

Study of the Influence of Television Advertising on the Purchasing Decision of Energy Drinks Consumers at Cotonou (South Benin)

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Abstract Energy drinks are becoming more and more popular around the world. The advertising associated with their sale projects the image of increased muscle strength and endurance, amplified reflexes and renewed energy. The overall objective of this study is to assess the impact of television advertising on the consumer's purchasing decision. To achieve this, we interviewed 100 people from a nonprobability sample with a defined profile: a person with a television set who could therefore be subjected to television advertising with the possibility of buying energy drinks. To refine the results of this survey, which was conducted in Cotonou, it was supplemented by a survey of about ten advertising agencies among the country's leading agencies. The results show that for the majority of agencies (78%) say that television advertising is not well organized or at all organized in Cotonou. Out of 100 people 79 say they paid for products just after watching the advertisement. The crossover between "advertising channels" and "knowledge of energy drinks" has shown that most people who know these drinks have known them through television advertising. Nevertheless, there is a large gap between the merits of these drinks and the health consequences of their consumption, ranging from impaired kidney function to behavioral abnormalities such as psychotic episodes.

Keywords: *advertising, television, purchasing, energy drinks*

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1. Introduction

Advertising is sometimes a very important investment in relation to turnover (max consumption products). It is often essential to start and/or increase sales [1] (Kammoun, 2008), to such an extent that it has now become a central activity in the global economy. Nowadays, it can be found everywhere, whether through television sets, the Internet, magazines, or even walking in the street. The effectiveness of advertising is an old and recurrent subject that is renewed according to methodological advances, schools and theoretical and epistemological trends. It is also a field for all the debates and controversies between communication and management specialists in companies [2].

Interest in this topic is growing due to the irresistible increase in advertising spending, in all forms and media. For economists, advertising performance output is based on marginal theory [3]. Advertising is then considered as a production input that can be combined with other marketing variables. It is enough to look for the best combination of factors to increase sales [4].

Faced with the evolutions and upheavals caused by the opening of the market, and in any society, initial

capitalism quickly gave the State a role in regulating the market. In the absence of this role of the State, the consequences on the actors, on the system and on consumers are enormous. This is the case in Benin where advertisements for energy drinks are made in such a way as to highlight the masculine or virile side of Man. Modernization and technological development have made the satisfaction of appearance needs, with reference to Maslow's pyramid, an object of belonging to an increasingly "civilized" society. In this context, advertisers are increasingly using snowbist fiber to attract more people to the consumption of these drinks at all times. This frenetic consumption is not without consequences for the consumer. These consequences range from changing habits to changing the economic and social life of the consumer. The questions that motivated this research are as follows: Is the advertising sector in Benin organized to provide better consumer protection? What are the obstacles to regulating advertising practice in Benin? Does television advertising have an impact on consumers' purchasing decisions? What are the perverse effects of advertising on consumers in Cotonou, Benin? The overall objective of this study is to assess the impact of television advertising on the consumer's purchasing decision. This will make it possible to demonstrate that advertising is,

beyond its economic function, a social phenomenon that can provide identity models in a certain type of society through its hyper-ritualization. This will lead us to analyze the discursive logic of advertising and shed light on the links between advertising, individuals, object consumption and modern society. But before achieving this, it seems appropriate to us to review the research on mass communication in the form of advertising and its integration into society.

2. Research Methodology

The general hypothesis is that advertising in Benin needs to be reorganized for better consumer protection. Specifically, the hypotheses underlying this research are as follows: i) advertising practice in Cotonou is located in an unorganized legal and institutional environment, ii) television advertising of energy drinks, has a real influence on the purchasing decision of Cotonou consumers, iii) television advertising of energy drinks in Cotonou distorts the socio-economic life of consumers.

In order to verify these assumptions, the methodology adopted is based on the qualitative and quantitative approach. Thus, scientific publications, articles, memoirs and books on the subject were read. We also conducted field surveys based on a questionnaire. A total of one hundred (100) people residing in Cotonou, the location of the survey and having the purchasing power to buy an energy drink were surveyed. We also collected information from about ten advertising consulting agencies using an interview guide.

3. Literature Review

3.1. From the Question of the Effects of Advertising to the Question of Its Meaning in Society

Ignored by social thinkers (although it emerged in the 17th century and imposed itself in the 19th century), advertising only became a real object of questioning between 1930 and 1940 [5]. The interest is contextualized, linked to the extension of advertising, the media and the development of totalitarian propaganda in Europe. In this climate, research naturally focuses on the effects of advertising on the public. The evidence being, for all, that advertising communication techniques necessarily have effects and that they can manipulate the mass at will. The first book to mark this period was the *Rape of Crowds* by the German socialist Serge Tchakhotine. Studying the role of Hitler's propaganda on radio, he concluded that it had made it possible to control minds by broadcasting slogans using advertising techniques. This thesis is based on the summary psychology of the conditioned reflex. It is based on the premise that "by certain practices, the resilience of the higher nervous mechanisms can be weakened" and that "in the mass whose intellectual level, i.e. critical faculty, is very low". The public is thus considered as a passive totality and ignorant of persuasion techniques, endowed with omnipotent power [5,6].

3.2. Paradigm to Measure Advertisement

3.2.1. The Economic Paradigm

Advertising performance output for economists is based on marginal theory [7]. Advertising is then considered as a production input that can be combined with other marketing variables. All you have to do is to look for the best combination of factors to increase sales.

3.2.2. The Sociological Approach

Sociology has also focused on advertising as an influential tool that can affect the opinions, attitudes and behaviors of individuals and social groups. The topics covered and the opinions expressed on advertising and its role in transforming consumer society are very fertile [8].

3.3. Theories of Advertising Communication

According to Abad and Compiegne [9], all advertising practices correspond to a model and each advertising message reflects the consumer's idea of the consumer. They outline four major theories of advertising communication, each based on a particular conception of the consumer being influenced.

- **Persuasive and informative advertising:** Advertising will therefore have to convince the consumers with rational arguments. It must persuade and inform them. It plays on the register of objectivity, using demonstrations, insisting on the utilitarian function of the product

- **Mechanistic advertising:** Mechanistic advertising refers to Pavlov who explains the most complex human behaviors based on a combination of reflexes. Several schemes work on this model, the best known is the A.I.D.A. According to him, a good ad must attract attention, arouse interest, provoke desire, and trigger purchase.

- **Suggestive advertising:** In this theory, the receiver acquires a decisive role. It is driven by unconscious forces, motivations. We then try to uncover the real causes of his behavior. The purpose of motivation studies is to understand the expectations and desires of the individual, his reactions at the unreflected level; adopting a strategy of deduction and suggestion, this advertising is above all a connotative advertising that reveals the symbolic meanings of the product

- **Projective or integrative advertising:** It considers that the consumer belongs to several social groups, each with its own standards. It must therefore place its communication on one of its social fields. The consumer's attitude resulting from an interaction between the psychological and the social (Psychosociology), the advertising strategy will be to give the product, or brand, the signs of a rewarding group. The purchase will result from the social significance of the product for the consumer

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1. Discussion

4.1.1. Socio-professional Data of the Interviewees

Composed of 100 individuals, our sample is mainly composed of young people aged between 18-25 and 25-35.

There are more men than women (68 men and 32 women). They are mostly civil servants (38%), professionals (36%), craftsmen (10%), students (4%), traders (3%) and others (9%) (Figure 1).

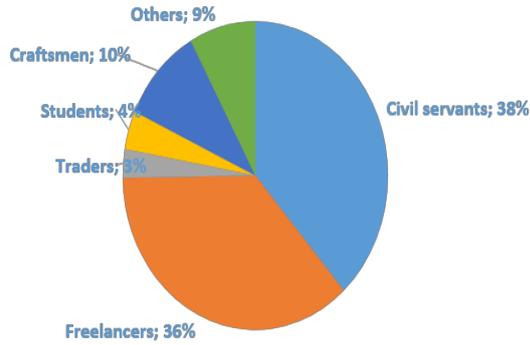


Figure 1. Distribution of interviewees by occupation

4.2. Perception of the Agencies Interviewed on the Level of Organization of Television Advertising in Cotonou

Among the agencies interviewed, the majority (78%) says that television advertising is not well organized or at all organized in Cotonou (Figure 2).

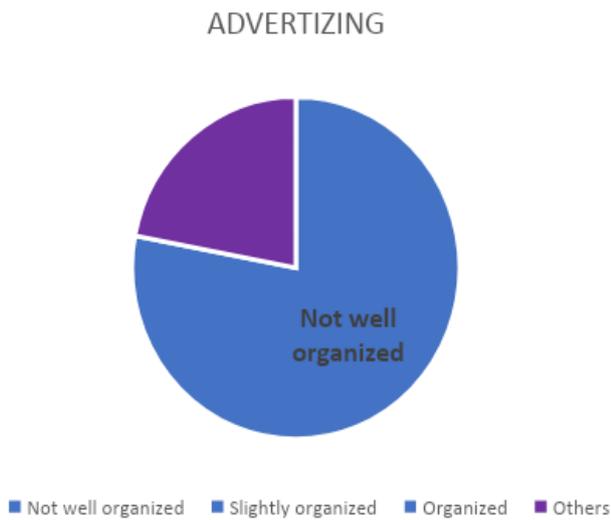


Figure 2. Organizational level of advertising in Cotonou

4.3. Sensitivity of Interviewees to the Advertising Message

Advertising is a powerful marketing weapon and has immediate effects on consumer behavior. Thus, in our sample, out of 100 respondents, 79 people claim to have paid for products just after seeing the advertisement (Figure 3). From the Chi-square test (Table 1) it can be seen that $p=0.036 < 0.05$. We then deduce from this, that the variable of the choice of purchase of energy drinks depends on the practical advertising variable. The analysis of this table also reveals that among advertising practices, advertising has a significant influence on the purchase choice of energy drinks.

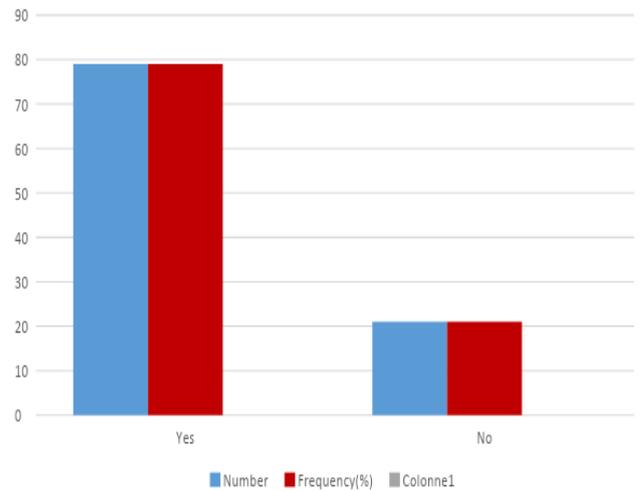


Figure 3. Correlation of the Ad channel and purchase variable

Table 1. Dependence between the purchase of energy drinks and advertising practice

Advertising channels	Did you buy	
	Yes	No
Poster	15	10
Television advertising	20	12
Word of mouth	18	4
Radio advertising	4	3
Others	4	10
Total	61	39

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 10.2810$, $Pr=0.036$ $df=4$, $T=9.49$.

4.4. Correlation of Advertising Channel Variables and Knowledge of Beverages

The crossover between "advertising channels" and "knowledge of energy drinks" revealed that most of the people who follow ads and who know these drinks knew it through television advertising being 32 people. The independence test (Table 2) conducted revealed a functional relationship between these two variables ($21.84 > 9.49$). This suggests that watching energy drink advertising on TV makes it easier to find out about them and, better still, influences the decision.

Table 2. Advertising channels and knowledge of beverages

Advertising channels for energy drinks knowledge	Knowledge of energy drinks	
	Yes	No
Poster	23	2
TV advertising	32	0
Word of Mouth	21	1
Radio advertising	5	2
Others	8	6
Total	89	11

Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 21,8418$, $Pr = 0.000$, $df = 4$, $T = 9,49$.

The high proportion of men consuming energy drinks illustrates the sensitivity to the virile side presented in the advertisements. Unfortunately, most advertising agencies

are in the informal. This prevents a global view of how all advertising agencies work. On the basis of the interviews, there are no regulations in effect in this sector despite the existence of the institutions in charge of communication. This is leading to a flood of advertising in this sector. Television advertising in Cotonou was then found in an unorganized legal-institutional environment.

In addition, energy drinks are particularly popular with young people who praise them to improve their cognitive performance and energize their evenings. These drinks are over-the-counter in several places: various sales stalls at all street corners of Cotonou, drinks and some lime corners of the city, and even in some pharmacies. In 2013, according to a study in France, 68% of adolescents aged 10 to 18 admitted to being regular users. Banned in France until 2008, these taurine and caffeine products continue to raise questions. Are they really risky? In 2008, French poison control centers recorded dozens of cases of disorders as a result of the consumption of these drinks, some involving heart attacks. A new French study, published in the journal *La Presse Médicale*, deciphers the health effects of these drinks [10]. Their consumption is therefore a concern for these three important aspects: (i) their sugar content, which provides empty calories and can contribute to weight gain. Energy drinks contain a very large amount of sugar. There are 7 to 9 teaspoons of sugar per 250 ml can, or 110 to 140 calories; (ii) their high caffeine content. Caffeine in large quantities acts as a powerful stimulant. There are 50 to 145 mg per 250 ml serving, which is the amount of caffeine in an espresso coffee. However, even when the amount of caffeine seems moderate, it can be hidden by the use of guarana, a bean that contains twice as much caffeine as coffee. Excessive caffeine consumption can increase blood pressure and cause palpitations, tremors and irritability [11] and (iii) the interactions they can establish with alcohol. Interactions with other factors, such as medications and alcohol, are the main sources of health problems [12].

Also in France and according to the ANSES, 27% of consumers under 35 years of age associate these products with alcohol at least from time to time. However, these drinks would reduce the perception of drunkenness. On the other hand, this association accentuates dehydration, and gives cumulative effects on the body leading to behavioral disorders such as agitation, irritability, aggressiveness towards others... or even headaches, discomfort, loss of consciousness [13].

Other ingredients no less dangerous are Glucuronolactone, vitamins of the B complex, Guarana, taurine. Glucuronolactone may be toxic to the kidneys. Guarana beans contain twice as much caffeine as coffee, which is why it can be dangerous to consume too much. In addition, combined these natural plant extracts increase the effects of caffeine tenfold. Taurine in too large a dose is responsible for side effects such as hyperactivity and causes behavioral abnormalities such as psychotic

episodes. In addition, taurine may interfere with thyroid gland function, mood, heart function, concentration and sleep quality [14,15]. These effects are diametrically opposed to the virtues being promoted. This is why it is imperative to be very careful when consuming these drinks, which are anything but harmless

5. Conclusion

In this study, we highlighted the persuasive power of television advertising and the risks associated with the consumption of energy drinks in Cotonou. It appears that there is a strong correlation between television advertising and the decision to buy these drinks. However, energy drinks should only be consumed moderately and occasionally by healthy adults who do not have a particular medical condition. The consumption of energy drinks causes multiple health problems, including obesity, high blood pressure, as well as psychological problems such as stress, aggression and nervousness.

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