



“It is not what you Say that Matters, but how You Say it” Sing the Same old Song “Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is Manipulative and Deceitful”

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"It is not what you Say that Matters, but how you Say it" Sing the Same Old Song "Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is Manipulative and Deceitful"

Ethical Issues Involve in Integrated Marketing Communication in Nigeria

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"If I were to name the deadliest subversive force within capitalism, the single greatest source of its waning morality I would without hesitation name "Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)". How else should one identify a force that debases language, drains thought and undoes dignity. (Heilbroner .R. (1981). are prone to scrutiny by those who are concerned about the methods marketers use to sell their products and services.

Proponents of advertising and IMC states that it is the life blood of business. That it provides consumers with information about products and services and encourages them to improve their standard of living. Advertising produces jobs and helps new companies enter the market place. Companies employ people who make the products and provide the services that advertising sells. Free market economic systems are based on competition which revolves around information, and nothing delivers information better and at less cost than advertising and integrated marketing communication (IMC) (Becch .E., Belch M.A. 1998).

Not every one is sold on the value of advertising. Critics argued that most advertising and IMC is more than information. It creates needs, faults consumers and mesmerizes them. It makes consumers to buy that they originally do not want or wish to buy. Adverts suggests that our bodies should be leaner, our faces younger and our utensils cleaner. They point to the sultry, scantily and muscular clad bodies used in it to sell everything from perfume to beer, and argues that advertising promotes materialism, instant gratification, insecurity and greed.

"Ethics also consists of certain rules and standards of conduct recognized as binding in a professional body or an Association.

This paper will define the concepts of law, ethics and morality, it will critically examine ethical issues in Advertising, public relations, targeting of integrated marketing communications efforts, public relations, sales promotions, personal selling, packaging and Telemarketing. It will also discuss the external constraints that influences the choice of product adverts and promotions and will provide practical examples

and solutions and how to improve ethical conducts in Nigerian integrated marketing communications

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I. INTRDOCTION

An integrated marketing communications program is based on the foundation provided by the communications model. Some marketing scholars argue that the integrated communications (IMC) approach is a recent phenomenon. Others suggest that the name might be new, but the concept has been around for a long time. They note that the importance of effectively, coordinating all marketing functions and promotions activities has been described in marketing literature for many years (Hutton G. 1996).

Although IMC has been described in so many ways, the consensus is to first define marketing communications and then integrated marketing communication.

"Marketing Communications is the sharing of information concepts and meanings by the source and receiver about products and services and the organizations that sells them". (Stanley .B. 1993).

"It is the term indicating description or relevance to communication techniques used for marketing purposes' (Baker M.J. 1998).

While integrated marketing communications (IMC) is defined as

"IMC is the coordination and integration of all marketing communication tools, avenues, and sources within a company into a seamless program that maximizes the impact on consumers and other end users at a minimal cost" (Clow .K, Baack D. 2004).

This integration affects all of a company's marketing Channel, customer – focused and internally directed communications.

"IMC is the process of developing and implementing various forms off persuasive communications programs with customers and prospects over time. The goal of IMC is to influence or

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directly affect the behaviour of the selected communications audience. IMC considers all sources of brand or company contacts which a customer or prospect has with the product or service as potentially delivery channels for future messages. IMC makes use of all forms of communications which are relevant to the customer and prospects and to which they might be receptive. In sum the IMC process starts with the customer or prospect and then works back to determine and define the forms and methods through which persuasive communication programmes should be developed" (Gilson .C., Berkman H.W 1980).

There is a need for synergy in IMC. All of the communication elements (eg Advertising, Sales Promotion, Public Relations, Personal Selling, Publicity and Event Marketing) must speak with a SINGLE VOICE. Coordination is very critical to achieving a strong and unified brand image and moving consumers taking action. The failure to closely coordinate all communications elements can result in duplicated efforts or contradictions. The marketing mix contains four basic elements of product, price, promotion and place (Kolter .P. 2004). Promotion is one of the four components and traditionally promotional activities includes, advertising, sales promotion (sales and trade promotion) direct marketing, public relations, personal selling and publicity in most cases.

There is a belief in IMC that successful communications requires building relationships between the brand and the customer. Relationship building is the key to modern marketing, and IMC is the key to relationship building. A relationship is an enduring link between a brand and consumer. It entails repeat purchases and loyalty.

II. MAINTAINING AND FOSTERING ETHICAL MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

As alluded to throughout the preceding discussion, primary responsibilities for ethical behavior resides within each of us when placed in any of the various marketing communications roles. We can take the easy route and do those things that are most expedient, or we can pursue the moral high road and treat customers in the same honest fashion that we expect to be treated. In large part, it is a matter of our own personal integrity. Integrity is perhaps the pivotal concept of human nature. Although difficult to precisely define, integrity involves avoiding deceiving others of behaving purely in an expedient fashion. integrity is the quality of being morally good (Oxford Dictionary 2009)

III. ETHICAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIA

Law is defined as the written and unwritten rules on human conduct derived from enactments, customs,

and judicial precedents which are recognized as generally binding in a human community in the sense that the state enforces it directly on all members of the community through the imposition of appropriate sanctions. (Obeng .S. 1990).

Law is contrasted with other normative systems or recognized standards of behaviour such as ethics and morality, in that it differs in some respects.

"Morality refers to certain general standards of behaviour which is regarded by his/her community, as being virtuous or upright in character" (Obeng .S. 1990).

"Morals are beliefs or principles that individuals hold concerning what is right and what is wrong in a community or society. (Clow K.E and Baack D. 2004).

"Ethics consists of certain rules and standards of conduct recognized as binding in a professional body or association. Legal, marketing and advertising ethics are examples of rules which specify the duties the practitioners of the respective professions owe to themselves, to each other, and the general public in practicing their professions (Obeng. 1990).

Ethics are principles that serve as guidelines for bolt individuals and organizations". (Clow K.E, and Baack .D. 2004).

The concept of morality does not only differ in interpretation and application from culture to culture, but seems to have changed over the period of time within the same culture. With reference to the changes in the moral values over time in America, a study conducted by US News and World Report and the Guardian Newspaper in Nigeria showed that on certain subjects, American and Nigerians, have simply changed their minds about morality. For example, gambling used to be widely condemned. Now, even churches run Bingo and Baazar games, which are a form of gambling. Drinking alcohol also used to be widely condemned. Now over two-third of Nigerians or Americans do drink. Premarital sex was taboo. Today couples live together before marriage (live in lover couples). DeGoerge (1998) has defined ethics as, "a theory of morality which attempts to systematize moral judgements and establish and defend basic moral principles". As this definition suggests, moral principles and moral judgements are also subjective in nature and depend much upon the value system of the individual. But, how do you determine the validity of the value system of the individual or the judgement about his ethical behaviour. For example, lying in itself may be unethical, in some religions and acceptable in others as a means of entering heaven, but lying to save a life might become ethical. A terriost to a government may be an immoral criminal but to his own people he is a hero. Killing someone may be religiously unethical but war heroes are decorated on the basis of the number of 'enemies' they killed. Based upon these controversies. Chandan J.S (1990) asked a number of question relative to ethical behaviour. For example, if there a set standard

against which the ethical standards can be measured" Or is there a situational code of ethics according to which the ethical merits of an activity can be evaluated? Is the evaluation of ethical and unethical conduct consistent among cultures and countries? Does it vary from individual to individual? Who decided what is right and what is wrong? Is it the individual, family, organization or the community?

As far as IMC, advertising and marketing ethics are concerned, the concept of right and wrong, fair and unfair, just and unjust, is reflected either by organizational policies or by social reactions to a given advertisement marketing communication or a marketing strategy. Kenneth E.C(2004) considers some of such issues as follows:

1. Suppose a firm is advertising for vegetable soup on television. Is it ethical to put small food seasoning like maggi or Royco at the bottom of the bowl of soup so that the soup will look thicker and tastier?.
2. A salesman for an electrical machine is anxious to sell his equipment. Is it ethical for him to offer a bribe to the purchasing agent as an inducement to buy? Suppose that instead of bribe, he gives some money out of his own commission, does it make the transaction ethical?

It is a very common practice among travel agents to give back a part of their commission to the customer so that the customer can save some money. Is this transaction unethical since nobody is hurt and everybody is happy, since the travel agent gave a part of his own commission back to the client out of his own free will? These controversial opinions make it extremely difficult to reach an agreement on a common and acceptable definition of the ethics and morality. Considering these conflicts (Baack 1988), Ayer has proposed a novel idea. He suggests that morals and ethics are just the personal viewpoints and "moral judgments are meaningless expressions of emotions". The concept of morality is personal in nature and only reflects a person's emotions. He called this view as "emotional theory". It proposes that if a person feels good about an act, then in his view, it is a moral act. For example, using loopholes to cheat on income tax may be immoral from societal point of view, but the person who is filling the income

Ethics are moral principles and value that govern the actions and decisions of an individual or group (Berkowitz E.N. 1992). An action may be within the law and still not ethical. A good examples of this involves target marketing. No laws restrict tobacco companies from targeting advertising and promotion of new brands to Nigeria Youths.

However given the high levels of lung cancer and smoking related illnesses among the Youths, many people would consider this as an unethical business practice.

Ethics in the context of this paper involves matters of right and wrong or moral conduct pertaining to any aspect of marketing communications in Nigeria. The specific ethical issues can be found in the code of conduct of the professional bodies that regulate and control some aspects of marketing communication in Nigeria. Specific references can be deducted from the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) code of conduct, and that of other professional bodies like the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria and the Nigeria Medical Association

For the purpose of this paper, ethics and morality are used interchangeably and considered synonymous with societal notions of honesty, honour, virtue and integrity in matters of integrated marketing communications conduct in Nigeria. Marketing and marketing communication are activities in which ethics and morals play key roles.

Some major ethical concerns regarding marketing programs generally are that;

- Marketing causes people to buy more than they can afford.
- Marketing increases the costs of goods and services
- Marketing perpetuates stereotyping of males, females and various ethnic minorities.
- Marketing creates offensive advertisements
- Marketing creates advertisements linked to bad habits and intimate object subjects.
- Marketing prepares deceptive and misleading advertisements
- Advertising of professional services is unethical.
- Advertising to children is unethical
- Sales people use too many deceptive practices.

Today's business ethics actually consist of a subset of major life values learned since birth. The values business people use to make decisions have been acquired through family, educational, and religious institutions. Ethical values are situation specific and time oriented. Nevertheless everyone must have an ethical base that applies to conduct in the business world and in personal life. One approach to developing a personal set of ethics is to examine the consequences of a particular act. Who is helped or hurt? (How long lasting is the consequences?) what actions produce the greatest good for the greatest number of people? A second approach stresses the importance of rules. Rules come in the form of customs, laws, professional standards and common sense.

Ethics is probably the most difficult concept to define. It is intangible to assess the idea of morality or the concept of right and wrong. "Nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so" does not leave much grounds for a universal definition of what is ethically right

and what is morally wrong. The concept many have some facets that are universal in nature, but much of it may be defined with reference to the values established by a particular society. Sex before marriage in Nigeria may largely be considered as immoral, while it is conceded as desirable in America and in England. Kissing is forbidden in the Indian films, but rape is a part of its story. Artificial birth control techniques may be a taboo in Catholic Christian societies, and may be mandatory in Russia, India and China. Thus ethical conduct is not easy to understand and the determination of ethical conduct is subjective and vague, varying among different cultures and different environmental conditions.

Ethical issues must be considered in all integrated marketing communication decisions. Advertising and promotion are areas where a lapse in ethical standards or judgement can result in actions that are highly visible and damaging to a company.

a) *Ethical Issues in Public Relations and Publicity*

Public Relations consists of all forms of planned communications, outward or inward between an organisation and its publics for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding (Jefkins .F. 1983, 1976).

It is a deliberate planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual line of understanding between an organisation and its publics (BIPR in Jefkins .F. (1974).

Publicity, is any form of commercially significantly news item about an organization, goods, medium that is not paid for by the sponsor, it is news carried in the media by the Editor or Reporter, and which has significant news value (Ayozie 1992), PR is the establishment and maintenance of good image, good works well told and doing good and getting credit for it. Publicity, the one aspect of public relations that relates primarily to marketing communications, involves disseminating positive information about a company and its products. Because publicity is like advertising in that both are forms of mass communications, many of the same ethical issues apply.

PR is a distinctive management function which helps to establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics. It involves the management of problems or issues, helps management to keep informed on an responsive to public opinion, defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest, helps management to keep abreast and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system, to help anticipate trends, and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tool (Kaelow .R.)

There have been a number of celebrated cases in recent years in which companies have been widely

criticized for marketing unsafe products. The way firms confront negative publicity has important strategic as well as ethical ramifications. The primary ethical issue concerns whether firms confess to product shortcomings and acknowledge problems or, instead, attempt to cover up the problems.

The ethical issues were the initial denial by Phizer Pharmaceuticals that led to various court case in Nigeria over a long period of years. Consider the case of Phizer Pharmaceutical in Nigeria where many children died as a result of the Phizer children drugs. It took several court cases over many years before the company admitted its fault and agreed to pay compensation to the victims.

There is also the case of my PICKIN teething powder, which when used by mothers in Lagos state caused a lot of deaths among new born babies. The company initially denied, until NAFDAC decided to prosecute the company. The ethical issue is the denial of the company alleging that its product did not cause he death of new born Babies.

IV. MARKET TARGETING/TARGET MARKETING TARGETING TO CHILDREN

Market targeting requires the evaluation and selection of one or more market segments to enter. Target marketing is the concentration of a firm's marketing effort on a clearly defined target market (Baker M.)

Market targeting (or targeting) consists of evaluating each market segment's attractiveness and selecting one or more market segments to enter (Amstrong/Kotler 2011).

According to widely accepted dictates of the marketing concept and sound marketing strategy, firms should direct their offerings at specific segments of customers rather than use a scatter or shotgun approach. Nonetheless, ethical dilemmas are sometimes involves when special products and corresponding marketing communications efforts are directed at particular segments. Especially open to ethical debate is the practice of targeting products and communications efforts at segments which, for various psychosocial and economic reasons, are vulnerable to marketing communications – such as children minors, minorities and adults physical with disabilities. Advertising and in-school marketing programs continuously urge kids to essential people desire various products and brands. Critics often contend that many of the products targeted to children are unnecessary and that the communications are exploitative.

V. ETHICAL ISSUES IN PERSONAL SELLING AND TELEMARKETING

Personal selling is a concise effort on the part of the seller to induce a prospective buyer to purchase

something that he had not originally decided to buy, even if he had thought of it favourably.

It is the personal and impersonal process of assisting or persuading a prospective customer to buy a commodity or service or to act a favourably upon an idea that has commercial significance to the seller.

Personal selling is something called the "last 3 feet" of the market function, because 3 feet is the approximate distance between the sales person and the customer on the retail sales floor as well as the distance across the desk from the sales representative to a prospective business customer (Clow .E.K. Baack D. 2004).

Telemarketing involves selling products and services by using the telephone to contact prospective customers.

Telemarketers use the telephone to make sales calls and presentations. Inbound telemarketing occurs when employees only handle inbound calls, they do not make initial contacts instead they respond to telephone orders or inquiries. Outbound telemarketing means sales representatives call prospective customers or clients (Clow E.K., Baack Donald 2004).

Telemarketing is the use of telephone and call centers to attract prospects, sell to existing customers and provide service by taking orders and answering questions (Kotler and Keller 2009.)

The possibility for unethical behaviour is probably greater in personal selling, including telemarketing, than any other aspect of marketing communications. This is because much of personal selling occurs on a one-on-one basis in the privacy of a customer's office or via the telephone. It is easier under such circumstances, compared to the case of mass communications, to make unsubstantiated claims and undeliverable promises. In other words, a salesperson is in a position to say things that are not subjected to public scrutiny.

Each person's moral fibre is the primary determinant of how truthful she or he is behind a customer's closed doors or when delivering a sales pitch by telephone. Companies' penalty and reward structures also have some effect on sales people's ethical conduct, but it is most often a personal matter.

VI. ETHICAL ISSUES IN PACKAGING

Four aspects of packaging involve ethical issues(i) label information, (ii) packaging graphics (iii) packaging safety, and (iv) environmental implications of packaging.

Label information on packages can mislead consumers by providing exaggerated information or by unethically suggesting that product contains more of desired attributes or less of desired attributes that is actually the case. Packaging graphics are-unethical when the picture on a package is not a true representation of product contents (like when a

children's toy is made to appear much bigger on the package than it actually is). Another case of unethical behaviour is when a store brand is packaged so that it looks virtually identical to a well-known national brand. Unsafe packaging problems are particularly acute with dangerous products that are unsafe for children and the package is not tamper-proof. Packaging information is misleading and unethical when it suggests environmental benefits that cannot be delivered. companies must endeavour to take not of the ethical issues and strive to minimized occurrence, and where it eventually happens, if is necessary to accept the faults, take conceptive measures and where necessary pay damages.

VII. ETHICAL ISSUES IN SALE PROMOTIONS

Sales promotion is the function of marketing which seeks to achieve given objectives by the adding of extrinsic tangible value to a product or service (AMA - American Marketing Association 1967).

It is a short time incentive means devices, methods, apart from personal selling, advertisement, public relations and publicity which stimulates demand for products and services (Kolter P. 2004).

It concerns the making of a featured offer to a defined customer group within a specific time limit.

Ethical considerations are involved in all areas of sales promotions, including manufacturer promotions directed at the trade (wholesalers and retailers) and to consumers.

Consumer-oriented sales promotions (including practices such as coupons, premium offers, rebates, sweepstakes,) are unethical when the sales promoter offers consumers a reward for their behavior that is never delivered. Sweepstakes and contest are potentially unethical when consumers think their odds of winning are much greater than they actually are.

As matter of balance, it is important to note that marketers are not the only ones guilty of unethical behavior in the area of sales promotion. Consumers also engage in untoward activities such as submitting coupons at the point of checkout for items not purchased or submitting phony rebate claims, and making false claims so as to win the prizes.

VIII. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN ADVERTISING (SPECIFIC DETAILS ON CODE OF CONDUCT TO BE FOUND IN APCON CODE OF CONDUCT) APPENDIX ATTACHED

One of the major problems in advertising and promotion is the lack of a clear and acceptable code of conduct. Advertising codes vary from country to country. Since the primary objectives of any advertiser is profit oriented, social concerns HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT on the long- term economic environment of the advertiser. Advertising is primarily meant to influence the

independent thinking of the consumer and change his behavior. In a way, advertising can be considered as a brain- washing catalyst, which is intended to manipulate the consumer into thinking that the advertised product is the best for him, and it does not matter much whether the consumer really needs the product or not. In that respect advertising can be considered manipulative with its accompanying social significance. On the other hand advertising is a major force in society, providing valuable service to its members as well, so that, it 'tends to help us understand the products, services and institutions that we encounter in our culture and provides us with some understanding of our relation to theme". However, it is the manipulative aspect of advertising that is considered the socially detrimental aspect. This manipulative aspect is responsible for leading consumers to purchase things they do not need or should not need. This, the critics contends, is the misallocation of economic resources.

In this regard advertising has a social responsibility to inform the people of various choices available and educate them about the superiority of a given product by putting forth hard facts about the characteristics of the product. Thus the consumers can freely decide for themselves as to which products to buy and which products to avoid. There are some areas of concern, where advertisers need to be more responsive to community needs. These areas are:

1. Advertising is considered to be an environmental pollutant. Most advertising is resented by people because it is simply too much to absorb. There are too many messages on the Radio and TV, too many billboards and many print Adverts, hence we have advertising clutters. It is too pervasive and too interfering in people's, personal lives. In that respect it is considered to pollute the mental environment. This is specially true about TV, Radio and Billboard Advertising

However, because of advertising's acknowledged economic and competitive role in a free enterprise economy, it is almost impossible to limit its role in the total marketing mix.

2. The issues of morals and tasks in advertising:- Since advertising is unavoidable, the same forms of it may become a burden on the consumer. Such advertising may be offensive, misleading and simply annoying. For example, some people who do not drink alcohol e.g. Christian/Muslims may consider all liquor advertising as morally offensive. Similarly, in some countries where prostitution is legal, prostitutes are permitted to advertise their services. In Nigeria, the U K or America, it would not only be illegal, but also morally offensive. Sex is considered to be such a private affair in India and Saudi Arabia and Northern Nigeria. All advertisement concerning feminine hygiene, deodorants are likely to be

considered by majority of people as offensive and tasteless (eg NIVEA deodorant TV Advert in Nigeria)

On the other hand, the product itself may not be morally offensive, but its presentation may be tasteless. Too noisy commercials, overtly repetitive commercials and commercials that disrespect consumer intelligence are considered to be in bad taste. Even though some proponents of advertising argue that the advertising is directed towards the audience which is the average mass of people and not the chosen elite. Hence they advertise what they believe the audience wants to see and hear and they are willing to absorb the dissatisfaction of a few who may find some advertising below their expected standards of decency.

However, in spite of the cultural and educational level of the recipients of such advertisements, it still remains the responsibility and civic duty of the advertiser to truthfully and sincerely inform the consumer of the characteristics and qualities of a product and let the consumer make the decision about buying the product, rather than manipulating the consumer to believe in a product in order to buy it.

London is the first and the most common stop for all American, African and Asian tourists coming to England. A tourist walking on oxford street or knights bridge would find some stores with large signs saying "Going Out of Business Sale: 40% - 60% off. This would be a great temptation to buy some electronic fashion and House hold products. The tourist would be very happy thinking that he got a last minute bargain before the store closed for good. What the tourist does not know is that the "Going Out of Business Sale" has been on for the past 25 – 30 years, and he could get the same item cheaper at some more reputable stores. Is it ethical for the store to advertise falsely and lure the customers in such manner? Is it morally acceptable to mislead the client, as in this case, where the only favourable argument is that nobody forced the customer to buy the merchandise? To buy or not to buy was his/her and his/her choice alone, but his/her thinking was indeed manipulated into believing the advertisement and trusting the advertiser. At best, the ethics of such selling techniques are debatable.

According to Rahul Bhatnagar in Chandan J.S et al (1990) the objective of advertising is to change the personality traits of the consumers and effect the desired buying behaviour. It is a very strong stimulant and if effectively channeled, its full potency could be realized. "But is it channeled effectively? Is it employing fair means to change the personality traits of the consumers?" In general, is advertising useful or is it manipulative as discussed above?

The role of Advertising in a society is controversial and has sometimes resulted in attempts to restrict or ban advertising and other forms of promotion to certain groups or to certain products. A lot of

Nigerian Youths are engaging in binge drinking and many on abuse alcohol. There are laws in Nigeria which tends to ban alcohol related advertising and promotions e.g there are specific restrictions banning sponsorship or support of any athletics, religious or Academic events of universities, polytechnics and colleges by any alcohol beverage company. Decisions to ban advertising of alcohol or tobacco involve very complex economic considerations and social issues. Some Nigerian companies have recognized the need to reduce alcohol abuse and drink driving particularly among the Youths, hence they have produced many Adverts designed to address this problems. The Adverts promote responsible behaviour among adults and youths of legal drinking age. Some companies with their promotions promote sexual permissiveness and objectify women in their Adverts; and this has brought a lot of criticisms of such product by women pressure groups. Many companies have been criticized for running adverts that are insensitive to certain segments of the society.

Based upon the accepted concept of ethics, any advertising that traverses the truth or uses questionable means would be considered unethical. The only thing that remains is about the relatively of ethics rather than the ethical absolutism. According to Lacznaiak, in Chandan J.S et al (1990) an action is relatively ethical if it is based upon either the theory of justice, which means protecting the interest of all involved or on a theory of utilitarianism which provides the greatest possible balance of values for all persons involved. The fact still remains that whether it is the "theory of justice" or the "theory of utilitarianism" it is not possible to satisfy all people. If the objective of advertising was simply to inform the people about the qualities of a product and give the complete freedom of choice, then certain ethical standards in advertising could be maintained. But the objective of advertising is to "persuade" people to buy the product and change their buying behaviour, then it might need some manipulative tactics to achieve such objectives. In that case, emphasis on psychological benefits, slightly exaggerated claims or ever puffery might be accepted by our society as ethically acceptable.

That is why products advertised as "best" or "most oftenly used" or "most often recommended by doctors" or "long lasting" etc. may be morally acceptable. But claims that are designed purposely to mislead and deceive the customer would be considered unethical. Some of these unethical practices are controlled by law in terms of "truth in advertising" laws. Undocumented false claims are prohibited by law. For example, a skin cream cannot be advertised in the form of, "your skin will look 20 years younger if you our use cream" unless such claims can be medically proven. To get around it, the advertisers might create a message rather than a claim, even though this promise also be considered as manipulative advertising. Advertising has been previously defined as "any paid form of non-

personal presentation of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor (AMA 1969). This definition suggests that advertising is simply a "presentation" and the prospect is totally free to chose and decide. Some very specific general principles of Advertising by the Advertising practitioners council of Nigeria is added in the appendix (i) below as it explains on what is ethical or unethical in advertising.

In other words, in order to choose freely, a person must be free of external constraints that control or even influence the choice of one alternative over another. These outside controlling influences have been categorized by Tom Beauchamp in Ayozie .D. (2004) as follows:

1. Coercive influences that are always controlling.
2. Persuasive influences that are generally non-controlling.
3. Manipulative influences that are sometimes controlling.

These tactics are explained in more detail;

a) Coercive Tactics

Coercive tactics are relatively rare but often used in public advertising. It involves threatening negative sanctions to those who do not choose the dictated alternative. Most of the penal legislation requires coercive tactics while informing the public about laws. "Belt up", says one advertisement requiring passengers in the cars to fasten their seat belts. "It is the law" pay your taxes to the correct internal revenue office you can go to jail if you patronize the illegal offices This advertisement could be considered as using coercive influences, as the prospect is not free to choose whether to belt up or not, and he is threatened with negative consequences if he choose not to fasten his safety belt, which is against the expectations of the advertiser-which in this case is the government. Similarly, coercive techniques may also be used in merchandise marketing in controlled societies where the people's choices are controlled by the Government. But in a free enterprises system, coercion is neither successful nor desirable.

b) Persuasive Influences

On the other end of the continuum is persuasion which is a deliberate and successful attempt at bringing the prospect to your point of view. While coercion is considered ethically unacceptable, persuasion is an accepted technique specially if it is rational persuasion in which good and objective reasons are given to the prospect for accepting the desired outcome. On the other hand, irrational persuasion which plays on the emotions of the people rather than objective judgments, may be considered as manipulative and thus ethically unacceptable. For example, does a toothpaste e.g Dabur and Macleans really improve sex close-up appeal? Using the sex appeal angle could be considered irrational persuasion. Rational persuasion is defined by in Chandan J.S et at (1990) as follows'

"Persuasion is rational so far so the persuasiveness lies in the substance of the argument rather than in the manner of presentation, the authority susceptible to suggestions from other".

This means that a favourable change in the prospects behaviour is brought about but by the strength of the argument and the merit of the reasons rather than the manner of presentation, or the style of the presenter. The basic idea in accepting rational persuasion as an ethical ploy is that the prospect fully understands and accepts the reasons given as good and just and makes the ultimate choice of his own free will. It is still not clear, however, what "good reason" means. Are these good reason measure against the utilitarian advantages of the chosen alternative or purely psychological and emotional advantages? Do good reasons have to be absolute or simply as perceived by the prospect? Secondly, it is also not clear as to why irrational persuasion must be considered ethically wrong. For example, if an advertiser persuades a person to buy a new car for his wife whom he loves very much, even when it is not necessary to buy her a new car, it could be considered irrational persuasion. But is it unethical for the advertiser to play on a man's love for his wife? This debate seems to be unending.

c) *Manipulative Influences*

Manipulation is a very area which includes a deliberate effort by the advertisers to deceive people. Manipulation is considered subtle coercion in so far as the presentation is such as to leave the prospect with no real choice. Manipulation, as defined by De George in Chandan J.S et al (1990) as; "playing on a person's will by trickery or by devious, unfair or insidious means". In more general terms, manipulation can be considered an attempt to get someone to believe in what is not correct and such belief would result in some form of harm to the deliver. For example, if a brand of toothpaste is advertised stating that it reduces cavities more than the brand of competitor, and this statement is backed a survey of dentists where figures conclusions of the survey are misleading and the claims being incorrect, then it would be considered a deliberate attempt to make the customer believe in what is not correct. Such a process would be categorized manipulative advertising.

Magazines and Newspapers in Nigeria are full of advertisements enticing people to lose weight fast by using some miracle drugs offered by the marketers or some miracle Healers. Some manipulative photographs of "before and after", appealing language of the message, emphasis on scientific breakthrough in the development of these drugs take full advantage of the readers' vulnerability. "Lose up to 20 kilogrammes a day" says one advertisement "Look 20 years in one week", says another advertisement for a herbal cream. Any rational buyer would know right away that these claims are false. Yet, millions of people buy these drugs and herbs and these creams with or no little effect.

Some good luck charms which promise instant money, instant success on the job, instant success in love, are sold by the Advertisers in the print media and seen in smaller signboards. If people are so gullible, should we blame the advertisers for using these misleading techniques.

Advertising, really, is informational manipulation. Even if the claims of advertisers are correct, they are packed and presented to the public in such a manner so as to leave the person with now real choice. The appeal is emphatic, forceful and compassionate so that the person can no longer resist the temptation to buy the product, thus limiting his choices to only one alternative.

While manipulation is deception in presentation and incorrectness of claims, a more subtle form of manipulation is known as "low balling". Low balling involves inducing the person to buy a product by highlighting the most favourable aspects of the product and withholding the less favourable aspects until the prospect has made his decision to buy the product. (Ayozie D.O (2004) This technique could be considered as psychological manipulation rather than informational manipulation, but never the less, it is manipulation. For example, a customer sees an advertisement about a 'Sony' camera that he knows is too good to miss, wants to buy one. He has known of Sony cameras of being highly reliable and the advertised price appears to be very low. The prospective buyer makes a special trip to the store to buy it and the salesman tells him of all the benefits of owning a Sony camera and emphasizes the tempting price. The customer is most impressed and decides to buy it. Only then does the salesman inform him that the camera case will cost extra and so would the batteries, making it much more expensive than what he was willing to buy it for in the first place. Now the customer is too embarrassed to back out and is more or less compelled to buy the camera at the higher price. Thus once again, the customer's choice was not free due to lack of total information about the camera.

Some laws have been passed as seen in the APCON code of conduct attached as appendix i below that protect consumers from such false advertisements where the claims cannot be substantiated. Many grey areas remain where society has to play a major role in ensuring that advertising sticks to purely informational roles giving the prospect an intelligent and rational way of making choices. If consumers are misled or enticed into a choice by deception, then advertising is delinquent in its role based on ethical or moral justification.

IX. HOW DO WE IMPROVE ETHICAL CONDUCT IN NIGERIA

In order to improve the ethical climate of an organisation, a plan of action is called for and this plan

can be categorized into two different levels and areas where each level has a significant contribution towards the formation of the entire ethical system. Some of these measures are contained in various advertising laws and many code of conducts of in Advertising and promotional related professions in Nigeria (i.e APCON, NIPR, NIMN, DMAN etc) These levels are;

a) *On an Individual or Personal Level*

What can the individual consumer in Nigeria do to protect himself from the effects of unethical and misleading advertising and IMC influences? It is necessary to understand, however, that all consumers do not react to the same stimulus in a similar manner. Hence, morally offensive advertisements must be so considered after an objective evaluation of the intent and content of the message. This means that the advertisement must be explicitly manipulative and the consumer morally and ethically balanced so as to be consciously aware of such intended manipulation. Based on this assessment, a consumer has a number of alternatives to choose from. these are;

1. If the consumer believes that the advertising has mislead or deceived him/her, he or she may stop buying the product and advise his friends likewise. Simply they will engage in consumer boycott of the product or services. If there are a sufficient number of people thinking in the same manner, then the advertiser would get the message and change the message to win back the loyalty of the consumers as it happened in the MTN's advert in "Mama, my wife born boy i.e. gave birth to a boy".
2. Write to the company. The consumer, individually or in consortium with other consumers or consumers groups may write to the company raising the issues in a specific manner. Most reputable companies and particular national ones would take such complaints seriously and take the necessary action in order to keep their goodwill and loyalty.
3. Write to a newspaper. Many newspapers and magazines have consumer-oriented columns and sections e.g PUNCH, the SUN and CHAMPION and if the company does not respond favourably directly, some newspapers will publicly take up the cause on behalf of the consumers.
4. See a lawyer about an individual group or a class action suit. This is an expensive and time-consuming route, but if the complaint is serious, this can be useful action. For example, If an advertisement is sexually explicit or has negative religious, personal or cultural undertones that it will have a negative effect upon children, a legal route can bring results. Similarly, if an advertisement is demeaning to women or an affront to certain religious beliefs, legal action may be desirable. Sometimes, just a letter from an legal practitioner or lawyer brings about the desired results.
5. File a complaint with the proper regulatory agency.

There are several legal bodies which oversee the legality and decency of advertising messages. In Nigeria for example, a self-regulatory agency, such as APCON, NAFDAC, CBN, NIMN, DMAN, NIPR BON, NBC could assist in getting some action from the advertisers, if there is a justified reason for it.

b) *Organisational/ Company Level*

This is the most important level at which the management can play an important role in shaping the ethical climate of the organisation. Top management should play a strong ethical role model so as to see that sound ethics permeates through all levels of the organizational hierarchy. One way to achieve high standards of ethical conduct is to set goals that are objectively achievable, because setting too high goals might induce some employees to use unethical methods to achieve them. This specially true at the salesman's level. These ethical concepts must be clearly defined and communicated at all levels and the management must ensure that these concepts are respected and followed through responsibly.

Hence, if the top management establishes a policy of ethical conduct for all members of the organisation and enforces this policy then the best opportunity exists for proved ethical conduct in advertising and integrated marketing communication (IMC). In addition, within the framework of general organizational policies, the advertisers themselves should develop personal standards of ethical or professional conduct and abide by these norms. The development of a strong moral or professional code on the part of advertisers further strengthened by certain motivations which are both internal and environmental. Some of these motivations are;

1. *Civic responsibility:-* An advertiser is a part of the society around him and is presumably a respected member of the community. Any unethical advertising would be an adverse reflection on his integrity and credibility. Since it is not always possible to separate social life from business life, a conflict between the social role and business role would have a negative impact on the advertiser's civic role. Hence advertisers consider it their civic duty not to offend any segment of the community around them.
2. *Legal Obligations:-* In order to protect the defenseless consumer, some laws have been enacted which make it a criminal offence to deliberately mislead the consumer by false claims e.g consumer right protection laws and consumerism. The fear of punishment itself would act as a deterrent to most advertisers who would then abstain from untruthful or deceptive advertising. The advertiser would also like to be known as a law-abiding citizen which is a kind of motivation for ethical behaviour. APCON, NAFDAC AND the Nigerian Broadcasting commission

enforces certain laws to protect the Nigerian consumer groups also assist in protective defenseless consumers.

3. *Profit motive*:- Most organisations are in business to make money over a long period of time. This money can only be made if consumers keep on buying their products. Thus no credible advertiser would want to mislead, deceive or offend consumers to point when they will stop buying the products. Someone in a position to make one sale and thereafter not care whether he ever gets the buyer's business again. Thus achieving maximum profit over the long run is a high motivation for any organisation to keep away from deception or misrepresentation.

c) *Self-Policing Activities*

Even though all these motivations are adequate in encouraging ethical standards among advertisers, there are some self-policing activities that further ensure that advertisers operate within the accepted code of conduct. These self-policing activities include;

d) *Writing And Blowing The Whistle On The Competitor*

If an advertiser does indulge in misleading, the competitor can either blow the whistle on him directly by pointing to these untruthful aspect in his own advertisement or complain about to the related regulatory body against the claims of the competitor.

X. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

It is reach difficult to identify what is or not ethical conduct in integrated marketing communicating as it varies from country to country. Ethical values as situation specific and time oriented. Nevertheless everyone either in business, marketing and specifically in integrated marketing communications most have an ethical base that applies to conduct in the business world and in personal life morals and Ethical have been viewed as personal viewpoints and moral judgments are seen as meaningless expressions of emotions. Not minding the viewpoints, sound ethical and moral considerations is very relevant both for the IMC practitioner, the consumers and four business as an entity. The debate still persists whether advertising simply influences the behavior or controls it. Authors have come to the defense of advertisers by proposing that "an advert influences more than controls an audience. Most often, advertising induces a desire for a particular product, given that the purchaser already has the basic desire. "Even if puffery and exaggerated claims can be considered manipulative, according to Levitt, (1969). "these efforts are not fundamentally different or as controversial as the efforts of artists, politicians, lecturers and editorial writers to manipulate ideas in the minds of citizens. "Hence such techniques which simply influence the buyer's behaviour are acceptable to society.

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