without coming in contact with advertising whether directly or indirectly (Mackay, 2005). The inclination to reach out and touch everyone living and working in today’s modern world through successful communication is the mould from which advertising is cast. In every advertisement, the message, which constitutes the words and images that combine together to influence people’s opinion regarding a product, service or idea is the sine qua non to how effective that advert will be. Devoid of words and images, advertising becomes a meaningless profession. Messages then, are the juice of advertising and communication is its crux and its very essence (Mitchell, N. Moriarty, S. & Wells, W., 2009).

We would not be in the wrong therefore to say that advertising is communication - a very special one at that. Even McCann-Erikson, the ad agency for Coca-Cola and MasterCard as quoted by Arens (2004: 8) agrees that advertising is “Truth well told.” This means that ethical advertisers, and the agencies they employ, work as a team to discover and use the best methods possible to tell their story truthfully and creatively to the marketplace. To succeed they must understand the elements of the advertising communication process, which is derived from the basic human communication process.

Barbara Stern of Rutgers University as quoted by Arens (2004) sees advertising as a form of structured, literary text, rather different from the spontaneous, word-of-mouth communication of oral speech. She proposes a more sophisticated communication model, derived from the traditional oral one but applied specifically to advertising as *composed*

commercial text rather than informal speech. The Stern model recognizes that in advertising, the source, the message, and the receiver all have multiple dimensions. Some of these dimensions exist in the real world; others exist on a different level of reality – a virtual world within the text of the advertising message itself (Mackay, 2005).

The types of messages typically communicated in advertising may also be multidimensional. As artful imitations of life, advertising messages typically use one or a blend of three literary forms: autobiography, narrative, or drama. In autobiographical messages, “I” tell a story about myself to “you”, the imaginary audience eavesdropping on my private personal experience. Other ads use narrative messages in which a third-person persona tells a story about others to an imagined audience. Finally, in the drama message, the characters act out events directly in front of an imagined empathetic audience. The drama form presents a series of events whose information and sequencing combine to imply a message and require the viewer to connect the sequences, thereby experiencing the message rather than having been told.

The receivers of the advertising message are also multidimensional because they are made up of the implied, sponsorial and the actual consumers. The implied consumers are the presumed audience usually addressed by the ad’s persona within the text. The sponsorial consumers are the gatekeepers (the company or organization) who must be convinced by the advertising agency that the ad will be profitable before it goes public. The actual consumers on the other hand are real life people who are the target public of the organization.

Thus the advertiser and his creative team are always concerned about how the real or actual consumers digest the message because the last thing an advertiser wants is to be misunderstood. Unfortunately, message interpretation is only partially determined by the words and symbols in the ad. The medium used may have an effect as well. As Marshall McLuhan (cited in Arens 2004) said, “The Medium is the message.” This is the reason why many companies prefer to advertise through the television medium.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out the viewers perception of the use of drama and communication in television advertising. Specifically, the study objectives include:

1. To determine the perception of the media audience on how the use of drama in television advertising influences audience recall and retention.

2. To explore the concept of television advertising and how drama enhances its communication element.
3. To evaluate the role of drama in communicating Mobile Telecommunications Network's (MTN) and Indomie Noodle's messages in "*Sunrise*" and "*Make the World a Better Place*" ads respectively.
4. To determine if dramatic compositions embedded in adverts can effectively mirror society.
5. To present the forms of drama embedded in "*Sunrise*" and "*Make the World a Better Place*" through the analytical method.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do media audience perceive the use of drama in television advertising as a factor that influences recall and retention?
2. How does the element of drama enhance television advertising?
3. How do viewers evaluate the dramatic role in MTN's '*Sunrise*' and Indomie Noodle's '*Make the World a Better Place*'?
4. Do dramatic compositions embedded in adverts an effective mirror of society?
5. What are the forms of drama embedded in MTN's '*Sunrise*' and Indomie Noodle's '*Make the World a Better Place*'?

Scope of the Study

This study focused on the role of drama and communication in television advertisement using Mobile Telecommunications Network's (MTN) '*Sunrise*' and Indomie Noodles' '*Make the World a Better Place*' as case studies. The study is therefore limited to the perception television audiences have on dramatic and communicative elements used in television advertising. The media audience in question are undergraduate students of Covenant University and University of Lagos (all in Nigeria) who our pilot study revealed are media literate and customers of both MTN and Indomie Noodles respectively. Furthermore, the study will also involve a thorough analysis of '*Sunrise*' and '*Make the World a Better Place*' in order to explore the dramatic and communicative elements embedded in both adverts. In addition to this, the study will also evaluate the overall success of the advertising in relation to revenue increase through interviews with the Marketing Departments of the aforementioned companies.

Literature and Theoretical Review

Drama is used to create awareness in television advertising. Advertisers have seen the need to communicate to its audiences through the use of drama in their television advertising because of its ability to effect change in people by bringing reality on screen. In the creation of a television advertisement, after the idea/theme has been established, a script writer is essential and the casting is dependent on the director whose responsibility is to artistically realise the script. Sometimes the television advertisement may not contain dialogue; it may just be an expression of dance depending on the director's picture in his mind as he works with other members of the production team.

Brecht (1977) the great theoretician was the first to highlight the need for drama to be “quotable” and to convey the message by easily remembered and reproduced phrases, gestures, and images. His idea that the essence of each scene should be condensed in an instantly reproducible electronic system with sound vision and gestures, has found its perfect actualization in the dramaturgy of television advertising.

Television is a medium of considerable power and significance which plays a crucial role in most people's daily lives. Even though a generation has fully grown with it, yet television is still a relatively new technology. Modern day statistics have shown that few homes are without a television set, and some even own more than one, advertisers therefore see television as an imperative and impactful medium which takes products right into the homes where it will be seen by prospective buyers and other household members who influence purchase.

According to a recent study by Ball State University on the media consumption habits of average Americans, despite the Internet's steady rise in popularity over the last few years, television remains the dominant medium in most U.S. households. On average, the general population spends over four and a half hours a day in front of the tube, making TV watching one of the most common modern leisure activities (Research results reported in Ekeanyanwu, 2009). Many TV ads feature catchy jingles (songs or melodies) or catch-phrases (slogan) that generate sustained appeal, which may remain in the minds of television viewers long after the span of the advertising campaign.

Television advertising has become such a potent force that it has the power to create its own TV personalities and run its own soap operas and this add to the power of repetition and continuity to this form of advertising. Jefkins (2000: 98) supports this statement with this example:

In 1990 Nescafe Gold Blend began its sequence of 30-second advertising about a yuppie couple played by Sharon Maughan and Tony Head. It was rated the worst TV commercial of the year in 1990, but it sold more Gold Blend, and the series continued year after year. The advertising were converted into a 312-page paperback novel 'Love Over Gold' and published by Transworld. They printed 100,000 copies, significant since 50,000 sales mean a best-selling paperback.

With recourse to the aural visual power of television above, it is clear that what influences the audience most is the power of the image as portrayed on TV. This is why dramatic and communicative elements in TV advertising are of the very essence in order to aid audience recall and ultimately their retention, which advertisers hope will lead to patronage.

Advertising can therefore be understood as an ideological system that not only speaks about the world of commodities, but paints pictures of them. The fact is that even though advertising should be controlled yet it must be persuasive. In conclusion, television advertisement through its relationship with dramatic communication has been able to achieve its aim. To further buttress this point, Esslin (1982) believes that television advertising must not only be regarded as species of drama but it indeed comes very close to the basic forms of theatre, near its very roots.

The theory that has emerged in our discourse so far to help further argue our position is the Uses and Gratification theory which was first used by Elihu Katz in 1959. Most communication research up to this point was questioning, "What does the media do to people?" However, Katz suggested asking the question, "What do people do with media?" Nevertheless, the uses and gratification approach, within the Functionalist theory, shifted the focus from the purposes of the communication message to the purpose of the audience and opened the door to a modern understanding of mass communication (Mitchell, N. Moriarty, S. & Wells, W., 2009).

This theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. It says that users take an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use. The theorist says that a media user seeks out a media source that best fulfils the needs of the user. Uses and gratifications theory assume that the media

audience have alternate choices to satisfy their needs. Folarin (2005: 91) reinforces this statement in his assertion:

This theory perceives the recipient as actively influencing the effect process, since he selectively chooses, attends to, perceives and retains the media messages on the basis of his/her needs, beliefs etc. The focus was thus shifted from media production and transmission functions to the media consumption function. Instead of asking: “what kinds of effects occur under what conditions?” the question became: “Who uses which contents from which media under which conditions and for what reasons?”

The relationship between the Uses and Gratifications theory and viewers’ perception of the use of drama in television advertising, therefore, lie in the fact that since the individual has the power to select messages based on his taste, the advertiser must ensure that the advertisement clearly indicates the product/service effectiveness as well as other factors that is associated with the product in the most alluring, captivating and distinctive way and this can only be achieved through a creative blend of dramatic elements in advertising communication so as to convince the individual that he/she needs that message to fulfil a particular need thereby ensuring customer patronage and in the long run, moulding a brand from the product/service.

The link between the study and the uses and gratification theory is hinged on the fact that since the audience has an independent mind of its own in deciding its use of media products, the advertiser faces a greater challenge in ensuring an effective assembling of dramatic elements in a manner desirable and easily decodeable by the consumer. This is due to the fact that consumers under this theory are in the driver’s seat of the media vehicle and would only respond to advertising that are useful to them as well as being visually attractive and aesthetically unique. This is where drama becomes relevant in packaging adverts.

It is therefore sacrosanct to measure the viewers’ perception of “*Sunrise*” and “*Make the World a Better Place*” for the ultimate purpose of determining the level of importance of drama in television advertising as well as measuring the overall success of the case study campaigns as regards consumer perception. Supporting the position of the Uses and Gratification as a theory, the authors note that TV ads could only attract youths when such ads interest and entertain them. This is where dramatic elements, which enhance the attractiveness of ads, come in.

Method

To answer our research questions, multiple research methods were used, including a survey of the undergraduate students of Covenant University and the University of Lagos, all in Nigeria; interviews with the advertising agencies commissioned to run the campaigns of Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN)'s "*Sunrise*" and Indomie Noodles' "*Make the World a Better Place*"; the Marketing Managers of the company; and an in-depth analysis of "*Sunrise*" and "*Make the World a Better Place*" to present the forms of drama and communication in both case study adverts. The final analysis of results was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program software.

Data Collection

Data was collected from 1,820 respondents drawn from the survey population of 7,600 Covenant University students and about 10,600 University of Lagos students who are qualified to be in the study. This sample size represents about 10% of the total survey population who were administered the questionnaire designed for the study. The response rate of the questionnaire was 98%. The interview sessions involved two Senior Accounts Executives (one for each advertising agency that was involved in the production of the campaigns) and the Marketing Managers of MTN and Indomie Noodles.

The Senior Account Executives of S, O & U Saatchi & Saatchi and TBWA Concept, agencies that worked on the "*Sunrise*" and "*Make the World a Better Place*" campaigns respectively were interviewed on the dramatic composition of the adverts. The Marketing Managers were interviewed to determine the consumer patronage and reaction towards MTN products and Indomie Noodles after the campaigns started running while the forms and elements of drama in "*Sunrise*" and "*Make the World a Better Place*" were also critically analyzed.

The population of this study was so selected because of the primary targets of both adverts – the youths. The undergraduates of both selected universities are mostly youths between 14 and 28 years old. Covenant University is a private owned university with a Christian orientation while University of Lagos is a government owned university with secular orientation. The research instrument was administered to the sample that was randomly selected from the population of the students who fell within the age range of 14 and 28.

Results

The demographic statistics of the respondents suggests that 44% were males while the remaining 56% of the population were females. The age distribution also shows that 32% were within the ages of 14-18 years, while 67% were within the ages of 19-23 years. Only 1% fell within the 24-28 years old bracket. The authors also made sure that all the respondents for the survey are familiar with the sample adverts. This was the major criterion to participate as a respondent.

One of the major questions asked the respondents was intended to get information on their perception of the use of dramatic elements in the two adverts. The result shows that 90% agreed that they like the drama portrayed in both ads because such dramatic elements were able to attract them and also retained their interest throughout the duration of the adverts. To corroborate the results above, 78% of the respondents also said they felt the spirit of love due to the setting, mood and appearance of the actors in the “*Sunrise*” advert while 66% said that they were positively imparted by the message of sharing in “*Make the World a Better Place*” due to the setting, mood and cast employed in the advert. Another 90% also agreed that the dramatic forms used in both adverts enhanced the entertainment values of the adverts.

Not all adverts could easily be recalled due to the cluster of advertisements splashed across thousands of television screens every day. But in **Figures 1** and **2** below, 92.5% of the respondents were able to recall the “*Sunrise*” advert due to the conversational drama between Jerry and his girlfriend while the Indomie advert was remembered for its heartfelt music and dance by 93% of the total respondents.

FIGURE 1: AUDIENCE RECALL AND RETENTION OF 'SUNRISE' DUE TO ITS DRAMATIC QUALITY

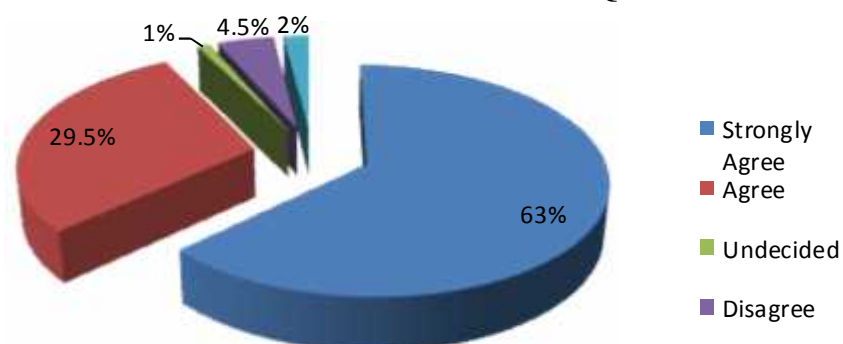
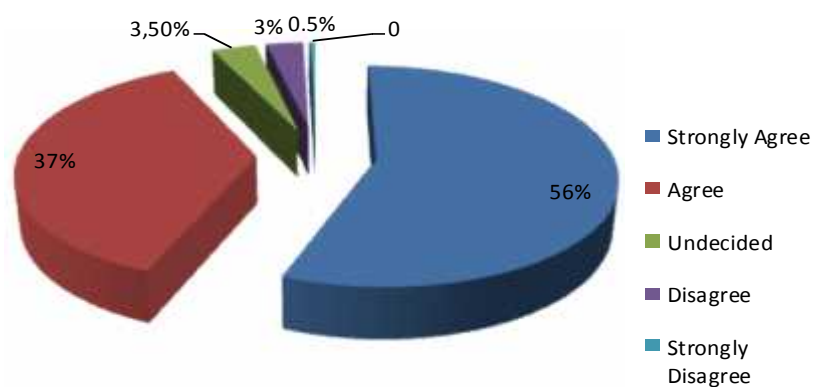


FIGURE 2: AUDIENCE RECALL AND RETENTION OF 'MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE' DUE TO ITS DRAMATIC QUALITY



Figures 3 and 4 below capture the perception of respondents in relation to the question of drama acting as an effective mirror of society. Due to the fact that domestic drama deals with issues pertaining to relationships amongst friends, and the society as a whole, the characters in both adverts were ordinary people from everyday life whom the viewers can identify with. That means that both adverts mimicked society.

FIGURE 3: PERCEPTION THAT 'SUNRISE' IS A N EFFECTIVE MIRROR OF YOUTHFUL LOVE IN THE SOCIETY

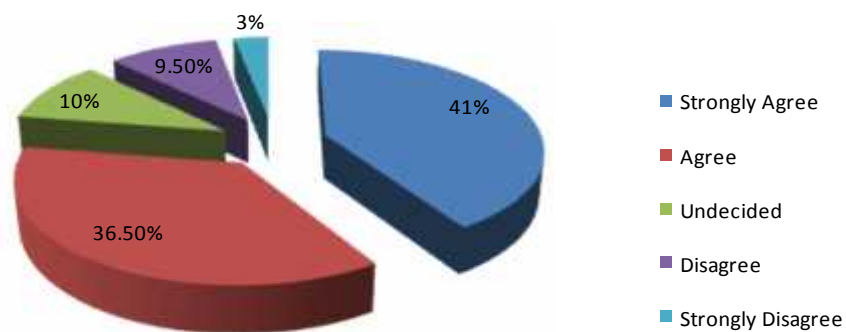
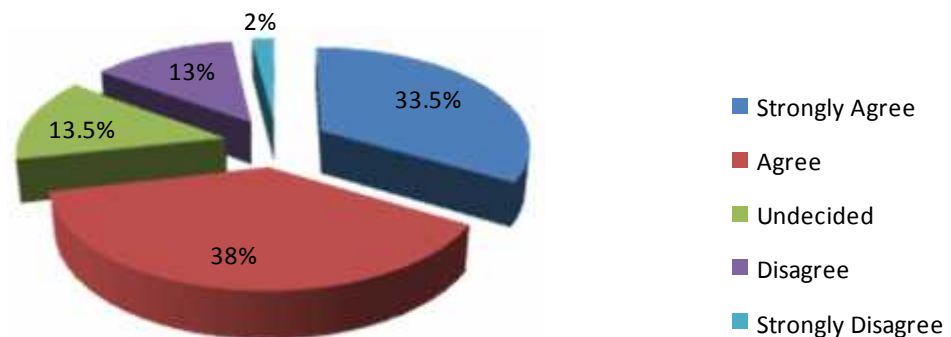


FIGURE 4: PERCEPTION THAT 'MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE' DEPICTS THE VIRTUE OF SHARING IN THE SOCIETY



One of the major objectives of this study is to find out if both television adverts under analysis have influenced the consumer purchasing decision in favour of MTN and Indomie Noodles. The results depict that 74.5% of the respondents said they did not patronize MTN because of the “*Sunrise*” advert while 67.5% of the sample population also said they did not buy Indomie Noodles as a result of “*Make the World a Better Place*” advert. This is a major drawback for MTN and De United Foods makers of Indomie Noodles because if over 50% of the respondents agreed that no matter how ‘exciting’ and ‘dramatic’ the adverts were, they did not influence them to purchase the products then one can only wonder if advertising is as effective as it is said to be.

However, advertisers can find solace in the fact that television adverts with dramatic displays could help recognition, recall, and retention in the minds of their customers and potential customers. The argument that one is not usually influenced by advertising is an age-long defence put up by consumers who feel it is rather demeaning to ‘accept’ that ‘mere adverts’ influenced them to buy the advertised products. Otherwise, in the case of the two firms under study, sales report suggest that they made more sales and profits from the advertised products during the months the advert campaigns were running. This, of course could have been for other reasons except advertising.

The authors also did a thorough analysis of the content of both case study adverts to determine forms of drama embedded in both adverts (See the discussion section for detailed analyses of both ads).

Summary of the Interviews

The Marketing Managers of both MTN and Indomie Noodles were interviewed on related issues concerning the adverts. When asked the firm's objective in commissioning the "*Sunrise*" advert, the Manager answered thus:

MTN wanted to promote lives by working with segments i.e. segmentation of the target audience to something called urban trendy which is influenced by technology. We wanted to touch the very source of your aspiration i.e. the very essence of you and in so doing drawing you closer to our brand by creating opportunities and a lifestyle. We think this was achieved as we now have only about 30% urban trendy update as we have made MTN stay in your mind space, constantly trying to make it be in your Top of the Mind Awareness (TOMA) i.e. at the first mention of telecom, you think about MTN, at the sighting of a yellow colour, you think about MTN, at the first sighting or hearing of the "*Sunrise*" advert or see the sun rise maybe on vacation, you think of MTN. So the commercial was also made to appreciate nature (D. Bamgboye, personal communication (Interview), May 5, 2010).

We also asked the Manager if drama was an essential part of television advertising and he again responded thus:

Drama can never be separated from advertising. Life is drama. We are acting a drama, you and I, because there is a way I have composed myself and sat in my chair and put myself in the mood to be able to talk to you. Yes, there is drama in advertising; you have to get an actor or actress so they go hand in hand. It's just that the scripts are different, you are looking at 15, 45, and 50 seconds to 1 minute in which you have to pass the message across effectively and it is interwoven with the brand essence (D. Bamgboye, personal communication (Interview), May 5, 2010).

Part of the objectives of this study is to find out if the use of drama in television advertising helps audience's recall and retention of the message. When this question was put forward to the MTN Marketing Manager, he answered in the affirmative:

Yes drama aids audience recall and retention because some people like to feel it, sense it, they like it to be enacted so they can remember. Some people are 'touchy, touchy' so they like visuals. Drama also did affect MTN positively. One is the area of TOMA. MTN carries out research to find out which of these adverts have led to the positive audience reaction. We target universities, we do road shows and as a result, we got a compilation which helps us to assess, analyze and re-evaluate whether the brand is in the mind of the audience through what adverts or message (D. Bamgboye, personal communication (Interview), May 5, 2010).

Another major objective which came out from the interview is in the area of whether the "*Sunrise*" advert helped product patronage. The Manager stated that the "*Sunrise*" advert was a great hit as it increased MTN's profit during the period of airing. He stated that MTN's profit margin went up by 25% in the first year of commissioning the advert.

On the critical issues of whether drama aids television advertising in the area of recognition, recall and retention, the Marketing Manager of Indomie Noodle did not differ in views with the MTN Marketing Manager. He also confirmed that that Indomie Noodles sales shot up by 32% in the first year of running the advert.

In a related interview with the Senior Account Executive of TBWA/Concept Advertising Agency that handled the "*Make the World a Better Place*" advert, Mr. Adereti Temitayo noted that the creative idea for the advert was done to reposition Indomie Noodles as the food of heroes. Continuing, the Senior Account Executive stated further:

This was the campaign because Indomie was moving from the point of being just a snack to being a meal. One of the key things we wanted to do was how to sell the idea to moms and children that Indomie can be taken at mealtimes. Basically, mom should give her little hero good nutrition so he can get a brighter future and on the other hand, the little hero wants to be like mom because

she is his/her hero. The ad wanted to show heroism to the world through values like selflessness and kindness expressed in the commercial when the birthday girl's mom was dishing out the noodles. The story is about the girl who is celebrating her birthday and she decides to help the old man playing the guitar so as to get people to come together and feed the needy (T. Adereti, personal communication (Interview), May 3, 2010).

On whether the drama in advertising communicates the message better by aiding audience recall and retention, he noted thus:

Of course the ad helped audience recall because of the music which was simple and interesting and the choice of shots i.e. the slow motion and even the build-up where everyone was coming out did a lot i.e. the style did a lot because it starts off slow and then crescendos. The ad played on the emotions and allowed people love it. The style was superb even right down to the texturing and video quality. As for the symbols in the ad, the whole commercial was Indomie Noodle's way of saying that we need to think beyond our selfish self because life is about sharing, sharing moments, thoughts, gifts et cetera which is how we bring out the heroism aspect of it. If you look at Nigeria, we are very selfish people so Indomie says think about the needy, share, so we can all come together and make the world a better place (T. Adereti, personal communication (Interview), May 3, 2010).

The Senior Accounts Executive of S, O & U Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Agency (Mr. Anthony Ekun) that handled the "*Sunrise*" advert was also asked how the team got the creative and dramatic idea for the advert. In his response, he noted that:

MTN wanted to communicate that life was beautiful. No ambiguity, clear message. We came up with about a 100 different concepts and shared about 12 with the client. Six of the adverts were then tested mechanically i.e. the storyboard, still pictures, and sound track for the focus groups in Lagos, Abuja, Kano et cetera.

The research was extensive; we knew the target audience, tested and got feedback. After the brief, we commissioned the research and we went out to talk to the target audience, couples, families and everyone who uses mobile phones. We asked how they spent their day, their life, what they do on weekends et cetera. We also asked what people wished they could do i.e. advertising as a window to set the trends not just acting as a mirror. One of the questions asked was: what is the ultimate gift you could give to a girl and how can you relate this to your mobile phone? (A. Ekun, personal communication (Interview), May 4, 2010).

The Senior Accounts Executive also noted that there can never be TV adverts without an infusion of drama, “even if you watch the news, there’s a bit of acting and drama you bring to it, so advertising cannot be divorced from drama. Your client comes to you because they have a message, they could just type out their message, record their own voices, but the reason they go to the agencies is because they want the drama and ‘wow’ effects.” He further noted that the use of drama in “*Sunrise*” aided audience recall of the advert. According to him, “It would be hard to measure the impact of “*Sunrise*” in isolation. There was a lot of negative feedback from consumers about MTN but after the campaign, the responses became milder. MTN’s marketing is still working as consumers still buy into the network”.

Discussion

Over the years, advertising has rapidly grown to become the spice of business. Thus, thousands of advertising messages constantly assail the media and its consumers. As such, advertising is as much a part of the environment as the traffic and the trees and it is every organization’s duty to ensure that its advertisement has a high stopping power to gain the attention of the viewers and encourage their recall and retention.

From the presentation and analysis of the data generated for this study, it is evident that a high number of the youthful population are very familiar with both case study adverts as over 93% of the population accurately remembered MTN’s “*Sunrise*” advertisement even though it was aired in 2006. The same can be said for the “*Make the World a Better Place*” advert released in 2007 with over 98% of the respondents still able to recall the advert from

memory. A large population of the respondents also attested to the fact that they love both the TV adverts.

This is the kind of scenario every organization desires to paint for its products - one in which consumers are not only aware of the existence of that product but are also positively drawn towards it through selective exposure and retention of the ad which may eventually lead to patronage. This observation is in consonance with Osunbiyi's (2002:45) assertion that "a television advertisement principally aims at attracting the attention of the target audience long enough to command an interest in the message, with the aim of creating desires and compelling action." Also, looking at the '*Sunrise*' advert, it is obvious that the message is directed at the youths and it tried to appeal to them in an urban trendy way which tried to touch the very source of their aspiration and emotions in order to draw them closer to the brand. This has indeed worked for the company.

There is also the need to further look into the relationship between drama and communication. The Irish-born writer Bernard Shaw (cited in Ekeanyanwu 2009) believes that the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. Thus, communication is the big determinant in advertising and drama is a form, a subset of communication. From the audience perspective, about 79% of the respondents said that '*Sunrise*' actually communicates MTN's message of love as illustrated by Jerry and his girlfriend while 88% of also agree that Indomie Noodle's message of sharing was duly passed across and understood by the audience.

One of our major research questions attempted to evaluate the role of drama in MTN's "*Sunrise*" and Indomie Noodles' "*Make the World a Better Place*". In a bid to answer this question, the respondents were asked if the drama used in both case study adverts appealed to them and also if they thought drama was a good reflector of society. Ninety percent of the respondents agreed that '*Sunrise*' and '*Make the World a Better Place*' have a good show of drama in which kept them glued to the commercial. For an advert to hold the attention of the viewers they have to be able to relate with the commercial and this is a major reason why good advertising must act as creative reflectors of the things that society represent. For example, the romance between Jerry and his girlfriend in '*Sunrise*' and Indomie Noodle's message of tending to the needy in '*Make the World a Better Place*' actually reflect realistic happenings in the society which the youths who are the major targets of the commercials could connect to. This will obviously enhance recognition, recall, and retention for brands that apply it.

The authors also believe that there is a need to break bounds and be culture specific/centric in our advertising so that when, for example, an American sees a Nigerian commercial on CNN, he should recognize Lagos, not because he sees the “Eyo Masquerade” but because there are some other things that are peculiar to Lagos he could identify with in the commercial. Also an advert should not be telegraphic. In most of our adverts from the beginning, you can predict where it is going to end and this makes the audience bored and uninterested. Therefore, commercials should have suspense-filled plots and good narrative.

The last research question sought to find out the forms of drama embedded in MTN’s “*Sunrise*” and Indomie Noodle’s “*Make the World a Better Place*”. From an in-depth analysis of both case study adverts, “*Sunrise*” is a 1.02-minute drama sketch that is based on a relationship between Jerry and his girlfriend through effective communication. Though the original concept is realism but the question to ask is ‘in what context’? Though the setting, mood, atmosphere and dialogue depicts that of youthful lovers in the Nigerian milieu, the commercial cannot be entirely described as Nigerian-centric as today’s Nigerian woman would be furious at anyone who gives her a gift which involves taking a glance at the sun that she sees every other day which darkens and burns her skin.

“*Sunrise*” involves dialogue, which is vital to every human relationship. The identification of the characters and the kind of message that exist between them is completely dependent on the dialogue. The romantic mood is also maintained by the tone and rhythm of the conversation. With the words softly spoken and the voices low pitched, Jerry’s fingers tremble as his girlfriend says, “I wish you were here now”. This also reveals the effect her voice has on him. The uninterrupted flow in their conversation makes the dialogue interesting. The language is prosaic, yet poetic, which is captivating in its intensity. In this commercial, the lines prompt the actions. The plot is a suspenseful one, and the climax is achieved when the gift is unveiled at the end.

Attention to details is important in any dramatic work so as to reflect a standard of verisimilitude, which presents the right image to the audience. Jerry and his girlfriend are an embodiment of youthful vigour and enthusiasm. The pink colour of the negligee worn by Jerry’s girlfriend highlights her femininity. In contrast, Jerry’s brown pyjamas portray a blend of masculinity and sensitivity. The absence of make-up and jewellery connotes that Jerry’s girlfriend has only just woken up while Jerry’s relaxed posture shows that he has been awake for sometime. The setting is modern and it consists of two bedrooms shown simultaneously. The fact that Jerry and his girlfriend are both alone in their respective rooms conveys an

impression of privacy and intimacy. The slow tempo of the background music augments the romantic atmosphere. The use of lighting in the commercial is also selective as Jerry's room is dimly lit while his girlfriend's room has a brighter look.

For drama and theatre to be seen as the 'willing suspension of disbelief', it has to be concrete in its facts because its authenticity lies in it. The conflict of romanticism which is an idealist ideology and realism come to the fore at the end of this television commercial. For Jerry to have known that his girlfriend would have been able to see the sun at that time, he would have been familiar with the location of the house, her room and even her door. Furthermore, they would have to be in the same geographical area for Jerry to have known that the sun was shining where she was, because it could have been raining. This is a big contradiction to the illusion of distance conveyed in the dialogue. It is important to note that in order to write convincingly, research must be meticulously done, irrespective of whether it is a television advert or not, because drama can only be relevant to the society as it takes cognizance of reality.

In drama, symbols are very important. The use of the 'sun' in '*Sunrise*' is metaphoric. Jerry equates the sunshine with his girlfriend's contribution to his life, because sunshine is likened to hope, beauty, a sense of destiny or fulfilment, joy, et cetera. According to the creative director at S, O & U Saatchi & Saatchi, Mr. Anthony Ekun "seeing the same sun is one thing that connects you the way MTN connects you. The sun is a character in the commercial, while they are on the phone, the sunlight moves and his fingers twitch as it touches them". The sun was used as a metaphor to represent MTN which connects people. The authors note that Jerry's last line "Thanks for bringing sunshine into my life" also connotes the kind of optimism MTN has brought into the Nigerian Telecommunications industry. Although not everybody appreciates nature, the authors are of the opinion that the way to happiness in a chaotic world is to be grateful for the simple things of life. This is the message most effectively conveyed by the use of drama in '*Sunrise*'.

"*Make the World a Better Place*" on the other hand is a 1.07-minute television commercial, rooted in trying to solve the prevailing challenges of the world especially Nigeria as it is today. It features music and dance, highlighting the poor and needy class of society who require a helping hand from privileged members of the society. The main thrust of the advert which is for human beings to imbibe the habit of sharing is done through the use of symbolism represented by the birthday girl, her mother and her friends. The elements of realism can also be seen in the environment with its black, battered, peeling old buildings and

broken window panes even more decorated by the condemned car tires and decayed wood strewn across the street. Indomie could have insisted that the advert be shot in a lovely setting, probably a high-brow area but the ad was done in the crumbling part of a Nigerian town. This is a typical reflection of the slums which society's low class members live in. Natural lighting is used in this commercial due to its exterior quality.

Though the company's aim is to represent the goodness of selfless giving, yet it reveals art for art sake. At this point, it is important to recall that drama cannot be separated from the society, thus the reason for the "*Make the World a Better Place*" theme of sharing as a reflection of the deprivation present in today's society and goes further to set the pace by recognizing the need for altruistic giving. The whole commercial was Indomie Noodle's way of showing heroism by saying that as human beings we have to think beyond our selfish selves because life is about sharing gifts, moments, thoughts et cetera. The authors note that if Nigerians perceive giving as living regardless of the circumstances, the world would be a much better place to live in. The commercial also signifies that giving is not the exclusive right of adults alone but children also have a part to play in improving lives.

Dance is portrayed through the movement of the human body and performed to the rhythm of the music. This is very evident in 'Make the World a Better Place' as the characters of the advert are seen moving to the cadence of the little girl's song. Though the youths and children are the target audience of Indomie Noodles, the authors think that there should have been an infusion of the older folks into the advertisement since it has such a magnanimous message.

Conclusion and Recommendation

As an important marketing communications tool, advertising is first and foremost communication. Advertising cannot communicate on its own; therefore it makes use of media channels such as radio, television, posters, newspapers, magazines, internet et cetera. Television is a very versatile medium that has the capacity to reach out to the masses in a way no other medium has ever done.

Though television reaches out to a lot of people, yet for the advertisement to have an impact on the audience, the importance of drama and theatre cannot be over-emphasized. This is because drama can be used to educate, enlighten, reform, change people's ideologies, and make them conscious of their environment. Drama is a representation of life and society. Drama is also a powerful tool for effective communication because it can move people to

action. It is therefore important that more attention be given to the art of drama and theatre in the Nigerian advertising industry.

The Nigerian advertising terrain is truly on the ascendancy and this calls for a conscious preservation of the market as advertising has become such an important part of the economy. It is therefore recommended that people in the advertising sector take heed of the following in order to ensure that advertising in Nigeria remains on the increase both economically and socially:

1. There should be an increase in the employment of theatre professionals in the advertising and media industries. The issue of drama and theatre is an essential part of advertising that agencies must take cognizance of, so just the same way we have copy writers under the creative department, there should be a sub-unit that would house drama specialists in order for drama and theatre ideas to be creatively used in electronic media advertising.
2. Advertisers should find out the socio-cultural peculiarity of its target audience, because it is important that the images presented by the advertisers are the images the audience can identify with. For example, India is so culturally diverse that they use more than a dozen official languages. One would therefore be culturally insensitive to create an advertisement using only one of these languages.
3. Research should be intensified in the area of effectiveness of drama and theatre in television advertisement, because most times, advertisers focus on art for art sake and not art for life sake. If life is drama then this means that drama is a crucial factor which must be in place for any advertisement to be successful. Thus, advertisers must invest in extensive research in order to gain access to useful information on drama that will help make the advert extremely entertaining and still reflect the values that hold the society together. This is of utmost importance as culturally sensitive entertainment will always be the key to penetrating the congested mind of the target audience which is why advertisers need to keep working on how to capture consumer attention through drama without boring them to the point of avoidance.
4. With regards to the concept of creativity, advertisers must always think out of the box at least that is why they are bountifully rewarded. They should not be creators of straight jacketed advertising as this would bore the audience to disillusionment and consequently create a terrible image of the organization.

References:

- Arens, W. (2004). *Contemporary Advertising*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Brecht (1977). *The Sociology of Drama*. California: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Ekeanyanwu, N.T. (2009). Nollywood, New Communication Technologies and Indigenous Cultures in a Globalized World: The Nigerian Dilemma. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management (IJOSAM)*. Vol 2, N0.2, Pp 62-84. Retrievable at www.ijosams.org.
- Esslin, M. (1982). *Television: The Critical View*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Folarin, B (2005). *Theories of Mass Communication: An Introduction*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.
- Jefkins, F. (2000). *Advertising*. London: W. H Allen and Company.
- Mackay, A. (2005). *The practice of advertising*. Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.
- Mitchell, N. Moriarty, S. & Wells, W. (2009). *Advertising: Principles and Practice*. London: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Osunbiyi, B. (2002). *Advertising: Principles and practice*. Lagos: Rotham Press.