

A consumer is not a moron, she is your daughter

 By [Musa Msane](#)

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Immortalized in the professional reads such as *Confession of an Advertising Man* and in the fictional character of the novel, *Fury*, penned by Salman Rushdie, David Ogilvy must have been the most celebrated doyens of advertising in the world.



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There are many quotable quotes attributed to him but I find this one: "*The consumer is not a moron, she is your mother*" more appropriate for this piece.

Issues of consumer behaviour are the stuff of the research and planning departments to worry about and sometimes if not most of the times, the creatives to rubbish! In my formative years in the industry, Beatrice Kubheka or Jean Green were familiar sights as they shuffled the corridors of the agencies at night, conducting groups in a bid to make sense of the market or to test creative before going to market.

Those were the fascinating times, to hear members of the target market saying things that one might have observed or even experienced but struggling with the concept of maintaining an open mind during groups, 'one shouldn't have pre-conceived ideas about the outcome of the research' being the mantra. There is nothing as satisfying as having ones observation validated by research though.

Today, without the budget to host groups and the top-of-the range infrastructure that big agencies provide, there is an urgent necessity to hit the streets more, observe more and question and question more all in a bid to understand the consumer. Confession again, there's nothing as interesting as observing ordinary family members engaging or disengaging with advertising, especially TVC.

With the advent of social media and digital gaming, it is a fact that television is no longer a centre of attraction in the room.

Well, even in my house, you will find everyone 'watching' TV with one eye and the other eye on the mobile device.

My rascals are the most interesting to observe. Rascal Snr. responds to every car-related TVC and is not shy to offer his opinions. Lately, he is adamant that a certain car insurance brand is not on fleek, 'the characters look so controlled, it's like they are on the strings' he says. I can understand how his obsession with everything-car and authentic-seeking mentality is coming from though. He is a petrol-head, an ardent follower of Top Gear and cartoon channels.

Rascal Jr. loves smartphones and knows features of most brands more than he knows his school work. A rugby and soccer mad-fellow and will comment about any TVC that uses these sport codes as a platform for the brand communications and any player used should be on form otherwise he disengages with the ad.

With all the technological advancements to better understand consumers, I find the observed 'truths' of my rascals validating Ogilvy's observation that consumers are not morons but my sons.

ABOUT MUSA MSANE

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