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## Children's Recall of Musical Elements in Indomie Television Commercials

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### Abstract

Television advertisements can be effective only if the audience understands the message correctly and remember them when needed. More television commercials are adopting the use of music, especially when such advertisements are aimed at children which in turn creates a need to examine the extent to which children are exposed to television commercials and a measurement of how music in TV commercials help children remember the brand and thus influence product brand preference. Classical conditioning or "Pavlovian conditioning" and Elaboration Likelihood Model \_Communication theory were used to anchor the study. The study adopted the survey method, the instrument of data collection was questionnaire; a total number of 210 children within the ages of 8-10 in Mayflower Private Primary School Ikenne Ogun State Nigeria were selected. The finding showed that children recall musical elements of the TV commercials and prefer the brand because of the music. The research provides recommendations and Suggestions for future researchers.

**Keywords:** Indomie, Memory, Musical elements, Recall, Television advertisements

### 1. Introduction

On the street corners, in shopping malls and almost everywhere, there is something that just beckons for attention. It is almost impossible not to see one advertisement or another in the 24 hours of a day.

According to Ussaima & Kalaivanan (2013) <sup>[1]</sup> advertising plays an important role in the world of marketing. It is purely an economic activity of selling. It is a form of communication intended to influence an audience to purchase or take some action upon products or services. For advertisements to possess the persuasive character, it is presented with different techniques which include testimonial, storytelling animation, musical, endorsement and so on.

In recent times, music has become one of the commonly used techniques to communicate advertising messages. Music has been argued by different scholars to have an effect on how things are perceived.

According to Hoerberichts (2012) <sup>[7]</sup> we can without question state that music is quite an important aspect in how we perceive things in our daily lives. Asemah (2011) <sup>[3]</sup> also claimed that when music commercials are well done, they can go a long way in persuading the consumers to buy the products being advertised... after many repetitions of advertiser's theme, the listener begins to associate the musical logo with the product.

Therefore, television advertisements can be recalled effective only if the audience understands the message correctly and remember them when needed. Ussaima & Kalaivanan, (2013) <sup>[1]</sup> opined that advertisers enhance the memorability of their advertisements by using attention values like slogans, pleasant music, animation, cartoon characters, action sequences, celebrities & sports personality's appeals are used to attract the listener's attention, carry the advertised product's message, and to act as a mnemonic device. Children are generally attracted to sounds and to pictures, and many products and services targeted at the age group have adopted the use of songs and pictures to keep advertised products and service in their minds.

This research work was aimed at looking at the degree to which children between 8-10 year old recall advertisements of Indomie Instant Noodles as a result of the musical elements used in the advertising campaign.

## Statement of the Problem

The ability to remember a part of an advert with or without aid is called recall. Recalling advertisements is only possible when the advertisement catches the mind of viewer. According to Hoerberichts (2012),<sup>[7]</sup> when the musical background in an advertisement fits the message and imagery of the commercial (congruity), consumers responded more affective towards it. This means that people were observed to remember the content of the commercial more clearly when the background music was fitting with the advertisement.

More television commercials are adopting the use of music, especially when such advertisements are directed at children; this in turn creates a need to examine the extent to which children are exposed to television commercials and a measurement of how music in TV commercials help children remember the brand and thus influence product brand preference. This research work will therefore look at the above problem using Indomie noodles television commercial and examining children between ages 8 to10.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study was to examine the effect of music on children's brand recall of selected TV commercials. The specific objectives were as follows, to:

1. Examine how familiar children are with musical elements of Indomie Instant Noodles television commercial.
2. Evaluate the reaction of children to musical elements of Indomie noodles television commercial.
3. Determine the extent to which children can recall musical elements of Indomie television commercial.
4. Find out the extent to which these adverts' musical elements influence brand preference.

## 1.3 Research Questions

This research work raised the following questions:

1. How familiar are children with Indomie Instant Noodles musical elements?
2. What are the reactions of children to music in the Indomie noodles television commercial?
3. To what extent can children recall the musical elements of Indomie advertisements?
4. What is the extent to which these adverts' musical elements influence brand preference?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Classical conditioning or "Pavlovian conditioning"

This research work was based on Classical conditioning theory, the theory is an attitudinal psychology of learning which was developed by Ivan Pavlov in 1927. The theory is sometimes referred to as "Pavlovian conditioning"

Applying Classical conditioning to this research, conditioning occurs when the unconditioned stimulus (music) is associated with the conditioned stimulus (advertising message without music) which may not elicit any response. Allan (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> asserts that music provides a retrieval cue. Music acts as a frame, which the text is tightly fit.

Allan (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> further asserts that music enhances memory for advertising slogans when the slogans were incorporated into an advertisement in the form of a jingle or song.

According to the above it is understood that children will naturally gravitate towards music and will tend to remember advertising messages that are incorporated with jingles.

## 2.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model

Elaboration Likelihood Model was developed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo in the 1980s. ELM was developed to explain the conflicting theories in persuasive communications by suggesting a number of ways in which source, message and other contextual variables impact attitude change.

Elaboration likelihood model follows a dual process of persuasion, they are called: Central route and Peripheral route. Hsu and Hsu (2011)<sup>[6]</sup> affirmed that whether an individual will follow the central or peripheral route to persuasion is determined by the likelihood of elaboration, which, in turn, is influenced by the individual's motivation and ability to process.

Persuasion through the central route involves relevant thinking: careful examination of information contained in the message and consideration contained in the message in relation to other issue in relevant material (O'Keefe, 2008)<sup>[10]</sup>. The ELM assumes that the very first stage of the persuasion process is awareness through advertising exposure. Attitudes are influenced through the central route when one has the motivation, opportunity and ability to carefully process information about a product. Then, the likelihood of elaboration is high and the person is in a state of high involvement with the product.

The peripheral route refers to attitude formation that is based on no argument cues, such as mood, source attractiveness etc. Attitudes are formed less by active thinking about the object and its characteristics than by positive or negative associations with the object caused by music. The person in this case is in a state of low involvement with the product and conditioning effects are more likely (Apaolaza-Ibáñez, Zander and Hartmann, 2010)<sup>[4]</sup>.

Based on the presumptions of the Elaboration likelihood model, children are considered to perceive things through Peripheral route because of their little or no ability to process advertising message. As cited by Apaolaza-Ibáñez, Zander and Hartmann (2010)<sup>[4]</sup>, predict that by the ELM, music influenced subjects best in a state of lower involvement and disturbed subjects in a condition of high involvement.

Apaolaza-Ibáñez, Zander and Hartmann (2010)<sup>[4]</sup> were of the opinion that an increase in the degree of positive emotional reactions evoked by the ad's music leads to a more favorable brand attitude. Recall is paramount from an advertising effectiveness perspective, as advertisers' we desire children to be engaged by an ad in order to create memorial associations with the product (Maher, Hu and Kolbe, 2006)<sup>[9]</sup>.

There are many significant memorial cues for the advertised product which include non-selling features of an ad which are important for children to remember. It is from this perspective that the current study examines the amount and accuracy of children's recall of Indomie television commercial.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1 Music as an Element of Advertising

There are many stimuli, or environmental cues, that retailers use to affect consumer behavior including music, color, scents, etc. Music is considered to be the most commonly studied stimulus variable (Allan, 2007)<sup>[1]</sup>.

Allan (2007)<sup>[1]</sup> "found that messages that were sung in a produced, original jingle that sounded like a nursery rhyme produced the same recall from children as spoken messages."

There are different commercial background music which include:

1. Instrumental background music without vocals
2. Popular hit songs
3. Jingles

For the purpose of this project only Jingles will be considered. Jingles are short musical compositions that are normally written especially for the brand and/or the product that is advertised. Generally, they have a catchy tune and lyrics that cover the advertised message. From a marketing perspective, there is evidence that music can influence attitudes and purchase intentions in an advertising setting (Wagner, 2008)

### 3.2 Review of Related Works

Ussaima and Kalaivanan (2013) <sup>[11]</sup> in their study, 'Recall Effectiveness of Television Advertisements', focused on the recall effectiveness of television advertisements on children in Madurai city. The objective of the study was to assess the extent to which TV advertisements are recalled by the children in the study area. Survey method was used. The researchers enlisted 50 advertisements which were found popular among the children and the advertisements were used to assess the recall effectiveness of sampled respondents. A sample of 354 school children in Madurai city were selected using the convenience sampling technique. Children between ages 5 and 14 years were chosen. The products advertisements were shown to them with the use of laptops and they were asked to recall the TV advertisements of the products shown. In a situation where any of the children failed to respond, some clues were prompted by the researchers.

The researchers found that the recall effectiveness is dependent on the age of the child and varies depending on the age group. Recall effectiveness varies depending on the gender. Recall effectiveness is independent on level of TV viewing of the child.

The research work concluded that the efforts of the advertisers in reaching the children with their product information through television advertisements will never be a waste but will yield the desired result.

In another article by Heaton and Paris (2006) <sup>[8]</sup>, they focused on the Recall of information contained in the advertisement combining the variables of congruency and presence or absence of lyrics. The objectives raised for this study were to examine the effects of vocal music versus instrumental music on advertisement recall and to examine the effect of music and product congruency on advertisement recall. Some hypotheses raised for the study were:

- An over additive interaction of the two variables will occur, such that instrumental version (absence of voice) that is congruent with the product would lead to the highest level of recall.
- There would be a main effect of instrumental music on recall because the instrumental version should prompt the participants to generate the lyrics in their head.
- Music that is congruent with the product would produce higher recall, because participants should be able to connect the product to a familiar context.

This study utilized 76 students from the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse. Each participant listened to an advertisement and was asked to recall the advertisement immediately and one week later. Results showed immediate

recall was greater than delayed recall; however, there was no significant difference in recall between the conditions.

Suggested recommendations for future researchers involving the interaction of product and music congruency, and the presence or absence of lyrics in advertising these interferences with hypothesized results should be more greatly controlled. Pilot study testing the familiarity of the songs that are intended to be used in the experiment should be done. Also, in future research the participant's familiarity of the song should be rated immediately after listening to the song, before they forget the song used in the advertisement.

In another related study by Maher, Hu and Kolbe (2006) <sup>[9]</sup> titled 'Children's Recall of Television Ad Elements: An Examination of Audiovisual Effects', they examined children's processing of television advertising by assessing children's recall of ad stimuli in the audiovisual mode, contrasting this recall with participants who received the ad in only one mode (audio or video).

The objectives addressed in the study were to find out how much information children can recall from a single exposure to a television ad, how much accuracy there is in their recall and how this recall differs according to age.

The method adopted was experimental. The experiment involved the manipulation of the presentation of a television ad to isolate the degree to which children process audio, visual, and audio/visual stimuli. The stimulus ad was presented to participants in one of the following formats: Audio only, Video only and Audiovisual (A/V).

It was discovered that children do not always watch television as their sole activity; they will often play and refer to the television set when an audio or visual stimulus triggers their attention. Likewise, viewing conditions may not necessarily allow full processing of the audio aspect of ads because of distracting non television noise. The authors recommended that a research designed to examine children's processing of television advertising should be considered.

Apaolaza-Ibáñez, Zander, and Hartmann in 2010 conducted a research, 'Memory, emotions and rock 'n' roll: The influence of music in advertising, on brand and endorser perception.' The purpose of the study was to address the extent to which music is capable of modifying the consumer's perception of the endorser and the brand.

Objectives raised were to address the influence of music in advertising on the perception of the brand endorser and the brand and examine the emotional reactions of the individual and his or her memories evoked. The Theories used in this study were the Classical conditioning theory and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

Classical conditioning implies that pairing a product (neutral stimulus) with a well-liked piece of music (unconditioned stimulus) will produce an association between the two, and therefore a preference for the product (conditioned response). A brand can be conditioned, that is, associations can be established with that brand as a consequence of the consumer's exposure to the brand adverts. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) on the other hand explains that attitudes are defined as general evaluations of ourselves, other persons, objects or facts. These general evaluations rely on behavior, affective cognitive experiences and influence our behavior, our emotions, our preferences and our knowledge.

The study adopted the experimental design; an experimental field study was carried out, based partly on Zander's (2006) research method (revealing a significant influence of music

on endorser and brand perception.) A sample of 540 individuals (249 males and 291 females) aged 16 to 65, selected through random sampling (street interviews) were exposed at random to one of four versions of an experimental radio commercial for a fictitious brand of mineral water differing only in the selection of the background music. The experimental design comprised one experimental factor type of music and four groups, three experimental groups and one control group.

The findings of the study emphasized the effect of music in advertising on emotional reactions and memories evoked. Music in ads that evoked more pleasant memories led to more positive emotional reactions of the participants. Based on the findings of the study, advertising practitioners were advised to consider music under the musical fit approach and the classical conditioning paradigm in a rather differentiated and specific way.

Goldberg and Gorn (1974) [5] in their article titled ‘Children’s Responses to Repetitive Television Commercials’ measured the extent to which TV commercials motivate children to try to obtain advertised products.

The journal employed an experimental paradigm to focus on the question of TV’s influence on children. Three levels of commercial exposure and three levels of expecting were employed in a 3x3 factorial design. Two-way analysis of variance was performed on both altitudinal and behavioral data to determine both the effects of expectancy and commercial.

The researchers adopted the Piagetian theory which holds that Children tend to approach situation or situations with preconceived hypotheses based on previous experience. The result of the research showed that expectancy and commercial exposure affect attitude and behavior exposure.

It was discovered that there was consistency between attitude and behavior, as children who saw the commercial evaluated the toy more favorable relative to the unadvertised toy and worked longer at the experimental task than those who saw the program without any commercials.

**4. Methodology**

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study, purposive sampling was used to choose sample. The scope of the research work covers children between ages 8-10 which was the criterion for selection. 210 pupils of Mayflower Primary Private School were sampled

**4.1 Results and Discussion**

**Research Question One: How familiar are children with musical elements of Indomie television commercials**

**Table 1:** Showing if respondents know any Indomie television commercial (advertisement)

| Variable   | Response Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Do you know any Indomie television commercial (advertisement)? | Yes               | 166       | 83.4       |
|  | No                | 33        | 16.6       |
|  | Total             | 199       | 100.0      |

Source: Field survey, 2015

**Table 2:** Which of the Indomie television commercial (advertisement) can you remember?

| Variable   | Response Category  | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Which of the Indomie television commercial (advertisement) can you remember? | Mama Do            | 111       | 55.8       |
|  | Good               | 72        | 36.1       |
|  | Indomitable        | 5         | 2.5        |
|  | To Me To You       | 11        | 5.5        |
|  | Indomie Super Pack | 199       | 100.0      |

Source: Field survey, 2015

**Table 3:** What can you remember about the Indomie television commercial you watched?

| Variable  | Response Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| What can you remember about the Indomie commercial you watched? | The dance         | 31        | 15.6       |
|   | The drama         | 25        | 12.6       |
|   | The song          | 87        | 43.7       |
|   | The cartoon       | 56        | 28.1       |
|   | characters        | 199       | 100.0      |

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 1 shows that children are familiar with Indomie television commercials. Table 2 shows that children can also remember some Indomie commercials they have seen, ‘Mama Do Good’ and ‘Indomitable’ advertisements had the lead. In addition, Table 3 shows that one major thing children can remember in Indomie commercials is the song followed by the cartoon characters and the dance. The implication of this is that children are familiar with commercials and the musical elements of such commercials when they have seen them recently and when they see them often.

**Research Question Two: What are the reactions of children to music in Indomie television commercial?**

**Table 4:** Showing Reactions to Indomie Television Commercials

|   | Variable/statements   | Strongly Agree | Agree     | Indifferent | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree | Total     |
|---|---|----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | When I see an Indomie TV commercial I am excited.                       | 81 (40.7)      | 91 (45.7) | 12 (6.0)    | 8 (4.0)   | 7 (3.5)           | 199 (100) |
| 2 | I danced to the song from Indomie television commercial (advertisement) | 58 (29.1)      | 59 (29.6) | 16 (8.0)    | 43 (21.6) | 23(11.6)          | 199 (100) |
| 3 | I enjoy watching Indomie Television commercial just because of the song | 46 (23.1)      | 62 (31.2) | 15 (7.5)    | 31 (15.6) | 45 (22.6)         | 199 (100) |

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4 shows that over 80% of the children are excited by Indomie commercial. It can also be seen that most of them dance to the songs they hear on these commercials. The table suggests that children develop and react positively to the

music in Indomie TV commercial and transfer the feeling to the commercials, this makes them watch it over and over again.

**Research Question Three: To what extent can children recall musical elements of Indomie television commercial?**

**Table 5:** Showing if respondents remember the words of Indomie television musical commercial?

| Variable  | Response Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Do you remember the words of Indomie Television musical commercial? | Yes               | 71        | 35.7       |
|   | Not very sure     | 85        | 42.7       |
|   | sure              | 43        | 21.6       |
|   | No                | 199       | 100.0      |

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 5 reveals that less than half remember the words of the commercial and 42.7 are not sure. 61.3% remembered 'Mama Do Good' and 17.1% Irresistible as shown in table 6. 'Mama Do Good' is remembered more maybe because it was in the Nigerian pidgin language that most of the children are

used to or maybe because the lyrics of the song were appealing to them and conveyed how they probably feel whenever they are served with Indomie noodles.

**Table 6:** What are the words of the song of Indomie musical television commercial you can remember?

| Variable  | Response Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| What are the words of the song of Indomie musical Television you can remember | Irresistible      | 34        | 17.1       |
|   | Mama Do Good      | 122       | 61.3       |
|   | Can't remember    | 43        | 21.6       |
|   | Total             | 199       | 100.0      |

Source: Field survey, 2015

**Research Question Four: To what extent do these adverts musical elements influence brand preference**

**Table 7:** Showing the extent to which the adverts musical elements influence brand preference

|   | Variable/statements   | Strongly Agree | Agree     | Indifferent | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree | Total     |
|---|---|----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | I like Indomie Television Commercial because of the song.                                   | 58 (29.1)      | 77 (38.7) | 14 (7.0)    | 32 (16.1) | 18 (9.0)          | 199 (100) |
| 2 | I eat Indomie because it is a better noodle brand due to the television commercials I see.  | 79 (39.7)      | 75 (35.7) | 13 (6.5)    | 15 (7.5)  | 17 (8.5)          | 199 (100) |
| 3 | Every time I see Indomie Television commercial I want mummy or daddy to buy Indomie for me. | 46 (23.1)      | 62 (31.2) | 15 (7.5)    | 31 (15.6) | 45 (22.6)         | 199 (100) |

Source: Field survey, 2015

From table 7 above 67.8% like the commercial because of the song, 74.4% eat indomie because of the musical element and 54.3% are persuaded to eat Indomie when they see the commercial. Children are excited about songs, commercials that have musical elements therefore appeal to them and this could be why children prefer Indomie noodles to other brands. Hence musical elements of Indomie television commercial make children choose the brand over other noodle brands.

**4.2 Discussion of Findings**

The study shows that Children who are exposed to television regularly watch TV commercials frequently. The more exposed they are to television, the more they have access to seeing television commercials and recalling them. The findings of Nadu & Kalaivanan (2013) [11] differs a little as they found out that the recall effectiveness is independent of level of TV viewing of the child respondents and does not vary depending on the level of TV viewing. The opposition may be because of the musical elements in Indomie commercial.

In addition, another finding shows that children are familiar with Indomie Television commercial, and can also remember the musical elements of the commercials they have seen. Therefore, hearing the song even without seeing the commercial, children remember the brand, Indomie. This agrees with a study conducted by Maher, Hu and Kolbe (2006) [9] where the researchers observed that the attention values such as slogans, pleasant music, animation (cartoon characters), action sequences and appeals by celebrities and sports personalities present in advertisements contributed for this level of recall of advertisements and recognition of advertised products by children. This finding is also

supported by the presumption of the Elaboration likelihood model, that music influence subjects best in a state of lower involvement.

The Elaboration likelihood model holds that attitudes are formed less by active thinking about the objects and its characteristics than by positive or negative associations with the object caused by music. This assumption gives base to the finding of this research work which show that children have a positive emotion towards songs and dance and attach the same emotions to TV commercials with musical element, as shown in table 9, over 80% of the children are excited by Indomie commercial, most of them dance to the songs from the commercial and over 50% enjoy watching the commercial because of the song. Therefore, music in the commercials get children excited and make them want to watch the television commercial over and over again. A study by Maher, Hu and Kolbe (2006) [9], agrees with this result 'according to him, Children watch commercials, not solely their hubby but will often play and refer to the television commercial they have watched anytime an audio or visual stimulus triggers their attention. The result of this research also agrees with Apaolaza-Ibáñez, Zander and Hartmann (2010) [4], as they affirmed that impressions of a brand could be manipulated by means of specific music pieces.

This study also discovered that some children don't remember the words of the commercial, while most of them remember specific ones like 'Mama Do Good' and 'Irresistible' and this could be because music and dancing was used prominently which is in accordance with Allan (2007) [1] citing Rubin (1977) found that recall of information is improved when cued with the melody of a well-known song. A research work by Maher, Hu and Kolbe

(2006) <sup>[9]</sup> suggest that children can recall a reasonable amount of information from a single exposure to a television advertisement and are capable of sharing that information accurately which does not agree with the finding of this study, perhaps increased amount of exposure and not just the musical element would affect commercial recall.

Findings of this research show that musical elements of Indomie television commercial make children choose the brand over the other noodle brands. The classical conditioning theory is knotted with this finding as it explains how advert messages when conditioned with music evokes similar reaction from children.

This finding agrees with the study carried out by Goldberg and Gorn (1974), which affirmed the consistency between attitude and behavior, as children who saw a commercial evaluated the toy more favorably relative to the unadvertised toy and worked longer at the experimental task than those who saw the program without any commercials.

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has established the fact that children between ages 8-10 have a positive attitude to the songs they hear and give attention to Indomie television commercial because they are attracted to the songs. The brand preference of the children is also affected by the recall of the television commercial which have musical elements in them.

In conclusion, it is no doubt that music helps children remember things, learn things in school, church or even at home. Music in television commercials play the same role, and also make children prefer to consume the brand they feel familiar with.

Children's exposure to TV commercials is determined by their exposure to television, therefore the researcher recommends that TV commercials targeted towards children are aired when most children will be watching.

The researcher recommends that commercials that are targeted towards children should have jingles which could grab their attention and help them remember, but care must be taken to make messages simple so as to help children not just to love the songs but persuade them to choose the brand. It must be noted that though children will be attached to jingles in television commercials some of them do not understand the total message or concept of a television commercial, therefore great care should be taken when structuring commercial messages targeted to this young and vulnerable minds.

The researcher further recommends that Indomie commercials should continue with the jingle but include more animation and dancing, since some children are not attracted by the song but by other elements they can relate with.

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