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## **COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE FOR CAUSE-RELATED ADVERTISING IN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Social responsibility in advertising implies the use of commercial messages for the promotion of the wellbeing and development of the community, rather than the use of advertisements for profit motivation. Advertising is conceived here as both a social institution and a form of communication to promote positive changes in society. Using a descriptive content analysis of newspaper advertisements, this paper investigates the extent to which advertisements on Children's Day activities in Nigeria portrayed the myriads of challenges confronting the Nigerian Child and the level of involvement of both government and private sector organizations in the sponsorship of children's issue-related advertisements. Two major newspapers, (*The Punch* and *The Guardian*) published between 2000 and 2005, were purposively selected and analyzed for content. Results show that the private sector advertisers sponsored more messages on Children's Day activities than did governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, while the few sponsored messages on the part of government bodies addressed the needs and social challenges of the child, the advertisements sponsored by business organizations were, expectedly, more overtly profit motivated than being socially oriented. The paper concludes with appropriate recommendations on strategies for motivating advertisers towards deeper involvement in cause marketing, otherwise called social responsibility advertising.

**Keywords:** Advertising; Cause-related marketing; Children's day; Content analysis; Social responsibility.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Advertising, traditionally, is a form of communication, directed by sponsors to prospects, through the paid media to influence buying decisions or acceptance of a proposition. It was this understanding that motivated a widely cited definition that advertising is "the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media". (Arens, 1999, p.8). Nevertheless, advertising is not merely sponsored for commercial motives. As an institution, advertising is both an economic and social institution, in which case advertising serves as a socializing agent

for the promotion of learning, culture, ethics and social change.

Against this background, the definition offered by Harris and Seldon (1962, p. 3), although dated, is very apt and is therefore adopted as our working definition in this paper: advertising is a form of invitation "to buy or sell, to borrow or lend, to work for or support worthy causes". Using cases of advertisements sponsored to commemorate Children's Day events in Nigeria, this paper therefore discusses "Communication and Social Change: A Case for Cause-Related Advertisements in Nigeria"

A recent survey shows that a total of N100 billion was spent on outdoor advertising in 2010, according to *Mediafacts* 2010, an annual publication of **MediaReach**, a media independent agency in Nigeria. Some of the major spenders were the telecommunications industry who committed a whopping N15.096 billion to advertising; religious bodies (N2b); banking and finance (N3.5b); public sector (N3.6b); milk and dairy (N1.8b); soft drinks (N1.5b); education and imparting knowledge (N1b).

Mgbenu (2010) opines that advertisers, particularly banks, should invest more in corporate social responsibility (CSR) rather than concentrate on product advertisements. "What if Nigerian banks integrate corporate social responsibility into an advertising model?" asks Mgbenu (2010). He then expressed the view that it was better and more cost effective for banks to advertise themselves in the process of carrying out commendable CSR initiatives, rather than advertise bank products. In his words:

A way in which a business would proactively promote the public interest (is) by getting involved in community growth and development and voluntarily eliminating practices that harm the public sphere, regardless of legality.(CSR is) a deliberate inclusion of public interest into corporate decision making and the honoring of a triple bottom line: People, Planet and Profit (Mgbenu, 2010).

This paper therefore examines the extent to which advertising messages sponsored to commemorate children's Day celebrations in Nigeria are socially responsible and responsive.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY**

In biological term, children are individual persons age 12 years and below. A child can also be referred to as a human between the stages of birth and puberty, or the pre-teen. Legally, a child refers to a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of majority. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as "a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". Children generally tend to enjoy fewer rights than adults and are classed as not able to make serious decisions, and legally must always be under the care of a responsible adult.

Children are the most vulnerable to the above challenges, particularly in developing societies of the world. Nigeria is a significant part of the Sub-Saharan population, with a population of over 160 million people. Challenges being faced by children in Nigeria include malnutrition, low access to basic education, health and sanitation; high level of school dropout rates, child labor, child trafficking, including girl-child trafficking; rape, homelessness, and the like.

One in five children in Nigeria dies before their fifth birthday. Some 40% of children miss school and have to work to survive. Nearly two (2) million children have lost one or both parents to an AIDS-related disease, according to an Internet source: (<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/nigeria.htm>) retrieved on 28/10/2011. It noted further that some 15 million children are working in agriculture, as domestic servants, hawkers, beggars or trafficked through the sex industry. Many of these children, about 11 million are out of school (62% of them girls), including 4.7 million primary school age children and lack access to basic health and social protection services. More than 1,000 children are newly infected with HIV

every day, and of these, more than half will die because of AIDS because of a lack of access to HIV treatment.

Children are valued across cultures and societies, most especially because they represent the future and continuity of humanity. In recognition of this, the United Nations Organization (UNO) came out with an idea of a Universal Children's Day in 1954. Children Day is celebrated on various days in many places around the world (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, retrieved 29/10/2011).

The World Conference for the Well-being of Children in Geneva, Switzerland proclaimed June 1 to be International Children's Day in 1925. This was traced to the Chinese Consul-General, who, in San Francisco (USA), gathered a number of Chinese orphans to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival in 1925, which happened to be on June 1 that year, and also coincided with the conference in Geneva. The Universal Children's Day on the other hand, takes place on November 20 annually and was first proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1954. Universal Children's Day is preceded by International Men's Day on November 19 creating a 48-hour celebration of men and children respectively during which time the positive roles men play in children's lives are recognized.

Each country sets aside a day in the year, to celebrate the child. For example, Albania, Angola, Armenia, Bulgaria, China (Mainland), Czech Republic, Ecuador, countries in the defunct Union of Soviet and Socialist Republic (USSR), Laos, Mongolia, Poland, Portugal and her former colonies mark Children's Day on 1<sup>st</sup> of June yearly. Egypt, United Kingdom and Finland amongst others celebrate children on 20 November

yearly; India carries out Children's Day celebrations on the 14 of every November.

Nigeria sets aside May 27<sup>th</sup> annually to celebrate her children, The day is usually marked with public rallies, parades, speeches on children's rights and wellbeing, children television (TV) programmes, parties, various actions involving or dedicated to children, families going out, etc. However, there are no special programmes to accommodate street kids during such celebrations. It is the social responsibility components of these advertisements that are the subject of attention in this research.

Interestingly, marketing organizations catch in on Children's Day celebrations to display their brands at rallies. Advertisers also buy airtime and available media spaces to identify publicly with the Nigerian child. The objectives of this paper therefore are to: highlight the major challenges confronting the Nigerian child as portrayed in the sponsored messages; investigate the level of involvement of both government and private sector organizations in the sponsorship of CSR advertisements; determine the extent to which CSR advertisements address the felt needs of the Nigerian child; and examine if there is a significant difference in the degree of commitment of advertisers from both public and private sector organizations to issues peculiar to the needs of the Nigerian child.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Social responsibility is a concept of management often associated with corporate actions. When applied to corporations, social responsibility refers to deliberate policy on the part of organizations to align themselves with local stakeholders' interests and respond to their needs (Oyagbola, 2006). In addition, a management philosophy and action have

the advancement of society's welfare as one of their primary objectives.

Corporate social responsibility goes beyond the fulfillment of statutory or legal obligations on the part of corporate bodies. Endirre and Tavis (1998, p. 1129) opined that CSR refers to "the policy and practice of a corporation's social involvement over and beyond its legal obligations for the benefit of the society at large". This is why voluntary involvement in CSR is often emphasized over and above adherence to legal requirements in social action.

Nonetheless, corporate involvement in social responsibility will include, but not limited to adherence to social, ethical, legal, constitutional and even political requirements in the process of doing business. Bihari and Pradhan (2011, p. 21) captured the subject of SR by referring to it as "management's obligations to make choices and to take actions that will contribute to the welfare and interests of society as well as those of the organization and its stakeholders." In other words, SR caters to the social welfare needs of all stakeholders and publics of an organization. It stands for business contribution to sustainable development. Earlier, Olatunji (2008) submits that one of the most effective routes towards the actualization of the millennium development goals in Nigeria is that of CSR.

Arens (1990) defines social responsibility as doing what society views as best, bearing in mind the welfare of people in general, or for a specific community of people. Accordingly, social responsibility in advertising implies the use of advertising as a product, or the actual practices of the advertiser or the other stakeholders in promoting the wellbeing of the community beyond profit motivation. There are different stakeholders in the advertising industry, including advertising agencies, media organizations, advertisers,

media independents, model agencies, regulatory agencies and the consumers. There is need for these stakeholders to be involved in social responsibility outreaches to host communities. As such, the general notion of CSR as management's obligations in making choices and taking practical actions towards contributing to society's welfare applies also to the advertising agency, advertiser and other stakeholders in that sector of the economy as well. However, it is the second category of SR of advertising that is of immediate concern in this paper.

Social responsibility advertising has to do with the extent to which advertising messages and visuals address the needs of the society, without necessarily focusing on commercial motive. Socially responsible advertising are those messages that pursue altruistic motives by promoting societal development, social harmony, honesty and integrity in business relationships, and adherence to sound ethical practice or corporate governance. This has been referred to as 'cause-related marketing', 'advocacy advertising', 'idea or issue advertising', 'green marketing' and the like, depending on the angle from which scholars look at the topic (Bronn, 2001; Kazmi and Batra, 2004; Candace, 2005; Kreshel, 2009; and Merskin, 2009).

'Pro bono' advertisements are those messages that promote the good of the larger majority. This is also called cause marketing or socially oriented marketing. Social challenges abound in societies that demand the attention of the advertising institution. Interestingly, the last of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), seeks to develop global partnership for development through the involvement of private sector organizations. Accordingly, advertising messages, in addition to physical contributions by marketing organizations, can

be deployed towards addressing global challenges such as eradication of extreme poverty; achieving Universal Basic Education (UBE); promotion of gender equality; reducing child mortality, maternal mortality, and combating HIV and AIDS; and environmental sustainability- all noble objectives of the MDGs.

The introduction of SR into the practice of advertising has been traced to 1983 when the American Express launched a campaign to help restore the decaying Statue of Liberty (Merskin, 2009). The company then pledged money every time a consumer signed up and was given a new card, bought traveler's checks or purchased an express travel package worth \$500 or more. At the end of the campaign, the company donated a total of \$1.7 million to the Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation, while it spent \$4 million advertising its involvement and pledge. Buoyed by the huge success of this effort, Jerry Welsh, Marketing Executive of American Express Travel and related service reportedly declared, "social responsibility is good marketing hook" (Merskin, 2009, p. 179).

Cause-related marketing (CRM), according to Bronn (2001, p. 214) refers to the practice of firms "advocating CSR in marketing communications activities". This can be seen in corporate communication, advertising, packaging, promotions and so on. To support worthy causes. It also extends to corporate contributions to non-profit efforts thereby "working together in financial concept with charity... to tie a company and its product to a cause" (Bronn 2001, p. 214). Also called "mission marketing" (MM), CRM "integrates a non-commercial, socially redeeming system into a company's business plan and operations" (Bronn 2001, p. 215).

Kazmi and Batra (2004, p. 599) refer to CRM as "advertising that is concerned with the

propagation of ideas and social issues of general importance in a manner that supports the position and interest of the advertiser". Advocacy or idea/issue advertising, as Kazmi and Batra (2004, p. 29) called it, does not usually attempt to sell products directly, "but gives a face to the company and attempts to develop a positive relationship by influencing the public's reactions toward the company and its products, services, sales force and job offers".

Sometimes controversial, idea advertising focuses on environmental issues, population, child labour, human rights, health, gender equality, education, and other social issues. Although targeting narrowly defined audiences, idea advertising address issues of importance to critical segment of the public. Stadler (2004, p. 592) notes that SR advertising typically sells a brand by associating it with a "resonant image, identity, lifestyle, or ethos (and) is a form of persuasive communication that can be effectively harnessed for explicitly pro-social purpose".

There are numerous benefits of CRM. It helps marketers to stay in tune with the mood of the public's; helps sell products; enhances corporate image; and motivates employees. Bronn (2001, p. 218) sums it up as follows: "Having a pro-social agenda means having a powerful marketing tool that can build and shape a company's reputational status, make a differentiation in the market and give a company a competitive edge".

In a 2003 study carried out by Stanford University and the University of California, it was found that 94 percent of the 800 MBA students would accept as much as 14 percent lower salary to work for environmentally friendly, employee-concerned, socially responsible corporations (Merskin, 2009). Bronn (2001, p. 212) also mentioned the

Cone/Roper (1993) and RSW (1996) studies that demonstrated conclusively that most consumers favour socially responsible companies and products. He observed that next to price and product quality, “a company’s responsible business practices are the most important factor in deciding whether or not to buy a brand, and if price and quality are equal, they are more likely to switch to a brand which has cause-related marketing benefits”.

White (2005) cited another Cone-Roper study, which was a survey of 2000 adults in the US. It was found that 78 percent of the subjects reported that they would be more likely willing to buy a product from a marketer that supports a cause in which they believed. More than half of the subjects (54%) also reported that they would pay more for a product that supported a cause they cared about, while 66 percent disclosed that they would switch brands to support a worthy cause.

White (2005, p. 119) identified two purposes of CRM namely to increase sales and to support a cause or to be a good corporate citizen, noting, “When the second purpose is sincere, the first-sales-is better served”. He noted further that CRM, when strategically executed, serves as effective marketing tool that increases media exposure, helps a brand to overcome media clutter, increases sales and effectively reaches target audiences.

Bronn (2001, p. 218) warns that the advantages of CRM or SR will be lost if commitment to the cause is inconsistent, unbelievable and non-strategic. Merskin (2009, p. 185) supports Bronn’s (2001) views: “SR as a creative strategy is ethical if the company legitimately supports the causes it clamors around, has a connection to the product, and is truthful in its statements”. To Merskin (2009) CRM will be considered

smart, ethical and effective if the advertiser is truthfully and actively engaged in the cause presented; if there is a clear and associative relationship between the said cause and the advertised product; and if the advertisement educates and informs citizens about social issues, concerns and needs. White (2005, p. 119) concludes: “where there is a good fit among the cause, the customers, and the company, the company’s image is enhanced and the customer feels good about the product purchase... It can make the company seem less “commercial” and more socially responsible”.

Cause-related marketing and CRS take place within global context and exhibit local varieties. Maynard (2003, p. 58) opines that globalization embraces “cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenisation, universalism and particularism, modernization and post-modernization”. Olurode (2003:68) also sees globalization as “a system of the domination and disempowerment of the developing nations”. In fact, such a conception has provoked local opposition against cultural imperialism believed to be embedded in globalization. It has also led to conscious moves for the preservation of local cultures (D’Silva et al, 2007).

In the opinion of Fankonbridge, Taylor, Beaverstock and Navivel (2008). “Globalization is created through a knowledge economy” and the advertising institution is one of such institutions in society, which creates the knowledge that drives and sustains globalization. “It is through the success of advertising campaigns that capital is realized globally”, submit Fankonbridge et al, 2008, p. 11).

Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1993) identified two distinct creative strategies often adopted by global advertising agencies. The first strategy

is called globalization or standardization approach (to advertising creativity), while the second is referred to as the glocalization approach, a term we borrow from Maynard (2003, p. 57).

Standardization of advertising is necessitated by the fact that globalization itself is seen as homogenization, universalism and singleness. Therefore, advertising standardization sees advertising as a universal commodity which must offer “one sight, one sound, one sell” globally according to Maynard (2003, p. 58). Thus, apart from the product that is standardized, the logo, image, selling themes and other brand manifestations are equally standardized. Standardized strategy enhances brand recognition wherever it is sold globally. Examples include global brands such as Nike, Gillette’s razors, Coca-Cola, British Airways, McDonald’s, American Express and Kodak. These global brands combine “consistent name, standardized product image and similar features” (Maynard, 2003, p. 59).

There are cultural differences within and between the nations and regions of the world. This calls for alternative strategy, variously called hybridization or glocalization (Adali et al, 2000; Hooper, 2000). Glocalization is a process that has a high regard for the local content in advertising creation and production and refers to the process of “the creation of products or services intended for the global market, but customized to suit the local culture” (Maynard, 2003, p. 60). Whereas globalization tends towards centralization, glocalization accommodates decentralization. In advertising, glocalization allows messages to be “both global and yet to be local” (Adali et al, 2000, p. 13). Therefore, to ensure accessibility of a marketing campaign to different cultures, the practice of glocalization or adaptation appears to be the most appropriate strategy.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Of the existing theories in the literature on the subject of CSR discussed, normative SR and the Stakeholders theories help argue this paper. Melé (2006) says that normative CSR theories give us the basic principles of and reasons why firms ought to carry out responsibilities toward society. Stewardship theory, fiduciary capitalism theory (FCT); corporate social performance (CSP) theory; stakeholder theory; and corporate citizenship theory are some of the theories classified as normative theories of CSR. However, only two of these normative theories of CSR are discussed here, that is the stewardship and stakeholders theories.

The stewardship theory guided Andrew Carnegie who insisted that businesses and wealthy individuals should view themselves as stewards, or caretakers of their wealth. Carnegie’s idea was that the affluent hold their wealth in trust for the rest of the society and should use it for any purpose that society deems legitimate. He also went further to state that it is a function of business to multiply society’s wealth by increasing its own through prudent investments of the resources under its stewardship.

The stakeholder theory of CSR, on the other hand, is premised on the assumption that organizations (private or public) have obligations to several groups that make up the society. These constituents are referred to as stakeholders- individuals and groups that are critical to the existence of the organization; they influence what the organization does, or they are being influenced by organizational actions. As an integral part of the normative CSR theories, the stakeholder theory stipulates that management has a moral duty to protect not only the corporation but also the legitimate interest of all stakeholders. Thus, all stakeholders’ interests must be maximized at

all times. In this way, when an organization invests in the society, it is expected to reap this in form of improved reputation and understanding when things go wrong; and to equally maximize even the profit motive of the owners in the process (Green, 1997).

The stakeholders' concept enables management to address the divergent needs and interests of critical groups, including owners of capital, employees, customers and suppliers, as well as the needs of those of emerging groups including governments, competitors, consumers, advocates, environmentalists, special interest groups and the media. There is need for the interests of these groups to be taken into consideration because they do play vital roles in the success of the business enterprise.

In this paper, we refer to advertisers, advertising agencies, governments and statutory regulatory agencies, non-governmental bodies (NGOs), media organizations, consumers, children and other members of the society as stakeholders. It is therefore incumbent on the advertising institution to act responsibly towards its vital stakeholders, particularly children. This explains why special care is taken by most of the civilized world to protect the rights of the child even in matters of advertising. As a part of that world, there are several provisions in *The Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice and Sales Promotion* (APCON, 2010), detailing responsibilities of advertisers and advertising agencies towards children and other stakeholders. For instance, Article 100 of the Code stipulates, "advertisements shall not induce children to pressure their parents, guardians, other adults or any person whatsoever to purchase the advertised product" (APCON, 2010, p. 32). Other provisions of the Code address the responsibilities of advertising to other critical stakeholders.

## **METHOD AND MATERIALS**

A descriptive content analysis of newspaper advertisements (or copies) on children's day activities in Nigeria between 2000 and 2005 was carried out. Two major newspapers were purposively selected- *The Punch* and *The Guardian* newspapers. The two newspapers are widely circulated in Nigeria; they are privately owned (independent), national in orientation, and regarded as highly credible organs in the country.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government adopted May 27 as the Day to celebrate the nation's children annually, although this date varies in different nations of the world, as previously mentioned. One issue (edition) of each of the two newspapers was selected yearly (May 27). It was the expectation of the researcher that advertisements on children's day programmes would most likely be concentrated on the 27 of May each year. This means that two issues of the selected newspapers were studied yearly for six years, giving us 12 issues for analysis. The author used the universe sampling method for this selection.

A content coding sheet was developed by the researcher, and presented to other experts and advertising practitioners who were well briefed on the objectives of the study. Inputs received were incorporated in the instrument, to ensure its validity. A test re-test was also carried out to ensure that the instrument is reliable. Results obtained at the two instances were similar, although this was not statistically measured.

Based on the objectives of this study, the coding sheet indicated content categories such as the headline, body copy, message orientation, visual analysis, and advertisers. The units of analysis are as follows: advertisers were further classified as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs);



Government/Public Sector; Manufacturers/Marketers; Individuals. Message orientation has units of analysis such as to sell brand; to celebrate the child; to both sell the brand and celebrate the child; to educate the child; and to sensitize society to the plight of the child. The headlines were directly quoted along with relevant aspects of the body copy, to support claims made concerning message orientation.

Coding was carried out between May and August 2010 by the researcher along with a Graduate Assistant. The coders leaved through the pages of each of the selected issues of the newspapers and picked advertisements that directly contained messages on children’s day celebration on the chosen date (May 27). To ensure inter-coder reliability, separate coding exercises

were first carried out by the researchers, both of whom later came together to iron out grey areas and thereafter agreed and adopted common data, based on the coding criteria. Results of the data are presented below.

**RESULTS**

The presentation of the results from the data analysis is based on the three research questions guiding the study. Twelve issues (six each of *The Punch* and *The Guardian* newspapers) were analyzed. The period of study was 2000 to 2005. These issues were accessed from the National library of Nigeria, Yaba, Lagos. For *The Punch* newspaper, the issue for May 27, 2002 was not available (N/A) for analysis, as shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Selected Advertisements on Children’s Day Celebration in Nigeria (2000-2005)**

Newspaper	2000 (%)	2001 (%)	2002 (%)	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	Total (%)
<i>The Punch</i>	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	N/A	16 (18%)	10 (11%)	16 (18%)	50 (55%)
<i>The Guardian</i>	4 (4%)	7 (8%)	16 (18%)	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	5 (5%)	41 (45%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (8%)</b>	<b>12 (13%)</b>	<b>16 (18%)</b>	<b>21 (23%)</b>	<b>14 (15%)</b>	<b>21 (23%)</b>	<b>91 (100%)</b>

As Table 1 above shows, majority of the advertisements (55%) appeared in *The Punch* newspaper as opposed to *The Guardian* newspaper (45%) advertisements on Children’s Day celebration in Nigeria.

**Research Question 1:** Between government sector and private sector organizations, is there a significant difference in the level of sponsorships of advertisements on children’s Day activities?

**Table 2: Advertisements on Children’s Day Celebration in Nigeria Classified by Sectors of Advertisers**

Newspaper	Private Sector (%)	Public sector (%)	Non Govt. Org (%)	Total (%)
<i>The Punch</i>	48(53 %)	NIL	2 (2%)	50 (55%)
<i>The Guardian</i>	34 (37%)	3 (3 %)	4 (4 %)	41 (45%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>82 (90%)</b>	<b>3 (3 %)</b>	<b>6 (7%)</b>	<b>91(100%)</b>

Table 2 reveals that, of the 50 copies on Children’s Day celebrations that featured in *The Punch*, a majority (53%) were sponsored by advertisers drawn from the private sector, followed by two percent of the advertisements sponsored by the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Thus, 90 percent of the messages were sponsored by private sector organizations as opposed to those sponsored by government and NGOs combined.

In addition, the number of sponsored messages in *The Guardian* (37%) by the private sector was less than those that appeared in *The Punch*; there were more

messages by NGOs in *The Guardian* than *The Punch*. A break down analysis shows that a majority of sponsored messages from the private sector emanated from the food and beverages sub-sector (25 of the 48 messages in *The Punch* and 24 out of 34 messages in *The Guardian*). The other advertisers were drawn from the banking and finance, drugs, telecommunications sub-sectors of the economy.

**Research Question 2:** Between sales motive and children’s cause, which is the more dominant in advertisements on children’s day celebrations in Nigeria?

**Table 3: Social Responsibility Orientation of Children’s Day Celebration**

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Celebrate and Sell product (%)</b>	<b>Educate the child/society (%)</b>	<b>Sensitize Society on Children’s plight (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
<i>The Punch</i>	44 (48%)	1 (1%)	5 (6%)	50(55%)
<i>The Guardian</i>	29 (32%)	1 (1%)	11 (12%)	41 45%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>73 (80%)</b>	<b>2 (2%)</b>	<b>16 (18%)</b>	<b>91(100%)</b>

In a majority of cases 80 per cent, (48% in *The Punch* and 32% in *The Guardian*), the messages were oriented towards both celebrating with and selling to children. Two of the advertisements were designed to educate the child, while 16 copies (18%) were meant for advancing the cause of the child. Thus, for most of the copies, while felicitating with, children on the one hand, advertisers were marketing to children on the other hand.

In *The Punch* of 27 (May, 2000, p. 2), a message sponsored by Tastee Fried Chicken (TFC) had the headline “What is the meaning of Children’s Day?” The copy reads: “Be part of the Children’ Day celebration. Take your

children to Tastee Fried Chicken and let them experience lots of fun...” Another advertiser in the same newspaper (*The Punch* 27/5/2000, p. 7) had its headline read, “We’ll give your kids lots to laugh about on May 27<sup>th</sup>”. It followed in the body copy with the text “It’s Children’s Day, again and Tantalizers is out to make it an outing mixed with fun and laughter”. Again, another food giant, Mr. Biggs, (*The Punch* 27/5/2000, p. 9) declared in its headline, “Kids, it’s your day”. In the body copy, it invited children to “Make it a “Bigg” one!”

Again, although, an advertiser in the financial services sector (Chartered Bank) on May 27, 2000 in *The Punch* (pg. 10), presented “A toast to the Nigerian Child” in the headline,

the body copy reveals the selling motive “Children’s Educational Savings Scheme (CHESS), the assurance of a bright future”. The messages in *The Guardian* were not different. A multinational foods and beverages company in its headline (of advertisement in *The Guardian* of 27 May 2002, p. 53) announced to children: “It’s your Day!” It went on to invite them to “Take a Nestle Milo break and have a fun-filled Children’s Day”. It is revealing therefore that sales motive is more dominant than advocating children’s causes in the advertisements on Children’s Day celebrations in Nigeria. These selling messages were however presented in subtle and persuasive manners.

**Research Question 3:** What are the relevant causes advocated by advertisers in relation to the plights of the Nigerian child in the sponsored advertising messages?

Relevant cause-related marketing messages on Children’s Day celebrations in Nigeria were sponsored by government sectors, NGOs and partly by business organizations. One of such messages appeared in *The Guardian* (27/05/2001, p. 38) with the headline “It takes courage to provide free education”. The text reads “Free meal a day for all pupils in the Lagos State public primary schools”. The attention is been drawn here to the need for free education and free mid-day meals for every child in Nigeria. A second message in *The Guardian* is similar, although sponsored by an Ink Manufacturer (*The Guardian* 27/05.2002, p. 14). The headline and the body copy respectively read, “The future belongs to her” (the Nigerian child). “Go on child, write right always”. The right to quality education of the Nigerian child is thus in focus.

A major health challenge to the Nigerian child is that of the prevalence of Polio, a debilitating sickness that causes paralysis for

children. The World Health Organization (WHO) along with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) continue to wage relentless campaigns against this infectious but preventable disease. It is against that background that a message with the headline “Kick Polio out of Nigeria”, sponsored by an NGO (*The Guardian* 27/5/2002, p. 27) should be appreciated. The full text reads, “Join us to ensure that all children are prevented from these vaccine preventable diseases”. The message sensitizes the public as a whole to the plight of the Nigerian child as it also calls for a drastic collective action against the debilitating disease.

The FGN during the same children’s day celebration and using the same vehicle (*The Guardian* 27/5/2002, p. 75) re-echoed the same message: “Join us to ensure that all children are prevented from these vaccine preventable disease. Please ensure that no child is crippled by immunizing your children against polio.” It closes “2002 is the date to free Nigeria of Polio”. Finally, citing a UNICEF report on the state of children globally- illiteracy, high dropout rate from schools, prevalence of childhood diseases, child labour/rape and so on, another NGO that advertised the 2003 Children’s Day (*The Guardian* 27/5/2003, p. 65), asked: “What hope for the Nigerian child?”. All of this sensitizes the public to the plight of the Nigerian child.

Going through cause-related marketing messages on the Nigerian child in the selected issues of *The Punch* shows further the value that society should place on the child. In *The Punch* newspaper (pg. 27) to commemorate the Children’s Day celebration of 27 May 2003, an advertiser announced to the children (headline): “You are our ACE”. The body copy continues, “You are our

future today. We prepare you because our tomorrow depends on you. Have a great day today”. Writing in the same vein, another advertiser in *The Punch* (27/05/2005, p. 40) announced in its headline “It’s the little ones that matter”.

Another advertiser, a food manufacturer in *The Punch* (27/05/2003, p. 36), calls on parents and guardians to constantly engage in “Conversations” with children. The message was amplified in the text “The future of their dreams is built on your conversations of today”. Visual analysis shows mum and daughter in a tête-à-tête. A similar message was repeated verbatim, to commemorate the May 27, 2004 Children’s Day celebration (*The Punch*, P. 22). Another message (*The Punch* 27/05/2005, p. 21) portrays the National Food Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), a Federal Government agency, as a socially responsible arm of government. The agency, to mark the Children’s Day celebration of that year presents its scorecard of successful operations and asked, “Can you count how many lives NAFDAC has saved? Indeed, many children had reportedly died due to the menace of fake drugs, an evil that NAFDAC continues to battle.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Results show that the private sector sponsored more advertising messages on children’s day activities than did governmental bodies and NGOs. However, expectedly, messages from the public sector and NGOs are more issue centered and cause-related than messages emanating from the private sector. The sponsored message from the Lagos State Government focused on the need quality education of the child and provision of free meals in schools. The nation’s foods and drugs agency (NAFDAC) and the Kick Out Polio Campaigns are also commendable, although such efforts appear

little considering the magnitude of the challenges confronting the Nigeria child; public institutions are expected to serve as vanguards in such cause-related campaigns. Thus, the model of CSR practiced in the Scandinavian countries where the government sector takes the lead appears to be dominant in the cause-related messages on children’s day celebrations in Nigeria.

While the few sponsored messages on the part of government bodies and NGOs addressed more of the needs and challenges of the child, the advertisements sponsored by most of the business organizations were more overtly profit motivated than advocating genuine causes of the child, although there is a little exception as a handful of the business organizations equally carried out cause-related marketing. As it is, most business organizations disguised, thus marketing their brands to children, under the pretext that they were celebrating with children during such a significant event.

Cause-related marketing (CRM) has been defined by Kazmi and Batra (2004, p. 599) as “advertising that is concerned with the propagation of ideas and social issues of general importance in a manner that supports the position and interest of the advertiser”. Such CRM messages do not usually attempt to sell products directly, but they give a face to the company and attempts to develop a positive relationship by influencing the public’s reactions toward the company and its products, services, sales force and job offers. As we have demonstrated, marketing motives were not disguised in a majority of sponsored messages in relation to children’s day celebrations in Nigeria. The occasion of the children’s day celebrations tended to present opportunities for marketers, particularly in the food and beverages sub-sector, to advertise to children and attract

children's attention to purchase the advertised brands or patronize the services.

Another issue worthy of consideration is that of product pestering. Economically, children are dependent on the active segment of the population for survival. This explains why the Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria (APCON) through its Code (2010, section 100) Article 100 stipulates that "advertisements shall not induce children to pressure their parents, guardians, other adults or any person whatsoever to purchase the advertised product: (APCON, 2010, p. 32). Contrary to provisions of this Code, many of the sponsored messages relating to Children's Day celebrations empowered children with the wherewithal to pester their parents and guardians to buy into the advertised brands. For example, a message sponsored by a commercial bank had the headline as "Eye on the future". The text reads "Prudent Rainbow Savings Account uniquely empowering children for the future" (*The Punch*, 27/05/03, p. 25). Another one (*The Punch*, 27/05/2003, p. 43) reminded children on their celebration day, to ask their parents/wards to "Take us to Tastee" (headline) and in the text to "take us to TFC (Tastee Fried Chicken) for a children's day". Another message, sponsored on behalf of Peak Milk brand (*The Punch*, 27/05/05, p. 27), called on children to: "Drink up, the future is waiting". In addition to negating the tenets of cause-related marketing, such postures also repudiates the tenets of ethical and socially responsible advertising. These types of messages encourage consumerism on the part of children, albeit in its negative connotations.

It is also noteworthy that the present study confirms an early one by Olatunji (2010) who found that advertisers in the food and beverages sub-sector of the Nigeria economy bombard children with messages on high sugared, high fat-laden foods and drinks

products, contrary to the global ethical requirements on advertising foods to children. It is this trend that seems to be manifested in the present study which establishes that a majority of manufacturers, who 'celebrated' with children during the May 27 events, were in fact drawn from the foods and beverages sub-sector. Most of the advertisements in that category covertly and overtly carry messages that suggest (wrongly), that Children's Day celebrations are incomplete if children are not treated to high doses of chicken, chocolate, snacks, ice cream, and the like. It is not surprising that much of product pestering occur during children's day celebrations in Nigeria. During this period and on other public holidays, it is common to hear children pester parents/wards to take them to one eatery or the other. Advertisers of foods and beverages in the present study seemed to offer little or nothing to the child in terms of how to address pressing issues, causes or concerns. The major concern seemed to be the need to market the brands to children. Not much of issues or causes relating to the challenges confronting the Nigerian child were addressed in the sponsored messages.

Berg and Katz (1999) for example found that in the United States, a total of \$715 million was spent on cause advertising compared to \$160 billion spent on profit-oriented advertisements in 1995 alone. This shows that there are also less of CRM/issue – centered advertising messages in advertisements emanating from the US as opposed to for-profit advertisements. This is similar to the finding of the present study, although we do not readily have a reliable figure on the amount spent on social responsibility advertising in Nigeria in the years past. This study shows that in Nigeria, advertisers did very little to promote issues/causes affecting children, similar to the situation in the US. Thus, when viewed

against the backdrop of the CSR normative theories (Melé, 2006), a majority of the commercial messages on Children's Day celebrations in Nigeria fell short of expectations in terms of their ethical values as well as bringing about mutually beneficial outcomes to all stakeholders, particularly the Nigerian child. The commercial motive, rather than issues or causes relating to the well being of children, were predominant in advertising messages on Children's Day celebrations in Nigeria.

### **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The need to engage advertising as a social institution for the promotion of social change cannot be downplayed. This study has sufficiently demonstrated that marketers whose messages are socially oriented do in fact profit maximally in positive image; secure public understanding and support; and most of all, issue-related marketing boosts corporate bottom line. These suggest that it is mutually in the interests of both marketing organizations and the public at large when commercial messages are socially oriented.

The present study has shown that the level of socially responsible advertisements in Nigeria is very low. This demands that regulatory agencies should put incentives in place to encourage advertisers and their agencies to embed social responsibility advertising in their promotional strategies. Advertising professional bodies such as the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), or other related bodies

elsewhere (such as Association of Advertising Agencies of America- AAAA) should award prizes on an annual basis, to advertisers and agencies whose messages rank best in social orientation.

Finally, advertising agencies under the umbrella of their professional association, should mount advertising campaigns around specific social issues on annual basis, the like of the campaign that is currently running in the CNN, tagged Freedom (or Ant- Slavery) Project. Every stakeholder needs to be positively involved in social responsibility advertising, to enhance social change. There are peculiar socio-economic and political challenges in several parts of the world. Efforts by some notable marketing organizations to build advertising campaigns around notable issues such as the environment, gender, health, human rights and the like are worthwhile and commendable. In the sub-Saharan Africa, it is time that marketing organizations built their advertising campaigns around the need to guarantee the rights of the child; prevent women and girl-child trafficking/prostitution; poverty reduction; transparency and corporate governance; health and physical well being, along with other pressing challenges in society. Such campaigns may be built around the United Nations' adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), bearing in mind the need to strengthen public-private sector participation in the achievement of the MDGs. .

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