

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND TRADITIONAL SALES
STRATEGIES: A CASE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE SELLERS
ON COMMERCIAL VEHICLES**

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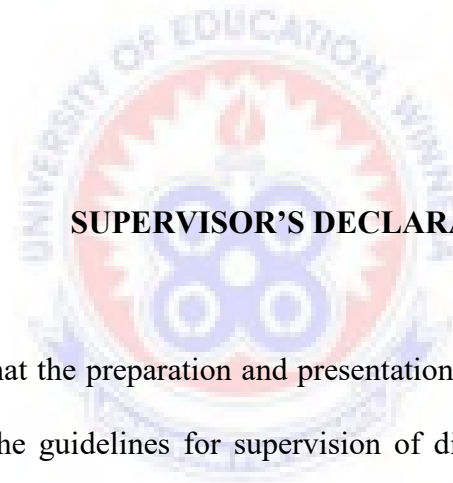
JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

I, Comfort Soyokuor Quarcoo-Tchire, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my original work and has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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The task of undertaking this exercise has been quite enormous. I am extremely grateful to everybody who in their own diverse but crucial ways contributed to the completion of this work

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, Mr. Samuel Yaw Quarcoo-Tchire and my beloved son Emmanuel Mordecai Ofotsu Cobblah.



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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of hawking traditional medicines on commercial buses is rampant in Ghana, notwithstanding its ban by regulatory authorities. This study examined the marketing communication strategies used by traditional medicine vendors to sell their wares to passengers in commercial vehicles. The study collected data using qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews and participant observations of five traditional medicine vendors. These vendors were selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The study found that traditional medicine sellers employ both ethical and unethical communication strategies in persuading passengers in commercial vehicles to purchase their products. Some of the ethical communication strategies they employed include identification techniques such as starting every sales encounter with prayers and/or comedy; sales promotions; and direct marketing. These strategies were aimed at building rapport with consumers, establishing trust, enhancing the credibility of the products being sold, and deflection of any suspicions or doubts consumers may have about the product. The unethical communication strategies adopted by the vendors to sell their products included propaganda techniques such as exaggerations, embellishments, half-truths and misrepresentations in relation to the efficacy of the medicines. These questionable promotional themes emphasised exaggerated efficacy, cheap price and other melodramatic claims, and overstate the benefits to be derived from using the medicines. The study, therefore, recommends that government and industry stakeholders, especially the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), the Ghana Federation of Traditional Healers Association (GFTHA) and others must train these vendors in ethical communication about the efficacy and dosage of traditional medicines, so as to reduce any negative consequences on the general public health.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background of the study and explains the statement of the problem. It continues with an enumeration of the research objectives and questions. It further considers the scope of the study as well as its significance.

1.1 Background

The mix of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations are used by companies to pursue their advertising and marketing objectives (McCarthy, 1998). Marketing Communication is a fundamental and complex part of a company's marketing efforts. It involves all the messages and media a company deploys to communicate with the market (Wiefels, 2002). Marketing communications are the tools a company or an organization uses to deliver a range of promotional messages to its target markets. Businesses use a range of marketing communications to promote their companies, products and services. Some examples of marketing communications tools include; brochures, mailshots, websites, advertisements, sales promotions, exhibitions and personal selling.

Marketing communication functions within a marketing framework. Traditionally, it was known as the promotional element of the four Ps of marketing; that is product, place, price and promotion. The primary goal or objective of marketing communications is to reach a defined audience to affect its behaviour by informing, persuading and reminding. Marketing communication acquires new customers for brands by building awareness of the brand and encouraging trial. A second objective of marketing communication is to

building and reinforcing relationships with customers, prospects, retailers and other important stakeholders.

Marketers use a combination of marketing instruments to promote, establish and maintain successful co-operations with target customers. These marketing strategies are used by marketers of a wide range of products, including herbal medicines. Herbal medicines remain an integral part of indigenous health-care system in Ghana. Herbal medicine has been defined differently by various people. According to Kamboj (2000), “herbal medicines constitute those traditional medicines which primarily use medicinal plant preparations for their therapy.” Lucas (2010) also defines herbal medicines as the use of plant products to treat or prevent a disease. In the past few years, traditional herbal medicines have gained significant global health attention. In China for example, traditional medicine herbal medicine played a prominent role in the strategy to contain and treat severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Eighty percent of African populations use some form of traditional herbal medicine and the worldwide annual market for these products is close to sixty billion dollars, WHO (2002).

Some studies in Ghana have revealed that the continued patronage of herbal medicines is due to their accessibility, affordability, effectiveness and cultural acceptability (Darko, 2009; Twumasi, 2005; Davie, 1994). Similarly, WHO (2002) states that the use of herbal medicine is often attributed to its availability and physical accessibility. This is because compared to orthodox health-care, herbal medicine is less expensive and herbal practitioners are more willing to accept delayed payment, in-kind payments (such as giving out fowls, goats, drinks, etc), or in some cases, patients can negotiate the amount of money to be paid (Darko,2009;Okigbo& Mmeka, 2006). Twumasi (2005) also states

that traditional practitioners speak to their patients or relatives in a language that could be easily understood and followed hence the high patronage.

In addition to these attributes however, many herbal medicine sellers have adopted techniques in oratory through which they are able to convince the public to buy their medicine even when the ‘potential buyer’ do not even need. Some of these herbal medicine sellers often claim that one type of herbal medicine can cure a number of sicknesses. They claim that modern science cannot provide treatments for certain diseases which herbal medicines are able to cure Ernst (2000) In most cases these herbal medicine sellers link their treatments with mystical rituals that have no scientific explanation for their effectiveness. Their task is to change potential buyers to real and loyal customers J. Zhang, B. Wider, H. Shang, X. Li & E. Ernst (2012). It is a precise channel for persuasion as the selected message is designed for a particular targeted audience. Herbal medicine sellers also use anecdotal evidence, research results from traditional medical centers and personal experience to reinforce their claims and educate their audience in all aspects of health-care. There is so much faith in herbalists and the spiritual world that in the rural areas, some diseases are classified as spiritual and curable only by traditional medicine, and affected patients would refuse to see trained medical doctors for advice.

A lot of research into plant medicine is currently being done in the universities and research institutions. There is now a degree programme in herbal medicine at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology KNUST. In Ghana, it is common place to see herbal medicine sellers on board commercial vehicles selling their products. It has become another form of marketing of traditional medicine. This system is different from

the norm where the herbalists will have a shop to sell their wares. This seems the fastest form of marketing where potential buyers are persuaded to purchase the herbal medicine.

There have been calls from the Medicine Practitioners Council to members to stop selling medicine in commercial vehicles. The State-owned transport, Metro Mass Transit, has banned hawking and sale of traditional medicines on its buses. However many more people are into this form of business now. It is seen by many as a creative way of selling herbal medicine that may not be packaged well. The negative aspect of the peddling of medicine in vehicles is that the herbal medicine sellers do not prescribe medicine to patients based on the diagnosis and the disease the patient is suffering from, but they just give the medicine without even the prescription attached. One other significant point is that most of these medicines are cheaper than those that are sold in located places such as stores.

The World Federation of Direct Selling Associations has defined direct selling as non-fixed retailing places and through the use of face-to-face way, the product and service are sold directly to the consumers. Peterson & Wotruba (1996) briefly described direct selling as a face-to-face selling without fixed retailing sites. Per this definition, it is very clear that, selling of medicine in commercial vehicles is a form of direct selling. Generally speaking, direct selling of medicine on vehicles is not done necessarily by the company but may be done by those who are affected by the product. These herbal medicine sellers employ traditional sales strategy of selling to a group of people on a vehicle. As stated earlier, this tactics is essential to those who would not have time to go and purchase the medicine at an identified shop.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of road safety has been of national concern for quite sometime now (Teye-Kwadjo et al 2013). Similarly the concern for consumer rights protection and quality standards in the production of goods and services has been highlighted in many places of our current national discourse (GTV, 2015; Ghana Standards Authority, 2015). On board commercial vehicles, travelers prefer a hussle-free, noise-free environment where they can relax and enjoy their travel. Notwithstanding these backgrounds, the phenomenon of preaching and selling medicines on commercial vehicles seem to heighten by the day in what appears to be a cherished phenomenon by passengers and drivers alike. There appears to be some efforts to discourage the practice, and the Daily Graphic (2009) for example notes that the Greater Accra branch of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) has formally requested its members to discourage that practice on board their vehicles. The Metro Mass Transit has done same while the Food and Drugs Authority has banned sales of drugs in commercial vehicles. The increasing use of commercial vehicles for preaching and selling medicine to travellers has been controversial since some argue that it misleads travellers into accepting an unrooted faith or taking costly prescription drugs that they do not need respectively. From the herbal medicine sellers, travellers are bombarded with daily messages of prescription on drugs that treat impotency, high blood pressure, diabetes, migraine, piles, erectile dysfunction and turning normal human experience like hair loss or shyness into disease. Various strategies have been employed by the preachers and the herbal medicine sellers to communicate their message or make sales. What is worrying is the helpless nature of the situation as passengers who speak against preachers and medicine sellers on board commercial vehicles are considered evil

or “book long.” Some of the commercial drivers even collect various amounts of money from these herbal medicine sellers to allow them sell their products on board commercial vehicles. Though most often the herbal medicines cannot be ascertained as registered and good for consumption, various themes are employed to sell these medicines to the poor passengers whose plight are used as platforms for selling. The study would bring to the fore why these herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles are still in business even after modernity, technology and policies that seek to curb their activities.

1.3 Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate marketing communication and sales strategies used by herbal medicine sellers on board commercial vehicles in Ghana. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate the nature of marketing strategies deployed by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles.
2. Identify the weaknesses and opportunities of the marketing communication strategies used.
3. To investigate the linguistic styles used by these herbal product sellers.

1.4 Research Questions

The study set out to find answers to the following questions in order to meet the outlined objectives.

1. What are the marketing strategies deployed by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles?
2. What are the weaknesses and opportunities of the marketing communication strategy employed by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles?
3. What are the linguistic styles used by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study was necessitated by the abundance of herbal products in Ghana and the marketing communication strategy used by herbal product sellers. The multiplicity of sources of promotion has resulted in the practice whereby an advertiser has to make choices based on the ability of the medium of promotion to attract the target audience (Pearce & Robinson, 2009). Given the marketing strategies employed by the herbal medicine sellers, examining its influence on consumer purchasing behavior in Ghana is important. This study is an attempt to contribute to the information and knowledge about the impact of marketing communications and traditional sales strategies by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles in Ghana. The study also seeks to establish the cultural elements and the linguistic styles used by some of these herbal medicine sellers. There is therefore the need for control and regulation of the activities of traditional medicine vendors, especially those that operate inside commercial vehicles. This should be followed with a structured programme to re-orient and educate the larger pool of Ghanaians who patronize these traditional medicines to be wary of the information they receive from these vendors.

As is expected of all scholarly works, this study would also offer valuable contribution to the academic community in understanding the modus operandi of herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles. It would also educate the public on the menace of herbal medicine abuse and unlawful sale. This would contribute to shaping orientations on safety and regulation of herbal medicine.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study will be conducted within the framework of examining the impact of marketing communication and sales strategies used by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles. It will also look at whether these herbal medicine sellers are fulfilling a niche or gap in the administration of medicine and its usage. Majority of Ghana's population are not able to afford Western medicine and tend to rely on traditional or herbal medicines. It is a study of herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles from Accra to Winneba and those from Winneba February and March 2016.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This research work, however, was carried out not without problems. The lack of time and inadequate funds were the major challenge in the course of the study. Furthermore, considering the broad nature of marketing communication strategies, the case study was only within the context of the marketing communication strategy that include personal selling, referrals or word of mouth, events and experiences, direct marketing and sales promotion.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters, each with sub categories. Chapter One contains the background and the general concepts; statement of the problem; research objectives; research questions; significance of the study; scope and limitations of the study. Chapter Two focuses on Literature review which makes exhaustive analysis of literature in the research area. It develops a theoretical framework for the study and points out the lacuna in the literature that the study seeks to bridge. Chapter Three details the methodology adopted for the study. It contains the population, sample, research design and description of the study. This chapter also has the instruments and procedures employed in data gathering and analysis. Chapter Four provides results and findings of the research. It presents and explains the outcome of the study. It highlights, discusses and interprets the significant findings as well as makes inferences from them by relating to findings from previous studies in the research area. Chapter Five, the final chapter, constitute the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The key research findings are itemised and their essence and contribution to knowledge are enumerated. Suggestions for future research work have also been made in this chapter. Sources cited in the research and are listed in references.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In recent years, technology has been increasingly harnessed in pursuit of persuading people and motivating them toward various individually and collectively beneficial behaviours. There are two dominant conceptual approaches to persuasion: the longer-established persuasive technology (Albania, Visser, Van Der Mast, Vastenburg & FLowie, 2009) and the more recent but increasingly popular gamification (Bergmans & Sahid, 2013). Gamification-related studies have rapidly increased; however, it seems that in the body of literature on persuasive technologies in particular as used by preachers and traders in commercial centres and vehicles respectively, a relatively larger proportion of empirical studies do not exist (Bhatnagar, Sinha, Samdaria, Gupta, Batra & Bhardwaj, 2012). In spite of these differing titles, the conceptual core of both forms of development incorporate the use of persuasion and artistry that is aimed at affecting people's or listeners' psychological attributes, such as attitudes or motivations, which are further presumed to affect behaviour.

While the behaviours that are supported by these marketing/persuasive messages may be similar, there are differences which seem to stem mainly from the emphases in the articulation of the persuasive stimuli and the psychological mediators. Whereas persuasive technology focuses more on social and communicative persuasion and attitude change, gamification centres more on invoking users' (intrinsic) motivations through gameful experiences and affordances (Centeiro, Roma & Dias, 2011).

2.1 Overview of persuasion

It is through a basic cultural personal definition of persuasion that ‘everyday people’ understand how others are attempting to influence people and then how individuals influence others. The dialogue surrounding persuasion is constantly evolving because of the necessity to use persuasion in everyday life. Persuasion tactics traded in society have been researched on from many researchers; it may sometimes however be misinterpreted. It can be said that in the field of marketing and in the sense of wealth and survival, it is good to persuade and not be persuaded. In order to understand persuasion, members of a culture will gather knowledge from domains such as buying, selling, preaching, and shopping, as well as parenting and courting (Friestad & Wright, 1999). This is due to the fact that, people who studied persuasion in scholarly departments such as marketing and psychology, also brought with them their folk knowledge of persuasion, the scientific knowledge became intertwined with folk knowledge. The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) was created by Friestad and Wright in 1994. This framework allows the researcher to analyse the process of gaining and using everyday persuasion knowledge. The scholars, (Friestad & Wright, 1994) suggest the necessity of including “the relationship and interplay between everyday folk knowledge and scientific knowledge on persuasion, advertising, selling, and marketing in general” (Friestad & Wright, 1994)

In order to educate the general population about research findings and new knowledge about persuasion, people must draw on their pre-existing beliefs from folk persuasion in order to make the research relevant and informative to lay people, which will create “mingling of their scientific insights and commonsense beliefs”. As a result of this constant mingling, the issue of persuasion expertise becomes messy. Expertise status can

be interpreted from a variety of sources like job titles, celebrity, or published scholarship. It is through this multimodal process that concepts like ‘don’t buy from medicine sellers in a bus, the drugs are fake’, “all preachers in buses preach just to solicit money,” are created, among others. The kind of persuasion techniques blatantly employed by preachers and medicine sellers on board vehicles creates an innate distrust of them in popular culture especially with the elite.

According to Lawson (2005), preachers and medicine sellers employ tactics ranging from making personal life ties with the customer to altering reality by handing the customer the medicine before the purchase.

2.2 Strategies used by preachers and medicine sellers

Strategies are classified into three hierarchical levels: corporate, business and functional level strategies. Strategic marketing authors have assumed that the different strategy levels might be influenced by different contingency factors. For several years, marketing authors have made considerable efforts to understand the nature of strategy formulation at the marketing levels (Menon, Bharadwaj, Adidam & Edison , 1999). Theoretical and empirical advances have enhanced our understanding of the nature of marketing strategy. There is still modest agreement as to how marketing strategy affects on sales performance.

However, the fragmented literature on marketing strategy substantiates the fundamental proposition that marketing strategy affects performance, or the conditions that might moderate this relationship. Against this background, it should

be clear that efforts directed at enhancing researchers' understanding of what marketing strategy is and how it influences people's behaviour and perception should make an important contribution to the marketing literature (Ingram, 2004). Thus the key objective of this study is two-fold. First, improve marketing literature and enhance researchers and academics understanding of marketing strategy and its key elements through developing a comprehensive conceptualization. Second, in the attempt to demonstrate the relationship between marketing and persuasion strategy and public behaviour by developing and testing a conceptual model that links persuasion to behaviour and perception.

2.3 Concept of persuasion

Centeiro, Romao and Dias (2012) defined the concept of persuasion in more detail as an attempt to shape, reinforce, or change behaviours, feelings, or thoughts about an issue, object, or action. On a general level, motivational systems such as persuasive technologies and gamification build on the assumption that human behaviour and attitudes may be influenced through technology. All information systems can be considered to influence the users in some way (Ateaga, Kudeki, Woodworth & Kurniawan, 2010). For a technology to be actually "persuasive" however the persuasion has to be intentional (Centeiro, Romao & Dias, 2012); that is, the technology must have been designed for the purpose of guiding the user towards an attitude or behaviour change. It follows then that a concept of a desired attitude or behaviour has to guide the design process.

Persuasive technologies have also been defined as interactive systems designed for attitude and/or behaviour change (Chittaro, 2012). In defining with persuasive technologies, in addition to the intentionality, the process of persuasion and the strategy must also be considered in the design of such systems (Bayor & Kim, 2009). As the intent determines the intended outcomes or changes in attitude or behaviour, the event refers to the usage and user of the persuasive technology, and the strategy to the message and how it is delivered (Ateaga, Kudeki, Woodworth & Kurniawan, 2010). Previous discussion on the topic of marketing communication has emphasised the importance of contextual factors of persuasion and the interactions among the persuader, user, and technology (Bayor & Kim, 2009). Ateaga, Kudeki, Woodworth and Kurniawan 2010 have suggested that for better discernment of the outcomes of persuasive technologies, these technologies could be categorised in terms of whether they are intended to form, alter, or reinforce attitudes, behaviours, or an act of complying.

On the level of design, persuasive technologies have been considered to consist of the following:

1. primary task support (features supporting the core activity or behaviour),
2. computer–human dialogue support (feedback from the system),
3. perceived system credibility (features making the system seem credible and trustworthy), and
4. social influence (features inducing motivation through social influence).

Bayor & Kim, (2009), presents guidelines and principles for these elements.

This means that effective communication for marketing to yield expected result must take into consideration the above stated elements. The primary task is the product sales and

the specific problems it meets, while consumer/customer feedback should be monitored while the communication process is initiated. Once a positive response is gained and the product / marketer is considered credible, it behoves the marketer to induce motivation and this is a tool most preachers and medicine sellers use by making references to specific cases and individuals they have helped or testimony arisen from what they do.

2.4 Social judgment theory and Persuasion

Social Judgment Theory is a persuasion theory propounded by Carolyn Sherif, Muzafer Sherif, and Carl Hovland. The theory defined by Sherif and Sherif as the perception and evaluation of an idea by comparing it with current attitudes. According to this theory, an individual weighs every new idea, comparing it with the individual's present point of view to determine where it should be placed on the attitude scale in an individual's mind. Social Judgment Theory (SJT) is the subconscious sorting out of ideas that occurs at the instant of perception. The perspective that people assimilate new information about attitude objective in light of what they already know or feel affects their initial attitude, this attitude act as a frame of reference leading to new information categorised in terms of this standard (Solomon, 2011).

The best theory which addresses just how difficult people can be in 'these and others' intuitions, is Social Judgment Theory. This theory is quite useful for three primary reasons. First, it explains why people get so agitated. Second, it explains why persuasion is so difficult to accomplish. Third, it offers a good common sense plan for persuasion in the real world. In understanding this theory, marketers, preachers and sellers alike would be able to know the dynamism of responses to marketing/sales messages, how best to

communicate to targets customers/audience and how to persuade people to respond favourable to a communication. The theory goes to explain how preachers and marketers can work on the subconscious minds of their target by starting from what is already known by the targets and gradually linking it to the subject of interest. In this way, the target compares his/her own point of view with the updated information. The social judgement theory is of interest to this study because it explains how the social environment has an influence on the cognitive processes of human to affect attitude/behaviour change to a cue, which many herbal medicine sellers and preachers on commercial vehicles take advantage of. For example, most of these herbal medicine sellers pry on the “innocence or passive” nature of travellers and attract the innocent passenger into liking the medicine they are selling.

2.5 Factors that affect target listeners’ behaviour or perception

2.5.1 Wear in and Wear out

Wear in refers to the positive effect on consumers who are exposed to a message (Pechmann and Stewart 1990). The term wear-out, on the other hand, refers to the decay in advertising quality of an ad over time (Grass & Wallace 1969, Strong 1972, Calder & Sternthal 1980, Simon 1982). An ad is worn out if it either does not have any significant effect on consumers or has a negative effect. Both wear in and wear out effects depend on factors such as whether the ad was based on an emotional appeal or a rational appeal, whether the persuasion in the message was strong or weak, whether consumers were motivated or not to process the ad, and whether the level of competitive ads was high or

low (Shakya, 2014). The wear out effects may also depend on the change in ad copy, based on research finding that suggests that variations in copy improve the effectiveness or, specifically, recall of ads (Grass & Wallace 1969). In a series of experiments to study of the effects of repetition of ads Shakya (2014) found that the response functions for repetition varied across different measures (for example recall or intention), segments, brands, and type of advertising. Shakya (2014) also studied the effect of different messages on repetition functions. MacInnis (2002) found evidence of a significant positive relationship between ad repetition and sales when emotional ads are employed, but not for rational ads. He argued that one possible explanation of the above finding is that emotional ads have less rapid wear out. Naik (1998) model two sources of wear out— repetition wear out and copy wear out. When a customer is exposed to ads repeatedly, she can become bored, irritated, or simply lose interest as the benefits of processing the ad are perceived to be worthless. This leads to repetition wear out, which depends on the amount of advertising that is done. Copy wear out, on the other hand, is the decay in advertising effectiveness due to the passage of time, which is independent of the amount of advertising. Such a decay may be the result of a change in consumers' conditions such as increased knowledge about product attributes over time (Diggs-Brown, 2011). Other reasons for copy wearout include the imitation of an ad strategy by competing firms or by firms in other product categories (Hindery, 2001) and an increase in ad clutter (Diggs-Brown, 2011).

2.5.2 Forgetting

Another factor that affects quality dynamics is the effect of forgetting. People tend to forget an ad when it is not being heard in a given period. Forgetting has a negative effect of reducing aggregate brand awareness (Mahajan, 1984). On the other hand, other research findings also suggest that there is a rejuvenating effect of advertising when an ad is taken off the media and directly sent to the target in personal human contact (Naik, 1998). Scot (2007) was of the view that a period of no advertising enhances consumers' attention to ads, therefore, since there is no advertisement in vehicles, it increases the travellers attention to the preacher or the medicine seller. Similarly, Nagle and Burstein (2009) have found that the amount of cognitive responses increases when there is a break in advertising. The argument for improvement on ad quality, when it is not heard for a period of time, is that consumers may forget the particulars of a given ad and may feel that the ad is "fresh" when it is re-introduced. This suggests that as the period when an ad is pulled off the media is increased, there is a corresponding increase in forgetting and a consequent increase in the restoration of ad quality (Diggs-Brown, 2011).

2.5.3 Differential Effects of Wear out

Across themes as stated earlier, wear out is affected by several factors such as the type of appeal, level of competitive advertising, and strength of persuasion. Experimental evidence shows that emotional ads wear out more slowly than ads based on non emotional appeals (Boesche, 2003). Boesche (2003) found this through a laboratory study. In this laboratory study, the dependent variables were attitude toward the ad, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions. The authors found that unemotional ads exhibited

faster wear out in all of the three dependent variables when compared to emotional ads. This could be due to the fact that ads with emotional images elicit imagery processing while verbal arguments elicit cognitive processing (Beckman, 2003). Rogers (1994) also suggests that “soft sell” ads, which use emotional images, wear out slower than “hard sell” ads, which are based on verbal arguments. These arguments highlight the need for studying the differential wear out effects of different themes of advertising and their effect on demand.

2.6 Themes and patterns employed by preachers and medicine sellers on board vehicles

These themes include the following:

2.6.1 Propaganda

Propaganda is also closely related to Persuasion. It is a concerted set of messages aimed at influencing the opinions or behaviour of large numbers of people. Instead of impartially providing information, propaganda in its most basic sense presents information in order to influence its audience. The most effective propaganda is often completely truthful, but some propaganda presents facts selectively to encourage a particular synthesis, or give loaded messages in order to produce an emotional rather than rational response to the information presented. The desired result is a change of the cognitive reasoning of the subject in the target audience. The term 'propaganda' first appeared in 1622 when Pope Gregory XV established the Sacred Congregation for Propagating the Faith. Propaganda was then, as now, about convincing large numbers of

people about the veracity of a given set of ideas (Cialdini, 2001). Propaganda has been a human activity as far back as reliable recorded evidence exists (Seiter, 2010). It has some connection with persuasion. Conditioning plays a huge part in the concept of persuasion. It is more often about leading someone into taking certain actions of their own, rather than giving direct commands (Seiter, 2010). Many advertisements for example, this is done by attempting to connect a positive emotion to a brand/product logo. This is often done by creating commercials that make people laugh, using a sexual undertone, inserting uplifting images and/or music among others, and then ending the commercial with a brand/product logo. Great examples of connecting positive emotion to brand are professional athletes. They are paid to connect themselves to things that can be directly related to their roles; sport shoes, tennis rackets, golf balls, or completely irrelevant things like soft drinks, popcorn poppers and panty hose. The important thing for the advertiser is to establish a connection to the consumer (Cialdini, 2007). The thought is that it will affect how people view certain products, knowing that most purchases are made on the basis of emotion. Just how people sometimes recall a memory from a certain smell or sound, so is the objective of some ads designed solely to bring back certain emotions when one sees their logo in a local store. The hope is that by repeating the message several times it will cause the consumer to be more likely to purchase the product because he/she already connects it with a good emotion and a positive experience.

Since there is two-way communication involved, the seller may hold the buyer's response to the perception of that product/marketing information; to adapt and keep this process eliminates any confusion or doubt. This means that through propaganda, a marketer or

advertiser can change public or a person's attitude about the product within the time available which has a long way of influencing the person's system of education about the product or object for a long time. The foregoing discussion thus suggests that propaganda is just like advertisement; but unlike advertisement, propaganda does not try to encourage the sale of a product but rather propaganda sends a visual presentation of a product to change public attitude. It therefore makes sense why the medicine sellers normally would carry pictures or photographs of diseases and effects of the drugs while on board a car.

2.6.2 The sleeper effect

When people are often/frequently exposed to a highly persuasive message such as an engaging or persuasive preacher, their attitudes toward the advocacy of the message display a significant increase (Kumkale, 2004). Over time, however, their newly formed attitudes seem to gravitate back toward the position held prior to receiving the message, almost as if they were never exposed to the communication in the first place. This pattern of normal decay in attitudes has been documented as the most frequently observed longitudinal pattern in persuasion research (Albarracin, 2004). In contrast, some messages are often accompanied with a discounting cue (for example a message disclaimer, a low-credibility source) that would arouse a recipient's suspicion of the validity of the message and suppress any attitude change that might occur with exposure to the message alone. Furthermore, when people are exposed to a persuasive message followed by a discounting cue, people tend to be more persuaded over time; this is referred to as the sleeper effect (Shakya, 2014). For example, in political campaigns during important elections, undecided voters often see negative advertisements about a

party or candidate running for office. At the end of the advertisement, they also might notice that the opposing candidate paid for the advertisement. Presumably, this would make voters question the veracity of the advertisement, and consequently, they may not be (initially) persuaded. However, even though the source of the advertisement lacked credibility, voters would be more likely to be persuaded later (and ultimately, vote against the candidate in the advertisement). This pattern of attitude change has puzzled social psychologists for nearly half a century, primarily due to its counter-intuitive nature and for its potential to aid in understanding attitude processes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In addition, it has been the most widely studied phenomenon in persuasion research (Kumkale & Albarracín, 2004).

One of the more challenging aspects that the sleeper effect posed to some researchers in early studies was the sheer difficulty in obtaining the effect (Kumkale & Albarracín, 2004). After attempting to replicate the effect and failing, some researchers went as far as suggesting that it might be better to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that the sleeper effect does not exist. However, previous studies done by researchers were of the view that studies failed to obtain the sleeper effect because the requirements for a strong test were not met. Specifically, they argued that the sleeper effect will occur only if:

- (a) the message is persuasive;
- (b) the discounting cue has a strong enough impact to suppress initial attitude change;
- (c) enough time has passed between immediate and delayed post-tests; and

(d) the message itself still has an impact on attitudes during the delayed post-test. Experimental studies conducted did, in fact, provide support for the sleeper effect occurring under such theoretically relevant conditions (Shakya, 2014). Furthermore, the sleeper effect did not occur when any of the four requirements were not met.

2.6.3 Social influence

Social influence occurs when one's emotions, opinions, or behaviours are affected by others. Within the framework of this disruptive technology operates a compelling force known as influence, one that all brands court on some level. Within the social space, influencers are seen as people who can “move” mountains, “open” doors, and control fates. Regarded as an influencer is a positive identification, one that altogether connotes authority, carries a high level of accountability, and hints at expanding a brand's reach. Social influence takes many forms and can be seen in conformity, socialisation, peer pressure, obedience, leadership, persuasion, sales, and marketing. In 1958, Harvard psychologist, Herbert Kelman identified three broad varieties of social influence; these are compliance, identification and internalisation.

2.6.4 Compliance

Compliance gaining is when people appear to agree with others, but actually keep their dissenting opinions private. Technically, compliance is a change in behaviour but not necessarily attitude- one can comply due to mere obedience, or by otherwise opting to withhold one's private thoughts due to social pressures (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert,

2010). According to Kelman (1958), the satisfaction derived from compliance is due to the social effect of the accepting influence (namely people comply for an expected reward or punishment-aversion).

2.6.5 Identification

Identification is when people are influenced by someone who is liked and respected, such as a famous celebrity. Advertisements that rely upon celebrities to market their products are taking advantage of this phenomenon. The desired relationship that the identifier relates with the behaviour or attitude change is the “reward”, according to Kelman.

2.6.6 Internalisation

Internalisation is when people accept a belief or behaviour and agree both publicly and privately. The individual accepts the influence because the content of the influence accepted is intrinsically rewarding. It is congruent with the individual’s value system, and according to Kelman the “reward” of internalisation is “the content of the new behaviour”.

Deutsch and Gerard described two psychological needs that lead humans to conform to the expectations of others. These include the need to be right (informational social influence), and the need to be liked (normative social influence) (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Informational influence (or social proof) is an influence to accept information from another as evidence about reality. Informational influence comes into play when

people are uncertain, either because stimuli are intrinsically ambiguous or because there is social disagreement. Normative influence is an influence to conform to the positive expectations of others. In terms of Kelman's typology, normative influence leads to public compliance, whereas informational influence leads to private acceptance. Social Influence is a broad term that relates to many different phenomena.

There are three processes of attitude change as defined by Harvard psychologist Herbert Kelman in his 1958 paper. The purpose of defining these processes was to help determine the effects of social influence: for example, to separate public conformity (behaviour) from private acceptance (personal belief).

With relevance to this study, it is worth noting from the above that social influence is very effective in group situation with smaller groups since it is easy for smaller groups to comply, identify with each other and internalise the responses of each other. In a bus for instance, comprising of people of different classes, social influence is key since positive responses to marketing by people of higher or middle class can influence lower class passengers to respond favourably to the message communicated out.

From the literature, seeding thoughts, opinions, and emotions in others has been around since the dawn of communication. Even in a free-thinking society, there are those who need to be told what to think, how to feel, who to believe, and what to buy. It can also be said that throughout the course of human history, there are countless notables who have proved an uncanny ability to establish their sway and direct action. Unfortunately, not all that wield the power of influence have used it for the greater good. Nowadays, marketers are acutely aware that their consumer lives in social groups. Given the velocity with which a message can be disseminated and amplified across the buses, coupled with the

impact of mobile technologies, more economic buyers can be reached in a fraction of the time. As the uptick in active use continues on all the major commercial centres, engaging with influencers has become a key component of the marketing equation. Influencer branding is closely related to thought leadership; both pursuits forge a path to wider recognition, increased engagement, and more business wins. For brands today, finding the right influencer to provide the right rationale that will turn indiscriminate consumers into fervent fans can mean everything. The influencers themselves are highly protective of their reputations and selective of the brands that they will tout and therefore it is not surprising to find very vocal marketers and preachers in the commercial centres.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research approach, the research design, the sampling procedure and the method that was used to collect data. The validity of the research instruments are addressed. Ethical considerations pertaining to the research are also discussed.

3.1 Research Approach

The qualitative research method was used. The study employed the qualitative research approach because it enables the researcher gain deeper understanding about the problem area due to its thorough investigative nature (Saunders, 2007). According to Spasford (2007) a choice of research method depends on the research problem being investigated. The approach is deemed appropriate because it provides the environment needed to investigate a phenomenon which in this study, is the marketing communications and traditional sales strategies from the perspectives of both the product sellers and consumers. The approach also allows for an in-depth understanding of the impact of these marketing communications and traditional sales strategies on sales. According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001), qualitative research provides a lot of data with more details about a subject. This study, therefore, wants to get a better and deeper understanding about the activities of herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles through data collection and analysis. In qualitative study, the researcher aims at transcribing what is observed, registered or reported on in the field into written words (Denscombe, 2003).

Denscombe stresses that qualitative research largely dwells on the personal qualities and skills of the researcher to explore and probe into views and feelings of respondents. This study will record and transcribe, report, share and store the data gathered in a written document.

3.2 Research Design

Designing a study helps the researcher to plan and implement the study in a way that will help to obtain intended results; this helps to increase the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation (Burns & Grove 2001:223) Yin (2003) suggests five strategies for understanding a study. These are surveys, experiments, observation, archival analysis and case study. This study adopts the case design within the qualitative approach. Case studies are designs of enquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth examination of events, activity, programme process within a real life context for the purposes of investigation. Cases are bounded by time and activity and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995; Yin 2009. 2012). Hancock (2002) describes a case study as the most versatile strategy that employs any or all methods of data collection. According to Yin (2003) a case study is a story or information about something unique or interesting about an individual, organisation, institution, programme and event, among others. The case study design was deemed more appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to have a real interaction with the various categories of respondents in their natural settings.

3.3 Study Population

The population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that represents the main focus of a scientific research. It is the total set of cases that are the focus of the research and is sometimes referred to as target population (Kent, 2007). However due to the large size of populations or target groups, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because of cost, time and other constraints. Samples are usually, therefore, chosen from the population and used for research. Polit and Hungler (1999:37) refer to population as an aggregate or totality of the objects, subjects or members that confirm to a set of specifications. In this study, the population consisted of herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles from Accra to Winneba and those from Winneba to Accra during February and March 2016.

The eligibility criteria

These criteria specify the characteristics that people in the population must possess in order to be included in the study (Polit & Hungler 1999: 278). The eligibility criteria in this study were that the participants had to be

- ❖ Herbal medicine sellers.
- ❖ Sell their herbal medicines on commercial vehicles.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedure and Sampling Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population for a study (LoBiondo-Wood & Harber 1998:250; Polit & Hungler1999:95).

According to Fowler (2009) sampling is important because it is often impracticable for data to be collected from the entire population, especially in the case of huge populations.

The study adopted both purposive and convenience sampling techniques.

3.4.1. Purposive Sampling Technique

The purposive technique is used because it enables the researcher to select the persons for the study to elicit the appropriate information required for the study. As Kumekpor (2002), puts it, in purposive sampling, the units of the sample are selected not by random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for the study. This is because of some peculiar characteristics such units would possess, or because they satisfied certain qualities which are not randomly distributed in the universe, but are typical or exhibit most of the characteristics of the study. Purposive sampling can be very useful for situations where the researcher needs to reach a targeted sample quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern (ibid).

3.4.2 Convenience Sampling

Malhotra (2007) asserts that convenience sampling obtains where respondents are selected because they happen to be in the right place at the time of the data collection and are willing to be part of the survey. The choice of this method is justified on the basis that the researcher needed people who could be directly engaged in the subject under investigation. Convenience sampling can be applied by stopping randomly respondents who belong to the expected target group and interviewing them.

3.3.5 Validity

Validity is an important concept in research. In order for research data to be of value and of use, it must be valid. Validity applies to both the design and the methods of a research. Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2001) describe validity as the ability of the researcher's approaches, methods and techniques to measure and relate to the issue that is explored. Validity is one of the concerns with research. Sneliger and Shohamy (1989:95) note, "Any research can be affected by different kinds of factors which, while extraneous to the concerns of the research, can invalidate the findings." The methods of documentation and interviews are combined to produce differing but supporting ways of data collection to increase validity (Denscombe, 2003). The researcher conducted interviews with the key respondents (herbal medicine sellers who ply their trade in commercial buses, consumers, herbalists and owners of herbal centers) to elicit information from these interviewees in respect to traditional sales strategies employed by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles.

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007), the validity of interviews in qualitative studies is the extent to which the researcher gains access to the experience and knowledge of the respondents, and the researcher's ability to make meanings out of the language used by the respondents. The validity of secondary data involves a detailed assessment of the methods used in collecting data and the source of the data (Saunders, 2007). As Yin (2003) states, the methods used for any study need to be justified. Such justification need to demonstrate the nature of the decision made in the course of study and basis upon which decisions become reasonable for readers (Denscombe).

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

Polit and Hungler (1999:267) define data as information obtained in the course of a study. In this study the main sources of data were primary and secondary sources. Yin (2003) argues that the most important source of gathering information within a case study is through interviews. According to Blaxter et al (2001), interview is conducted between two participants who engage in a conversation which becomes a process of learning. The sources such as articles, journals, internet/web information and books formed the secondary sources of data used. Relevant literature was reviewed from secondary sources to support and/or contest arguments and conclusions made by different scholars on the subject under investigation. The primary data collection instrument included the use of the interviews. The primary source of data was obtained from herbalists, herbal medicine sellers and consumers sampled for the study. The interview guide was designed to help focus the interview to capture information on socio-demographic characteristics, the nature of marketing strategies employed by herbal medicine sellers on commercial vehicles, and the linguistic styles used by these herbal medicine sellers.

3.5 Data Analysis

Analysis and interpretation of the data are necessary in all studies to bring order and understanding. This requires creativity, discipline and a systematic approach. Data obtained in this study was analysed in line with that of Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) which argued that qualitative data consists of words and observations rather than numbers. This type of analysis is often referred to as content analysis. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) emphasised that there is no best or single way for data analysis. The

process will depend on the research questions, the needs of those to make use of the information and the resources available to the researcher. The similarities and variations in responses given by various respondents were cross-examined with one another to ascertain the evolving trends. The emerging themes in the responses were noted to facilitate in-depth discussions. The data was analysed into themes in the research objectives.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

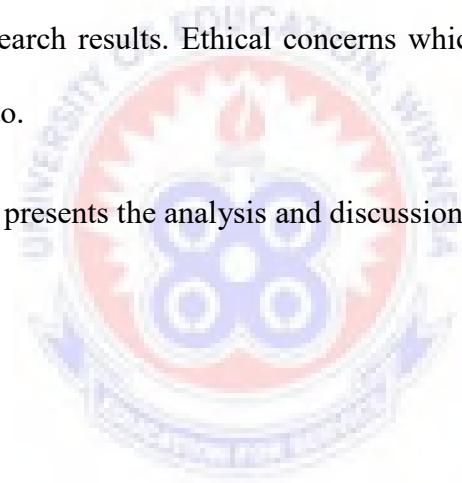
Whenever humans are used as study participants in a research investigation, care must be exercised that the rights of those individuals are protected (Polit & Hungler 1999: 132-134). Ethics are the norms or standard of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationship with others (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Research ethics therefore relates to the way researchers carry out research activities, from formulating the research topic to the analysis and discussion findings in a moral and responsible way. Prior to the commencement of data collection of this study, respondents were duly informed about the purpose for this research. The respondents' right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity was adhered to by ensuring that no interview schedule could be linked to any specific participant. Names of respondents were also not asked for. The researcher only sought the opinion of the respondents hence respondents were not under any pressure to impress the researcher. Also, observation of the vending process on commercial vehicles was conducted overtly. The respondents were fully aware that they were being observed as they had given their consent to the researcher prior to the observations.

Overall, data collection lasted for a week and took place on Accra-Winneba route. The Data collected was used for the purpose of this study only.

3.7 Summary

This chapter dealt with the research design that had been followed in this study addressing the population, sampling procedure, data collection instrument and data collection procedure. The methods and tools of data analysis and the rationale for adopting them have also been provided. Measures were adhered to in order to enhance the validity of the research results. Ethical concerns which could have impacted on the survey were attended to.

The following chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the results of the data analysis. The data collected was processed in response to the problems set out in Chapter One of this dissertation.

4.1 Response Rate of Respondents

The response rate for this study was 50%. Ten traditional medicine sellers were conveniently approached for purposes of data collection. Out of these, five (5) turned down the invitation. Data collection and analysis was therefore conducted on five (5) respondents. The study is of the view that the traditional medicine vendors turned down the interview due to misguided fear that disclosure of their trade strategies could expose them to huge risks in the future. This notwithstanding, the researcher has augmented the information gathered from the in-depth interviews with personal observations. The analysis below was therefore done on the basis of data gathered from the interviews and the researcher's own observations of the traditional medicine sales process.

4.2 Sex of Respondents

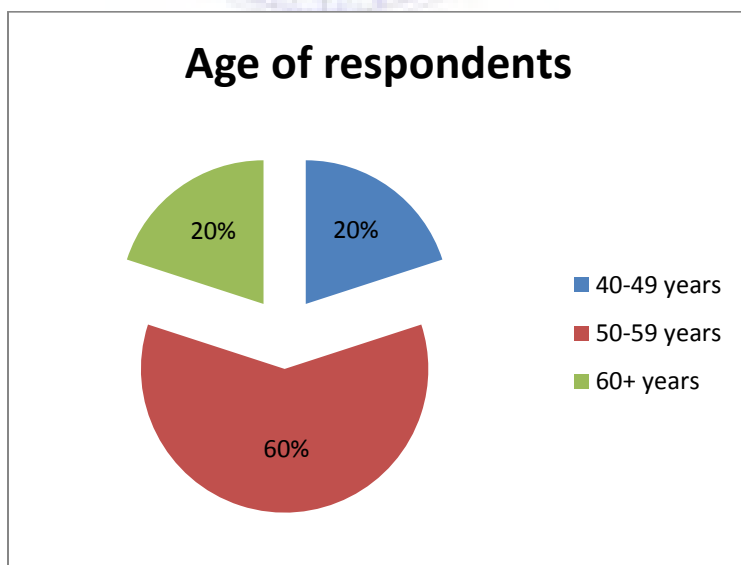
All sampled respondents for this study were males. The researcher could not come across any female who was engaged in selling of traditional medicine on commercial vehicles.

This implies that the vending of traditional medicine on commercial vehicles is a male dominated terrain in Ghana.

4.3 Age of Respondents

It is generally believed that age has a significant influence on how people view things around them; the value people attach to things, items, goods and resources has been found to vary with age (Frempong, 2008). The age distribution of the five sampled respondents generally ranged from 40 to above 60 years. One (1) respondent was 40 year, representing 20% of the responses gathered. Another 60% (3 respondents) were between 50-59 years, whereas another 20% (one respondent) also indicated that he was above 60 years. Figure 1 shows that in terms of chronological age, the respondents were mature people. It is important to note that most of the respondents were adults who had had some experiences in life and as such could make reasonable judgments. This suggests that the information provided in response to the various questions could be relied on.

Figure 1: Age of Respondents (Field Data, 2017)



4.4 Profile of traditional medicine vendors

Traditional medicine vendors are popular on commercial buses, lorry stations, markets and other public spaces in Ghana. These vendors deal in medicines for ailments such as asthma, waist and body pains, worms, piles, hypertension, diabetes, insomnia, among others. Asked how they got into the business of vending medicine on commercial buses, respondents gave varied reasons. One respondent who claimed to have been in the business for the past ten years, indicated that he first got into the business when he personally tried the product and witnessed its efficacy. One of the respondents, who is a sales agent for the *Ye aboa yie magic* range of medicinal products from China had the following to say:

My decision to be a sales agent is as a result of excellent result I had after taking some of the medicine which I bought from someone selling some on a Mankessim bound bus. I contacted the distributors here in Ghana through the address provided on the bottle. I expressed my desire to be their sales agent since I am a living testimony of their great product. That is how it all started.

Another respondent who deals in *Aduana Kooko Aduro*, traditional medicine for piles manufactured in Koforidua by a popular doctor, said he joined the business in order to popularize the medicine and make profit. He stated:

I buy the medicines from the Company's factory in Koforidua at wholesale price. Once it's popular in Koforidua, people know the factory so what I do is to bring it to Accra in a bid to popularize it and also make some money.

Another respondent deals in an imported balm from Nigeria known as *Aboniki Balm* and has been in the business for the past four years. According to the vendor, the balm “is prepared with potent herbs that give quick relief to aches and pains, cold, catarrh and rheumatism.” He secures the balm from his Nigerian agent at wholesale price upon making a 50 percent down payment. He is then given a month or less to pay up the rest of the money after selling the products. The key strategy he uses is to give the balm to passengers who have body aches to try out on those parts of their bodies, and within five to ten minutes, receive testimony from them about the efficacy of the balm. This primary testimony in turn influences other passengers to buy the balm. In fact, from the observation, he sometimes challenged all who bought the balm to come back for their money if they didn’t get results.

Another respondent who claimed he and his family have never been to the hospital before as they rely solely on his herbal preparations has been in the business for close to two decades. He claimed that his products were not sold on the open market or pharmacies as he preferred to sell them all by himself to avoid any imitation. He was very convinced that orthodox medicine was not suitable for the African system and was also very critical of milk products, beverages and sugar. According to him,

People in the country are dying very fast nowadays because of the intake of foreign medication. There are three ‘brothers’ that walk hand in hand and kill very fast. These are milk, milo & sugar. No human being must consume any of these. The white man produces medicines to suit his system. Herbs are meant for the African or black man. In Ghana, our life depends on maize. Look at what is happening to us nowadays. The craze for fast foods has gained unprecedented level. People are now eating large amounts of fried rice, spicy chicken, grilled chicken, pizza, fizzy drinks, ice-cream among others.

He continued:

They must go on like that. Very soon they would get fast sickness, fast death, fast mortuary, fast burial and fast body decay. Some people can prepare tea or milo drink as thick as dirty engine oil. Why won't they die very quick?

Obviously, this vendor is against any non-indigenous food or medication. To him, the intake of these medications and foods is the chief cause of illness among the youth. He believes that herb based food and medication is the right way for a healthy life.

4.5 Marketing strategies employed by traditional medicine sellers

Apart from scheduled interviews with respondents, the researcher also undertook personal observation of all sampled respondents vending their wares on commercial vehicles. This exercise revealed the following insights about the general conduct of traditional medicine vendors and the strategies they use to market their wares. It was realised that these vendors, even though had not been formally educated about marketing, employed various strategies to address the four essential P's of marketing which are the price of the product, the product itself, the place and promotion.

The vendors adopted tactics aimed at enhancing the credibility of their product by carrying with them laminated ID cards which they always showed to consumers before any presentations, claiming the cards were issued by the local association for traditional medicine dealers. This tactic is to deflect any suspicion the consumer might have about them. Another tactic adopted to enhance the credibility of their product was to show the

Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) registration numbers and the expiry dates of their products. In addition, all vendors used the claim of offering the cheapest prices which consumers could never get from regular medicines outlets such as pharmacies. They buttressed this claim with the fact that as mobile vendors, they are spared the added overhead costs associated with the regular pharmacies; and hence, could afford to sell with marginal mark-up.

One key sales strategy adopted by traditional medicine sellers in marketing their wares on commercial vehicles was sales promotions. Sales promotion is a complexity of actions with a single or short-term aim; to encourage consumers and commercial firms by offering them additional incentives to increase sales (Todorova, 2015). It included activities promoting sales by providing additional incentives for purchase – price reduction, premiums, samples, coupons and more. These incentives are a supplement, but not substitute for the basic benefits that the buyers get when they buy the product. According to one respondent, he sells his wares to patrons at discounted prices. He states:

Actually, you will buy it at the Chemical shops at 10 Cedis per bottle. My price is way low, because the more I sell, the more money I make. You know even though I retail the medicine at 8Cedis per bottle, on the bus I do a sales promotion. Also I give two bottles for 15 Cedis.

Another key sales strategy employed by traditional medicine sellers is identification. The researcher noted that many traditional medicine sellers employ identification techniques in their marketing. For instance, before they begin to talk about the efficacy of the medicine on sale, the typical traditional medicine seller says a word of prayer. This strategy, as later discovered, was designed to help the traditional medicine sellers identify with the dominant faith of prospective buyers. Other identification strategies used by

traditional medicine sellers include narration of testimonies and comedy. According to one respondent, they employ this technique because it gives them the opportunity to get closer to the people (prospective buyers) to know exactly how they (prospective buyers) are feeling. He states:

In talking about how certain diseases manifest themselves the people can relate with what is happening to them. Also, there are some people who feel shy to tell the doctors exactly what is happening to them or may not even have the money to pay the consultation fee. Because I give vivid descriptions of the disease, they feel relaxed to buy the medicine.

Another popularly adopted technique is direct or personal selling. Personal selling may be defined as a person-to-person process, whereby the seller attempts to determine the prospective buyers' wants, and seeks to satisfy these by offering suitable goods, services or ideas (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2010:6). While traditional advertising involves non-personal communication using mass media, personal selling utilises interpersonal communication approaches to achieve commercial objectives. This two-way communication is one of the major strengths of personal selling. It enables a sales person to customize or modify the message, according to the buyers' individual needs and reactions, as well as to provide instant and precise feedback on customer requests or questions (Duncan, 2005: 624).

Most traditional medicine sellers prefer to sell to the customers directly since it offers them an opportunity to get to know what their doubts are and address them. One respondent states:

Once they (customers) are able to test the efficacy of the product while I am with them, it gives them a better reason to trust who I am and buy the product anytime they need a solution that my medicine can provide. I mostly live on testimonies and so I prefer the customers to first test and then give a testimony as to how they reacted to the product.

The researcher also observed that traditional medicine sellers adopt propaganda techniques such as exaggerations, embellishments, half-truths and misrepresentations, among others, to pitch their traditional medicines against orthodox medicine. Most traditional medicine sellers exaggerate the efficacy of the drugs they sell. They give a plethora of ailments for which their medicines were capable of curing. One respondent who deals in traditional drugs for piles notes:

Many ailments can be associated with Kooko (piles). Something like waist pains, sexual weakness and eyesight problems. So even though this is a Kooko aduro (Kooko medicine), it can cure fast all other ailments associated with it.

This strategy is an effective pair-trawling technique, as it sweepingly associates every likely ailment to piles, locally referred to as 'kooko', thereby catching the attention of lots of prospective buyers. According to one respondent, because a number of herbs were combined to reach the formula for the drug, he was convinced it could cure all ailments associated with the individual herbs.

Another key propaganda technique usually employed by traditional medicine sellers is exaggeration. By this technique, the medicine vendors usually give lucid descriptions to ailments, sometimes with the help of pictured charts which they display to the customers. As one of the respondents observed, he always tries to leave a lasting impression on all those he meets. Another states:

I have to bring out a vivid description of whatever I say. That is how best people can understand me. For example, if I say 'frozen chicken', people will really not get the drift of my message but "Akukɔ funu or akukɔ foos" makes the impact.

It was also observed that the vendors employed ice-breakers effectively in their sales communication strategy. The commonest ice-breaking strategy used by the vendors included prayers. These prayers, as was observed, were either against death of the passengers from road traffic accidents or against contracting diseases of the physical or meta-physical origins. Others were humor or jokes, and brief preachings. In a study conducted by Yusuff & Wassi (2011) on itinerant vending of medicine on buses in Nigeria, they found that the most frequently used ice-breaker for these vendors was prayers (76.8%), followed by humour/jokes which constituted 7.1% (Yusuff & Wassi, 2011).

Concerning the price, the study realised that vendors always contrast their prices with those of established pharmacies. They always sold the products at prices lower than the common retail price. This tactic was aimed at making enough unit sales to cover for the marginal costs of the reduction in price. For instance, a product sold for 10 cedis at the pharmacy was being sold by one vendor for 8 cedis. Another tactic they adopt, from my observation was that they run promotions on-board the vehicles. For instance, the vendor who sold his product for 8 cedis was ready to give it out for 15 cedis for two copies. The other vendors also ran various promotions on their products in the buses, thereby attracting attention from the customers.

In order to identify with the place/environment in which they were vending their products, it was observed that the vendors usually wore traditional dresses and spoke predominantly in the local languages, most especially in Twi and Fante.

From the personal observations of this study, it was discovered that the most frequently provided medicine information by vendors to customers was on the indications of the medicine. The indications of the medicine were usually given in a narrative format, outlining a litany of ailments for which the drug was effective in curing. But an assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the medicine-related information provided by these traditional medicine sellers generally revealed overstatement of the efficacy of promoted medicines, incompleteness and lack of information on dosage, contra-indications and potential side effects respectively. It was realised that most of these information were exaggerations in a lot of sense or sometimes plain inaccuracies. In addition, factual medicine information such as dosing frequency, potential side effects and contra-indications were not provided in majority of vending episodes.

4.6 Impact of adopted sales strategy on sales output

On the issue of whether effective marketing communication has an impact on the performance of sales, one respondent answered in the negative, stating that:

I know the product is a good product and once I explain what the product does, I don't need to talk more because if they want to buy the product, they would. I prefer to sell the product, not to persuade them to buy.

The remaining four respondents, however, were of the view that, even though the products they sell are very effective, the marketing strategy they used had an impact on the sales they make each day. For instance, one respondent observed:

It is a competition, you know, and you need to master all the strategies well to sell out the product. Sometimes while you are on a bus, someone

would buy another drug outside the bus, so that tells you the level of competition available. For me, the number of sales depends on the kind of strategy you use.

Another respondent also stated enthusiastically when asked whether the adopted sales strategy had any effect on his daily sales:

There is no two ways about that; you cannot sell anything if you cannot send the right message to get the attention of the customers. The passengers are busy, some going to work, others troubled with thoughts so if you don't attract their attention, be sure not to make any sales. It's even possible you would employ all the skills and knowledge you have yet you won't make any sales, how much more being dull," retorting in the local language: "Madam eno deɛ anka tu mu da" (Madam, you better forget about it).

4.7 Challenges faced in using the marketing strategies

The study found several challenges that traditional medicine sellers face in their operations. These included the highly competitive industry that the sellers found themselves in. The pharmaceutical industry is very competitive and as such organisations and individuals operating in the industry resort to many strategies to attract its customers and also to retain existing ones. One respondent had the following to say:

The media is choked with lots of advertisements of pharmaceutical products and it is a major concern to us. The market is saturated with so many products from other Pharmaceutical companies and thus has affected our communications.

Another key challenge faced by the traditional medicine sellers is the public perception that they (traditional medicine sellers) are illiterate. According to one respondent,

People say we sellers who sell in the cars are not highly educated to even prescribe drugs to people but the reality is that people buy pharmaceutical products on the counter without being prescribed by a doctor. Sometimes it is one of our drugs, other times it is not. This is dangerous as the right doses might not be taken by the patient which could result in drug failure due to drug under dose or result in serious adverse drug reaction due to drug overdose. When such incident happens, because the drug they took is the drug we sell on buses, they conclude that our products are fake, meanwhile they did not follow the right way of taking the drug.

4.8 Discussion of findings

Marketing communication's effectiveness, in one form or another, is essential to a company's success. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) contended that, without effective communications, prospective customers may never learn of a firm's existence, what it has to offer them, the value proposition of each of its products and how to use them to their best advantage. Customers might be more easily lured away by competitors and competitive offerings, and there would be no proactive management and control of the firm's identity. Communication efforts serve not only to attract new users but, also, to maintain contact with a seller's existing customers and build relationships with them. In this study, the researcher attempted to understand the impact of marketing communication strategies as used by traditional medicine vendors on commercial vehicles in Ghana. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the sampled respondents regard their marketing communication strategies as effective. This was supported by about 80% of the respondents.

From the study, the major marketing communication techniques adopted by traditional medicine sellers to effectively market their wares include promotions, propaganda (exaggerations), direct selling, among others. Direct marketing specifically ensures

sending a promotional message directly to consumers rather than via a mass medium. It is aimed at creating and exploiting a direct relationship between producers and their customers. The findings of this work have revealed that interactive system of marketing using person-to-person communication techniques is useful for establishing product credibility and in acquiring measurable response and/or transaction. Further, sales promotions become short-term incentive to encourage the purchase or sale of a product; which agrees with the findings of Blythe (2006) that sales promotion is any activity intended to generate a temporary boost in sales. This includes several communications activities pursued in an attempt to provide added value or incentives to consumers, wholesalers, retailers, or other organisational customers to stimulate immediate sales. Such efforts are usually geared towards stimulating product interest, trial, or purchase. It is specifically designed to boost quick sales and ultimately create loyalty.

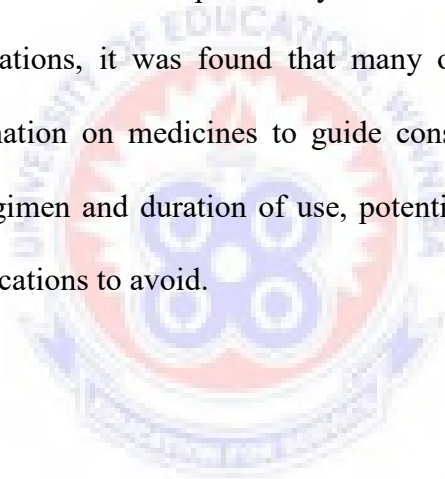
It was observed from the study that most of the respondents sold their product through direct sales, promotion and propaganda. This shows that, with improvement in marketing communications, the sellers could improve tremendously in areas of market share and customer growth as with respect to pharmaceutical companies. The interview also revealed that to a greater extent, marketing communication tools were especially effective in the marketing of the products at person-person level. Effective marketing communication helps create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence, and reassurance which in one form or the other is essential to the company's success. However, effective service quality delivery should be the benchmark, other than that, not much sales can be made.

The finding, in one way or the other, agrees with Lovelock and Wirtz, (2007), who assert that without effective communication, prospective customers might never learn of a company's existence, what it has to offer prospective customers, the value proposition of each of its products, and how to use them to the advantage of the user. Customers might be more easily lured away by competitors and competitive offerings, since marketing communication concentrates on consumers' specific responses to communications (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Techniques for keeping in touch with customers and building their loyalty include sample testing, direct sales to answer questions and other forms of communication including pictorial illustrations. This is necessary, because through communication, medicine sellers are able to explain and promote the value proposition that their product is offering. The implication is that effective communication would inform existing or prospective customers in the target segments about product features and benefits, price and other costs, the channels through which products are delivered, and when and where it is available.

The findings also agree with Kumuyi (2007) who indicated that communications must be viewed more broadly than just the use of paid media advertising, public relations, and professional salespeople. Today, there are many other ways for producers to communicate with current and prospective customers. Corporate design features, such as consistent use of graphic elements, the appearance and behaviours of marketers/seller, all these contribute to an impression in the customer's mind that reinforces or contradicts the specific content of formal communication messages.

Rational and appropriate use of medicines is predicated on patients' access to accurate and detailed information. This potentially guarantees positive outcomes and minimises

the possibility of occurrence of harms (Yusuff & Wassi, 2011). A key downside of the activities of traditional medicine vendors was that some of them used questionable promotional themes which exaggerated the efficacy of the medicines, thereby overstating the benefits derivable from using the vended medicines. This could mislead consumers and prompt inappropriate purchase. Such misleading vending strategies could have potentially serious negative consequences on public health. This is because inappropriate self-medication may delay or mask an otherwise serious chronic medical problem, provoke new chronic medical problems such as hypertension, diabetes, and related complications, or increase the risk of potentially harmful adverse effects. Also, from the interviews and observations, it was found that many of the vendors were unable to provide factual information on medicines to guide consumers in knowing the correct range of doses, the regimen and duration of use, potential adverse effects to watch out for, and the contra-indications to avoid.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This concluding chapter contains the summary of the key findings of the study, limitations of the study and recommendations to the study.

5.1 Summary of findings

Marketing communications involves a complexity of measures, techniques and methods by which information about goods, services or brand of a company reach its users. Marketers use a combination of marketing techniques such as sales promotions, direct marketing, personal selling, advertising, public relations among others to promote and to convincingly communicate customer value and to establish and maintain successful corporations with target customers. These marketing strategies are used by marketers of a wide range of products, including traditional medicine products.

The following are the key findings of this study:

- i. The marketing strategies deployed by traditional medicine vendors on commercial vehicles included sales promotions, direct marketing and personal selling.
- ii. The strategies contained various individual tactics that the traditional medicine vendors have mastered and employ in every sales encounter. These

tactics were aimed at building rapport with consumers, establishing trust, enhancing the credibility of the products they offered for sale, and deflecting any suspicions or doubts that consumers may have about the product.

- iii. Tactics employed included identification: starting sales encounters with prayers and/or comedy, showing proof of membership of a local association for traditional medicine dealers, and also showing proof of Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) registration numbers of the vended products.
- iv. Another major sales tactics adopted by traditional medicine vendors include sales promotions, by which the traditional medicine vendor sells the products at discounted prices. Many of the vendors ran discount sales on the commercial buses.
- v. Propaganda techniques such as exaggerations, embellishments, half-truths and misrepresentations were also employed by traditional medicine vendors to pitch their medicines against orthodox medicines. Most traditional medicine sellers exaggerate the efficacy of the drugs they sell. They give a plethora of ailments for which their medicines were capable of curing.
- vi. Key challenges confronting traditional medicine vendors include the highly competitive industry that the sellers found themselves in and the perverse public perception that they (traditional medicine sellers) are illiterate. The pharmaceutical industry is very competitive and as such organisations and individuals operating in the industry resort to many strategies to attract its customers and also to retain existing ones.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by the researcher to help in further policy formulation on the activities of traditional medicine vendors. The study revealed that most traditional medicine sellers employ ethical communication strategies in marketing their wares. However, some of them use misleading and melodramatic promotional tactics to secure high consumer patronage inside buses. It is therefore recommended that government and industry stakeholders, especially the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Federation of Traditional Healers Association and others must train these vendors in ethical communication about the efficacy and dosage of traditional medicines, so that they (traditional medicine sellers) do not mislead people into misapplying medicines. Traditional medicine vendors must endeavour to understand that knowingly providing misleading information to potential customers with the hope of making sales is very dangerous, as it can lead to health complications in those people. They should therefore endeavour to be candid about the efficacy of their medicines to potential consumers.

There is also the need for control and regulation of the activities of traditional medicine vendors, especially those that operate on commercial buses. This should also be followed with a structured programme to re-orient and educate the larger pool of Ghanaians who patronize these traditional medicines to be wary of the information they receive from these vendors.

The interview also revealed that to a greater extent, marketing communication tools were especially effective in the marketing of the products at person-person level. Effective marketing communication helps create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence, and reassurance which in one form or the other is essential to the company's

success. However, effective service quality delivery should be the benchmark, other than that, not much sales can be made.

5.3 Conclusion

This dissertation examined the use of marketing communication strategies by itinerant vendors of traditional medicine in Ghana. The study used qualitative tools including in-depth interviews and participant observation to collect relevant information from traditional medicine vendors in commercial buses.

By analysing the various strategies and techniques adopted by traditional medicine vendors on commercial vehicles, the study established that traditional medicine vendors use both ethical and non-ethical strategies to sell their medicines on commercial vehicles. The ethical strategies include sales promotions (discounts), direct marketing, advertising, and personal selling. These strategies, as the study found out, were very effective in marketing the traditional medicinal products on sale, as was observed in the high patronage of the products on the commercial vehicles.

However, it was also realised that these itinerant vendors sometimes used misleading and melodramatic promotional tactics to secure high consumer patronage inside buses. These questionable promotional themes which emphasised exaggerated efficacy, cheap price and other melodramatic claims, and overstate the benefits to be derived from using the medicines could mislead consumers and prompt inappropriate purchase (Yusuff & Wassi, 2011). These could have potentially serious negative consequences on public health as inappropriate self-medication with some of these medicines may delay or mask an

otherwise serious chronic medical problem, provoke new chronic medical problems such as hypertension, diabetes, peptic ulcer and related complications, or increase the risk of potentially harmful adverse events.

In conclusion, this study showed that even though traditional medicine vendors were quite confident and knowledgeable on their products, sometimes, their responses to enquiries by consumers were incomplete, inaccurate or misleading. They appear incapable of appropriately guiding consumers to make rational and appropriate choice concerning their medical needs, as majority of them were unable to provide factual information to consumers on the correct range of doses, the regimen and duration of use, potential adverse effect to watch out for and what should be done, and the contra-indications to avoid. Perhaps further research is needed to understand whether the consumers of these products on commercial vehicles are aware of the risks associated with purchasing traditional medicines from these vendors on commercial buses, and if they are aware, what makes them continue to patronize their services.

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