Insecurity and Advertising in Nigeria: A Study of Selected Media Practitioners in Anambra and Enugu States

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Abstract
This study examined the effect of insecurity on advertising in Nigeria, focusing on selected media practitioners in Anambra and Enugu States. The study was prompted by the rising insecurity across the country and its implications for business activities, including advertising. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised 2,560 members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in the Anambra and Enugu State chapters. A sample of 346 was determined using Taro Yamane's formula; 320 valid questionnaires were returned (response rate = 92.5%). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and the chi-square goodness-of-fit test. Findings revealed that insecurity has a significant negative effect on advertising. Outdoor advertising was identified as the most threatened form, while increased cost was the most frequently cited effect. The study recommends that advertising firms place greater emphasis on online and digital promotion to reduce dependence on physical presence in insecure environments.
Keywords: Insecurity, Advertising, Outdoor Advertising, Nigeria, Media Practitioners

Introduction
The right to security is a fundamental human right and is enshrined in Section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government" (Ldama & Sali, 2024).

Nigeria currently faces multiple security challenges, including armed banditry, farmer–herder clashes, kidnapping, and insurgency. These have resulted in loss of lives and property, disruption of businesses, and a general atmosphere of fear that discourages investment. No investor—local or foreign—is motivated to commit resources in an unsafe environment. Consequently, the high level of insecurity has slowed business activities, including advertising.

Advertising practitioners face operational challenges, psychological stress, financial losses, and reduced willingness to operate in volatile markets. This study therefore examines the effect of insecurity on advertising in Nigeria, with particular attention to media practitioners in Anambra and Enugu States.

Statement of the Problem
No business thrives where the security of lives and property cannot be guaranteed. Insecurity distorts brand messaging, increases costs, reduces campaign effectiveness, and creates opportunities for disinformation that can damage brand reputation. Despite these observable effects, the specific threats that insecurity poses to the survival and practice of advertising in Nigeria have not been adequately examined. Questions remain about the fate of outdoor advertising, the impact on advertising costs, and the challenges brands face in insecure environments.

Objectives of the Study
The specific objectives of the study are to:
1. Ascertain the challenges that brands face in an insecure environment.
2. Identify the specific threats posed to outdoor advertising in an insecure environment.
3. Determine the extent to which an insecure environment affects the cost of advertising.

Hypotheses

$H0_1$: Insecurity does not significantly affect the cost of advertising.

$H0_2$: Brand message distortion is not a significant consequence of an insecure environment.

Literature Review

Concept of Insecurity

Security has been defined as a situation that guarantees protection of persons, property, and the conditions necessary for normal daily activities (Akin, 2008; Ogunleye et al., 2011). Igbuzor (2011) expands the concept to include stability of livelihood, predictability of daily life, protection from crime, and freedom from psychological harm.

Insecurity, by contrast, is the state of fear or anxiety arising from inadequate protection or freedom from danger (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). It encompasses danger, uncertainty, lack of protection, and vulnerability to harm. Remote causes include institutional weakness, material inequality, ethno-religious conflicts, and weak security systems. Immediate factors include porous borders, rural–urban migration, unemployment, poverty, and the proliferation of small arms (Achumba et al., 2013; Adebayo et al., 2022).
High unemployment (over 33% nationally, with youth unemployment exceeding 40% according to the National Bureau of Statistics, 2023) and economic desperation have been linked to the rise in kidnapping and other violent crimes (Afolabi, 2021).

Advertising

Kotler (2003) defines advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. Arens (2006) describes it as structured, usually persuasive communication about products, services, or ideas, paid for by identified sponsors and delivered through various media. Advertising thrives in stable environments; insecurity undermines its effectiveness.

Insecurity and Advertising in Nigeria

Insecurity has disrupted industrialisation and economic activity. Boko Haram insurgency in the North, farmer–herder conflicts, kidnapping, and banditry have made advertising operations difficult or impossible in many regions. Outdoor and experiential advertising are particularly vulnerable because they require physical presence and movement. Reduced consumer confidence and spending further diminish the viability of advertising campaigns. Firms often avoid high-risk areas, leading to lower advertising expenditure in those markets (Ashworth, 2019).

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population consisted of 2,560 registered members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in Anambra and Enugu States (figures supplied by the respective NUJ chapters).

Sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where $N = 2{,}560$ $N = 2{,}560$ and $e = 0.05$ $e = 0.05$.

$$n = \frac{2{,}560}{1 + 2{,}560(0.0025)} = \frac{2{,}560}{7.4} \approx 346$$

A structured questionnaire was administered. Of the 346 copies distributed, 320 valid copies were returned (response rate = 92.5%). Data were analysed using frequency distributions, percentages, and the chi-square test. A four-point Likert-type scale was employed where appropriate.

Results

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents (N = 320)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	214	66.9
Female	106	33.1
Total	320	100.0

Source: *Field Survey*

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents (N = 320)

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
25–34	41	12.8
35–44	153	47.8
45–54	88	27.5
55 and above	38	11.9
Total	320	100.0

Source: *Field Survey*

Table 3: Awareness of the Threat of Insecurity to Advertising

State	Aware	Not Aware	Total
Anambra	185	2	187
Enugu	120	13	133
Total	305 (95.3%)	15 (4.7%)	320 (100%)

Source: *Field Survey*

Table 4: Type of Advertising Most Threatened by Insecurity

Type of Advertising	Frequency	Percentage
Print advertising	97	30.3
Broadcast (electronic)	88	27.5
Outdoor advertising	110	34.4
Interactive advertising	25	7.8
Total	320	100.0

Source: *Field Survey*

Outdoor advertising was identified by the largest proportion of respondents (34.4%) as the most threatened.

Table 5: Perceived Effects of Insecurity on Advertising

Effect	Frequency	Percentage
Distortion of brand messaging	74	23.1
Increasing cost of advertising	145	45.3
Influencing campaign effectiveness	28	8.8
Creating opportunities for disinformation	73	22.8
Total	320	100.0

Source: *Field Survey*

Increased cost was the most frequently cited effect (45.3%).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

$H0_1$: Insecurity does not significantly affect the cost of advertising.

A chi-square test was conducted on the distribution of responses relating to cost and other effects across the two states. The calculated chi-square value was 46.19. At $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 3, the critical value is 7.815. Since 46.19 > 7.815, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant relationship between insecurity and the cost of advertising.

Hypothesis

$H0_2$: Brand message distortion is not a significant consequence of an insecure environment.

The calculated chi-square value was 69.5. At $\alpha = 0.05$ and df = 3, the critical value is 7.815. Since 69.5 > 7.815, the null hypothesis is rejected. Brand message distortion is significantly associated with an insecure environment.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that insecurity exerts a significant negative effect on advertising practice in Nigeria. Outdoor advertising is particularly vulnerable because it depends on physical infrastructure and movement in public spaces. Increased operational costs emerged as the most prominent effect, followed by brand-message distortion and the risk of disinformation.

These results are consistent with earlier observations that business location and promotional activities in high-risk areas are heavily constrained by security conditions (Sequeira et al., 2018). Advertising success depends on a reasonably secure environment in which both producers and consumers can operate without excessive fear.

Conclusion

The study establishes a clear relationship between insecurity and advertising in Nigeria. While producers and consumers remain interested in exchanging information about products, services, and ideas, the effectiveness of advertising is heavily dependent on the prevailing security situation. Outdoor advertising and cost structures are especially affected.

Recommendations

1. Advertising firms should prioritise online and digital promotion channels to reduce reliance on physical presence in insecure locations.
2. Firms should develop flexible pricing and operational strategies that allow survival and continuity even in high-risk environments.
3. Continuous investment in digital tools and real-time security information systems can help practitioners adapt more quickly to changing threat levels.

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