
Advertising and Cultural Perspective: Trophy Billboard Advertisement in Ilorin as A Paradigm

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between advertising and the culture of the Trophy Lager beer billboard advertisement at Offa garage area of Ilorin, which generated controversy between the advertiser and the Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressives Union (IEDPU) in the year 2023. The study's primary purpose was to determine the perception of Ilorin residents about the Trophy Lager beer advertisement. The study was underpinned by reception theory. A survey research method was adopted, and a self-administered questionnaire served as the research instrument for this study. The views of 187 residents of Ilorin were sought on their perception of the Trophy Lager beer billboard advertisement mounted at the Offa garage area of Ilorin in the year 2023. The finding revealed that, although the Trophy billboard advertisement caught the attention of most of the residents of Ilorin, it was against the Islamic cultural relevance for which Ilorin community is known. That respect for local values was highly unfavourable. The study concludes that advertising content should mirror the society through the people's language, religious customs and ideology to motivate the target buyers to purchase the advertised products. The study recommends, among others, that further research should be carried out on the influence of the Trophy Lager beer advertisement on alcohol consumption among Ilorin youth.

Keywords: *Advertisement, culture, Islamic culture, perception, Trophy billboard advertisement.*

INTRODUCTION

Advertising and culture are intertwined. Understanding cultural perspectives in an advertising campaign is significant for the success of the campaign. It is the spine of a campaign message. Luong et al. (2024) observe that advertising has a profound impact on consumerism and cultural values; the impact of advertising is no longer limited and can have both positive and negative effects on society to a certain extent depending on the content of the message and how it resonates with the value, norms and culture of a specific society. Meanwhile, the role of advertising within consumer culture as an ideological force has received much attention within academic studies in the advertising and marketing disciplines. It has been the subject of inquiry and debate in related fields within sociology and cultural studies (Holm, 2023).

Advertising fulfils several tasks like awareness, communicating product attributes and benefits, reminding consumers, generating repeat purchases and contributing to developing the consumer base (Rizomyliotis *et al.*, 2024). Ismail and Tejumaiye (2025) define advertising as communicating product features to consumers. Belch and Belch (2018) believe that advertising and promotion are an integral part of human, social, and economic systems and that, in a complex human society, advertising has evolved into a vital communications system for both consumers and businesses. The ability of advertising and other promotional methods to deliver a carefully prepared message to the target audience has given them a significant role in the marketing programmes of most organisations (Belch & Belch, 2018). Advertising intends to communicate a message (usually paid for) and inform people about something to influence them to purchase or try it out (Bhagat, 2022). This suggests that no organisation can survive in a globally competitive market without the aid of advertising, and advertising also helps consumers to determine what to consume.

On the other hand, different scholars have viewed culture in several ways. Fernández González and Akrivou (2024) describe culture as an accumulation of the beliefs, traditions, language and values of a particular group of people; it has to do with the opera, art, ballad, dances, food, dressing and values of the people. Culture is the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes, religions concepts of self, the universe and self-universe, relationships, hierarchies of status, role, expectations, spatial relations and time concepts acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individuals and group strivings (Fernández González & Akrivou, 2024). According to Kalilu and Alimi (2022), culture is a key variable in understanding human behaviour better, as culture affects perceptions, attitudes, and behaviour.

Advertising plays a significant role in shaping cultural perspectives and reflecting society's values, beliefs, and norms. It serves as a medium to communicate messages and ideas, influencing consumer behaviour and shaping societal attitudes (Aomari & Nafaa, 2023). Kalilu and Alimi (2022) assert that advertising across cultures is essentially a platform for engaging different elements of an advertising campaign and ensuring that such a campaign positively impacts the target audience, especially when advertising designers deploy culturally relevant iconology most effectively. They opine further that the advertisement audience largely determines its contents. Thus, advertisement seeks to capture attention and connect emotionally through socially conscious and purpose-driven messages. Kalilu and Alimi (2022) observe that advertising messages can be powerful tools of persuasion by getting under the cultural skin of the society only if the advertisers know the cultural context of their audience. On this note,

Kalilu and Alimi (2022) conclude that advertising and culture are usually synchronised to shape the behaviours and values of society.

However, Deng (2024) asserts that human emotions are often informed by culture as emotions could drive engagement, brand recall, and purchase intent, in such a way that understanding and quantifying culture is expedient in advertising to help define the relevant emotional palette, in which a brand can use with a particular audience. Abokhoza et al. (2019) stated that the effectiveness of advertising can be enhanced by creating messages that reflect the cultural symbols of their target audience, using any chosen media, such as mass communication or other methods. At this juncture, it is important to note that people's interests are usually reflected in their culture. The Trophy advertising message: *Trophy Atunilara to sie gege bi omo ...* (a heartwarming Trophy is good for you as an indigene of ...) was used in Ibadan, Oyo, Abeokuta, Lagos, among other Yoruba towns and cities without causing any hullabaloo. However, this advertising message did not resonate well with Ilorin indigene, perhaps because of their cultural perspectives.

In this case, Nigeria Brewery Trophy's larger beer billboard advertisement in Ilorin fails to identify and reckon with the cultural background of the people of Ilorin society. The content of the billboard was written in Yoruba language "*Trophy Atunilára to síẹ gege bíí ọmọ...*" which can be translated as "a heartwarming TROPHY is good for you as an indigene of Ilorin". To this end, Ilorin indigenes frown at this Trophy Billboard advertisement because alcohol drinking, as stated in the Holy Quran, is against their Islamic culture. Meanwhile, Islamic teachings generally discourage the consumption of alcohol as stated in the glorious Quran, "O' you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, sacrificing on stone alters to other than Allah and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, avoid it so that you may be successful" (Quran 5; Verse 90 in Saheel International). This religious perspective significantly influences drinking habits in the Ilorin community. Public alcohol consumption in Ilorin is observed to be relatively low, and this is perhaps because many adhere strictly to these religious guidelines. In a statement signed by the National publicity Secretary of Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressives Union (IEDPU), Mallam Nurudeen Ibrahim on June 3rd 2023, described the message contained in the advertisement of Trophy beer, which makes references to Ilorin and its people as regular consumers of alcohol as clearly offensive; saying that the advertisement was deliberately planted to provoke the people of Ilorin Emirate. Pulse reported that an online platform deemed the advertisement as excessive liberty and recommended its swift removal to discourage self-help among Ilorin community members, highlighting the need for swift action (Zubair, 2022). While insisting that advertisement of products that are at variance with the culture of a given community should always be discouraged in such a place, the statement said that the message on the billboard attaching alcohol to the people of Ilorin, who are predominantly Muslims, is a deliberate provocation, to say the least. Overall, alcohol consumption in Ilorin is shaped by religious guidelines, reflecting a nuanced cultural approach. Social and community norms reinforce the avoidance of alcohol in Ilorin. Ilorin is a community where religious adherence and traditional values are strongly upheld; public drinking or alcohol-related activities are less common and often viewed with disapproval. To this end, this study established the relationship between Trophy billboard advertisement and Ilorin Islamic culture.

Research objectives

1. To determine the perception of Ilorin residents about the Trophy billboard advertisement in Offa garage, Ilorin.
2. To investigate the relationship between the Trophy billboard advertisement in the Offa garage area of Ilorin and Ilorin Islamic religious culture.

Research Questions

1. What is Ilorin residents' perception of the Trophy billboard advertisement in Offa garage, Ilorin?
2. What is the relationship between the Trophy billboard advertisement in Ilorin's Offa garage area and Islamic religious culture?

Literature Review

Advertising messages and culture

Advertising is a form of communication intended to persuade an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to purchase or take some actions on products, ideas or services (Suleman et al., 2025). Skiba (2024) emphasises the importance of understanding the target audience, their needs, preferences, and the competitive landscape, crafting compelling messages, visuals, and calls-to-action to drive desired outcomes. Koo *et al.* (2012) opine that Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is a complex, dynamic, and multifaceted concept encompassing a society or group's beliefs, values, norms, practices, and symbols (Schaller & Muthukrishna, 2021). Shiraev and Levy (2024) assert that culture is how a group of people solves problems and resolves conflicts, and it is reflected in their language, customs, and traditions. The relationship between advertising and culture is reciprocal, with advertising reflecting and shaping cultural values and norms, and culture influencing the content and effectiveness of advertisements (Abokhoza et al., 2019).

Hardy (2021) also believes that advertising and culture are in a constant dialogue, influencing and shaping each other in complex and multifaceted ways. Bowman (2021) submits that advertising and culture are intertwined, with advertising helping to create and disseminate cultural meanings, and culture shaping the meanings and effectiveness of advertisements. Culture is the soil in which advertising grows, and advertising is the fertiliser that helps culture grow (Davis, 2013). Meanwhile, Abimbola (2017) argue that advertising shapes culture by influencing values, norms, self-perception, and cultural identity. Whereas, Raza *et al.* (2020) and Grier and Poole (2020) are of the contrary opinion that it is people's culture that influences advertising because culture is the context in which advertising is created and consumed and that cultural values and norms shape the content and execution of advertising. Culture is the framework that gives meaning to advertising, influencing how advertisements are interpreted and responded to. Culture is also the framework that gives meaning to advertising, and advertising is the tool that helps culture evolve and change (Abokhoza et al., 2019). Ilorin is predominantly a Muslim territory, and Islam is the primary factor in the culture and way of life of Ilorin people. Aliyu and Yusuf (2024) assert that in the present time, Ilorin city is proud of many Islamic scholars who have made immense contributions towards the consolidation of Islam and knowledge in the city and in the Yoruba land generally, thereby promoting the heritage bequeathed to them by their ancestral scholars.

Theoretical Perspective

Reception theory

This research is built on reception theory, which was propounded by John Stuart Hall in 1973. The theory explains the audience's negotiation or opposition to a particular message. Reception theory proposed that individuals actively shape the meaning of advertising, and audiences do not passively receive meaning (Aminudin, 2018). This means the audience could create meaning or interpret the message based on their cultural background and life experiences. Reception Theory is an approach that highlights the audience's active participation in interpreting and creating meanings from media messages (Aminudin, 2018). Rather than viewing audiences as passive, Reception Theory acknowledges individuals' diverse interpretations and cultural contexts. It recognises how audiences interact with media texts and how their subjective experiences and cultural backgrounds influence their understanding. This suggests that reception theory reconstructs how audiences interpret and derive meaning from texts, media, and cultural artefacts. It highlights the influence of audience context, experiences, and social factors in shaping their understanding and reception of a given work. Holub (2013) reveals that reception theory was an index of the creative process in interpreting, reading, and receiving any message. Reception theory highlights that advertisements are not universally understood, but are subject to multiple interpretations depending on the audience's cultural perspective (Shadiev & Yu, 2024). Audiences bring their cultural knowledge and experiences to interpret advertisements, which can lead to varying understandings and meanings (Wilson, 2013).

In understanding audience interpretation and negotiation of media messages, reception theory offers valuable insights into its strengths and weaknesses. Akhtar et al (2023) explains that the theory's strengths include empowering the audience by recognising their active role in the communication process, highlighting power dynamics between the encoder and decoder, and contextualising communication within social, cultural, and historical contexts while the theory's weaknesses include overemphasising individual interpretation, ignoring technological factors, and lacking empirical evidence. This theory is related to the Trophy billboard advertisement in Ilorin, as the people in this city interpreted the advertisement as offensive based on their religious culture. The billboard advertisement, which was erected in Offa garage area of Ilorin in June 2023, has the same advertising message which was used in other Yoruba-speaking areas of Nigeria, such as Ibadan, Oshogbo and the like, where it was well received. Thus, Reception Theory, about advertising and culture, suggests that audiences actively interpret and negotiate the meaning of advertisements based on their cultural background, experiences, and social context (Pradhan *et al.*, 2023). Thus, advertisers must take into consideration the cultural values of every society. Akolkar et al (2024) conclude that cultural understanding is not a luxury but a necessity in today's global advertising and that companies must be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences to create effective, culturally sensitive strategies for advertising.

RESEARCH METHOD

The survey method is considered appropriate for this study because it enables these researchers to scientifically sample residents of Ilorin Metropolis to determine their views about the Trophy Billboard advertisement and its relationship with Ilorin Islamic culture. The population for this study consists of the entire population of Ilorin Metropolis, which is 777,667.

Ilorin comprises three Local Governments: Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South. According to the National Population Commission (2015), the 2006 census indicates that the total population of Ilorin East is 204,310, Ilorin West has a population of 364,666, and Ilorin South has a population of 208,691. Therefore, the total population is 777,667. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to determine the sample size for this study. To achieve this, the first stage was the identification of the local governments in Ilorin metropolis: Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South. At the second stage, a probability sampling technique was used to select one Local Government among the three local governments in Ilorin metropolis, and the local government selected was Ilorin West. All the wards in Ilorin West Local Government (12) were listed at the third stage. Therefore, the wards are listed below: Adewole, Ajikobi, Baboko, Badari, Balagun Alanamu Central, Magaji Ngeri, Oloje, Ogidi, Ojuekun/Zarumi, Oko-Erin, Ubandawaki, Warrah/Egbejila/Osin. At the final stage, four wards were selected out of the 12 wards for the study. Using a simple random sampling technique, the four wards selected were Adewole, Baboko, Oko-Erin, and Ubandawaki.

The table below shows how the sample was selected using a ratio of 1:450.

Listed Wards	Population (N)	Percentage (%)
Adewole	29,168/450	64.82
Baboko	11,625/450	25.8
Oko-Erin	15,507/450	34.5
Ubandawaki	27,868/450	61.9
Total	84,168/450	187.04

National Population Commission (2015)

Thus, 187 respondents were chosen as the sample size for this study. The questionnaire comprised two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A is embedded with respondents' biodata to elicit responses on demographic details. At the same time, Section B was concerned with questions related to the research questions. The data collection method for this research was face-to-face or interpersonal questionnaire administration by the researchers. Researchers sought the consent of the selected respondents and distributed the questionnaire for immediate or later collection depending on respondents' disposition. This study employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences IBM-SPSS 23.0 to analyse the data gathered from the respondents. The results were presented using % percentages and tables. A pilot study was conducted before the commencement of the investigation to enhance the validity of the research instrument, and to ensure its reliability, a test-retest method was employed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the age distribution of the respondents showed that 11(6%) of the respondents were under 18 years of age, 12(6%) were between the age 18-25, 44(24%) were between the age 26-30, 84 (45%) were between the age 31-35 while 36 (19%) were 36-40 of age. This means that most respondents were between the ages of 31 and 35. This implies that the respondents were mature enough to understand the relationship between the Trophy Billboard advertisement and Ilorin Islamic culture. The findings on the gender difference of the respondents showed that 79 (42%) were male, while 108 (58%) were female. This showed that females formed the majority of the respondents. The results on the occupation of the respondents showed that

47(24%) were civil servants, 54 (29%) of the respondents were into trading, 33(18%) of the respondents were artisans, and 35 (19%) of the respondents worked in the private sector. In comparison, 18(10%) of the respondents were unemployed. Results on the education level of the respondents showed that 3 (2%) had just primary school certificate, 17 (9%) of the respondents had secondary certificate, 38 (20%) of the respondents were graduates of Colleges of Education, 51 (27%) of the respondents had HND certificate. In comparison, 78 (42%) respondents had a Bachelor's Degree certificate. This showed that most respondents were learned and literate enough to understand the Trophy Billboard advertisement mounted at the Offa Garage area of Ilorin and its implications on Ilorin Islamic Culture.

RQ1: What is Ilorin residents' perception of the Trophy billboard advertisement placed at Offa garage?

Table 1.

I know the Trophy billboard advertisement was erected at the Offa garage in Ilorin.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	182	97%
No	5	3%
Total	187	100%

The results from Table 1 showed that 182 respondents, representing 97%, were aware of the Trophy billboard advertisement erected at Offa garage in Ilorin, and 5 respondents, representing were not aware of the Trophy beer billboard advertisement mounted at Offa garage area of Ilorin. This showed that most respondents were aware of the Trophy billboard advertisement erected at Offa garage in Ilorin.

Table 2.

The Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage depicts Ilorin Islamic culture negatively.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	82	44%
Agree	97	51 %
Disagree	3	2%
Strongly Disagree	5	3%
Total	187	100%

The results from Table 2 showed that 82 respondents, representing 44%, strongly agreed that the Trophy billboard advertisement depicts Ilorin culture negatively, 97 respondents, representing 52%, agreed, 3 respondents, representing 2%, disagreed, and 5 respondents, representing 3%, strongly disagreed. This revealed that the majority of the respondents affirmed that the Trophy billboard advertisement depicts Ilorin Islamic culture negatively.

Table 3.

The Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage aligns with the Islamic values of Ilorin residents.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	9	5%
Agree	12	6%
Disagree	114	61%
Strongly Disagree	52	28%
Total	187	100%

Table 3 shows that 9 respondents, representing 5%, strongly agreed that the Trophy billboard advertisement aligns with the Islamic values of Ilorin residents, 12 respondents, representing 6%, agreed, 114 respondents, representing 61%, disagreed, and 52 respondents, representing 28%, strongly disagreed. This revealed that most respondents disagreed that the Trophy billboard advertisement aligns with the Islamic values of Ilorin residents.

RQ2: What is the relationship between the Trophy billboard advertisement at the Offa garage area of Ilorin and Ilorin Islamic culture?

Table 4.

The trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage reflects Islamic culture in Ireland.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	1%
No	182	97%
Cannot say	4	2%
Total	187	100%

The result from Table 4 shows that 1 respondent, representing 1%, believes that the Trophy billboard advertisement reflects elements of Ilorin Islamic culture, 182 respondents, representing 97%, claimed that the billboard reflects Ilorin Islamic culture negatively. In contrast, 4 respondents, representing 2%, were undecided. This shows that most respondents submitted that the Trophy billboard advertisement mounted at Ilorin's Offa garage area is against the Islamic culture.

Table 5.

How did the Trophy billboard advertisement at Offa Garage depict Ilorin Islamic culture?

	Frequency	Percentage
Positively	12	6%
Negatively	152	81%
No impact	18	10%
Undecided	5	3%
Total	187	100%

The results from Table 5 show that 12 respondents, representing 6%, believe that the Trophy billboard advertisement positively depicts Ilorin Islamic culture, 152 respondents,

representing 81%, believe that the Trophy billboard advertisement negatively depicts Ilorin Islamic culture, and 18 respondents, representing 10%, believe that the Trophy billboard advertisement had no impact. In comparison, 5 respondents, representing 3%, could not decide. This shows that the majority of the respondents believe that the Trophy billboard advertisement negatively depicted Ilorin Islamic culture.

Table 6.
Trophy billboard advertisement is against the Islamic cultural aspect of Ilorin community.

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	148	79%
No	28	15%
Undecided	11	6%
Total	187	100%

The result from Table 6 shows that 148 respondents, representing 79%, were of the view that Trophy billboard advertisement is against the Islamic cultural aspect of the Ilorin community, 28 respondents, representing 15%, chose the No option, while 11 respondents, representing 6%, were undecided. This shows that the majority of the respondents strongly believe that the Trophy billboard advertisement is against the Islamic cultural aspect of the Ilorin community.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of research question one indicate that, while the billboard advertisement caught the attention of most Ilorin residents, the perception of its Ilorin Islamic cultural relevance and respect for local values was highly unfavourable. The overwhelming sentiment among the respondents highlights a disconnection between the advertisement's content and the cultural sensibilities of the community, suggesting that the advertisement may not have been well-received in this particular context. This could be attributed to the fact that the Ilorin community frowns at alcoholic advertisement in public places. Sales of alcoholic products are equally prohibited in certain places in Ilorin. Due to this, there is a high probability that the trophy billboard advertisement in question will be rejected by most of the Ilorin people. This finding supports the assertion made by Abokhoza et al. (2019) that advertising not only mirrors cultural values but also has the power to shape them. This also indicates that the relationship between advertising and culture is bidirectional, with cultural values influencing the content of advertisements, while advertising simultaneously impacts cultural norms. Additionally, Akolkar et al. (2024) emphasise that successful advertising hinges on understanding the target audience's values, preferences, and needs. This suggests that advertisers and advertising agencies ought to understand people's perceptions and cultural values to avoid rejection of their products or services advertised. In line with reception theory, Ilorin residents' Islamic cultural background and life experience shaped the negative meaning they attach to the Trophy billboard advertisement. This also portrays Ilorin residents as active message receivers. The findings of research question two revealed that the Trophy billboard advertisement at the Offa garage area of Ilorin is against the Islamic culture of the Ilorin community. It is a fad that the Islamic religion is against intoxicants of any nature, and the Ilorin community is Islamic. Therefore, this is the reason why the Ilorin community frowns at public advertisement of alcohol at Offa garage,

which led to a call for the removal of the Trophy billboard alcohol advertisement at Offa garage by the Ilorin Emirate Descendants Progressives Union (IEDPU) and some Islamic clerics in Ilorin. Alcohol was prohibited in the Holy Quran through chapters 4, verse 43, and chapter 5, verses 90-91. According to Qur'an 4:43, Almighty God says, "O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants (khamr), gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than God], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. This finding is in tandem with Kalilu and Alimi's (2022) view, which observes that advertising messages can be powerful tools of persuasion by getting under the cultural skin of society and that advertisers should understand the cultural context of their audience. Moreover, Berger (2020) also submits that the influence of culture on an individual's consumption pattern is strong enough to affect their choice of goods and services, and by extension, their response to advertisements. Regarding the aforementioned, advertisers and advertising agencies should pay due attention to the community's culture, where a product or service is to be advertised, for the advertisement to be accepted. While emphasising the importance of recognising and respecting the culture of the host community by the advertisers, and the advertising agencies, Abokhoza et al. (2019) found that culture is the framework that gives meaning to advertising, influencing how people interpret and respond to advertisements; it is also the frame work that gives meaning to advertising, and advertising is the tool that helps culture evolve and change.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that since advertising is an essential communication strategy which aims to sell products or services to large, heterogeneous audiences using any form of communication channels, in the course of advertising a product, there should be a relationship between the cultural, religious, and social values and the contents of the advertisement. The study also concludes that advertising content should mirror the society, through the language, religious customs and ideology of the people, in order to motivate them to purchase such a product. Consequently, the advertisement for Trophy Lager Beer at Offa Garage negatively represents the social, religious, and cultural values of the people of Ilorin. Most residents of Ilorin did not subscribe to the Trophy Lager Beer advertisement mounted at Offa Garage, Ilorin. As such, they believe the advertisement had demoted Ilorin's socio-cultural and religious values. Through the Trophy Lager Beer advertisement, there is misrepresentation and misinterpretation of the values and traditions of the Ilorin community, as the alcoholic advertisement changed the cultural perspective of the City to a society that embraces alcoholic drinks.

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