

Full Length Research Paper

A study on how advertisement of condom influences its use among University students. A case study of MT Kenya University (Nakuru town campus)

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Abstract

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Advertising is a form of communication for marketing and used to encourage, persuade or manipulate an audience (viewers, readers or listeners, sometimes a specific group) to continue or take some new action. Most commonly, the desired result is to drive the consumer behavior with respect to a commercial offering, although political and ideological advertising is also common. Commercial advertisers often seek to generate increased consumption of their products or services through 'branding' which involves associating a product (name or image) with certain qualities in the minds of consumers. Advertising in any business is an important aspect that cannot be ignored. Klaidman S, (1994) asserts that a potential consumer of a product can be made to see the need that wasn't seen previously when the product had not been advertised. Advertising changes the cognitive attitude of a consumer, is meant to draw attention and change the notion that was held by the potential consumer and eventually bring about purchase. In public health advertising, Atkins A and Arkins S. (1996) argue that products that are meant to be used by the consumer in keeping fit, improving their health need to be given considerable attention because lives of consumers are at stake and hence they also need to be protected from any form of exploitation. In this study the use of a condom as a form of protection against HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies was brought to the limelight. Issues that were discussed include: how to use a condom, how to dispose and also find out how effective it is. This study was meant to give an in-depth examination at how advertising of a condom influences its use among university students. Of great significance was the information provided in the advertisement and how that information was and is being used by students in making decisions that affect their health. A local advertisement "je una yako" (do you have yours) was the advertisement that was in focus.

Keywords: Advertisement, Public announcement, Advertising agencies, Condom, Dispose.

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem

Advertising as a marketing tool is an important element for the success of any organization engaged in business,

Abbreviations and Acronyms: AIDS: Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome; HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus; STIs: Sexually Transmitted Infections; TV: Television; Newsp: Newspapers; Magz: Magazines.

the problem with advertisements on condom use is that they are not clear and do not give relevant information on how to use and dispose them. A typical example is the advertisement by trust condom where one of the local Kenyan artists called Prezzo dressed in an expensive suit is being driven in an expensive car heading to a party. On arrival he is welcomed by a pretty lady. He flashes a pack of trust condoms and says he has his and asks where

yours is. From this advertisement a lot of information has been left out and what is being stressed is that if you feel like having sex what you just need is a condom. The information on how effective a condom is, is not provided, the age limit of users and how to dispose of used condoms has not been given.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to find out how advertising of condoms is influencing its use among university students specifically Mount Kenya University Nakuru Town Campus.

Purpose of the study

It is hoped that the outcome of this study will benefit advertising companies to know the level of utilization of information they provide through the condom advertisements to their users. This is also expected to give the organization an insight into other issues that need to be incorporated in the development and designing of advertisements that are not only giving information but also help in change of attitude towards the use and disposal of condom. The outcome of this study also is an important input for the other organizations that are engaged in sensitization of the public on issues related to HIV/AIDS and STD's.

Literature review

Importance of advertisement

For many years, research was not widely used in advertising and decisions were made on an intuitive basis (Gay, 1992). However, with increased competition, mass markets and amounting costs, more and more advertisers have come to rely on research as a basic management tool according to Haskins and Kendrick, (1993). Early mass communication theorists assumed that print and electronic media had enormous power to mold opinion, arouse feelings and sway behavior. They viewed the mass audience as defenseless and relatively passive " a herd of sheep that easily fall prey for manipulative advertising or clever propaganda." "The powerful effects" model linked media messages to bullets fired from a machine gun into a crowd. Information delivered by mass media is no longer information but a commodity saturated by fantasized themes. Mass media audiences are nothing more than consumers of these commodities.

On a typical day, an average teenager or young adult sees over 3000 advertisements a day according to Gay (1992). Many questions arise about these advertise-

ments, such as " Is advertising deceptive? Does it create or perpetuate stereotype? Does it create conformity? Does it create insecurity in order to sell goods? Does it cause people to buy things that they really don't need?"Advertisers use specific methods to target teenagers and young adults, but these methods are not always successful or ethical. Advertising is giving the general public information about new goods and trying to increase overall sales, which increases the efficiency of the nation's economy. It is supposed to be a significant way of getting the point across about a product and create motivation for people to buy.

Strategies used in advertisement

Getting the customers back requires more creative marketing approaches. There are several ways that can be used to find out about customer's behaviors', likes and dislikes. The most popular method is tests and surveys, both before and after a product is introduced. Telephone surveys, but they take thousand calls to get a substantial number of responses to work with. Along with those, written questionnaires, either handed out in stores or sent by mail, are effective tests to see if customers like a product or not. The reactions to the samples, results of questionnaires, and number of participants are all recorded of the process to come up with effective advertisements. All of this data collected also has other purposes, such as information on warranties and which groups to target for certain products. Companies also check whether the advertisements are being productive by means of comparing the money made and number of sales during periods of those during a time of no advertising. Some companies even allow average consumers to preview a commercial to get a response. As a result, companies learn what consumers want before they advertise.

A well known advertising strategy is making consumers feel insecure and creating fears that can be overcome by buying. Advertising reveals the latest fashions and the new popular novelties on the market. It exhibits perfect individuals wearing the new styles and looking good. Teenagers and young adults observe this perfection and envy it. Therefore, they go out and buy in hopes of reaching perfection. Furthermore, being an accepted member of society has become very important to most teenagers; they pay close attention to the new advertisements for the new looks, which gives advertisers more drives to make their advertisement portray the ideal person. Advertisers also ensure that advertisements are simply informational, but many disagree and believe that they are definitely persuasive.

Impact of advertising on tastes and preferences

According to Douglas Kellner, a professor of philosophy, as early as the 1920s, advertising critics argue that advertisements began to persuade Americans, due to the new invention of assembly lines and the concept of corporations. They tried convincing people that spending hard-earned dollars on items that could be handmade was the new accepted behavior that would enhance their lives (Alexander & Hanson, 1993). Likewise, critics of the advertising industry argue that advertisements give people the impression that products can give them talents. Take athletics for example. Nike is accused of implying that their shoes will give them athletic ability. Michael Jordan is shown in the television commercial dunking a basketball, wearing a new style of Nike shoes. Consequently, teenagers are going to want the same type of pair to be 'like Mike' (Wolf, 1998). On the other hand, agencies say that they just give the consumers up-to-date information. They show change in their advertisements because they know that is what consumers want and to feel the needs of the general public. Thus persuasive strategies are considered techniques used by advertisers to get consumers to buy, they are therefore important for persuading consumers. Teenagers and young adults have become top consumers in today's society, and so advertisers have focused on getting their business. According to Ayton Young Research Company in 1998, teens spent 3.5 billion on jeans, almost twice as much as in 1990, and ksh 3 billion on sneakers, almost four times more than the amount spent in 1997 (Tulley, 1994). Another reason teens are being targeted is the fact that there are many more teens today than in the past. The current number is even expected to grow in the next decade, giving advertisers more reasons to target them. Winning teens over as consumers today means possible long-term consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population

The population of the study was made up of students who are currently third year students from the following courses; BA. Communication media, Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Library Science.

Sampling and sample design

After taking into consideration the number of courses that are offered in Mount Kenya University (Nakuru Town Campus) and the time that was available for the research and the financial limitations, a sample of 90 students, 30 from every course was used in the study.

Random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 30 students and this was done by assigning the selected students numbers. Selection of students was through their admission numbers done randomly. From a random number table the numbers were picked representing the students.

Data collection

A questionnaire that was administered on the basis of 'drop and pick' was used to collect all the required data. In some cases, the researcher was present when the questionnaires were being filled to provide clarifications to the respondents. The questionnaire was designed to capture information on, the number of exposure to condom advertisements, the use of the advertised message in making decisions whether to use them or not, use of other protective devices apart from the ones that are advertised.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics in form of frequency tables and proportions were used to get a general pattern and the extent of use of advertisement messages by the target population in choosing whether to use protection (condoms) or not. Non directional questions were asked to gather more information on the attributes of the product. These questions were meant to bring out the general feeling about the product in terms of its quality. More questions on the influence the advertisement of condoms (trust) is having on them were asked. For instance; does the advertisement influence them to engage in sex? Do the personalities advertising condoms especially trust makes them feel they need to identify with them and hence make them feel like engaging in sex? Information on the influence of advertisement of condoms (trust) was tabulated to show the extent of influence of condom advertisement on the target population.

The same information was done on both the male and female target audience and this was meant to show the extent to which information regarding advertisement of condoms is being utilized by different sexes. A bar graph was used to show how the different sexes used advertisement messages. Later the information was used to create a pie chart, which was meant to ease the understanding of the overall exercise.

Bar graphs and the tabulated information were later used to draw the conclusions for the research. This same information was then used to make recommendations on the nature of advertisements; this was in terms of creativity. Information on the level of information and how much should be incorporated in the advertisement were suggested especially with regard to use and disposal.

Table 1. Types of media used by the target population

Type of media	Frequency	Percentage
Television	24	80%
Radio	26	86.6%
Newspapers	20	66.6%
Posters	18	60%
Billboards	10	33.3%
Magazines	14	46.6%
Internet	9	30%

Source: Author, from questionnaire data (2012)

Table 2. Showing male & female consumption of advertisements on condom use

	TV	Radio	Newspapers	Magazines
Male	88%	78%	70%	48%
Female	50%	30%	28%	60%

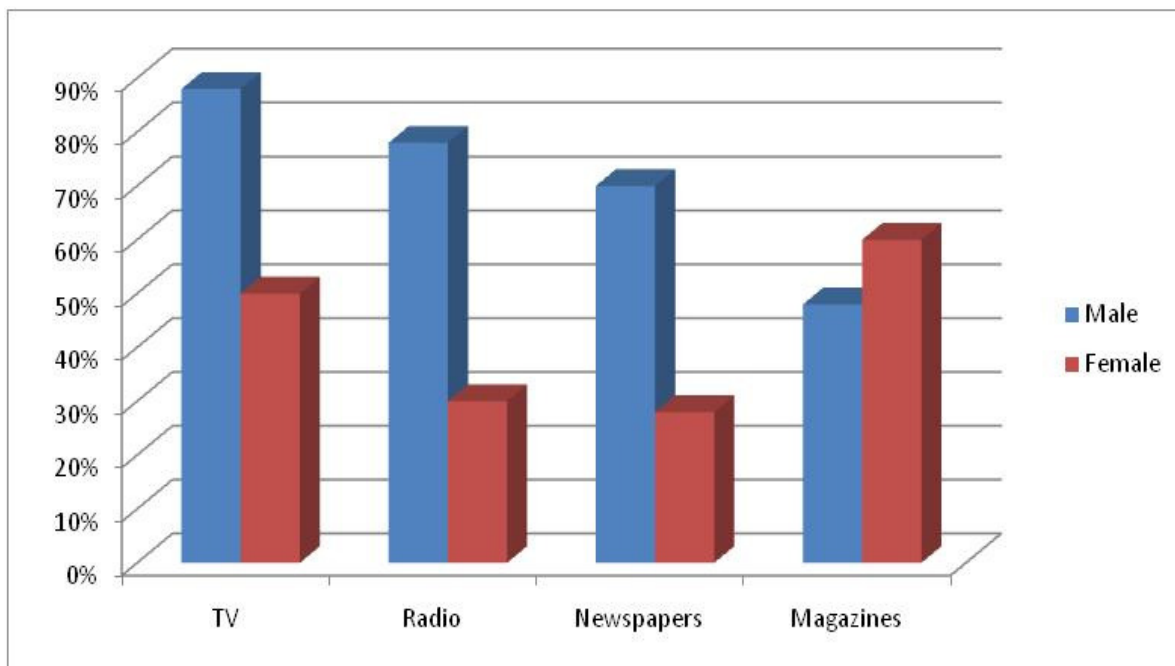


Figure 2. Bar graph showing male and female consumption of advertisement on condom use

STUDY RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Study results and analysis

Use of birth controls (trust condom)

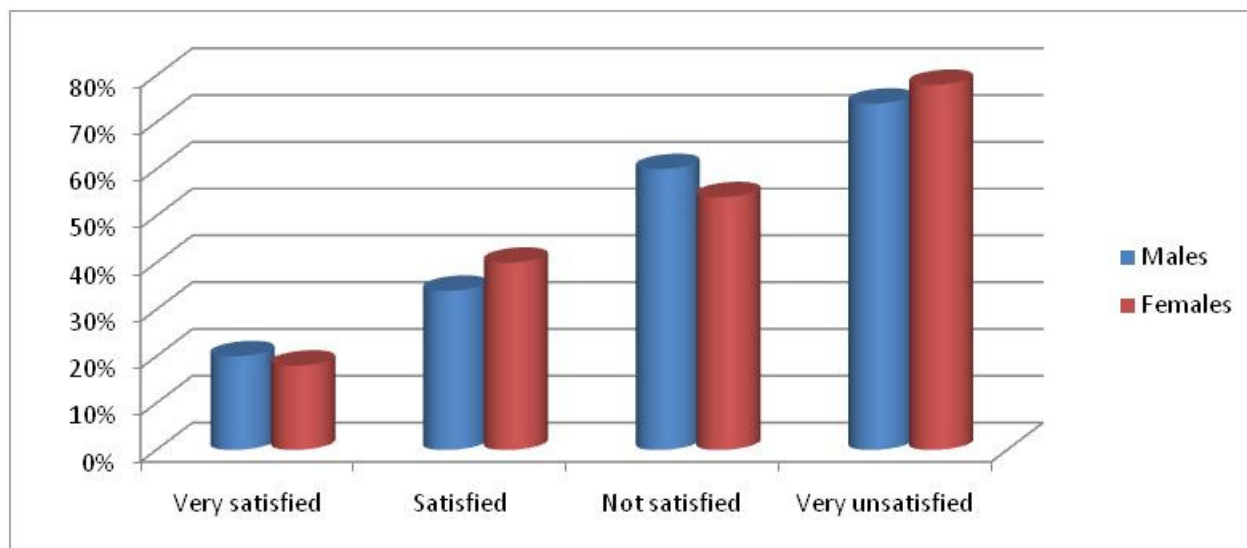
The data collected on the use of condoms as a protection against HIV/AIDS revealed that 70% of the target population used a condom as a precaution willingly. 37.5% used a condom after deliberating on whether to

use or not. Further results also indicated that after a certain period of time, ranging from six months to one year and above, of being in a relationship and engaging in sex, 80% opted not to use a condom. 55% of the target population agreed to voluntarily go for HIV/AIDS test without the intervention of their partners. 90% of the target population agreed that the availability of condoms has contributed to most of them engaging in sex. (See Table 1)

35% of the target population agreed that they use the

Table 3. Showing attributes and other information on the use of a condom

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Very unsatisfied
Males	20%	34%	60%	74%
Females	18%	40%	54%	78%

**Figure 3.** Bar graph showing attributes and other information on the use of a condom.

information provided on the literature material that is packed with them, 65% do not use the information on the pack.

Frequently used media as a source of information on condom use

Data collected and analyzed on the frequently used types of media by the target audience revealed that males and females used advertisement information on condoms (trust) differently and at different rates. In most of the media used, males dominated and this is partly because of the active nature of males in terms of consumption of the information in the media. The passive nature of the females indicated that they consume less information in regard to condom use. In general 71 % of the males used advertisement of condoms while 42% of females used the same information as shown above. (Table 2, Figure 1)

Attributes of the product and other information

Data collected revealed that most of the consumers of the product did not have all the information concerning how effective a condom is and how to dispose it. 64% of the male users acknowledged that they use it, but do not bother to check accompanying literature materials on the

pack. 60% of the females also agreed that most of their partners only used a condom because it's being advertised. Most of the users also agreed that they are willing to use a condom when engaging in sex because they are not sure of the future of their relationships. 74% of the females agreed that they need more information on the effectiveness of a condom and how to dispose it. 70% of the males also said they needed more information especially on how to use, dispose and also how effective it is. (Table 3, Figure 2)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

It was evident that the target audience frequently utilized the information on condom advertisements. This means that information on condom advertisements is necessary because it is the information that is utilized in deciding whether it is used or not. Information on the effectiveness of a condom is also necessary but this is lacking in the current advertisement. The results of 71% also revealed that the male audience is more active because it utilized more information provided in the advertisements. On the other hand, female audiences are less active when it comes to utilization of information provided in the advertisements of condoms (trust).

However, both female and male audience agreed that

they need more information on the effectiveness of a condom and also its disposal. This proves the hypotheses that the use of condoms by university students as a protection against HIV/AIDS is largely dependent on the information provided through its advertisements.

Concerning the reason as to why students in university are active consumers of advertisement messages, data revealed that most of them are never committed to the relationships they are in while others argued that that they are never sure of the status of their partners thus making them use a condom as a protection. It was also noted that most of the students are sexually active. It was revealed that over 70% of them are either in a relationship or are sexually active though not in a relationship.

It also emerged that the most commonly used media was the radio. This is as a result of the emergence of many local FM stations which are widely used by the audience and partly as a result of the changing trends in radio broadcast. The liberalization of the airwaves and the free interaction between the presenters and the audience where they can discuss freely any issue ranging from relationships to even sex is another contributory factor. Television was rated as the second most used media and this is as a result of its consumption. Most of the audience spend most of their free time watching TV, Newspapers and lastly by the internet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research outcome, advertisement of condoms as a precaution against HIV/AIDS, STIs and

unwanted pregnancies need more creative ways of advertising. These creative ways must incorporate all the important points noted earlier like the effectiveness of a condom, conditions in which it can be used and also how to dispose the used condoms.

The advertisement of condoms (trust) must also stress the importance of responsibility; this is to make the user be aware that he has the responsibility of his/her health. It lies solely with him or her and not the ministry of health or perhaps his or her parents. This is also meant to make the user be cautious so that as much as he or she will use a condom as a protection against HIV/AIDS, STIs and unwanted pregnancies, it does not mean that he or she has been protected fully from contracting AIDS because there are other modes through which AIDS is spread.

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