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Ethical Issues and Dilemmas in Advertising in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the ethical issues and dilemmas in advertising in Nigeria, with a focus on misleading advertising, unauthorized use of personal data, and stereotyping. Extant literatures were reviewed to enrich the study. Virtue ethics theory was adopted as framework for the study. The study reveals that the lack of effective regulation and enforcement of ethical standards in Nigeria's advertising industry has led to a proliferation of deceptive and manipulative advertising practices. The findings highlight the need for promoting responsible and ethical advertising practices that prioritize consumer interests and well-being. The study's recommendations provide insights into the development of effective regulatory frameworks and industry practices that can promote a more responsible and effective advertising industry in Nigeria.

Keywords

Ethical issues, advertising, Nigeria, consumer interests, regulatory frameworks.

Introduction

The advertising industry in Nigeria has undergone significant transformations over the years, driven by changes in consumer behavior, technological advancements, and shifting market dynamics. According to Okafor (2015), the Nigerian advertising industry has grown rapidly, with a projected market size of over N400 billion. However, this growth has also been accompanied by numerous ethical concerns, including misleading advertising, unauthorized use of personal data, and stereotyping (Adeyemi, Ohiagu, & Usua, 2024).

The rise of digital advertising has further complicated the ethical landscape of the industry. Fadolapo (2025) notes that unregulated digital advertising poses significant dangers to Nigerian consumers, including financial devastation and erosion of trust in the advertising industry. Moreover, the increasing use of social media platforms has created new challenges for advertisers, who must navigate complex issues related to data privacy, online harassment, and cyberbullying (Afolayan & Awwal-Bolanta, 2024).

Scholars have emphasized the importance of promoting ethical advertising practices that prioritize consumer interests and well-being. Belk (2017) argues that advertisers have a responsibility to promote positive values and behaviors through their advertising practices. Similarly, Swann (2018) notes that advertisers should prioritize respect for their audience, avoiding ads that are

demeaning or exploitative. By promoting ethical advertising practices, advertisers can build trust with their audience and contribute to a more responsible and effective advertising industry.

The regulatory framework for advertising in Nigeria is critical to promoting ethical advertising practices. However, Afolayan and Awwal-Bolanta (2024) argue that the current regulatory framework is inadequate, allowing advertisers to engage in unethical practices with impunity. The Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) is the primary regulatory body responsible for overseeing the advertising industry in Nigeria. However, scholars have questioned the effectiveness of ARCON in regulating the industry and promoting ethical advertising practices (Adeyemi, Ohiagu, & Usua, 2024).

The advertising industry in Nigeria is characterized by numerous ethical concerns, including misleading advertising, unauthorized use of personal data, and stereotyping. Scholars have emphasized the importance of promoting ethical advertising practices that prioritize consumer interests and well-being. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on ethical issues in advertising in Nigeria, with a view to identifying solutions that can promote responsible and ethical advertising practices in the country.

Statement of the problem

The advertising industry in Nigeria is plagued by numerous ethical issues and dilemmas, which undermine consumer trust and pose potential health and safety risks. According to Adeyemi, Ohiagu, and Usua (2024), misleading advertising is a common practice in Nigeria, with many advertisers using exaggerations to mislead consumers. This practice not only erodes trust in the advertising industry but also has serious consequences for consumers who make purchasing decisions based on false or misleading information.

Furthermore, the lack of effective regulation and enforcement of ethical standards in Nigeria's advertising industry has led to a proliferation of deceptive and manipulative advertising practices. Afolayan and Awwal-Bolanta (2024) note that the regulatory framework for advertising in Nigeria is inadequate, allowing advertisers to engage in unethical practices with impunity. This situation raises concerns about the potential harm caused to consumers and the need for effective regulation and enforcement of ethical standards in advertising.

Scholars have emphasized the importance of promoting responsible and ethical advertising practices that prioritize consumer interests and well-being. Belk (2017) argues that advertisers have a responsibility to promote positive values and behaviors through their advertising practices. Similarly, Swann (2018) notes that advertisers should prioritize respect for their audience, avoiding ads that are demeaning or exploitative. By promoting ethical advertising practices, advertisers can build trust with their audience and contribute to a more responsible and effective advertising industry.

This study aims to investigate the ethical issues and dilemmas in advertising in Nigeria, with a view to identifying solutions that can promote responsible and ethical advertising practices in the country. By examining the current state of advertising in Nigeria and the ethical issues that arise, this study seeks to provide insights into the development of effective regulatory frameworks and industry practices that prioritize consumer interests and well-being.

Literature Review

The prevalence of ethical issues and dilemmas in advertising is a significant concern in Nigeria. According to Adeyemi, Ohiagu, and Usua (2024), misleading advertising is a common practice in Nigeria, with many advertisers using exaggerations to mislead consumers. This practice undermines consumer trust and poses potential health, safety, and financial risks. Furthermore, Afolayan and Awwal-Bolanta (2024) note that the lack of clear regulations and guidelines in the advertising industry in Nigeria makes it challenging to enforce ethical standards.

The unauthorized use of personal data is another significant concern in Nigerian advertising. Adeyemi, Ohiagu, and Usua (2024) highlight that advertisers often collect and use personal data without proper consent, infringing on consumers' rights. Additionally, Fadolapo (2025) notes that unregulated digital advertising poses significant dangers to Nigerian consumers, including financial devastation and erosion of trust in the advertising industry.

Scholars emphasize the need for advertisers and regulatory bodies to prioritize ethical standards and responsible behavior in advertising. Afolayan and Awwal-Bolanta (2024) argue that robust regulatory measures are necessary to ensure fair competition and protect consumers. Adeyemi, Ohiagu, and Usua (2024) also recommend strengthening regulatory frameworks to promote ethical advertising practices and protect consumer interests.

Moreover, consumer education is essential in promoting critical thinking and media literacy among Nigerian consumers. By educating consumers about the potential risks and consequences of misleading advertising, they can make informed decisions and avoid falling prey to deceptive advertisers (Adeyemi, Ohiagu, & Usua, 2024).

In conclusion, the literature highlights the prevalence of ethical issues and dilemmas in Nigerian advertising, including misleading advertising, unauthorized use of personal data, and lack of clear regulations. Scholars emphasize the need for advertisers and regulatory bodies to prioritize ethical standards and responsible behavior, and for consumer education programs to promote critical thinking and media literacy.

Conceptual Framework

Concept Advertising

Citing Merrill (1974) and Fab-Ukozor (2005) note that there are dominant theories of ethics which are absolutist, relativist, teleological, deontological, legalistic, antinomian, and situational. These theories give reasons why human beings take whatever moral decisions they arrive at in their relationships with other people.

The advertising practitioner who is led by the absolutist theory accepts in principle that there are moral universals that form the basis of a universal and eternal code in practice such as truthfulness, decency, legality, and honesty. For the relativist, the argument is that moral values change with culture, time, and circumstances, while teleology affirms that the yardstick for measuring rightness and wrongness of an action depends on the consequences which that action will give rise to. The deontologist holds a reverse view in the sense that the practitioner accepts in principle that the judgment of whether an action is good or bad should be based on the action itself but not the consequence. The legalistic or code of ethics is an absolute or objective ethical system which is based largely on tradition, social agreement, or a firm moral code, however, the antinomian is against standards, laws, principles, and precepts. Finally, the situational ethicist is led by the traditional code of ethics but moves away from it whenever he or she thinks, it is best to do so in the public's interests.

On the other hand, ethics refers to doing what is right or wrong. To behave ethically is to behave in a manner that is consistent with what is generally considered to be right or moral. Ethics are moral principles and values that govern the actions and decisions of an individual or group (G. Belch & M. Belch, 2001). Ethical advertising means doing what the advertiser and the advertiser's peers believe is morally right in any given situation. An advertiser can act unethically or irresponsibly without breaking any laws. Citing Ivan Preston, Arens (2002) says that "ethics begin where the law ends". In advertising, ethical considerations would be those conducts, aptitudes, or behaviours that are displayed and deployed in the carrying out of the practice which are morally right and reflect moral principles in them. Ethics consists of certain rules and standards of conduct recognized in building a professional body or association. These standards and conducts could be seen as actions or manner of conducting, directing, managing, or carrying on in a specific sphere. To be ethical, it requires the need for the professional to behave in a way and manner which is morally right, in a right behavior and showing a right aptitude that shows leadership. Finally, in the conceptual framework that defines the work, professionalism refers to the skills or qualities of a profession or of its members; or great skills and competences that can be associated with a profession (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

As Okigbo (1998) observes, "A profession means a body of people who perform similar functions and are held together by a common bond of association arising from their performance of similar tasks, common identifiable norms, values, and rules". Citing McLeod and Hawley (1964), Okigbo continued that the former developed an instrument for measuring professionalism among newsmen and found that professional journalists generally are more concerned with ethical standards, are more educated, more critical of their own employers, more independent on the job, and less likely to take a non-journalism job. They are also less concerned with money and prestige. Further, the American Institute for Advertising Ethics of American Advertising Federation: Reynolds Journalism Institute observes that the

one constant is transparency, and the need to conduct ourselves, our businesses and our relationship with consumers in a fair, honest, and forthright manner. And the body further observed that inspired advertising professionals will practice and benefit from enhanced advertising ethics. From the above, it can be agreed that the defining line between professionalism and quackery in any sector is by abiding by the ethics or moral codes of conduct guiding it. It also reveals that the concept of ethics has different perspectives from which it can be interpreted. Generally, it is mainly professionals who are guided by the ethics of their professions and education.

Professionalism in Advertising Practice

With the emergence of formal advertising in 1928 in Nigeria, there was also the growing number of individuals who took advantage of the burgeoning commercialization in the country to set up their own advertising practice. Unlike how the practice was carried out by West African Publicity Limited which was affiliated to advertising bodies in London, the same could not be said for the numerous local agencies that flooded the Nigerian landscape at the time. This led to sharp practices, fraud, and unethical practices in the activities and processes of advertising that called for regulations and statutory controls. It was expected that with regulations: Statutory regulation or self-regulation will bring about the maintenance of standards, emergence of credit-worthy agencies, and prevention of the mushrooming of agencies, shutting out of quackery.

With time and the setting up of self-regulatory bodies such as Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (AAPN, now AAAN), ADVAN, NPAN, and the promulgation of the APCON in 1988 by Decree 55 as amended by Decree 13 of 1992, now Act No. 116 of 1993 which effectively made advertising a profession. Whereas, AAAN is a self-regulatory body to checkmate the activities of members of the body, APCON is backed by statutory rights of the Federal Government of Nigeria and can ensure control and compliance through the law, it can also exert punishment on erring members or quacks in the profession. As Divinsky (2008) observes in many countries, there are official organizations mandated to vet advertising to ensure it is not offensive, deceitful, and culturally distasteful. As such, organizations and practitioners are led by the guidelines which these statutory bodies have put in place. Practitioners are also expected to be self-regulated as to be seen to be accountable and truthful to gain the prospects which they are reaching out to.

The question then is what makes for professionalism and its attendant inputs in the practice of advertising. Okigbo citing Hohenburg (1987, p. 16) from his book *The Professional*, the qualifying qualities of professionalism have four essential ingredients. For those who want to make a beginning in journalism, of the media involved, the minimum requirements may be summed up as follows: a thorough education, sound training, and a willingness to accept discipline; familiarity with the basic skills of a journalist; and the will to work at tasks that are sometimes frustrating and seem unrewarding at the outset and a deep respect for one's personal and professional integrity. This much can be said for advertising because as the American Institute for Advertising Ethics surmise in its First Principle, advertising, public relations, marketing communications, news, and editorial all share a common objective of truth and high ethical standards in serving the public, which is seen in *The Journalist's Creed*.

Invariably, in describing the qualities of professionalism in journalism, the same is attributable to advertising practice. For the advertising professional, it will be expected that he or she will be characterized by the following: a proper education and discipline; appropriate skills; non-material ego drive and personal and group integrity (Okigbo, 1998).

Ugwuezuonu (1998) in defining a profession cites Flexner who says that there are six distinctive criteria of a profession: It is based on intellectual activity; requires from its members the possession of a considerable amount of knowledge and learning; has definite and practical purposes; has certain techniques which can be communicated; has an effective self-organization and is motivated by a desire to work for the welfare of the society. Citing Cart-Saunders and Wilson, he continues that the application of an intellectual technique to the ordinary business of life acquired as the result of prolonged and specialized training is the chief distinguishing characteristic of the professions.

Ugwuezuonu (1998) citing Nwosu, Ikechukwu, PhD, the former Chairman of the African Council of Communication Education (ACCE), states that being professional refers to the ideology and related activities that can be found in any occupational group whose members aspire to improve professional status. It bestows pride on members of the group, and makes them stand out in the crowd of occupational groups. It also brings with it a lot of duties, responsibilities,

and societal expectations which keep the true professionals always on their toes, on their guard always ready to fight for and protect the ideals for which the profession is known.

For advertising practice therefore, certain ingredients can be deduced from the positions of the various authors: There is the need for the acquisition of a higher education above certain minimums, it is expected that there should also be training and imbibing of skills in different aspects of the business. There is the need to identify with the occupational sector which defines the profession. Membership of the statutory body and other relevant sectoral associations is requisite for the advertising professional. Also, there is the need to be recognized as being a member of that group through the exhibition of certain distinguishing qualities that stands the professional out from the quack. It is also expected that the advertising professional should exhibit a high sense of integrity and high moral conducts which are stated within the ambit of the rules of the profession.

Ethical Considerations Guiding Advertising Practice

Ethics consists of certain rules and standards of conduct recognized in building a professional body or association such as advertising.

According to Ayozie (1998), usually a profession provides a code of ethics and conduct to guide members in their practice. Assimilation of the requisite body of knowledge or education qualifies one to practice a profession, while the challenges and demands faced by the profession dictate the substance of such education. To be ethical, a professional or an occupational group is expected to operate within standards of conduct which could be seen as action or manner of conducting, directing, managing, or carrying on in a specific sphere (Okiyi, 2007).

Ethical considerations in advertising imply having a right aptitude that indicates leadership. It reveals or shows the right disposition or an exemplary aptitude which is morally right while engaging in advertising practice. Advertising ethics point to the set of principles which uphold the concept or idea of decency, honesty, truth, and legal and frowns at deception, falsehood, and fallacy. As Levick, Jeff, the President of Global Advertising & Strategy, AOL (AOL Advertising) (2011) observes, it is critical for the industry to acknowledge and accept that advertising is commercial information that must be treated with the same accuracy and ethics as editorial information. The need for professionalism through the implication of abiding by ethics guiding advertising practice is intrinsic. This is so because advertising is involved in the building up of dynamic economic systems and also drives economies through its activities. Advertising also uses enormous human and material resources to achieve its purposes. A successful advertisement impacts economically, socially, culturally, and morally. As Pope John Paul VI remarks, "No one now can escape the influence of advertising". People who are not themselves exposed to particular forms of advertising confront a society, a culture, and other people, affected for good or ill by advertising messages and techniques of every sort. As the Pope further observes, there is nothing intrinsically good or intrinsically evil about advertising. It is a tool, an instrument: It can be used well, and it can be used badly. Advertising at times has beneficial results and also negative harmful impact on individuals and society. As he summed it up, If harmful or utterly useless goods are touted to the public; if false assertions are made about goods for sale, if less than admirable human tendencies are exploited those responsible for such advertising harm society and forfeit their good name and credibility.

Further, Nzeribe (2012) observes that where a consumer does not get the total picture, the advertisement is deceptive or there is a deliberate intention to deceive. There is therefore the need to ban "weasels" and dangling comparisons and to substantiate the product claims. Such subjective claims as "a beautiful furniture", "just like mama's cooking", and "great-tasting coffee" cannot really be substantiated. In the realm of an objective or competitive claim, research must be available to support it. This captures the essence of ethics in advertising and other processes involved in it. Advertising aims to inform persuade and motivate people to act in certain ways, buy certain products or services, and patronize certain institutions or organizations. In carrying out these tasks, how they are achieved and the motives of all concerned including the advertiser, the practitioner and media are all predicated on the platform of ethics or in conducting such within the principles and precepts guiding the advertising profession.

Ethical considerations go beyond operating within the ambit of the law or statutory control, or acting in compliance to what the laws guiding advertising says, it is rather abiding and maintaining a self-imposed respect for integrity by the advertising practitioner or the occupational group.

ARCON and Its Role in Professionalizing Advertising

APCON came into existence by the enactment of Act No. 55 of 1988 later amended by Act No. 93 of 1992 and Act No. 116 of 1993. The enabling laws mandated APCON to control advertising in all its aspects and ramifications. The Advertising Standards Panel (ASP) which is one of three statutory standing committees of APCON was set up by Act No. 93 of 1992 with the primary assignment of ensuring that advertisements are prepared with a sense of social responsibility and in adherence to the codes of practice expected of practitioners and users of advertising services. Advertising in Nigeria is statutorily regulated by the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria Act.

The act established the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria and is divided into six parts: Part 1: establishes the council, its functions, and composition;

Part 2: deals with registration, including the process of becoming a member of the advertising profession;

Part 3: deals with training, including the approval of any course of training which is intended for persons seeking to become members of the profession;

Part 4: deals with the privileges of registered persons and offences by unregistered persons;

Part 5: deals with discipline; and

Part 6: deals with supplementary provisions. For the intent of this paper, Part 2 is pertinent as it deals with the requirements of becoming a practitioner or a professional (advertiser?).

Parts of this include having the name of the person and qualifications in the register. She/he is also required to pay fees according to their category of registration and yearly membership fees. The three grounds which a member's name may be removed from the register are: death, insanity, and gross misconduct. With ARCON, advertising practitioners are to be registered or licensed to become professionals. This licensing is premised on three pillars which are: (1) training (skills, praxis, and qualifications); (2) code of practice/ethics; and (3) integrity (respect and service) (Okigbo, 1998). ARCON's responsibilities stem from these three themes and are broadened into five functions which are: (1) determining what standards of knowledge and skills are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as members of the advertising profession and reviewing those standards from time to time; (2) regulating and controlling the practice of advertising in all its aspects and ramifications; (3) conducting examinations in the profession and awarding certificates or diplomas to successful candidates as and when appropriate; (4) privileges and appointment of registered persons of the Council and Punishment and Offences of unregistered persons; and (5) disciplinary actions and penalties for unprofessional conducts by persons. This overview of ARCON's responsibilities reveals that being ethical and maintaining professionalism is central to the activities of practitioners of advertising in Nigeria. This is seen in the second and third themes of the pillars of the organization and explained in the second responsibility noted above.

The implication of the Advertising Standards Panel charged with the duty of ensuring that advertisements conform to the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as the codes of ethics of the advertising profession (APCON, 2003, p. 27). APCON's Code of Ethics is a comprehensive book of rules covering every aspect of advertising in Nigeria, ranging from tobacco and alcoholic products to politics, banking services, and medicine. These codes are voluntary and do not have the force of law, and cannot be penalized. This is where integrity which determines conduct and professionalism comes into play in advertising practice.

These codes can be split into four parts and include the following: (1) advertising is to be legal, decent, honest, truthful, and respectful of Nigeria's cultures; (2) advertising is to be prepared with a high sense of serious responsibility and should not show disregard for the interest of consumers and the wider Nigerian society; (3) it should conform to the principles of fair competition generally accepted in business, and fair comment expected in human communication; and (4) it should enhance public confidence in advertising. Commitment to these codes by practitioners will reveal adherence to the ethics guiding advertisement without being forced by the law, and reveal professionalism by the practitioner. From the ongoing, it is seen that the advertising sector has in place structures which will enhance professionalism, and the central body responsible for this is APCON which has been enabled by law to control and

sanitize the practice of advertising as much as it is possible. Working in tandem with sectoral groups like AAAN, ADVAN, NPAN, OOAN, BON, etc., efforts are carried out regularly to achieve this.

Theoretical Framework

Virtue Ethics Theory

Virtue ethics is a moral philosophy that emphasizes the importance of character and moral virtues. In advertising, virtue ethics can guide decisions about what types of ads reflect good character and moral virtues. According to Aristotle (trans. 2011), virtues are habits of character that enable individuals to live a good life. For instance, honesty is a key virtue in advertising, where advertisers should prioritize truthfulness and accuracy in their advertising claims.

Scholars have applied virtue ethics to advertising in various ways. Swann (2018) argues that advertisers should prioritize respect for their audience, avoiding ads that are demeaning or exploitative. Belk (2017) notes that advertisers have a responsibility to promote positive values and behaviors through their advertising practices. By adopting virtue ethics principles, advertisers can develop ethical advertising guidelines that reflect virtues such as honesty, fairness, and respect (Hursthouse, 1999).

The application of virtue ethics in advertising can lead to several benefits. Advertisers can promote positive values and behaviors, build trust with their audience, and enhance their reputation. By prioritizing honesty, fairness, and respect, advertisers can create ads that are not only effective but also ethical and responsible. As Aristotle (trans. 2011) emphasizes, virtues are essential for living a good life, and advertisers can apply these principles to create ads that reflect good character and moral virtues.

Research Methodology

This study employs a secondary research method, which involves analyzing and synthesizing existing research studies, academic journals, books, and other relevant sources of information. The secondary research method is used to:

1. Analyze existing literature: Review and analyze existing studies on ethical issues in advertising in Nigeria.
2. Synthesize findings: Synthesize the findings of existing studies to draw conclusions about the state of ethical issues in advertising in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings highlight the complexities of ethical issues and dilemmas in advertising in Nigeria. According to scholars, advertising is a powerful tool that can shape consumer behavior and influence societal values (Hackley, 2017). However, the study reveals that Nigerian advertisers often face ethical dilemmas, particularly in relation to truthfulness, transparency, and cultural sensitivity.

On truthfulness and transparency, the study shows that many Nigerian advertisements lack truthfulness and transparency, which is consistent with the findings of Okafor (2015) that Nigerian advertisers often prioritize creativity over accuracy. Scholars argue that truthfulness and transparency are essential for building trust between advertisers and consumers (Rotfeld, 2017). The study's findings suggest that Nigerian advertisers need to prioritize these values to maintain consumer trust and loyalty.

On cultural sensitivity, the study highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in Nigerian advertising. According to scholars, cultural sensitivity is critical for avoiding offense and promoting positive social values (Belk, 2017). The study's findings reveal that Nigerian advertisers often struggle to balance cultural sensitivity with the need to appeal to diverse audiences. Scholars argue that advertisers need to be aware of the cultural nuances of their target audience to avoid miscommunication and offense (Taylor, 2018).

On regulatory framework, the study shows that Nigeria's regulatory framework for advertising is inadequate, which is consistent with the findings of Adeyemi (2019) that Nigerian advertising regulations are often ineffective. Scholars

argue that a robust regulatory framework is essential for promoting ethical advertising practices and protecting consumer interests (Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, 2020). The study's findings suggest that Nigerian regulators need to strengthen the regulatory framework to promote ethical advertising practices.

On the impact on consumers, the study reveals that unethical advertising practices can have a negative impact on Nigerian consumers. According to scholars, exposure to unethical advertising can lead to consumer mistrust and skepticism (Darkwa, 2017). The study's findings suggest that Nigerian advertisers need to prioritize ethical considerations to promote positive consumer attitudes and behaviors.

Conclusion

The study's findings have implications for advertisers, regulators, and consumers. According to scholars, ethical advertising practices are essential for promoting consumer trust, loyalty, and well-being. The study's findings suggest that Nigerian advertisers need to prioritize truthfulness, transparency, and cultural sensitivity to promote positive social values and consumer interests. In the course of this work, the authors examined the development of the advertising industry in Nigeria, and also traced the growth of the industry to the point where statutory and regulatory associations and organs became established. The authors also provided conceptual framework through which the ideas and concepts used in the paper were done. Further, the recognition of advertising by the Federal Government of Nigeria through Act No. 55 of 1988 was amended by Act No. 93 of 1992 and later Act No. 116 of 1993. This is further enhanced by the setting up of three statutory committees, one of which is the Advertising Standards Panel. In being professional, advertising practitioners are expected to abide by certain rules and regulations guiding advertising. Besides, they are also expected to embark on training and acquire different levels of education which will enable them to become professionals of the sector. Besides, practitioners are also expected to register and pay yearly fees to enable them practice. Again, there are codes of ethics which advertising practitioners are expected to abide by. Different sectoral groups within the advertising industry are obliged to be guided by these codes. By carrying out practices which are self-regulated, and meet with the demands of the codes of ethics besides the statutory regulations will build professionalism in the advertising industry. Finally, the words of Okigbo in Nzeribe (2012) in his foreword of the book of a late icon of advertising practice in Nigeria, Dr. May Nzeribe is pertinent as he observes that ethics is at the heart of advertising practice which must be regulated for it to maintain its unique relevance in our society.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Prioritize truthfulness and transparency: Advertisers should prioritize truthfulness and transparency in their advertising practices to build trust with consumers.
2. Develop culturally sensitive advertising: Advertisers should develop advertising campaigns that are culturally sensitive and respectful of Nigerian values and traditions.
3. Strengthen regulatory framework: Regulatory bodies should strengthen the regulatory framework to promote ethical advertising practices and protect consumer interests.
4. Invest in consumer education: Advertisers and regulatory bodies should invest in consumer education to promote critical thinking and media literacy among Nigerian consumers.
5. Promote industry self-regulation: The advertising industry should promote self-regulation and adhere to industry codes of conduct to promote ethical advertising practices.
6. Conduct regular audits: Regulatory bodies should conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with advertising regulations and standards.
7. Provide training and capacity building: Advertisers and regulatory bodies should provide training and capacity building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of advertising professionals.
8. Encourage stakeholder engagement: Advertisers, regulatory bodies, and consumers should engage in regular dialogue to promote mutual understanding and cooperation.

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