



Evaluation of Consumers' Perception on Aesthetic Values of Advertisement and Patronage of Children's Products

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ABSTRACT

This study was investigated to assess how citizens of the Edo North Senatorial District felt about commercials' aesthetic value and how often they bought children's products. The research was helped in this by "the hedonistic or pleasure and contextualism/naturalism theories" ideas. Using a 28-item questionnaire, the cross-sectional study approach was used. A straightforward random sampling procedure was used to choose 400 respondents from three local government areas in the Edo North Senatorial District for the samples. The collected data were examined and displayed as frequency tables and percentages. The results of this study showed that most Edo North Senatorial District consumers of children's products view or perceive the aesthetic value of advertisements as a major motivating element for patronizing children's items. It has been found that customers of children's products in the Edo North Senatorial District can be motivated by factors other than the aesthetics of packaging.

Key words: Aesthetic value, Advertisements, Packaging, Children, Patronizing, Edo North Senator District

1. INTRODUCTION

A product's packaging design is a touch point that is regularly experienced by consumers and that shapes their perception of the product. The appearance of the package is believed to have a stronger impact on influencing consumers' purchase decisions than advertising. In marketing, the product package design is considered a "silent salesman" or "salesman on the shelf." Silayoi and Speece (2004) emphasize that understanding consumers' responses to packaging is key to processed food companies competing globally in the rapidly expanding modern retailing industry, where packaging plays a pivotal role in merchandising and communication and acts as a strategic driver of the dynamic competitive environment for processed food products. According to Asadollahi and Givee (2011), an appealing and successful packaging design with relevant design pictures and decorations is more successful in attracting customers. In this case, package designs may stimulate consumers to repeatedly purchase a product. According to Laforet (2010), a brand package is intended to meet the functional and emotional needs of the consumer. Therefore, it is important for package designers to have adequate information on the changing needs of customers and the attitudes or impressions they have about particular designs and how these affect purchase decisions.

The marketing environment is becoming increasingly competitive for products and manufacturers. Designing and marketing aesthetically pleasing products has also grown in importance in markets where many basic consumer needs must be met before a product can be sold. Core product attributes, such as quality and functionality, have become increasingly homogeneous (Reimann, Schilke, & Thomas, 2010, p. 188–197). Companies are now changing their products' identification on the market to attract more consumers by turning away from physical product characteristics and concentrating on aesthetics (Brunner, Emery, & Hall, 2009). According to Zolli (2004, p. 52–55), design and aesthetics are major distinguishing features with regards to the choice and preference of consumer goods. This simply explains why, at special seasons, some notable companies simply come out with special edition designs for their products. Often times, we see Coca-Cola doing this, as evident in their special limited-edition curved bottle designs for the Olympics, Christmas seasons, and other special events. Their reasons are unconnected with the belief that no matter the consumption domain, aesthetic designs trigger certain positive responses in consumers, such as an immediate desire to own the product (Norman, 2004).

Aesthetics appears to be one of the fastest-growing subjects in communication studies. It is consistently catching the attention of a growing number of academics, professionals, and researchers, some of whom neither necessarily belong to the communication discipline nor the traditional academic domain of the concept, which is philosophy. Besides communication, philosophy, and the arts generally, research on aesthetics is constantly permeating the social sciences, education, and related branches of knowledge. A careful examination of current journals and similar publications on the subject published by some Nigerian universities reveals a plethora of researched works on aesthetics as it relates to the aforementioned areas and other issues.

The depth of attention enjoyed by the aesthetic concept has been so remarkable that the concern, which hitherto revolved around physical or tangible beauty, has given way to a more practical understanding of the term, as perhaps originally intended by its progenitor. Alexandra Gotlieb-Baumgarten (1714–1762). Thus, the concept of aesthetics is now re-analyzed and unquestionably understood to have de-limited its confines from the mere physical beauty of an object to center its concern on the collective sensory and perceptual properties of humans in relation to objects, processes, or situations perceived or assessed by such humans. In support of this, Akpan and Etuk (1990, p. 2) see aesthetics as the product of or pertaining to sense perception. They particularly view the aesthetic experience as a feeling or sensation that "we have when we experience something that evokes a certain feeling of enjoyment, something that makes our nerves tingle, whether from seeing or hearing a thing." Revisiting the original intent of the Greek coinage, Idang (2007, p. 17) quotes Froloy as having explained that materialistic trends, encouraged by notable philosophers like Aristotle, Epicurus, and Democritus, made the belief in the objective basis of beauty vis-à-vis material qualities, links, relations, and laws of reality gain wider acceptance. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the role of aesthetic value in advertising in the patronage of children’s products in the Edo North senatorial district of Edo State, Nigeria.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research design

The method adopted for this research is the survey research method. The survey research technique is the method of collecting and analyzing social data via highly structured and often very detailed interviews or questionnaire in order to obtain information from a large number of respondents presumed to be representative of a specific population. The research design is a cross-sectional design, which involved using different groups of people who differ in the variable of interest but share other characteristics, such as socio-economic status, educational background, and ethnicity. This design enabled the respondents in the Edo North Senatorial District to respond to how they perceive the aesthetic value of advertisements and patronage of children’s products. It also enabled the researcher to elicit their attitude, behavior, and feelings on the subject matter. Adults over the age of 18 were chosen from the Edo North Senatorial Districts.

2.2 Population of the study

The population of the study comprises the three Etsako Local Government Areas: Etsako West, Etsako Central, and Etsako Local Government Area of Edo State. According to the 2017 national Bureau of Statistics (NBS) projection, the population of each local government area is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Population projection

Local Government Areas	Population
Etsako West	491, 898
Etsako East	442, 000
Etsako Central	326, 102
Total	1, 260, 000

2.3. Sample Size

The study adopted the Taro Yamane’s formula. The Taro Yamane’s formula is;

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

Where;

n = Desired sample size

N = Population size

e = Level of significance or accepted error margin or limit (0.5)

1 = Constant value

Applying the above equation formula, the sample size of this study is 400.

2.4. Sampling Procedure

For this study, a simple random sampling technique was adopted. It was adopted because it allowed each event or subject in the population an equal opportunity for selection. According to Asika (2002: 42), the random sampling

method is the most fundamental method of probability sampling. It allows the researcher to freely select his samples through a random exercise.

2.5. Research Instruments

The questionnaire was adopted as the research instrument for data collection in this study. The survey was divided into four (4) sections, A-D. Section A elicited information about the respondents' backgrounds. Section B obtained information about the aspect of children's product design that influences product patronage. Section C obtained information about the aesthetic value of children's products and patronage, while Section D contained questions formulated in the likert scale format to elicit information from respondents on the aesthetic value of the advertisement of children's products in the Edo North Senatorial District.

2.6 Validity of the research instrument

For the validation of items in the questionnaire, content and construct validity were carried out. This was to ensure that the instrument accurately measured what it was set out to measure. In addition, the researcher ensured that the majority of the items in the research instrument successfully measured the theoretical constructs of this study, which led to the fine-tuning of the items in the questionnaire to make them suitable for the study.

2.7 Reliability of the Instrument

In testing for the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach's alpha reliability test technique was used. The procedure followed entailed the administration of the validated instrument to 5% of the sample size, which amounted to 20 respondents outside the 3 selected Local Government Areas in Edo North Senatorial District. The pilot test conducted was twofold. Twenty respondents were administered a questionnaire, and the data were collected. Following the initial test, a re-test was performed two weeks later. Data derived from both tests were correlated to find the stability of the instrument over a period of time using the Cronback Alpha reliability test. The Cronback Alpha reliability test decision states that if the Alpha value is more than 0.85, it means that the items in the questionnaire are reliable for the study, and vice versa. The result of the pilot test showed an alpha value of 0.86, which was found to be consistent, indicating that the instrument was reliable.

2.8 Method of data collection

The researcher, with the help of assistants, administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents in the three local government areas of Etsako West, Etsako Central, and Etsako East in the Edo North Senatorial District, which make up the scope of this study. The completed copies of the questionnaire were collected on the spot after administration. This ensured that the total number of copies of the questionnaire administered was the same as the number retrieved. Moreover, it afforded the researcher the opportunity to be present so as to answer any oral questions from respondents and to give guidance on how to answer the questionnaire where necessary within the confines of research ethics.

2.8.1 Proportional distribution of sample size

The copies of the questionnaire were distributed according to the proportion of the population of the study using equation 2 as follows:

$$\frac{N \times X}{TN} \quad (2)$$

Where;

N is population

X is sample size

2.9 Method of Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was based on the four research questions formulated for this study. To provide a visual aid for the data collected, the data to be measured were presented and displayed in frequency tables. Moreover, the most effective, simplest, and understandable method of analyzing complex data is through tables. In addition, the tables enabled percentage scores to be distinct. From the above calculation, Etsako West had 150 copies of the questions. Etsako East had 140 copies, while Etsako Central had 104 copies, making a total of 400 copies. The level of contribution from each respective respondent to various pertinent questions formulated in the Likert scale format was determined using a chi-squared statistic.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Data Presentation

A sample size of 400 respondents out of a population of over one million people in the Edo North Senatorial District was adopted for this study. At the last count, exactly 400 copies of the questionnaire, representing 100% of the sample size, had been distributed and retrieved for the research.

3.1.1 Socio-Demographic Composition of Respondents

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' socio-demographics. The gender of the respondents revealed that men made up 74.33% of the total and women made up 25.67%. The policy adopted was to ensure equitable participation by both sexes in the spirit of non-sex discrimination, which implied that males were more than females, despite the fact that the data sought by this research were not sex-emphatic. It was observed, however, that in most places and scenarios, females were few compared to men. Noteworthy also is that they exhibited a lukewarm attitude toward accepting the researcher's questionnaire. It was also observed that young female employees (youth coppers) as well as middle-level management females, on the contrary, were enthusiastic to accept and complete the questionnaire, preferring that the researcher wait and collect the completed questionnaire immediately.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents on socio-demographic variables

Group	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	223	74.33%
	Female	77	25.67%
Total	-	400	100.00%
Age	18 – 27	100	25%
	28 – 37	220	55%
	38 – 47	70	17.50%
	48 – Above	10	2.50%
Total	-	400	100.00%
Marital Status	Single	120	30%
	Married	280	70%
Total	-	400	100.00%
Education	Primary	70	17.50%
	Secondary	140	35%
	Tertiary	190	45%
Total	-	400	100.00%
Occupation	Employed	170	42.50%
	Unemployed	230	57.50%
Total	-	400	100.00%

Source: Field work, 2019

Naturally, ages 1-17 were excluded from this study due to the age distribution. As a result, the study was kept within the realm of reason so that the resulting data are well-thought-out and relevant to the research demands. Thus, the age range 18–27 had a response frequency of 100, representing 25%; 28–37 had 220 responses, representing 55%; and 38–47 had 70, representing 17.5%. The above analysis indicates that both distribution and retrieved responses are among the strong, productive, and reasoning brackets of society—the earners and heavy consumers of children's products—and so, the most required for the study. On the marital status of the respondents, it was observed that the number of married respondents who took part in the study outweighed the number of single respondents. While there were 280 married respondents, accounting for 70% of the total population, there were 120 single respondents, accounting for 30% of the total population. It also showed that married women are heavy consumers of children's products in the Edo North Senatorial District. In terms of education, the above table revealed that those who attended a higher education institution valued the aesthetic value of advertising and invariably patronized children's

products more than those who only attended primary and secondary school. While those with higher education had a response frequency of 190, representing 45% of the total sample size, those with primary and secondary education stood at 70 and 140, respectively, representing 17.5% and 35% of the total sample size. The occupational distribution of respondents indicated that among all those sampled for the research, the unemployed were more numerous than the employed. While the number of those employed stood at 170, representing 42.5% of the total population, the unemployed were 230, representing 57.5%.

3.2 Children products design and influences on product patronage

The respondent is hereby requested to attest to the aspect of the product design that attracts his or her children most. To this question, 100 respondents out of a total of 400 respondents, representing 25%, attested to packaging as the aspect of product design that attracts their children mostly, 20 respondents, representing 5%, stated that it is the product label; 80 respondents, representing 20%, said it is the colours and the remaining 200 respondents, representing 50%, stated that it is the pictures or images used in the design that attract their children mostly as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Preference of children’s products

Type of product	Frequency	Percentage
Local products with good design	12	3
Foreign product with good design	42	10.5
Any product usage that is attractive	226	56.5
Any product usage that they see other children using	120	30
Total	400	100%

3.3 Effect of aesthetic value in advertisement of children’s products on good product

The results in Table 4 and Figure. 1 show the distribution of respondents according to their views on whether aesthetic value in the advertisement of children’s products makes a good product. The question is quite significant, judging from the p-value at the 5% level of significance. So, the question is both right and appropriate. The respective contributions to the chi-square statistic indicate the number of respondents. More respondents in the Likert-Scale category strongly disagree with the relevant question. 52 respondents, or 13% of those polled, strongly agreed; 45 respondents, or 11.25% agreed; 43 respondents, or 10.8% were undecided; 70 respondents, or 17.5% disagreed; and 190 respondents, or 47.5% strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test for Observed Counts

Category	Observed	Proportion	Expected	Chi-Sq
Strongly Agree	52	0.280	9.800	
Agree	45	0.280	15.313	
Undecided	43	0.280	17.113	
Disagree	70	0.280	1.250	
Strongly Disagree	190	0.280	151.250	
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N	400			
DF	4			
Chi-Sq	194.725			
P-Value	0.000			

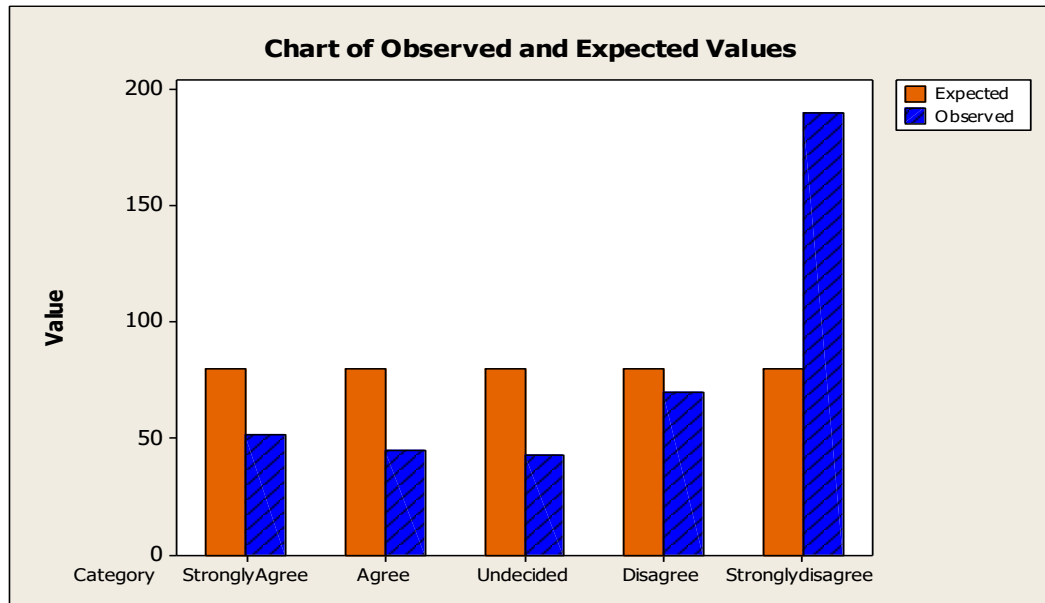


Fig. 1 Observed and expected value

According to Table 5 and Fig. 2, 165 (or 41.3%) of the total number of respondents strongly agreed that product packaging helps to increase consumer preferences for children’s products. 100 other respondents, or 25% of those polled, agreed with the viewpoint; 82, or 20.5%, were undecided; 40, or 10%, disagreed; and 13, or 3.3%, strongly disagreed. The question is also significant, judging from the p-value at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, the question is right and appropriate. The number of respondents is shown by the respective contributions to the chi-square statistic. From the Likert-Scale category, more respondents strongly agreed with the pertinent question, as shown in the chi-square statistic.

Table -5 Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test for Observed Counts

Category	Observed	Proportion	Expected	Chi-Sq
Strongly Agree	160	0.280	80.00	80.00
Agree	120	0.280	20.00	
Undecided	66	0.280	2.45	
Disagree	40	0.280	20.00	
Strongly Disagree	14	0.280	54.45	
N DF Chi-Sq P-Value				
400 4 176.9 0.000				

Sources : Field Survey, (2019).

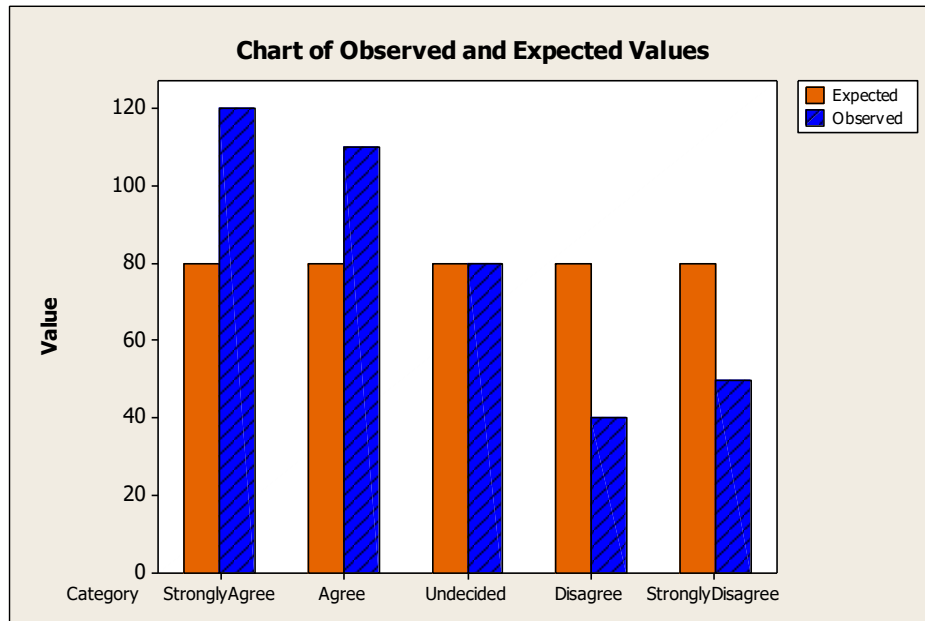


Fig. 2 Observed and expected value

According to the findings of the study, aesthetics is an important aspect of product package design that helps increase customers' choice responses to purchasing a product, particularly children's products. This finding supports the work of Martin (1998), who claimed that while products purchased solely for their functional utility may lose their appeal when becoming technically obsolete, those with aesthetic qualities may be treasured long after their functional value fades. This is why the consumer may be willing to pay more for the product (Bloch, Brunel, & Arnold, 2003) and subsequently increase the tendency to show off the product (Bloch, 1995). Often times, we find people keeping the packs of their used products because they consider it a treasure or a privilege to have used the product. The study answered the question of which aspect of product design attracts children to the product they like, and the study revealed that aesthetic packaging is the aspect of product design that attracts children to the product they like. This finding is in line with the study of Brunner, Emery, and Hall (2009), who said that companies are now changing their product identification on the market to attract more consumers by turning away from physical product characteristics to less physical appearance and concentrating on aesthetics.

The study further revealed that although aesthetic package design helps increase customers' choice responses, it does not do so exclusively. The findings revealed that there are other factors, apart from aesthetic package designs, that have an influence on customers' choice responses as well. Size, product label, and price are also factors that influence customers' choice responses, according to the findings. This study also supports the work of Zoli (2004), who claimed that design and aesthetics are major distinguishing features with regards to the choice and preference of consumer goods. This simply explains why, at special seasons, some notable companies simply come out with special edition designs for their products. Often times, we see Coca-Cola doing this, as evident in their special limited-edition curved bottle designs for the Olympic, Christmas seasons and other special events. Their reasons are not unconnected with the belief that no matter the consumption domain, aesthetic designs trigger certain positive responses in consumers, such as an immediate desire to own the product (Norman, 2004). These findings corroborated the hedonistic or pleasure theory and the contextualism or naturalism theory on which this study was anchored. The findings presented agree with the two theories used.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings made in this study, it can be concluded that a good number of residents of Edo North senatorial district see aesthetic packaging of children's products as a major factor of influence for the patronage of such products when compared with the number of those with a contrary view. This is because, according to the study, aesthetic design is mostly for the purpose of identification, but it also serves the purpose of attraction as it is the first thing the consumer will see before considering whether to buy the product or not. It can also be concluded that, while aesthetic package designs have been shown to increase customer choice responses, they do not do so exclusively. Other factors influence the customer's choice response besides aesthetic package design. This is because when a product is appealing, the consumer becomes psychologically attached to it, and when the satisfaction from using the product corresponds with the package design with which the customer first came into contact, the customer's loyalty to the product is assured. The point to note here is that the visual appeal of a product is as important as the content of the product itself, as it determines whether a product gets noticed at the store or market.

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