

ADVERTISING AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: TROPHY BILLBOARD ADVERTISEMENT IN ILORIN AS A PARADIGM

BY

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between advertising and culture with regards to the Trophy Lager beer billboard advertisement at Offa garage area of Ilorin which generated controversy between the advertiser and the Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressives Union (IEDPU) in the year 2023. The primary purpose of the study was to determine the perception of Ilorin residents about the Trophy Lager beer advertisement. The study was underpinned by reception theory. Survey research method was adopted and self-administered questionnaire served as the research instrument for this study. The views of 187 residents of Ilorin were sought on their perception of the Trophy Lager beer billboard advertisement mounted at Offa garage area of Ilorin in the year 2023. The finding revealed that, although, the Trophy billboard advertisement caught the attention of majority of the residents of Ilorin, it was against the Islamic cultural relevance for which Ilorin community is known, and that respect for local values was highly unfavourable. The study concludes that advertising contents should mirror the society through the language, religious customs and ideology of the people in order to motivate the target buyers to purchase the advertised products. The study recommends, among others, that, further research should be carried out on the influence of the Trophy Lager beer advertisement on the consumption of alcohol among Ilorin youth.

Keywords: Advertisement, culture, Islamic culture, perception, Trophy billboard advertisement.

Introduction

Advertising and culture are intertwined. Understanding cultural perspective in an advertising campaign is significant for success of the campaign. In fact, it is the spine of a campaign message. Luong et al. (2023) observe that advertising has a profound impact on consumerism and cultural values; the impact of advertising is no longer limited and can have both positive and negative effects on society to a certain extent depending on the content of the message and how it resonates with the value, norms and culture of a specific society. Meanwhile, the role of advertising within consumer culture as an ideological force has received much attention within academic studies in the advertising and marketing disciplines, and has been the subject of inquiry and debate in related fields within sociology and cultural studies (Kelly, al. 2005). Advertising fulfills a number of tasks like awareness, communicating product attributes and benefits, reminding the consumers, generate repeat purchases and contributing to the development of consumer base (Rizomyliotis et al. 2024). Tejumaiye et, al. (2021) define advertising as a means of communicating product features to consumers. Belch (2020) believe that advertising and promotion are an integral part of human, social and economic system and that, in human complex society; advertising has evolved into a vital communications system for both consumers and business. The ability of advertising and other promotional method to deliver carefully prepared message to target audience has given it a

major role in the marketing programmes of most organization (Belch, 2020). The intent of advertising is to communicate a message (usually paid for) and inform people about something to influence them to purchase or try it out (Pahwa, 2022). This suggests that no organization can survive in a global competitive market without the aid of advertising, and advertising also helps consumers to determine what to consume.

Culture, on the other hand, has been viewed in several ways by different scholars. Gonzalez and Akrivou (2024) describe culture as an accumulation of the beliefs, traditions, language and values of a particular group of people; it has to do with the opera, art, ballad, dances, food, dressing and values of the people. Culture is the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes, religions concepts of self, the universe and self-universe, relationships, hierarchies of status, role, expectations, spatial relations and time concepts acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individuals and group strivings (Gonzalez and Akrivou, 2024). According to Kalilu and Alimi (2022), culture has been identified as a key variable to better understand human behaviour, as culture affects perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour. Advertising plays a significant role in shaping cultural perspectives and reflecting the values, beliefs, and norms of society. It serves as a medium through which messages and ideas are communicated, influencing consumer behaviour and shaping societal attitudes (Sani *et al*, 2024). Kalilu and Alimi (2022) assert that advertising across cultures is essentially a platform for engaging different elements of advertising campaign and ensuring such campaign impact positively on the target audience especially when advertising designers deploy culturally relevant iconology in the most effective way. They opine further that advertisement audience largely determines its contents, thus, advertisement seeks to capture attention and connect emotionally through socially conscious and purpose-driven messages. Kalilu and Alimi (2022) observe that advertising messages can be powerful tools of persuasion by getting under the cultural skin of the society only if the advertisers know the cultural context of their audience. It is on this note that Kalilu and Alimi (2022) conclude that advertising and culture are usually synchronized to shape behaviours and values of the society.

However, Yaling (2024) asserts that human emotions are often informed by culture as emotions could drive engagement, brand recall, and purchase intent, in such a way that understanding and quantifying culture is expedient in advertising to help define the relevant emotional palette, in which a brand can use with a particular audience. Ulogu and Emmanuel (2022) declare that the effectiveness of advertising can be enhanced if advertisers ensure that messages are created to reflect the cultural symbols associated with their target audience using any chosen media of Mass communication or any other media so decided. It is important to note at this juncture that the interest of the people usually reflect in their culture. The Trophy advertising message: *Trophy Atunilara to sie gege bi omo ...* (a heartwarming Trophy is good for you as an indigene of ...) was used in Ibadan, Oyo, Abeokuta, Lagos, among other Yoruba towns and cities without causing any hullabaloo. However, this advertising message did not resonate well with Ilorin indigene perhaps because of their cultural perspectives.

In this case, Nigeria brewery Trophy larger beer billboard advertisement in Ilorin, fails to identify and reckon with the cultural background of the people of Ilorin society. The content of the billboard was written in Yoruba language "*Trophy Atunilára tọ síẹ gege bíí ọmọ...*" which can be translated as "a heartwarming TROPHY is good for you as an indigene of Ilorin". To this end, Ilorin indigenes frown at this Trophy Billboard advertisement because alcohol drink as stated in the Holy Quran is against their Islamic culture. Ilorin as a whole is considered as a city of Muslims. Meanwhile, Islamic teachings generally discourage the consumption of alcohol as stated in the glorious Quran, "O' you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, sacrificing on stone alters to other than Allah and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, avoid it so that you may be successful" (Quran 5; Verse 90 in Saheel International). This religious perspective significantly influences drinking habits in Ilorin community. Public alcohol consumption in Ilorin is observed to be relatively low, and this is perhaps because many adhere strictly to these religious guidelines. In a statement signed by the National publicity Secretary of Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressives Union (IEDPU), Mallam Nurudeen Ibrahim on June 3rd 2023, described the message contained in the advertisement of Trophy beer, which makes references to Ilorin and its people as regular consumers of alcohol as clearly offensive; saying that the advertisement was deliberately planted to provoke the people of Ilorin Emirate. The report as published by Pulse. NG;(June 3rd 2023) an online platform, added that the advertisement is a

liberty taken too far and that it should be swiftly removed in order to discourage resort to self-help from the concerned members of the Ilorin community (Alaya, 2023). While insisting that advertisement of products that are at variance to the culture of a given community should always be discouraged in such a place, the statement said that the message on the billboard attaching alcohol to the people of Ilorin, who are predominantly Muslims, is a deliberate provocation, to say the least. Overall, alcohol consumption in Ilorin is shaped by religious guidelines, reflecting a nuanced cultural approach. Social and community norms reinforce the avoidance of alcohol in Ilorin. Ilorin is a community where religious adherence and traditional values are strongly upheld; public drinking or alcohol-related activities are less common and often viewed with disapproval. To this end, this study established the relationship between Trophy billboard advertisement and Ilorin Islamic culture.

Research objectives

- 1) To determine the perception of Ilorin residents about the Trophy billboard advertisement in Offa garage, Ilorin.
- 2) To investigate the relationship between Trophy billboard advertisement in Offa garage area of Ilorin and Ilorin Islamic religious culture.

Research Questions

- 1) What is the perception of Ilorin residents about the Trophy billboard advertisement in Offa garage, Ilorin?
- 2) What is the relationship between Trophy billboard advertisement in Offa garage area of Ilorin and Ilorin Islamic religious culture.

Literature Review

Advertising is a form of communication intended to persuade an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to purchase or take some actions on products, ideas or services (Hossain et al., 2014 cited by Suleman, et al. 2025). Martini (2023) note that effective advertising requires a deep understanding of the target audience, their needs and preferences, and the competitive landscape; It also involves creating compelling messages, visuals, and calls-to-action that resonate with the audience and drive desired outcomes. Koo *et al.* (2024) opine that Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is a complex, dynamic, and multifaceted concept that encompasses the beliefs, values, norms, practices, and symbols of a society or group (Mark & Micheal, 2021). Onime (2024) asserts that culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems and resolves conflicts, and it is reflected in their language, customs, and traditions. The relationship between advertising and culture is reciprocal, with advertising reflecting and shaping cultural values and norms, and culture influencing the content and effectiveness of advertisements (Fuchs, 2021).

Hardy (2021) also believes that advertising and culture are in a constant dialogue, influencing and shaping each other in complex and multifaceted ways. Max (2020) submits that advertising and culture are intertwined, with advertising helping to create and disseminate cultural meanings, and culture shaping the meanings and effectiveness of advertisements. Culture is the soil in which advertising grows, and advertising is the fertilizer that helps culture grows (McAlister & Emily, 2023). Meanwhile, Max (2020), Mkumbo and Mbise (2022) are of the opinion that advertising influences culture by shaping cultural values and norms, influencing how we think about ourselves as well as reflecting and shaping our cultural identity. Whereas, scholars such as Raza *et al.* (2020) and Grier (2020) are of the contrary opinion that it is people's culture that influences advertisement because culture is the context in which advertising is created and consumed and that cultural values and norms shape the content and execution of advertising. Culture is the framework that gives meaning to advertising, influencing how advertisements are interpreted and responded to. Culture is also the frame work that gives meaning to advertising, and advertising is the tool that helps culture evolve and change (Magaji, 2021). Ilorin is predominantly a Muslim territory and Islam is the

major factor in the culture and way of life of Ilorin people. Gambar *et al* (2024) assert that In the present time, Ilorin city is proud of many Islamic scholars who have made immense contributions towards the consolidation of Islam and knowledge in the city and in the Yoruba land generally, thereby promoting the heritage bequeathed to them by their ancestral scholars.

Theoretical Perspective

This research is built on reception theory which was propounded by John Stuart Hall In 1973. The theory explains the audience negotiation or opposition to a particular message. Reception theory proposed that individuals actively shape the meaning of advertising, and audiences do not passively receive meaning (Raj & Pratima, 2024). This means that audience could create meaning or interpret the message based on their individual cultural background and life experiences. Reception Theory is an approach that highlights the active participation of the audience in interpreting and creating meanings from media messages. Rather than viewing audiences as passive, Reception Theory acknowledges the diverse interpretations and cultural contexts of individuals. It recognizes how audiences interact with media texts and how their subjective experiences and cultural backgrounds influence their understanding. This suggests that reception theory reconstructs how audiences interpret and derive meaning from texts, media, and cultural artifacts. It highlights the influence of audience context, experiences, and social factors in shaping their understanding and reception of a given work. Organi, (2021) reveals that the existence of reception theory was an index of the level of creative process that occurs in the act of interpreting, reading, and receiving any message. Reception theory highlights that advertisements are not universally understood, but are subject to multiple interpretations depending on the audience's cultural perspective (Chen & Starosta, 2022). Audiences bring their own cultural knowledge and experiences to the interpretation of advertisements, which can lead to varying understandings and meanings (Max, 2020).

In the context of understanding audience interpretation and negotiation of media messages, reception theory offers valuable insights into its strengths and weaknesses. Yasmeen et al (2023) explains that the theory's strengths include empowering the audience by recognizing their active role in the communication process, highlighting power dynamics between the encoder and decoder, and contextualizing communication within social, cultural, and historical contexts while the theory's weaknesses include overemphasizing individual interpretation, ignoring technological factors, and lacking empirical evidence. This theory is related to Trophy billboard advertisement in Ilorin as the people in this city interpreted the advertisement as offensive base on their religious culture. The billboard advertisement which was erected in Offa garage area of Ilorin in June 2023 has the same advertising message which was used in other Yoruba speaking area of Nigeria; Ibadan, Oshogbo and the likes, where it was well received. Thus, Reception Theory, in relation to advertising and culture, suggests that audiences actively interpret and negotiate the meaning of advertisements based on their cultural background, experiences, and social context (O'Reilly,*et al.*, 2021). Thus, advertisers must put into consideration cultural value of every society. Aditya, et al (2024) concludes that cultural understanding is not a luxury but rather a necessity in today's global advertising and that, companies must be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences to create effective, culturally sensitive strategies for advertising.

Methodology

Survey method is considered appropriate for this study because it enables these researchers to scientifically sample residents of Ilorin Metropolis to determine their views about Trophy Billboard advertisement and the relationship between the advertisement and Ilorin Islamic culture. The population for this study consists of the entire population of Ilorin Metropolis which is 777,667. Ilorin comprises of three Local Governments: Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South. According to the National Population Commission (2015), the 2006 census indicates that the total population of Ilorin East is 204,310, Ilorin West has a population of 364,666 and Ilorin South is 208,691. Therefore the total population is 777,667. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to determine sample size for this study. To achieve this, the first stage was the identification of the local governments in Ilorin metropolis which are: Ilorin

West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South. At the second stage, probability sampling technique was used to select one Local Government among the three local governments in Ilorin metropolis and the local government selected was Ilorin West. At the third stage, all the wards in Ilorin West Local Government, (12) were listed. Therefore, the wards are listed below; Adewole, Ajikobi, Baboko, Badari, Balagun Alanamu Central, Magaji Ngeri, Oloje, Ogidi, Ojuekun/Zarumi, Oko-Erin, Ubandawaki, Warrah/Egbejila/Osin. At the final stage, four wards were selected out of the 12 wards for the study. Using simple random sampling technique, the four wards selected are; Adewole, Baboko, Oko-Erin and Ubandawaki ward.

The table below shows how the sample was selected using ratio 1:450.

Listed Wards	Population (N)	Percentage (%)
Adewole	29,168/450	64.82
Baboko	11,625/450	25.8
Oko-Erin	15,507/450	34.5
Ubandawaki	27,868/450	61.9
Total	84,168/450	187.04

National Population Commission (2015)

Thus, 187 respondents were chosen as the sample size for this study. The questionnaire comprised two sections: Section A and B. Section A is embedded with respondents' biodata in order to elicit responses on demographic details while Section B was concerned with questions related to the research questions. The method of data collection for this research work was face to face or interpersonal administration of questionnaire by the researchers. Researchers sought the consent of the selected respondents and distributed the questionnaire for immediate or later collection depending on respondents' disposition. This study employed Statistical Package for Social Sciences IBM-SPSS 23.0 to analyse the data gathered from the respondents. The results were presented using % percentages and tables. To ensure the validity of the research instrument, a pilot study was conducted prior to the commencement of the investigation to enhance validity of the research instrument, and to ensure the reliability of the instrument, test of re-test method was employed.

Results

Results of the age distribution of the respondents showed that 11(6%) of the respondents were under 18 years of age, 12(6%) were between the age 18-25, 44(24%) were between the age 26-30, 84 (45%) were between the age 31-35 while 36 (19%) were 36-40 of age. This means that majority of the respondents were between the age of 31-35. This implies that the respondents were mature enough to understand the relationship between Trophy Billboard advertisement and Ilorin Islamic culture. Finding on the gender difference of the respondents showed that 79 (42%) of the respondents were male while 108 (58%) were female. This showed that female formed majority of the respondents. The results on the occupation of the respondents showed that 47(24%) were civil servants, 54 (29%) of the respondents were into trading, 33(18%) of the respondents were artisans, 35 (19%) of the respondents worked in a private sector while 18(10%) of the respondents were unemployed.

Results on the education level of the respondents showed that 3 (2%) had just primary school certificate, 17 (9%) of the respondents had secondary certificate, 38 (20%) of the respondents were graduates of Colleges of Education, 51 (27%) of the respondents had HND certificate while 78 (42%) of the respondents had Bachelor's Degree certificate. This showed that majority of the respondents were learned and literate enough to understand the Trophy Billboard advertisement mounted at Offa Garage area of Ilorin and its implication on Ilorin Islamic Culture.

Analysis of the Research Questions

RQ1: What is the perception of Ilorin residents about the Trophy billboard advertisement placed at Offa garage?

Table 1: I am aware of the Trophy billboard advertisement erected at Offa garage in Ilorin.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	182	97%
No	5	3%
Total	187	100%

Result from Table 1 showed that 182 respondents representing 97% were aware about Trophy billboard advertisement erected at Offa garage in Ilorin, and 5 respondents representing were not aware about the Trophy beer billboard advertisement mounted at Offa garage area of Ilorin. This showed that majority of the respondents were aware about the Trophy billboard advertisement erected at Offa garage in Ilorin.

Table 2: The Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage depicts Ilorin Islamic culture negatively.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	82	44%
Agree	97	51 %
Disagree	3	2%
Strongly Disagree	5	3%
Total	187	100%

Result from Table 2 showed that 82 respondents representing 44% strongly agreed that the Trophy billboard advertisement depicts Ilorin culture negatively, 97 respondents representing 52% agreed, 3 respondents representing 2% disagreed while 5 respondents representing 3% strongly disagreed to this statement. This revealed that majority of the respondents affirmed that Trophy billboard advertisement depicts Ilorin Islamic culture negatively.

Table 3: The Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage aligns with the Islamic values of Ilorin residents

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	9	5%
Agree	12	6%
Disagree	114	61%
Strongly Disagree	52	28%
Total	187	100%

Table 3 shows that 9 respondents representing 5% strongly agreed that the Trophy billboard advertisement aligns with the Islamic values of Ilorin residents, 12 respondents representing 6% agreed, 114 respondents representing 61% disagreed while 52 respondents representing 28% strongly disagreed that Trophy billboard advertisement aligns with the Islamic values of Ilorin residents. This revealed that majority of the respondents disagreed that Trophy billboard advertisement aligns with the Islamic values of Ilorin residents.

RQ2: What is the relationship between Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa garage area of Ilorin and Ilorin Islamic culture?

Table 5: Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage reflects Ilorin Islamic culture

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	1%
No	182	97%
Can't say	4	2%
Total	187	100%

Result from Table 4 shows that 1 respondent representing 1% believe that Trophy billboard advertisement reflects elements of Ilorin Islamic culture, 182 respondents representing 97% claimed that the billboard reflects Ilorin Islamic culture negatively while 4 respondents representing 2% were undecided. This shows that majority of the respondents submitted that the concerned Trophy billboard advertisement mounted at Offa garage area of Ilorin is against the Ilorin Islamic culture.

Table 5: How did Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage depict Ilorin Islamic culture?

	Frequency	Percentage
Positively	12	6%
Negatively	152	81%
No impact	18	10%
Undecided	5	3%
Total	187	100%

Result from Table 5 shows that 12 respondents representing 6% believe that Trophy billboard advertisement positively depict Ilorin Islamic culture, 152 respondents representing 81% believe that Trophy billboard advertisement negatively depict Ilorin Islamic culture, 18 respondents representing 10% believe that the Trophy billboard advertisement had no impact while 5 respondents representing 3% could not decide. This shows that majority of the respondents believe that Trophy billboard advertisement negatively depicted Ilorin Islamic culture.

Table 6: Trophy billboard advertisement is against the Islamic cultural aspect of Ilorin community.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	148	79%
No	28	15%
Undecided	11	6%
Total	187	100%

Result from Table 6 shows that 148 respondents representing 79 were of the view that Trophy billboard advertisement is against the Islamic cultural aspect of Ilorin community, 28 respondents representing 15% chose the No option while 11 respondents representing 6% were undecided. This shows that majority of the respondents strongly believe that Trophy billboard advertisement is against the Islamic cultural aspect of Ilorin community.

Discussion of findings

Finding to research question one indicates that, while the billboard advertisement caught the attention of the majority of Ilorin residents, the perception of its Ilorin Islamic cultural relevance and respect for local values was highly unfavorable. The overwhelming sentiment among the respondents highlights a disconnection between the advertisement's content and the cultural sensibilities of the community, suggesting that the advertisement may not have been well-received in this particular context. This could be attributed to the fact that Ilorin community frown at

alcoholic advertisement in public places. In fact, sales of alcoholic products are equally prohibited within certain places in Ilorin. To this, there is high probability that Trophy billboard advertisement in question would be rejected by majority of the Ilorin people. This finding supports the assertion made by Pahwa (2022), that advertising does not only mirror cultural values but also has the power to shape them. This also indicates that the relationship between advertising and culture is bidirectional, with cultural values influencing the content of advertisements, while advertising simultaneously impacts cultural norms. Additionally, Aditya (2024) emphasizes that successful advertising hinges on understanding the target audience—its values, preferences, and needs. This suggests that advertisers and advertising agencies ought to understand people's perception, and cultural values to avoid rejection of their products or services advertised. In line with reception theory, Ilorin residents' Islamic cultural background and life experience shaped the negative meaning they attach to the Trophy billboard advertisement and this also portrays Ilorin residents as active message receivers.

Finding to research question two revealed that Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa garage area of Ilorin is against the Islamic culture of Ilorin community. It is a fad that Islamic religion is against intoxicant of any nature and the Ilorin community is Islamic in nature. Therefore, this is the reason why the Ilorin community frowns at public advertisement of alcohol at Offa garage which led to call for removal of the Trophy billboard alcohol advertisement at Offa garage by the Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressives Union (IEDPU) and some Islamic clerics in Ilorin. Alcohol was prohibited in the Holy Quran through chapters 4 verse 43 and chapter 5 verses 90-91. According to Qur'an 4:43, Almighty God says "O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants (khamr), gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than God], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. This finding is in tandem with Kalilu and Alimi's (2022) view who observe that advertising message can be powerful tools of persuasion by getting under the cultural skin of the society, and that advertisers should understand the cultural context of their audience. Moreover, Magaji (2021) also submits that the influence of culture on individual's consumption pattern is strong enough to affect their choice of goods and services, and by extension, their response to advertisements. With regards to the aforementioned, advertisers and advertising agencies are supposed to be paying due attention to culture of the community where a product or service is to be advertised for the advertisement to be accepted. While emphasising the importance of recognizing and respecting the culture of the host community by the advertisers, and the advertising agencies, Magaji (2021) found that culture is the framework that gives meaning to advertising, influencing how people interpret and respond to advertisements; it is also the frame work that gives meaning to advertising, and advertising is the tool that helps culture evolve and change.

Conclusion

This study concludes that since advertising is an essential communication strategy which aims to sell products or services to large heterogeneous audiences using any form of communication channels, in the cause of advertising a product, there should be relationship between the cultural, religious, social values and contents of the advertisement. The study also concludes that, advertising contents should mirror the society, through the language, religious customs and ideology of the people in order to motivate them to purchase such product. Consequently, the advertisement of Trophy Lager Beer at Offa Garage negatively represents the social, religious and cultural values of the people of Ilorin. Majority of the residents of Ilorin did not subscribe to the Trophy Lager Beer advertisement mounted at Offa Garage, Ilorin and as such, they believe the advertisement had demoted the socio-cultural and religious value of Ilorin. Through the Trophy Lager Beer advertisement, there is misrepresentation and misinterpretation of values and tradition of Ilorin community as the alcoholic advertisement changed the cultural perspective of the City to a society that embraces alcoholic drinks.

Recommendations

1. Further research should be made on effect of Trophy Lager Beer Billboard advertisement and consumption of alcoholic product among Ilorin youth. This will help to understand if the Trophy Billboard advertisement earlier mounted at Offa garage area of Ilorin contributed to consumption of beers among Ilorin youth.
2. Other Local Governments in Kwara State with diverse cultural and religious orientation should be studied to understand if there is variation in acceptance of alcoholic advertisement.

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