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## Street Advertisement of Herbal Products as Noise Pollution: The Yenegoa Experience

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### **Abstract**

*Advertisement of herbal products on the streets is increasingly becoming a common source of noise pollution across Yenegoa, Bayelsa State. This undesirable development has often made the inhabitants of the city wonder about the true description and ideal composition of marketing communication, advertising precisely. This study examined the problem of noise pollution generated through intense herbal products advertising on the streets and at different corners of Yenegoa. To guide this study to achieve its objectives, three research questions were raised. The study adopted the survey design, using the quantitative methods for data collection. The population comprised adult residents of Yenegoa and the sample free and sampling technique were 100 male and female inhabitants of the town purposively selected, using age, occupation, education and experience about the town as criteria the main instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The findings revealed that Boom-lime cordial herbal product-advertisements do not optimally achieve the basic goal of marketing communication but rather generate a lot of noise pollution, thus becoming more of a societal curse than a blessing, considering its adverse health implications. The study recommended, among other things, that the Yenegoa township authority should enact laws that will prohibit the indiscriminate use of loud speakers to market products on the streets of the town, and the Bayelsa State Ministry of information should direct the street marketers on how ideal advertising is done. This study will help bring about environmental sanity in Bayelsa State capital as well as educate its residents about the dangers of uncontrolled herbal product-street advertising.*

**Keyword:** Advertisements, Herbal products, Noise, Pollution, Culture.

### **Introduction**

It is an incontrovertible fact that the Nigerian society today is awash with all kinds of cheap, locally manufactured products, especially the herbal ones whose producers and marketers often generate too much noise when carrying out their sales promotion activities. This unfortunate development has hardly favoured the socio-economic and cultural development of the country.

Communication with its several kinds - intrapersonal communication, inter personal communication, group communication, mass communication and public communication, all share the same broad and basic goals. These goals, which are laudable enough, are improving the recipient's level of understanding, eliciting receiver's response, creating good relations as

well as creating organizational goodwill (ATSWA, 2009:115). It is unarguable that if communication is done appropriately, its important societal goals will be realized and the receiver or audience of the message sent will be better off, his communication desire having been met.

Although it evidently possesses tremendous benefits, communication can be flawed and rendered ineffective by certain communication barriers, one of which is noise. Noise, like other communication barriers, interferes with the effective implementation of the communication process, often resulting in either poor or failed communication. Thus, Ebinu (2006) posits that good communication can be considerably hampered by noise, emphasizing that this happens when noise hinders the comprehension of sent messages.

It is common knowledge that the activity of communication is often exploited for the achievement certain ends. In all of life's endeavors, communication has proven to be a most useful tool for human survival (Adenbigbe, 2013:45).

Hence, professionals in all fields and other career people who realize its enormous value and potential have exploited to attain various levels of success when this happens one or more functions of communication, which Obe (2009:10) provides as social interaction, business and trade ideas, socio-political development as well as social- cultural interaction, has been achieved.

Indeed, communication of any form can hardly be successful if the basic elements of the communication process, and their various roles effectively and properly used. They are stimulus, source, message, channel receiver and feedback (Obe 2009:22) and noise.

All the above functions of communication will remain unrealizable if the sender of a communication content or message does not utilize most, If not all the basic elements of communication which ensure that the message sent is comprehensibly received. Herbal product marketers, including Boom lime cordial, have, in recent years, been generating tremendous, disturbing noise as they try to sell their products on the streets of Yenagoa. But their marketing and sale promotion efforts have not been as successful as they desire because they end-up making more noise than communicating their marketing messages.

This paper is a modest attempt at more broadly discussing a growing societal problem which most members of the affected societies have seem powerless to confront. The study will help to somewhat establish the magnitude of the problem and proffer some solutions to it.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Communication is believed to have taken place only when the message sent has been understood by the receiver. This is the argument that justifies one popular description of the activity of communication as the process of sharing meaning through the use of symbols or the giving of understandable information with another person or group of persons many times, however, people indulge in communication but hardly realizes the objective and goal of the communication event.

Certain barriers technically described that communication barriers have been identified as being responsible for this incomprehensibility. Noise can frustrate a message sender or receiver as well as kill the message itself as both the sender and receiver can be made to lose touch of the message.

Inarguably, the negative impact of noise on the communication process deserves more investigation and discussion so that communicators can stay clear of it. Promoters and advertisers of almost herbal medicines across Nigeria display a lot of communication lapses, especially creating noise when publicizing their products. Those who do street advertising and sales of Boom lime cordial Herbal products are highly guilty of this communication aberration as they make more noise than communicate their message to members of the public particularly the Yenagoa Public.

### **Research Questions**

1. What kind of noise do you think negatively affect communication, hampering the message communicated?
2. Do the street advertisements of Boom lime cordial herbal products produce extremely high sound, causing noise pollution in Yenagoa?
3. Do you think the decibels (dB) of Boom lime cordial's street advertisement across Yenagoa town, apart from interfering with communication cause such health problems as irritation, high blood pressure, nervous disorders and temporary deafness?

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concept of products and Herbal Products**

##### **The Product**

A product, according to Wikipedia, is any object or system made available for consumer's use or anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy the desire or need of a consumer.

Corporate finance (2021) described the product simply as object that are manufactured, stored, transported, advertised and then sold.

On the hand, herbal products are medicines derived from plants and are used as supplements to improve health and well being and may be use for other therapeutic purpose (Drugscm, 2021).

According to *Healthcare* (2021), herbal medicines are plant-medicines that can totally flush out such common diseases as Staphylococcus.

Hindawi (2021) described herbal medicines as evidence-based complementary and alternative African medicine.

#### **The Concept of Communication**

Communication according to Okon (2001), are legendry and numerous in literature. They run from the very "general communication" which is the general response of an organism to a stimulus (Steven 1915) to the "specific Communication" which has as its central interest those behavioral situation in which a source transmits a specific message to a receiver(s) with conscious intent to affect the matters behaviors. Communication is the sharing between one or

more individual or animals through the use of symbol, signs, writing and verbal form etc. The human communication process entails the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver. The factor which distorts the free flow of communication is known as ‘Noise’.

### **The Concept of Advertising**

Advertising, according to Akpede (2010:5), is my advertising form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas goods and services paid for by an identified sponsor ATSWA (2001:18) speaks of advertising as a paid form of non-personal communication about an organization its product or services that is transmitted through a mass medium to a target audience. Advertising is thus aimed at making an idea, a good or service known, so that more sales which will ultimately result in more profits can be made.

Sunday (2012:20) describes of how to write an effective advertising copy. He says it should contain short sentences, use present fences and active voice, don’t waste words; try to avoid being formal and avoid clichés, which distracts from the effectiveness of the advertisement’s message. He further adds that a writing advertising copy calls for a high degree of intelligence, hard-work creativity.

It can be deduced from the foregoing submissions that, to be able to present a good advertisement, demands a lot of skill of the advertising practitioner.

### **Types of Advertising**

Olubunmi (2013: 71-80) speaks of newspaper advertising and broadcast commercials, describing them as the two bread categories of mass media advertising. He explains that newspaper advertising may be display of classified while he described the former as the type that combines the elements of an advertisement to give the advert a balance and professional positioning in the newspaper, He present the latter as one that uses only the body copy of an advertisement.

According to Olubunmi (2013:82-83) broadcast commercials refers to the type of advertisement done through the radio or television. He explains that advertisers often chose either of these broadcasts on the strength of the special features each of them possesses. The radio uses only sound while the television uses both sound and visuals. Harland, et al, cited in Olubunmi (2013: 84) identifies some basic formats that guide the preparation of broadcast commercials and These are: progressive rock top 40 format middle of the road, good music, classical country and western all news, ethnic, all talk etc.

## **The Concept of Noise**

The concept of noise occupies a very important place in the communication process. This is because noise alters the intended meaning of those who communicate or send messages through communication channels. To Aderibigbe (2013:28) noise in communication as technical term for all forms of obstacles which conspire to reduce the fidelity of communication. He further describes communication noise to be whatever makes it impossible for the decoder to act the message intended by the encoder. Okon (2009:21) sees noise as in communication as any distraction or interference between the source and the message receiver. Wasterman and Parnel (2021) argue that noise present a great deal of problem to communication process and so they suggest strategies to manage it effectively, so that a goal of communication can be ultimately achieved.

## **Types of Noise**

Different kinds of noise have been identified, all of which have proven harmful to man and his activities. According to Aderibigbe (2013:26), they are physical or environmental noise, physiological noise and psychological noise on (2009:23) adds to the foregoing linguistic noise, which, according the seriously impedes communication.

### **Physical/Environmental Noise**

Aderibigbe (2013:26) describes physical or environmental noise as any form of disturbance to communication process traceable to the factors within the immediate physical environment. He exemplified this form of noise as intermittent loud sound from radio sets, markets grounding machines; block make machines, hooting by moving vehicles.

### **Physiological Noise**

This type of noise describes any form of disturbances to the communication process caused by the ill health of the sender or the receiver ATSWA (2009:18) describes noise during communication as anything that distracts the attention of the sender or receiver from receiving information it further explains that physical, psychological technical or sound noise are the forms of noise that are created in the communication process and which impedes the effective transmission or communication.

### **Psychological Noise**

Another category of noise is psychological noise is which refers to the unfavourable state of the mind of the sender and/or the receiver of a piece of communication. Psychological noise can be exemplified as depression, annoyance, fatigue, among others Aderibigbe further notes that noise can be caused by such factors as usage of wrong media exhibition of disturbing mannerisms, and inadequate mastery of language of communication. Others are insensitivity to the receiver, poor preparation and lack of deep knowledge of the message or topic.



## **Noise Pollution**

According to Berg (2001:2), “Noise Pollution is unwanted or excessive sound that can have deleterious effects on human health, wildlife, and environmental quality”. Hartley and Vincent (1983:501) submit that bad communication can create the problem of noise pollution which they describe as “loud, harsh irritating sounds” capable of causing heart disease. Noise generated through bad communication is therefore harmful to society and so should be not tolerated. According to them, noise pollution can lead to a number of ailments, such as heart disease, stomach ulcer, high blood pressure partial and permanent deafness, etc.

Botkin and Keller (2005:308-39) speaks of noise pollution as unwanted sound which describes sound beyond to units of decibels (dB), the highest level humans can take sound. They explain that the threshold for human hearing is old and the average sound level in the interior of a home is about 45 (dB). Speaking of dangers of noise pollution, Botkin and Keller (2005:308-39) point out that “any sound above 80 (dB) is potentially dangerous”. In point of fact, according to them, one can suffer damage to hearing or some permanent loss of hearing noise pollution also cause irritability. Thus, sicknesses such as headaches body pains, fevers,

## **Theoretical framework**

This study falls in line with the theoretical thrust of Shannon and Weaver’s Linear Model. According to Okon (2000), “the model envisions a source who encodes or creates a message and transmits it through a channel to a receiver and decodes or recreates the message”.

The model identifies noise, which denotes any extraneous stimulus that interferes with the validity and reception of a message, as a key concept of communication. Shannon and Weaver believe the noise is present in communication channel or medium and that this noise constitutes a huge distraction during communication exchange; thus, noise work against the realization of the goals of communication. The model presents the following taxonomy to provide clearer explanation of noise: semantic noise, syntactic noise, psychological noise, physiological noise and channel/mechanical noise.

The Shannon and Weaver’s model is pertinent to the study, for it clearly recognize that, for any effective and successful communication to be achieved; noise must be rid off and not come in the way of the communication between the message sender and the message receiver.

## **Method**

The study adopted the survey design using quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain the necessary data. The target population was the residents of strategic and densely populated area of Yenagoa Town. For the sample size and technique, a total of one hundred (100) Yenagoa residents - twenty from each major part of the town were purposively drawn, using age, occupation, experience and education as criteria. The main tool used for data gathering was the questionnaire with semi interviews conducted with the respondents. The obtained data was analyzed by means of the percentage method.

## Discussion of Findings

### RQ. 1:

What kind of noise do you think negatively affect communication, hampering the message communicated?

Seeking answers to research question one, the researcher posed the aforementioned question to the respondents concerned. Out of the total of 100, 80 or 80% of them expressed the view that physically, noise which comes from the environment and are produced by loud conversations, vehicular sounds, rickety generators and the like negatively affects the communication process as well as give rise to noise pollution. Another 50 or 50% identified psychological noise. They explained that this type of noise results from poor mental attitude, depression, emotional stress or disability. Each of these can cause communication noise. 70 or 70% of them spoke of physiological noise, caused by body comforts, tiredness or hunger. 60 or 60% of the respondents said that there is what is also called linguistic noise, which is caused by the sources inability to use the language of communication accurately and appropriately. They more simply explained this as grammatical noise, which results from wrong use of grammar, faulty sentence structure, misspellings or incorrect pronunciation. All of this, they said, negatively affect communication. To illicit answers from the respondents, the aforementioned question was posed.

### RQ. 2:

Do the street advertisements of Boom lime cordial herbal products, produce extremely high sound, causing noise pollution in Yenagoa?

**Table 1:**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	80%
No	20	20%
Total	100	100%

To elicit answers to research question one, respondents were asked a number of questions which demanded their indicating Yes or No, to express their responses. Out of the total of one hundred (100%) respondents, 80 (or 80%) of them answered Yes while 20% said No, which clearly shows that the shows that the sound systems often use by Boom lime cordial's street markets are always high sound and blaring. Another related question was posed- which was: Does Boom lime cordial's marketers ever reduce the volume of their sound system when on their marketing or sales promotion drive through Yenegoa? Out of the 100 respondents, 90 (or 90%) of them said the volume kept ever so high –a situation which causes a lot of distraction and frustration to those in the neighborhood of their operation. Yet another question was asked was which: Does Boom lime cordial's marketing group show any respect for schools, churches and residential areas?



To answer this question, 75 or 75% of the respondents said that the markets keep the sound system too high around school, worship places and in residential areas. They explained that the noise generated is often so high that there is also great distraction and loss of concentration by all those affected.

**RQ. 3:**

Do you think the decibels (dB) of Boom lime cordial’s street advertisement across Yenagoa town, apart from interfering with communication cause such health problems as irritation, high blood pressure, nervous disorders, and temporary deafness?

**Table 2:**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	90	90%
No	10	10%
Total	100	100%

When the aforementioned question was posed to know their views regarding the issue, 90 or 90% of the respondents answered Yes, proving that noise pollution which Boom lime cordial’s street advertisements often produce, can lead to such ailments as heart diseases, high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, nervous disorders as well as deafness. They explained that there had been confirmed cases of how noise pollution leads to the aforementioned kinds of sicknesses. In addition to giving rise to a lot of irritability or discomfort. Another 80 or 80% of the respondents spoke of the harmful effect of disturbing sound on human ear drum. According to them when one listens to such loud disturbing sound for a long period, the noise made damages one’s ear drum causing deafness or grave ear troubles.

**Conclusion**

From the study, the conclusion can be drawn that loud, disturbing noise such as the type generated by Boom lime cordial’s herbal product street-advertisements qualifies as noise pollution and thus clearly and evidently harmful to human health, In addition to creating certain grave environmental concerns. The study specifically identified different kinds of communication noise and how they can degenerate into noise pollution, which has been scientifically proven to be dangerous to human health, The findings of the study was found consistent with the conclusion put forward by Aderibigbe (2013:26) and Obe (2008:23), that communication can be hampered by noise that can take the form of noise pollution-a phenomenon which Botkin and Keller (2013:308), and Hartley and Vincent (1983) posit has serious health implications as well as poses grave environmental concerns.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that

- The Yenegoa township authority should as soon as possible enact laws that will prohibit the indiscriminate use of loud speakers to market products and services on the streets of Yenegoa;
- The Nigeria police should be authorized to arrest and prosecute street marketers of marketers of products who use their marketing or sales promotion activities to generate noise pollution and
- The Bayelsa State Ministry of Information should provide professional guidance to the street marketers on how ideal advertising is done.
- Members of the public should understand that such loud street advertising is dangerous to their health.

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