

**THE CULTURAL IMPACT OF SELECTED TELEVISION
ADVERTISEMENTS WITHIN AN AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

by

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MINI-DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MAGISTER ARTIUM

in

AFRICAN LANGUAGES

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR S. LOUW

NOVEMBER 2001

DECLARATION

I declare that the study, entitled

**THE CULTURAL IMPACT OF SELECTED TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS
WITHIN AN AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

Is my work, that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete reference, and that this mini-dissertation was not previously submitted by me or anyone else, to this university or any other educational institution, for degree purposes.

Signed

Date

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ❖ My gratitude goes to Professor Salomina Louw, my supervisor, for having faith in me, and for creating opportunities in which I was free to learn. I thank her for the professional guidance and constructive criticism she showed during our meetings. I also thank her for her motivational statement and patience in helping me when I seemed confused. Long live!
- ❖ I thank the University of the North for granting me an opportunity to study and expand my horizons. I wish to thank in particular, the department of African Languages and Communication Studies for their vision and commitment.
- ❖ My special thanks goes to my friends who helped me in many different ways during my studies, amongst others are, Mrs Cebisa Nesamvuni, Mrs Selina Ramurunzi, and my colleagues at Makhado College of Education.
- ❖ I owe many thanks to my family. My dear husband Edgar who has been more than a helpmate and always wanting me to excel. Thanks a lot, you are one in million. To our daughters, Thumo and Vhuiwa Kurhula, who have always been my source of courage and strength. I appreciate the sacrifice you took for the sake of my studies. I love you girls, I owe you a lot.
- ❖ To my in-laws, I appreciate your support and your unconditional love.
- ❖ My special thanks goes to my grandmother, Sophie N'wa-Magezi Hlaneki-Maluleke, for the great investment she put earlier on into my education, you planted in fertile ground.
- ❖ To my Pastor, and the whole family of Charis Missionary Church, your prayers and support kept me going.

- ❖ Above all, I wish to thank God Jehovah, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

ABSTRACT

This study was influenced by amongst other things, change in the socio-political landscape in South Africa, which has had enormous impact on society and a refreshed need to respect and recognise each cultural group and their norms. This was done by investigating the impact of selected television advertisements within an African community, with the aim of alerting the public about the inadequacies of television advertisements and therefore influencing the necessary change.

The literature review in this study revealed that there are some obvious problems that are peculiar to the South African market and which indeed affect the role of advertisements in marketing. South Africa is a multicultural country; and therefore it is important for South African advertisers to know and understand the different cultural norms and values of various South African communities they serve. Important knowledge areas in this regard are language, culture, tradition and the size of the market.

The findings and recommendations of this research revealed that television advertisements do have a negative impact on the African society. Most of the advertisements in the study fail to appeal to the African culture, because the African culture is portrayed in an unacceptable and pejorative way; at the end of the day South African youth learn customs that are irrelevant to their culture. It also becomes difficult for the adults to interpret messages and make meaning in certain advertisements because the advertisements are too western. The use of the focus group interview for this study proved to be very useful for providing insights about television advertisements in the selected groups within an African society.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a country entailing eleven official languages, thus a diversity of cultures. Every cultural group cries for recognition in almost everything that is happening in the society. Certain cultural groups feel undermined and speak out against cultural biases. The same is manifesting itself in the television industry, with special reference to television advertisements.

Advertisements were supposed to improve cultural values and be very educational for the betterment of communities, because of their frequent appearances and unselectivity in reaching the viewers. The above idea is supported by Williamson, quoted by Young & Regnart (1992: 172), when he says:

Advertisements are one of the most important cultural factors moulding and reflecting our life today... advertising replaces the functions once filled by art or religion.

It is important that people understand what advertisements say about them, and how they represent them. Dennis Mashabela - Communication Director, J. Walter Thompson (*Special Assignment* 13 /02/ 2001) - argues that:

advertisements must portray the Soul of Africa, they must communicate with every person, they must reflect the norms and values of the society.

If advertisements reflect the African way of living, it will have a lasting effect in people's minds and people will be interested and enjoy the advertisement.

Advertisements are very influential; they can create both a happier, more knowledgeable society, and also a violent and an unhappy society. This is the reason why it is important for advertisements to be true and rooted in the moral values of that specific community. Dominick (1990: 370) says:

Television has almost universal reach and allows for frequent repetition of messages.

This may have a strong influence on the viewer's mind and behaviour if the advertisement is against the moral values expected by their society. Koekemoer (1991: 44) supports this by saying:

Advertising must influence the attitude of the individual first of all, and thereafter his behaviour.

This becomes dangerous if the behaviour is changed negatively. Advertisements must act as a mirror of reality. They should reflect what Africans are in their beliefs, hopes and fears. Sizakele Marutelle, Deputy Managing Director of Herdbouys McCann-Erickson, argues that:

If a person wishes to have an African dimension to the advertisement, a Black African must be portrayed as a person of integrity and as intelligent and authentic (*Special Assignment*, 13/02 /2001).

The problem with South African advertising agencies is that they imitate western ethics, which is sometimes detrimental to our African ethics. What is good for Americans may be unacceptable to the Africans. David Jordaan, Research International, comments about globalization in the advertising industry and says that:

In South Africa we try to be many countries in one, and this brings failure to these industry.

He goes on to say that:

We have a unique sense of humour; the USA's humour is not South African humour (*Special Assignment*, 13/02/2001).

It is not necessary for us to imitate that which is not important for us.

1.2 HYPOTHESES

Some advertisements fail to address African culture and customs, meanwhile they hope to appeal to Africans. Advertising agencies fail to portray African tradition and culture. Sometimes African culture is portrayed in an unacceptable and diminishing manner. South African youth learn and imitate habits that are irrelevant to their cultural way of living because of the nature and content of the message. Sometimes people fail to interpret and make meaning, because the advertisements are too western, and therefore meaningless, to South Africans. Such failures will be identified and investigated in this study.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.3.1 Main research question

Why do certain television advertisements not appeal to the African community?

1.3.2 Other research questions

The following are a sample of questions this study will be pursuing:

- Defining television advertisements.
- The value of advertising for society.
- Context and market focused advertising.
- Argument on the inappropriateness of certain television advertisements.
- The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of television advertisements in promoting various products within an African context in South Africa.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Main aim

- To investigate the impact of selected television advertisements within an African community.

1.4.2 Objectives

- To identify television advertisements that do not appeal to an African community.
- To investigate the cultural reasons of ineffective appeal of these advertisements.
- To bring the message home to advertisers that cultural factors need to be taken into account.
- To sensitise members of the public to signification in advertisements.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to be significant in alerting the public and advertising agencies to the need to take into consideration some cultural norms and values. Cultural biases, which are found in certain advertisements, will be identified. The study notes that some advertisers reflect inappropriate values in our society. These are shown by the wording or the visual image found in an advertisement.

1.6 DELIMITATION AND LIMITATIONS

This research will be done in the Northern Province and concentrate on Region 3. Due to time constraints and limited resources the study will focus on some of the selected television advertisements seen on South African Broadcasting Corporation.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research methodology was deemed most suitable for this study since it allows for more insight to be gained into the perceptions of African television viewers on some television advertisements. According to McMillan & Schumacher (1993:373):

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon under investigation from the participants' perspective.

Qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, thoughts and perceptions. Flick (1998:13) states that:

Qualitative research is oriented towards analysing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity, and starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts.

An important aspect of a qualitative approach is the detailed or descriptive nature of the data. According to Nachmias & Nachmias (1992:272):

Qualitative researchers attempt to understand behaviour and institutions by getting to know the persons involved and their values, rituals, symbols, beliefs and emotions.

This methodology enabled an in-depth investigation into South African television viewers' perceptions of television advertisements.

1.7.1 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1.7.1.1 Interview as research method

The type of interview that was used in this research was semi-structured or open-ended. The semi-structured interview particularly was chosen because it has the advantage of being reasonably objective while still permitting a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions and the reasons behind them. Cohen and Manion (1994:277) further identified some advantages of open-ended questions:

- They are flexible.
- They allow the interviewer to probe in order to go into depth if he or she chooses to.
- The interviewer is able to clear up any misunderstandings on the questions.
- They allow the interviewer to test the limit of the respondent's knowledge.
- They encourage co-operation and help establish rapport.
- They also allow the interviewer to make a correct assessment of what the respondent really believes.

Open-ended situations can also result in unexpected or unanticipated answers, which could suggest hitherto unthought-of relationships or hypotheses.

1.7.1.2 Focus group interviews

The researcher randomly selected and recorded some advertisements on videocassette for analysis. People were interviewed and gave their opinion or comments about the advertisements, what they learn and how they are influenced by such advertisements.

Group interviews based on open-ended questions was selected as a relevant interview instrument for this study because of their potential for discussions to develop, thus yielding a wide range of responses from participants. In focus group interviews the interviewer creates a permissive atmosphere by asking questions eliciting discussion and expression of differing opinions and views. Group interviews were fundamentally socially oriented as they allow participants to voice differing views and opinions about television advertisements. A distinct feature of the focused interview is the prior analysis, by the researcher, of the situation in which the respondents have been involved.

Morgan, cited by Flick (1998:122), writes that:

The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group.

The focus group interview was recommended, because it allows social interaction and interviewees are able to share their experiences. Focus group interviews create settings in which diverse perceptions, judgements, and experiences concerning particular topics can surface. Participants in focus groups were always stimulated by the experiences of other members of the group to articulate their own perspective.

Nachmias & Nachmias (1994:225) support this when they say:

The focused interview permits the researcher to obtain details of personal reactions, specific emotions and the like.

In this study a sample of four focus groups consisting of ten participants in each group were used: two were made up of interviewees from a more rural area or villages and the other from an urban area in Region 3 of the Northern Province. This was done intentionally in order to determine if there were differences of opinion, influenced by geographical location. Morgan, cited in Flick (1998:123), claims that:

The number of groups to be interviewed may depend on the research question and the number of different population subgroups required.

In order to explore the possibility of a variety of responses and to avoid bias, the focus groups were more heterogeneous and strangers who have certain experiences in common were selected randomly. It is more appropriate to work with strangers instead of groups of friends or of people who know each other very well, because the level of things taken for granted which remains implicit tends to be higher in the latter. This is further supported by Lindlof (1994:174) who states that:

Members of the group might not know each other, but in some cases they share social histories of some sort.

In this case, the participants watched some television advertisements in the recorded video that they might have seen before.

For the purpose of maintaining a smooth running of the process, the researcher briefed the participants about the objectives of the gathering. The researcher prepared a guide list of questions and interjected with probes.

1.7.2 SAMPLING

A simple random sampling procedure was used for the interview.

According to Cohen & Manion (1994:90):

Where simple random sampling is used, the sample size needed to reflect the population value of a particular variable depends both upon the size of the population and the amount of heterogeneity of the variable in the population.

Du Plooy (1996:49) states that:

In communication research the term 'population' does not only refer to people, but is also used to refer to the entire group or class of other variables or phenomena which we want to investigate.

For the purpose of this study, the population includes all television advertisements broadcast from November 2000 to August 2001 on all the South African Broadcasting Corporation stations, and only television viewers from Region 3 of the Northern Province of South Africa.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS

This took the form of textual analysis and comparative methodology.

1.9 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Relevant literature about television advertisements were consulted, referred to and quoted. Semiotics was used to analyse media texts.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Advertising:

1.1 **Advertising** - any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor (Kotler & Armstrong 1993:406).

1.2 **Advertising** - A paid form of nonpersonal communication about an organization, its products, or activities that is transmitted through a mass medium to a target audience (Skinner 1990:91).

2. **Appeal** - To be attractive or interesting to somebody (Hornby 1995:47).

3. **Community** - The people living in one place, district or country, considered as a

whole (Hornby 1995:230).

4. **Society** - A community of people living in a particular country or region and having shared customs, laws, organizations, etc.(Hornby 1995:1128).

1.11. SCOPE OF WORK

In order to foster understanding, this study has been demarcated into five chapters, as follows:

- The first chapter serves the purpose of providing a comprehensive background orientation to the study, with a detailed introduction.
- The second chapter provides a literature review based on the investigation of the value of advertising for society and an in-depth analysis of certain television advertisements that do not appeal to the African community.
- The third chapter will focus on the research methodology.
- The fourth chapter will provide the findings and analysis of the research.
- The fifth and the final chapter will summarise the entire study with some recommendations and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO ADVERTISING

This chapter serves to give a broad understanding of the value of advertisements for the society. An introduction on what advertising and television advertisements are will be outlined. The history of South African advertisements and different advertising bodies will be discussed. Different types of advertising media will be shown, as well as the different functions of advertisements within the South African context.

Advertising started long before television and other advertising media were used. Manufactures used to make the consumers aware of the different products they were producing. Advertising was very personal. Eksteen (1984:112) says:

In earlier times the producer was in personal contact with the consumer, because goods were produced for a local demand and manufactures knew what consumers wanted. People bought goods from dealers or manufactures whom they knew personally.

The New Encyclopaedia, Volume 1 (1989:113) supports the above ideas:

In the ancient and medieval world such advertising as existed was conducted by word of mouth.

During the period of barter trading, people used to go from door to door to exchange goods for other goods. This made advertisements to be very verbal. De Beer (1998:322) supports this by saying:

The phenomenon of advertising developed as naturally as civilisation itself.

This means that advertising was important in the olden days as people were engaged in business transactions in different ways. Advertising started to take shape as the countries' standard of economic development grew, and as better ways and better facilities of advertising were developed to match the society's level of development.

2.2 TYPES OF ADVERTISING MEDIA

Advertisers need to select advertising media from a variety of the available media, with every medium serving its own function differently from others. Advertisers must see to it that they select the best advertising media, which attain the right coverage and achieve the right frequency. Stefanou (1993:184) says:

Media planners need to balance a variety of considerations in selecting the best combination of media to achieve their objectives.

The type of product to be advertised has an influence on the selection of the advertising media to be used. The following are the most commonly used advertising media:

- **The newspaper** - advertisements are placed in daily and weekly newspapers, to cater for different readers.
- **The radio** - the radio has become a very important advertising medium. It is cheap and everybody can have it, and it is always around. The most exciting thing about the radio is that it directs its appeal to the ear, and is a most effective medium for reaching people who cannot read.
- **Cinema** - cinema is a useful medium for advertisers who want to target a local audience, especially the youth. The impact of the advertising message is increased because cinema allows the use of colour, movement and sound.
- **Magazines** - magazines have a long lifespan and are often passed from one person to the next. Magazines come in different types. Some may be kept indefinitely as a source of reference. A wider audience may therefore read magazines.
- **Taxis and busses** - taxis and busses have become an extremely low-cost medium that allows advertisers to put their brands in the face of consumers and keep them there, as reminders for a longer period. *City Press* May 20 2001 reports:

Taxis, being used by more than 60 percent of South Africans, have become a massive communication channel and companies such as GMR have found a lucrative market in taxi advertising.

The advantage of using this type of advertising is that it has a lasting impact because it can stay in the taxi or bus for a long time, and it is not expensive.

- **Television** - television advertisements are regarded as the fastest way of informing the public about new goods in the market.

Advertisers must select the available time slots where they can successfully reach the highest number of the target audience. This statement is supported by Frederikse *et al* (1988:79) when they write:

Businesses want to advertise in media that attract a readership or listenership wealthy enough to buy their products.

Television provides wide coverage, because it informs, educates and entertains. People enjoy watching television in the comfort of their own homes, and it has a more receptive audience to advertisements than most of advertising medium.

2.3 OUTLINE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTRONIC ADVERTISING AND MECHANISMS

In South Africa formal advertising has been taking place in different forms. Radio advertisements were the most powerful medium in South Africa, because of its availability to most households.

In South Africa, television advertising started to take shape in the late seventies, and since then it has been growing rapidly. Koekemoer (1991:162) supports the above idea when he says:

To think that commercial television was introduced to South Africa as recently as 1978! Yet only eight years

later it accounts for no less than 29% of all advertising expenditure and it is a growing medium!

Because of a rapid growth in the advertising industry, different control bodies have been put in place to exercise control over advertising in the South Africa. The following are some of the controlling bodies in the South African advertising industries:

- The South African Code of Advertising Practice controls all advertisements in the different advertising media.
- The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) exercises control over all advertisements that are broadcasted on television.
- The Newspaper Press Union (NPU), which was started in 1882, is concerned with advertising and advertising agents.
- The Association of Advertising Agencies (AAA) controls all the advertising practices and make sure that certain objectives are met.
- The Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa (ASA) is responsible for all the complaints, related mainly to consumers, about different advertisements. They invite the public to report any transgressions of its code and stipulations, and take actions against advertisers who violate the codes.

The South African public is also protected by legislation against false and misleading advertisements. The consumers are advised to report such complaints to the relevant bodies. For example, the 4x4 Landrover advertisement, where they wanted to show the speed and strength of it by using the Ovahimba woman from Namibia: the woman is standing at the roadside; the vehicle will pass next to her. According to their culture, women are not supposed to hide their breasts. When the vehicle passes, her breasts follow the direction of the vehicle. The public complained, and indicated that it is denigrating other people's traditions and culture. The advertisement was immediately discontinued, and the company and advertising agency apologised to the public.

Because of the rapid growth of the advertising industry, many black people form part of this industry, though they are not actively involved in creating advertisements. The involvement of both black and white brought flavour into the advertising industry.

An advertisement is delivered to the intended audience through various advertising media and methods, such as newspaper, radio, cinema, magazines, circulars and handbills, advertisements on packaging and wrapping-material, internal publicity, competitions, television, etc.

Following are the functions of television advertisements, with reference to the South African context.

2.4 THE FUNCTIONS OF ADVERTISEMENTS

Television advertisements, also known as commercials, play a significant role in the South African society. People come to know the available products and services quickly through television advertisements. Advertisements are used to promote the sale of goods and services and to influence the public to buy and to have certain services. It used to be a business between the producers and retailers, but nowadays the public is exposed to advertisements, as they are the end users of the product.

For the public to know of the new products on the market, advertisers need to communicate with them about the various products in the market using the fastest and most convenient media. De Beer (1998:326) says:

... Because advertising is a form of mass communication, it can inform a mass audience of new products in a short period of time.

Television advertisements are the fastest way of reaching consumers in a short period of time, but have to conform to certain norms and standards.

2.4.1 Advertisements are a mirror of the reality

Advertisements should not be detrimental to the society's moral values by displaying things in an unacceptable manner. Advertisers must be able to address the black consumers as black consumers by reflecting values that are important to them. Advertisements must be presented in such a way that they do not embarrass the viewer, whether young or old. Koekemoer (1991:395) supports the foregoing statement when he says:

One major guideline to successful communication with the black market is the aspect of realism. The choice of models, props, wardrobe, setting, music, interaction with white models, and interaction with the product being advertised must reflect what would be realistic in the view of black consumers.

If advertisements are very realistic and a true reflection of the South African society, it can be an instrument that can help to solve some of the social problems by showing and educating society to be embracing of their own cultural norms and values. However, there are problems in the South African market that affect the role of advertisements, as Koekemoer (1991:382) writes:

Although novelty can be successful in attracting the prospect's attention, it is no guarantee that the advertising message will be communicated successfully. Experience suggests that novelty often creates confusion, and trying to be clever results in misunderstanding of the advertising message.

This is so because there are some obvious problems that are peculiar to the South African market and which indeed affect the role of advertisements in marketing. South Africa is a multicultural country; it is therefore important that the South African advertisers must know the type of people they are addressing. Important knowledge areas are language, culture, tradition and the size of the market. In a multiracial country like South Africa, where there is a diversity of cultures, this lack of knowledge is one of the problems we come across every day, so advertisers must always guard against being one-sided, for example protecting a single tradition at the expense of others. Let us take the Cremora advertisement as our example. In this

advertisement, the man is looking for Cremora in the fridge. We can assume that he wants to drink tea or coffee. Failing to get it by himself, he calls to Thandi (Let us assume Thandi is his wife). She answers, shouting from an invisible place, and saying: "It is not inside, it is on top".

From this advertisement, young Black Africans learn that it is acceptable within their culture for a man to prepare food for himself, which culturally is not so. It is always a woman's responsibility to prepare food for her husband. And it is again not culturally accepted for a woman to shout and give instructions to her husband.

So advertisers must know that they are not just arousing people's interest to buy the article, but they are at the same time reflecting the image of the nation through the advertisements. In the South African context, advertisements may mean different things to different people due to cultural groupings. To an African it is an insult for a woman to shout at her husband; to a European it may not be regarded as an insult for a man to prepare food for himself. This is because until recently most advertisements in South Africa were made to accommodate the culture of Whites rather than Blacks. Louw (2001:1) supports the forgoing statement when she says:

For many years the dominant ideology in South African advertising was that of the white minority, especially under the National Party government, or Apartheid Regime. In those years the impression was conveyed that consumers consisted of only one homogeneous group, namely the hegemonic whites ... All advertising was thus aimed at this audience, and this type of appeal from the Western or First World became the norm in advertising. In most cases where an advertising message was aimed at a different audience, it was done with the white or Western lifestyle as an ideal, something to be aspired to.

In their article Sinclair & Barenblatt (1993:228) supports the above idea when they say:

Marketers will always need to be conscious of the variety of races, nationalities, religions and languages...

Advertising agencies in South Africa are to create advertisements that must be a true mirror of the South African society.

2.4.2 Advertisements educate and inform

Education is a life-long occurrence: a person is subjected to learning new things virtually every day. Advertising is one of the things that we are engaged with every day and forms part of the learning arena. De Beer (1998:326) says:

Advertising provides the public with information about products, services and companies ... Many current campaigns aim to inform people before trying to change their attitudes and behaviour.

This means that, in the process of advertising, the public must also learn something and get information that can help them change attitudes and behaviour. Examples of these educational advertisements are *Love Life*, *Masakhane* and many others, especially on billboards, SABC2 and taxis. De Beer (1998:326) says:

The campaigns of the National Road Safety Council fall in this category, for example, those aiming to inform people about the effects of alcohol driving, and road safety features, such as the implications of the distance between vehicles. The Aids campaign is another example. In fact, many advertisers in South Africa believe that advertisements should not only inform – they should educate.

These days most people watch television more often compared to previous years, so even the present educational effort is mainly based on television activities, of which advertising is one. In the olden days people used to sit around the fire listening to their grannies and older people telling stories and teaching idioms and other cultural activities. This can simply mean the movies and advertisements have taken the place of tales and other educational folklore activities. It is therefore important for advertisers to know that through advertisements they are concentrating on business, but at the same time transmitting values to society. Because of this, advertisements are supposed to bridge the gap by transmitting knowledge and cultural history from

one generation to another as a means of paving the way for modernity. Koekemoer (1991:46) supports this when he says:

Advertising promotes the standard of living of the community by making consumers aware of products which will improve their standard of living.

In this way advertisements are supposed to stimulate people to work harder, to take good care of themselves, to be responsible and to be more productive citizens. This is, again, supported by De Beer (1998:326) when he comments about the Masakhane campaign:

The Masakhane campaign (the promotion of rent and services payment), for instance, is aimed at changing attitudes by teaching people about moral responsibility and national pride.

In the Masakhane campaign, the public is reminded in a friendly and peaceful manner to change attitudes towards paying for services, thus expressing the positive aspects of paying for services and the consequences of not paying for services. Just like the roles played by stories and tales in the African culture of educating, empowering, informing and fun, so are the advertisements today.

2.4.3 Advertisements create awareness

Advertisements make people to be aware of certain things, of which they were not formerly aware. The *Love Life* campaign is an example. In this campaign the general public is made aware of the importance of having safe sex by using condoms. In the same way, advertisements help the buyer to be aware of the advantages and certain benefits of using a particular article. De Beer (1998:326) supports the foregoing statement:

Advertising creates an awareness of products, services or companies, of which the audience may previously have been unaware.

Through advertisements new and unknown goods are introduced and made known to the public. Still in reference to the *Love Life* campaign, it will only be a very ignorant people who can say they have never heard anything about a condom in their entire life, because even pre-scholars know something about a condom. The *Love Life* campaign has been successful because it has been advertised throughout, using different types of advertising media, such as taxis, billboards, and magazines. For every South African citizen interesting television advertisements about *Love Life* was developed, and it showed great success. The same applies in the market where a consumer was not aware of the advantages of using a certain product; the consumer is made aware through advertisements.

Advertisements are planned in such a way that every person feels that he or she comes to know about something and the need to have that particular article, and enjoy the advantage of using it.

2.4.4 Advertisements create choice

Advertisements help the consumer to make a good choice of the products he wants to buy. Producers make it a point that their products are seen as only the best, and persuade the public to buy them. By so doing, they make the job of the buyer very easy. Being given a variety of related articles to choose from, they make the buyer to know exactly what he wants and to go for it. For example the Dove soap and Protex soap: the Dove soap advertisement says, 'Dove cream bar is a cleansing bar that doesn't dry your skin like soap can, because it is made from neutral cleansing ingredients and ¼ moisturising cream', while the Protex advertisement says, 'Protex Antibacterial soap come in three types, Protex 1 gentle, Protex 2 balance, Protex 3 ultra. Laboratory tests prove that Protex is effective against bacteria that can cause bad odour, infect pimples and cause common skin infections.' Both these two examples are bath soaps, which the consumer can choose from, but they basically perform the same function of cleansing. According to De Beer (1998: 326):

Advertising helps the consumer to choose from an extensive variety of brands within the same category by providing the kind of information or imagery that the consumer can relate to; advertising enables him or her

to make a choice between alternatives that often seem bewilderingly similar, or cause conflict.

Advertisements are very persuasive at the least; but they leave the buyer with a choice of buying something they need. The buyer knows exactly what he needs, but he finds that he is faced with a lot of related products. He simply goes for the product he once saw in an advertisement, which most impressed him.

It is evident that television advertisements are very important to the society. It is effective in convincing customers to buy a product. It is, as well, interesting to watch television commercials. Because of the fact that television covers a wide range of viewers, television advertisements are able to reach a great number of recipients on its first appearance.

2.5 AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS THAT DO NOT APPEAL TO THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will analyze certain television advertisements that do not appeal to the African community, broadcasted on the SABC channels. Television advertisements are designed to communicate particular messages to the viewers, by way of making the viewers aware of a particular product or services in the market, and persuading the public to buy it. Television advertisements appeal to almost all the senses. They combine sight, sound and motion. Koekemoer (1991:162) says:

As a means of communication, television has it all-sight, movement, sound and colour- conveying a total impression simultaneously to millions of people.

The advertiser or sender encodes the message and the receiver or viewer decode or interpret the message and act accordingly. Television commercials are mostly very exciting and entertaining in such a way that they sometimes turn out to be better than the programmes they sponsor. Advertisements are often remembered many days and

weeks after they were aired, rather than the actual television programme. They are remembered for many different things: some are remembered because of the humour, others for the embarrassment they pose, etc. As part of the communication chain, advertisements cannot be approached in isolation; it is another type of message transmitted. Nevertheless, it depends on the viewer's attitude towards a specific advertisement, which basically is based on a person's own cultural background. Young & Regnart (1992:121) support this when he says:

The attitude you have creates a 'frame' or 'horizon of expectations' that determines how you interpret the film. Your culture, beliefs or worldview, political persuasion, age, sex and personality make up the 'frame' through which you look at a film or television programme.

In South Africa, where there is a diversity of cultures, it is important that the cultural views of different people be considered when designing television advertisements. Advertisements play a significant role in moulding a person's behaviour. They affect people's lives. It is therefore important that they should resemble good moral standards and cultural dignity. Advertisements must be culturally sensitive and be accommodative.

2.5.2 THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Television commercials have sixty seconds or less to tell a story and convince customers to buy a product or services. Advertisements are designed in such a way that they capture the viewer's attention quickly. To do so, commercials use words and pictures which have more impact than ordinary television programmes. Appealing messages and actions that can be easily remembered are used. The diagram below shows briefly what happens immediately a television commercial flash on the television screen. According to Koekemoer (1991:162)

... television is the key communication development of our era and the most influential and powerful advertising medium in the world.

It is therefore necessary for viewers to understand the advertisements, as they are basically meant for them.

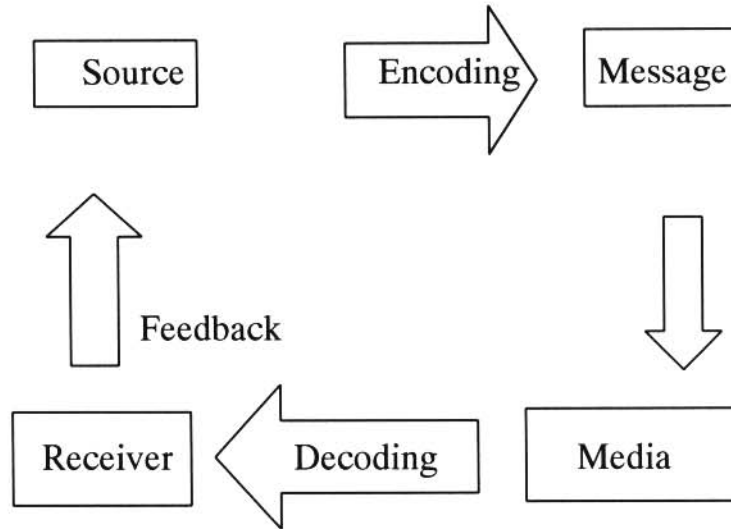


Figure 1. Communication process (Stefanou 1993:176)

In this diagram, **source** refers to the decision taken by the advertiser to send an advertisement or a message through television advertisement, which is a medium, in order to reach the target audience that is the receiver or viewer.

Encoding- is how the message or advertisement is transmitted to the viewer. This includes the use of language, body movements and humour in the message.

Decoding- is how the viewers interpret or translate the message in order to understand its meaning.

Receiver- is the viewer or audience.

Feedback- is how the viewer or target audience accepts and responds to a specific advertisement. The marketer uses the feedback to measure the effectiveness of the advertisement. The feedback will determine whether to change the media used or to target different audiences.

Message- it is how the advertiser communicates with the viewers. The nature of the message is influenced by the marketer's objectives.

Media- it is the communication channel, which the marketer chooses to use after considering different factors like the type of product and the target audience.

The personal life-style that the viewer holds mostly influences the viewer in his or her response towards a specific advertisement. That is why different people can give different interpretations of the same advertisement. It is therefore important for advertisers to know their targeted customers.

2.5.3 RECEPTION OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

The following advertisements were randomly chosen to research with, and to find out how far they appeal to the participants. Descriptions and some personal views follow as background to market research feedback, which is presented in chapter 4 in more details.

2.5.3.1 Vodacom Incomer

In this advertisement, three white men who look like farmers are driving in a van. They are hefty and they have squeezed together, so that they all sit in front. At the back of the van there is a black man seated alone. It looks like he is offered a lift. A cell phone rings. The fat man who is in the middle thinks it is his cell phone that is ringing and he struggles to take it out of his pocket. Each of them feels very uncomfortable. After a while, the black man at the back of the van realizes that it is his cell phone that is ringing and he answers it. The three white men looked all amazed, as they did not expect it.

From this advertisement we can assume the following: firstly, the three white men undermined the black man by letting him sit alone at the back. They felt they could not share a space with him, neither at the front nor at the back. They chose to squeeze themselves in front, rather than sitting with him at the back of the van. We can conclude that he was discriminated against.

We can also assume that according to them, a black man or labourer cannot own a cell phone. This is supported by the message that accompanies the advertisement, that says; 'Now anyone can be in touch'. This shows that during the apartheid regime, it was unlikely to find a poor black man owning something that a white man has. This type of practice may cause problems to the South African white children who are now

going to the same schools and same clubs as black children. We are living in the country where there is a convergence of interest, so advertisements should work towards addressing how different people from different cultural groups can live in harmony without undermining each other. Taelo Mokgalagadi (*Special Assignment* 13/02/2001) said:

In South Africa we share a common past and a common destiny.

Advertisements must be framed in such a way that they do not look like they are glorifying the bad things that happened in the past at the expense of the present and the future. Advertisements must reflect the future hopes of the society. It is therefore the responsibility of the South African advertisers to reflect the hopes, visions and ambitions of South Africans. It could be through advertisements that the youth can be educated in forgetting about the past and striving to create a better tomorrow. We can assume that this advertisement is educating the white youth not to treat their black counterparts in a despising manner, or to look down upon the poor, which is unethical in our new South African democratic context.

2.5.3.2 NBS homeloan

In this advertisement there are two neighbouring families. The first family, where the owners look older compared to the second one, has a big yard with a swimming pool, we will call them family Q. The second family, which looks younger, does not have a swimming pool or maybe even the house is not theirs, we will call them family P. When family Q is out maybe on holiday, family P trespasses and swims in their swimming pool, without the owner's permission. When family Q comes back, family P tries to take their belongings and jumps over the fence to their home. Family Q is shocked by what was happening in their yard. The man tries to make peace with them, but the old lady is screaming to her husband that he must do something. This shows that family P came without the permission or knowledge of the owners.

In the African culture this is unethical. It is like undermining other people. In African culture, from a young age, people are taught to respect others and their properties. A

person is not allowed to get into other people's property without their permission to do so. African culture teaches that envying other people is not good.

We can say that this advertisement carries with it not a very good message to the South African public. It encourages people to trespass, which is not only culturally wrong, but it is also illegal. We can therefore conclude that the advertisement is encouraging the community to violate other people's privacy. Furthermore, in this advertisement, children are used; they are in a way taught to be housebreakers and intruders.

2.5.3.3 **G-string pads**

This advertisement shows a young girl and a young man, who we can assume are in love. They are about to kiss each other or something intimate is about to happen. The girl decides to walk away. When the girl walks away, the boy is looking at her. The girl is uncomfortable with her panty, which is not in the right position because of the type of pad she inserted. She moves a few steps, and tries to pull it right between her buttocks. The boy looks at her until she disappears.

In the African culture, it's embarrassing for a male and a female to kiss or to show intimacy to each other in public. Kissing is something very private; it is not to be done openly. This sends a very bad message to our youth. When such actions are showed on television, young people may take it as a good practice to be done in public.

The young lady's actions as well are not good as far as the African culture is concerned. The right thing for her to do would have been to hold out until she reaches a toilet, where she can privately reinsert her pad. The advertisement is embarrassing if one is watching it in the presence of parents or older people. It also encourages rape. The lady's actions are very provocative to the boy, judging by the way he looks at the lady as she walks away from him.

2.5.3.4 Castle Lager

The advertisement is about a graduation ceremony for Castle Lager graduates. Firstly the students are in the field observing seeds. On graduation day, the graduates are all in uniform, putting on their medals.

In this advertisement, the congregation is seated at tables clapping their hands and smiling at the graduates. This is not usually how Africans show their happiness. It does not appeal well to the ideals and norms of the majority South Africans, maybe to other (Western) cultures. As David Jordaan (*Special Assignment* 13/02/2001) said:

... Advertisements must be firmly rooted in South African reality... We don't all live in the same country yet there are a number of different countries in one.

What Jordaan is trying to say is that people are imitating what other countries do, undermining our own way of doing things. Makwana (*City Press* 20/04/2001) supports the foregoing statement:

...the company must be able to do this within a uniquely South African context to engage the SA consumer from a SA perspective and not from some extrapolated stereotype.

This is what Jordaan referred to as 'consumer transplanting', trying to apply Western styles in an African country.

In the African culture, black Africans are known for expressing their emotions to the fullest: when Africans are happy they celebrate without reservation. When the procession enters, the congregation is supposed to dance, ululate and sing praises as a way of congratulating the graduates. We can therefore conclude that the advertisement is not appealing to the African community; it is not a good portrayal of an African graduation.

2.5.3.5 Telkom

The advertisement is about an old man living in a rural area. As a custom, he greets his friend who is staying far from his own dwelling by standing outside his hut shouting “Molo Mhlobo Wam”, meaning, “Good morning my friend.” He waves and smiles at him.

Telkom came and installed telephones in the village, in his hut as well as in his friend’s hut. The following morning he makes a call to his friend, he opens the window and sees his friend from a distance; as usual he smiles at him and waves his hands, and again shouts “Molo Mhlobo wam”.

The advertisement portrays the old black man as backward; he still waves his hand through the window and smiles to his friend even when he is speaking through a telephone. Sizakele Marutelle (*Special Assignment 13/02/2001*) says:

If you have an African dimension to the advertisement, portray the black person as an intelligent person of integrity; do it authentically or not at all.

This advertisement sends the message that the old man does not understand how the telephone functions. This advertisement portrays the black person as confused, unskilled and illiterate. To him he thinks his friend will see his smile and hand wave, even though he is using a telephone. To our white South Africans, they may think black Africans are too confused to understand how a simple telephone works.

2.5.3.6 Dawn Lotion

The advertisement is about the dawn lotion that is used to smear over the body. In this advertisement a women is showed, it looks like she was from taking a bath. She wrapped herself with a towel. She sat down and started smearing Dawn lotion slowly on her legs as far as to the thighs.

Culturally, women’s legs especially thighs are not supposed to be seen in public. They are regarded as her husbands’ treasures, which is not supposed to be showed off. In

the African belief and culture, showing off of one's body is a sign of disrespect or a way of inviting men to propose love.

The advertisement is encouraging young girls to expose their bodies, which is not ethical to the African culture. As said before that, children always want to identify themselves with a television personality, they easily imitate what they see and take it as fashion and style. It is therefore important for advertisers to create advertisements that will encourage good behaviour to the African community.

2.5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can say that advertisements must reflect great insight on life. The black community must be embraced by the advertising industry, so that they too can learn from advertisements. They must make people to be knowledgeable. They must create a better people and a happier society. They must portray South African culture the way it is, and be very genuine, avoiding what David Jordaan calls 'consumer transplanting' meaning trying to implant western style into the South African market. The consumers end up being confused, and cannot identify with the commercials, because the advertisements are not addressing them as South Africans.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, the main research problem was stated and an extensive literature review was conducted. A number of issues about television advertisements were explored from various sources. In this chapter, the methodology that was used for the collection of data will be explained. The methodology used will further be justified and motivated through relevant literature.

The cultural impact of certain television advertisements is central to this research. A qualitative and in-depth investigation of the cultural impact is significant for the research findings.

3.2 JUSTIFICATION OF METHODOLOGY

An in-depth study of relevant available literature on research methodology revealed two possible research paradigms or methodologies, namely quantitative and qualitative methodologies. For the purpose of this research, the qualitative research methodology was used.

The qualitative research methodology was deemed most suitable for this study since it allowed for more insight to be gained into the perceptions of African television viewers on some television advertisements and their impact on the African culture.

Qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, thoughts and perceptions. According to Miles and Huberman (1994:6):

One of the recurring features of qualitative research is that the researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors "from the inside", through a process of deep attentiveness, empathetic understanding, and suspending or "bracketing" the topics under discussion.

This qualitative methodology enabled an in-depth investigation into the cultural impact of some television advertisements.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

An important aspect of a qualitative approach is the detailed or descriptive nature of the data. According to McMillan & Schumacher (1993:43):

... the main or common goal for each will be to capture the richness and complexity of behaviour or issues that occur in natural settings from participants' perspectives.

In qualitative research it is important for the researcher to try and create a situation which will be conducive for the subjects to participate fully. In this study, the researcher focused on collecting data which is representative of the perceptions of a selected group of South African television viewers, and impact on the African culture.

3.3.1 Data collection procedure

After drawing up the semistructured interview questions, the interviews were administered in the following manner:

- The researcher asked different people to participate in the interview.
- Four categories were identified, consisting of ten subjects in each group.

Subjects were categorised as follows:

- Group A- Consisted of people with no schooling
- Group B- Consisted of people with little schooling
- Group C- Consisted of people with secondary qualifications
- Group D-Consisted of people with tertiary education.

Different groups were interviewed in different places, but they were asked the same, or similar, questions.

3.3.2 Interview as a research method

The type of interview that was used in this research is semi-structured or open-ended. The semi-structured interview is particularly chosen because it has the advantage of being reasonably objective while still permitting a more thorough understanding of the respondents' opinions and the reasons behind them.

Open-ended situations can also result in unexpected or unanticipated answers, which could suggest hitherto unthought-of relationships or hypotheses.

3.3.2.1 Focus group interviews

The researcher randomly selected and recorded some advertisements on videocassette for analysis. People were interviewed to give their opinions or comments about the advertisements, what they learnt and how they were influenced by such advertisements. Group interviews based on open-ended questions are selected as a relevant interview instrument for this study, because of their potential for discussion development, thus yielding a wide range of responses from participants.

In the focus group interviews, the interviewer creates a permissive atmosphere by asking questions eliciting discussion and expression of differing opinions and views. Group interviews were fundamentally socially oriented as it allowed participants to voice differing views and opinions about the impact of television advertisements in the African culture.

The focus group interview was used because it allows social interaction and interviewees were able to share their experiences. Focus groups create settings in which diverse perceptions, judgements, and experiences concerning particular topics can surface. Persons in focus groups are stimulated by the experiences of other members of the group to articulate their own perspective.

In this study a sample of four focus groups was used made up of interviewees from both rural and urban areas in Region 3 of the Northern Province. This was done

intentionally in order to determine if there are differences of opinion, influenced by geographical location.

In order to explore the possibility of a variety of responses and to avoid bias, the focus groups were more heterogeneous. Participants from both rural and urban areas were randomly included. In this case, the participants watched some television advertisements (in the recorded video) that they might have seen before.

For the purpose of maintaining a smooth running of the process, the researcher briefed the participants about the objectives of the gathering. The researcher made introductions, discussed the purpose and rules of the group interview to orient the group to the research subject, and began with questions.

The researcher prepared a guide list of questions and occasionally interjected with probes.

3.3.2.2 Interview data collection procedure

When using group interviews for data collection, the researcher considered issues that could interfere with the interview process and impact negatively on the results of the interviews. Nevertheless, there are unavoidable problems that may occur during the interview. The respondents occasionally felt uneasy and sometimes adopted avoidance tactics. The researcher made provision for this by attempting to create a relaxed atmosphere to stimulate freedom and deep discussion among the participants. Interview dates were confirmed in time and confirmed with the interviewees.

Interviews were held at different places as preferred by the interviewees. Theme questions were prepared in advance, in order to maintain focus and control of the interview discussions.

These questions further provided guidelines on the entire interview process to the researcher. Some of these questions were supplemented by the follow-up or probing questions during the interview.

3.3.3 Sampling

A simple random sampling procedure was used for the interviews.

For the purpose of this study, the population included television advertisements described in paragraphs 2.4.1 and 2.5.3.1 to 2.5.3.6, broadcast from November 2000 to August 2001 on all the South African Broadcasting Corporation stations, and all television viewers from Region 3 of the Northern Province of South Africa.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused mainly on an outline of the research methodology used when collecting data. Description and motivation for the use of specific methods in the research is included. Qualitative research methodology is used, relevant literature is used to support the use of this method. The relevancy of the selected data collection and data collection procedure for this study is included and supported by relevant sources. The importance of interview as a research method and focus group interview for this study in particular is as well emphasised. The sampling procedure is indicated.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section a report of the group interviews including direct quotations of some of the respondents' statements captured during the interviews will be provided. The interview data from various groups will be compared and analysed in order to find the reliability and validity of the entire research findings and how these relate to the main research problem.

4.2 QUESTIONS AND SPECIFIC RESPONSES

Some of the questions asked amongst others were as follows:

What do you learn from this advertisement?

This question was based on the advertisement explained in paragraph 2.5.3.1: 'Vodacom Incomer'. The aim of this question was to find out the viewers' attitudes towards television advertisements and what they learned and what are their future hopes. One respondent said:

In fact, from long time ago, we use to see blacks seated on the back of their bosses' vans. A white man can better seat with his dog on the front seat instead of sitting with a Black man, even when it is raining.

The common understanding from this group was that it was not an unusual thing for whites to let a black man sit alone at the back. They believe that because most black people are poor and working for whites they deserve to sit alone at the back.

When the researcher asked them about the new democratic government of South Africa, where every person must be treated with dignity and respect, where black and white children have to grow up together, attending the same schools and given the same status irrespective of their colour, race and gender. One of the respondents said:

I will live to see it. Whites are Whites, democracy or no democracy they are taught from early age that they are superior to Blacks.

From the respondents' comments it was evident that they are products and witnesses of apartheid; that is why they regarded whites as always superior to blacks. To them this was not the sign of any unfair treatment, but it was a reality.

Respondents in group B concluded that whites hated black people and are jealous of them. They emphasised that white adults always teach their children to hate black people. Some responses were as follows:

Whites adults want their children to know that they should not equal themselves with blacks. They are superior.

Whites always teach their children that blacks are very poor, they enjoy being given a lift or just to drive around with them, so letting them sit at the back of a van is a great favour.

From the respondents' views it was clear that the black man embarrassed them, by having a cell phone they did not expect. They thought he is too ambitious: how can he afford to buy a cell phone and not a car? The fact was that they were embarrassed.

Respondents from group C indicated that the advertisement taught all whites that they must learn not to undermine other people because they are poor or black. One of the respondents said:

It may sound like I am talking politics, but I think the advertisement was teaching whites a good lesson. Whites are so spoiled you know, they think every good things belong to them. That is why they were very offended by a black man at the back of their van having a cell phone.

It was interesting to note that respondents were very outspoken about this advertisement. It was unfortunate that the researcher could not get white participants to voice their own view about this advertisement.

Group D admitted that the advertisement was very destructive to African white children who are struggling to accept blacks as human beings, and to black children who are expected to accept whites irrespective of what a history lesson taught them about apartheid government. Some of the responses were as follows:

Is only Mr Mandela who will reconcile peacefully with white people, how can we forgive them when the television continued piercing our nearly healed wounds.

The advertisement was educating young white children to ill-treat black children. Instead of creating advertisements wherein peace and unity was encouraged they are continuing to add gasoline into the burning flames.

It was evident from the respondents' comments that television advertisements were going to create hatred to the coming generation instead of creating a peaceful nation. The general view of the respondents was that television advertisements were very educative. The nature of some of these advertisements could cause a divide between racial groups.

Do advertisements communicate with you as an African?

The aim of this question was to find out whether viewers do understand messages and can identify with these television advertisements, to the point where they can say, this advertisement addresses me as a person and as an African, and I believe in what it is saying. This is how respondents from group A reacted to the question, based on the NBS Home Loan advertisement, which was explained in chapter three:

According to my opinion most of our television advertisements are not addressing Africans the way they should do. For example, the NBS Home Loan advertisement, the advertisement is not reflecting the African way of living. Africans are people of respect. In the African culture people are taught to respect other's properties. If I was the owner of the house, I was going to make the intruder pay dearly for his offence.

It was interesting to note that respondents from group A mentioned the issue of penalty for the committed offence.

The respondents in group B also indicated that television advertisements are imparting bad moral standards to children. Siting the NBS Home Loan advertisement as an example, they said that children are taught to behave badly by their own parents, which will affect their lives in the future. The response from a member of this group was as follows:

I think that family acted irresponsibly, how can they enter other people's house without the permission of the owners and being accompanied by children? The advertisement is encouraging young people to steal. In the African culture, such behaviour is not allowed.

The respondents from group C had different opinions from other groups. One of the respondents from group C argued:

According to me, this type of advertisement was not suppose to be broadcasted, because it teaches to intrude. On the other hand the advertisement is saying to the government to create jobs, so that everybody can afford a house with a swimming pool.

From the respondent's point of view, the family was intruding because the government is failing them in one way or another. In a way, they were trying to justify the intruders' behaviour.

In response to the same question, respondents from group D blamed the advertising bodies and the South African Broadcasting Corporation for allowing advertisements like the one under discussion to be aired. One of the respondents in this group stated:

I think this advertisement is detrimental to the South African community, it encourages crime. It shows that the house owners were in the danger of being killed by the intruders. It again encourages housebreaking.

From the respondents' answers we learn that the advertisement is not addressing the African community. It only encourages crime, it is therefore not regarded as

portraying a genuine African way of living. The respondents could not identify with it.

Another question that was a follow-up was as follows: *What do advertisements say to you as an African?*

This question was based on the Telkom advertisement in paragraph 2.5.3.5.

The main objective of the question was to find out the viewers' attitudes towards the old man's action compared to the real life situation and the reasons for that. At first respondents were reluctant to answer the question, but they later came up with interesting ideas.

The respondents from group A indicated that the old man was portrayed as a real African old man, who greeted his friend every morning, by shouting and hand waving. The set-up inside and around the hut was really admired by the respondents. When the researcher asked about the necessity of shouting and waving of a hand when speaking over the telephone, one of the respondents said:

Is because he was using the telephone for the first time in his life and he was not properly taught how it works.

Group A gave different views compared to the rest of the participants. They believed that the advertisement is teaching young people that they must greet every morning. To them most of the advertisements are good as long as they do not show nakedness or men doing household duties.

Respondents from group B argued that advertisers were making fun of that old man. The respondents emphasised that this advertisement was encouraging young white children to hate old people and to make fun of them.

A cause for concern raised by the respondents from group C was why they chose a black old man for the advertisement instead of a younger person or an old white man who knew how a telephone works. One of the respondents said:

Advertisers design this advertisement in this way, because they wanted to show the whole world how stupid and illiterate an old black person could be.

Statements such as the one above indicated the problems and frustrations on the part of African viewers. It was evident that the South African viewers felt they were taken for granted by advertisers, they were portrayed as backward people.

Respondents from group D believed that advertisers were all out to destroy the dignity of the black person. They said advertisers only used blacks to show that they are stupid. Some of the responses were as follows:

Advertisers have chosen a black old person from the rural areas, because they knew that to him having a telephone was like having the heavenly paradise on earth. Why did they choose a black man, instead of the white old man who knew how to use a telephone? They wanted to portray him as a stupid and indeed they succeeded.

It became evident from the respondents' views that a black man was portrayed as an ignorant and illiterate person, whom no one would want to be associated with. The general perception in this question was that advertisements misrepresented the African people.

Another question asked was: *Is it culturally acceptable for Africans to behave in this way? Why?*

The aim of this question was to get the general perception of the viewers about television advertisements, and to caution viewers about the impact that television advertisements have in their daily lives. Responses to this question added value to the argument.

Respondents from group A said that behaviour that is portrayed in the television advertisements is not acceptable in the African culture. One of the respondents stated:

In the Dawn Lotion advertisement, a woman is shown smearing Dawn Lotion on her legs. According to African culture, a woman's legs are not supposed to be seen. A woman is taught from the very early age to hide her body.

When the researcher asked why, the respondent said:

Because in our African culture it is only her husband who is supposed to see his wife's legs. That is why there are many rape cases these days. People have adopted the Western cultures where putting on short dresses is encouraged.

This group also blamed television advertisements for encouraging young girls to put on minis, stomach outs and half-nakedness. They added that during their days, such a manner of dressing was a disgrace to the community.

Respondents in group B complained that advertisements were encouraging behaviour which is not approved by the society. They added that advertisements were encouraging young girls to expose themselves. One respondent said:

Culturally, a woman's body was not supposed to be seen. It is so embarrassing to see an advertisement like this one in the presence of children; you also feel you are naked as well.

Respondents in this group indicated that something should be done to remedy the situation wherein adults feel annoyed when watching television in the presence of children.

Respondents from group C indicated that it is not culturally acceptable for African females to behave like the woman in the advertisement. One of the respondents who was a woman made this strongly worded statement:

I do not understand why advertisers choose women to advertise their goods, because it is a known fact that every person does use body lotion, maybe it will be better if they used a man to smear the lotion over his legs instead of a woman.

It was interesting to note how respondents reacted when this statement was made. Respondents were divided, some girls said they used woman because they are attractive, others said it is women abuse. But the common understanding in this group was that it will be better to use a man for this advertisement instead of a women, because it is not acceptable for women to expose their bodies.

Respondents from group D argued that it was true that people were to be educated about taking care of themselves and of the new products available at the market, but the problem was the way of doing it. This was what one of the respondents said:

Women are raped everyday, because men are always exposed to naked women on television advertisements, display windows, magazines etc. This was not so, in the early days, because a woman's romantic beauty was not as cheap as it is these days.

From the respondents' arguments it became clear that some of the problems the society was faced with were results of the influence of television advertisements. Respondents emphasised that some advertisements were very detrimental to society's moral standards. They indicated that advertisers must plan their advertisements in a way that will not despise the beauty of the African culture.

A follow-up to the above question was as follows: *Can you say advertisements are a mirror of the society?*

The question was based on the Cremora advertisement in paragraph 2.4.1. The aim of this question was to find out whether advertisements were a good reflection of the cultural norms and values in the African society.

Respondents from group A indicated that this advertisement is not a true reflection of the African culture. In the African culture it was taboo for a married man to prepare food. Even young boys were not allowed to cook; their sisters have to make it a point that they get food when they needed it. The kitchen was a woman's place. One of the responses was as follows:

In our time, a man was not supposed even to ask for food, a woman was expected to look at him and read from his face that he is hungry. A woman who will shout at her husband had to be sent back to her parents for more teachings.

Respondents from this group believed that the advertisement was not reflective of an African way of living. They also said that maybe it was fashion.

Respondents from group B also said it was not culturally accepted for Africans to behave the way we see people behaving in television advertisements. They said that advertisements are misleading. They are made to violate the society's norms and values in the name of civilisation. A respondent from this group said the following:

I personally do not like the Cremora advertisement. In the advertisement, they are portraying an African man as a fool. How can he make coffee for himself when he is married? In the African culture a woman is supposed to prepare food for her husband, even drinking water.

The respondents in this group said that the advertisements are trying to give birth to another culture, which will confuse the coming generation.

Group C also emphasised that it is not culturally acceptable for people to behave the way we see in television advertisements. They based their arguments on the G-string advertisement that is explained in paragraph 2.5.3.3. The advertisement is about a lady who was walking away from a boy, and she is always trying to pick her panty from between her buttocks. One of the respondents stated:

The way the girl is doing things in this advertisement is not allowed in African culture. I am having a problem with what the girl was trying to suggest to the boy who was looking at her. This will send a very bad message to girls. They will imitate her, and try to create a new style and they are all going to be raped. In our African culture if adults can see a girl behaving that way they were going to call her names, and it was going to be very difficult for her to find a man to marry her.

Group D admitted that some of the actions or behaviour that we see on the television advertisements are not accepted in the African culture. So many more people attend to television than any other communication media. And viewers are good imitators. This is going to create another culture, which will be very destructive to the coming generation. One respondent argued thus about the Cremora advertisement, which was explained in paragraph 2.4.1, said:

In my opinion, this African man is portrayed as an irresponsible fellow; he cannot even know where his groceries are put. The man cannot know that powdered milk cannot stay in the refrigerator.

Another respondent added and said:

In the African culture, a woman is not allowed to shout at her husband. This behaviour again is going to teach young girls disrespect. In the African culture, a woman is supposed to show unconditional respect to her husband.

It was evident that respondents were very sensitive about the negative effect of television advertisements on the coming generation.

The last question was as follows: *Do you think South Africa, through advertisements, is trying to be many countries in one?*

The aim of this question was to get the viewers' perception about the relevancy of television advertisements to the real African situation. Respondents argued that it is true that South African advertisements were imitating styles from other countries and trying to use them. Respondents from group A were not aware that it was a graduation party. The researcher had to explain what a graduation party is, giving example of initiation school so that they can understand better. The respondents in this group indicated that it was too different from how they jubilate. One respondent said:

When we celebrate we dance and drink all night long. When the initiates come back home, gallons of beer are brewed, we drink and be very happy.

Respondents in this group indicated that they were completely lost, the advertisement can never be compared to the African way of celebration.

Respondents from group B expressed the same confusion with that of group A. One of the respondents said:

I have never seen an African graduation where hand clapping was as a way of congratulating graduates. In the African culture, we only clap hands when a person is dancing as a way of encouraging the dancer.

The general agreement in this group was that most of the television advertisements are too westernised, and they end up boring the African viewers.

Respondents from group C and D expressed the same views about the advertisement. One of the responses from group C and D was as follows:

Yes, it is true South African advertisers are bringing European styles at the expense of African viewers, and is confusing us. I was not aware that it is a graduation party, I thought it was just a business meeting.

It was interesting to note that indeed some of the respondents were not aware of what was happening. One respondent from group D said:

Imagine how the nation celebrated, when the National soccer squad won the African Cup. People danced, Castle Lager was flowing.

From the respondents' views it was evident that advertisers were bringing Western culture to African people through advertisements. Respondents agreed that South African advertisers are trying to be many countries in one.

4. 3 REPORT OF INTERVIEW FINDINGS

To familiarise the respondents with the concept of television advertisements, the researcher had to use familiar concepts. A videocassette with recorded advertisements

was played. After playing it, respondents were asked questions. Some questions were answered referring to specific advertisements. The opening question, which was in the form of an introduction, was as follows: *What do we mean by television advertisements?*

At first, the respondents in all groups seemed reluctant to answer the question, but later came up with different views about advertising, including buying and selling of goods in the olden days. It was interesting to note that one particular response lead to another.

Most of the respondents from all groups understood what television advertisements are. One respondent from group D gave an interesting definition and said:

I think television advertisements are a way of bringing nearer goods, services and shops which are far to us.

Group A (Mixed gender – no schooling)

The respondents of this group consisted mainly of old people with absolutely no formal education and with ages 55 years and above. They had little knowledge of television advertisements. It was bit hard to make them understand why they should comment on television advertisements. Some said they are not interested in watching television, because they cannot see properly. They said they preferred listening to the radio, where they hear everything. The most dominant views expressed in group A were that television advertisements are displaying immoral behaviour, which will later create an indifferent African society. They even pointed out that in some television advertisements they do not only show naked people, they even show events like childbirth, which according to our culture is not supposed to be seen by children. They further explained that children as young as 3 years know that babies are not from rivers, but from their mothers tummies.

Group B (Females only- Little schooling)

This group consisted mainly of women aged between 28 years and 45 years. Most of them were once married, and have come back home, and they are working as domestic workers. It was almost impossible to get men of this age.

To most of them things that are advertised on television are very expensive; they gave the Dove Soap advertisement as an example. They were convinced that television advertisements are made for the professionals and people of a high class. To them advertisements encourage people to adopt to the Western way of living instead of the African way of living. The common agreement in this group was that television advertisements advertise expensive things, which they cannot afford to buy. They further explained that to the advertisers' beauty is associated with the use of expensive products from Western culture. They say most of the television advertisements are embarrassing to watch in the presence of elderly people or young people. They claim that most of the advertisements do not subscribe to the African norms and values. They said that advertisements show private and love actions, which are destructive to the youth and young children.

Group C (Mixed gender – Secondary qualifications)

The respondents in this group consisted of young people aged from 16 years to 22 years. To them television advertisements are informative and appealing. They said television advertisements keep them up to date with the developments of new things, like fashions and style. They said television advertisements should be able to move with the times. They were confident enough to say that South African advertisements do have African humour. To support their views, they gave the Telkom advertisement that has been referred to in paragraph 2.5.3.5 as an example. They emphasised the fact that South Africans lack cultural tolerance. They said that people should learn it, because South Africa, as a multiracial country, has cultural diversity.

Group D (Mixed gender – Tertiary education)

This group consisted of intellectuals. These were qualified people, some working and others having completed their studies but still looking for employment. They said most of the television advertisements do not reflect the African way of living. They

said advertisements are not realistic, they want to promote other cultures at the expense of African culture. One of the responses from this group was as follows:

Because television advertisements are influencing children at a tender age, we will end up having a culture where children will learn from their peers or an adolescent culture as a dominant culture.

It was evident from the respondents' comments that television advertisements are very influential and very detrimental to African culture.

To counteract this type of a situation, television advertisements, as one of the central youth attraction areas, should be able to transmit good and proper behaviour. They emphasised that advertisers must study the South African consumers and create advertisements that will reflect the South African market.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The use of the focus group interview for this study proved to be very useful for providing insights about television advertisements in the selected groups within an African society. It was interesting to note that the respondents were very outspoken on the issue of television advertisements. They demonstrated the frustrations and disappointments they have experienced with television advertisements. From the respondents' statements it became evident that television advertisements are not addressing the African community. They indicated that advertisements encouraged bad behaviour and crime.

The respondents also indicated that the South African Broadcasting Corporation is letting the people down by allowing destructive advertisements to be aired on television that is watched by people belonging to all age groups. It was evident from the respondents' views that most of the television advertisements have a negative cultural impact to the African society. The respondents indicated that advertisers portray African tradition in an unacceptable and a diminishing manner. They also indicated that some of the advertisements were good for Western people instead of the African, because they were not answering to the needs of the African society. These

responses clearly indicated the preparedness and deep desire of viewers to have meaningful, informative and educative television advertisements.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this chapter is to provide conclusions and to reflect on the entire study in relation to its aims and objectives. This will include a brief summary of the research findings, limitations, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The interview findings indicated that television advertisements do have an impact in the African society. The impact is both negative and positive depending on, amongst other things, age, educational level and social standards of participants. It has been evident during the interviews that opinions differed because of the above mentioned factors. Nevertheless, advertisements still play an important role in the society today.

Television advertisements are very effective in reaching consumers in different places in a short period of time. It is therefore important for advertisements to reflect the society's values as they are. Television advertisements also serve the function of educating and informing the society about certain societal norms and values. It is through advertisements that the society is made aware of certain goods and services available in the market or around them. It is important that people should be aware of what advertisements say about them; they must reflect the wishes and vision of the community and be authentic.

Most of the advertisements fail to appeal to the African culture because the African culture is portrayed in an unacceptable and pejorative way, at the end of the day South African youth learn customs that are irrelevant to their culture. It also becomes difficult for the adults to interpret messages and make meaning in certain advertisements because the advertisements are too western.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher aimed for the study to have a wider impact of involving different participants than it turned out to have, in order to enhance the quality of the findings. However during the course of the research process, there were limiting factors that were beyond the researcher's control. For certain questions there was a poor response indicating that not all the participants were familiar with television advertisements. Some participants indicated that they preferred to go and do some little responsibilities during commercial breaks. Some respondents, especially those with no formal education, could not understand why they were supposed to comment on advertisements, to them it was something irrelevant to their lives. It was difficult making them cooperate. Most of the adult participants indicated that they preferred listening to the radio where they can hear and understand everything, because the radio speaks their language.

It was the researcher's wish to hear the views of advertising agencies concerning the study during interviews, but it was not possible.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the opinion of the researcher, this study has provided valuable insights into the cultural impact of television advertisements. The research findings and literature review discussed in the previous chapters revealed the need to consider the cultural norms and values of the society when designing television advertisements.

The findings of this study indicated clearly that respondents do not want to see black culture portrayed as a culture of backward people or western culture as the culture of superiors. This study wished to sensitise viewers to the significance of television advertisements and its impact on the African society. It furthermore wishes to alert advertising agencies to take into consideration the importance of cultural factors and the South African diversity of cultures and to find ways of embracing them. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:

- As the biggest percentage of the South African population is black, it will be important to consider the black culture when creating television advertisements. This means the cultural norms and values should be considered before broadcasting an advertisement on television.
- Advertisers must do research on the African culture. They must know the market and address it as it is. Advertisers should guard against creating another country within South Africa. They must not take it for granted that what is exciting in other countries will also be relevant to the general South African market. If this is considered it can lessen the situation where adults feel embarrassed to watch television with their children.
- Advertisers must take into consideration that advertisements are directed to the person in totality, that is his or her culture, religion, finances, etc, therefore tolerance must always prevail.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has been an eye-opener regarding the role of television advertisements and its impact in the African culture. In a country like South Africa, which entails eleven official languages and many cultures, creating a balance amongst different cultures is never easy. Certain cultural groups feel offended in the process, yet a good standard of advertisements can be set.

The central idea of this research was the realisation that in the quest for uplifting the standard of living and the economic power of the country, cognisance should be taken of the fact that cultural norms and values should be respected and adhered to. Television advertisements should be done in an acceptable and respectable way that will not be offensive to the viewers.

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APPENDIX A

List of suggested questions:

1. What do you learn from these advertisements?
2. Do the following advertisements communicate with you as an African? What are they saying?
3. Do they attract you in such a way that you wish to buy the type of product they are advertising? Why do you say so?
4. Do these advertisements portray a genuine African way of living? Motivate your answer.
5. What do these advertisements say about you as an African?
6. Is it culturally accepted for Africans to behave in this way? Why?
7. Do they fit the norms and values of the African society? Motivate.
8. Can you say they are a mirror of the society? Motivate.
9. Do you think that South Africa, through advertisements, is trying to be many countries in one? Motivate your answer.
10. Can you say that these advertisements possess South African humour? Why?
11. What suggestions can you give to the advertising agencies of South Africa?