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Female professionals, advertising agency management and Nigeria's development challenge

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The numerical strength and the power of women in many sectors of the Nigerian economy are on the increase. Also, previous efforts by multilateral organizations, government agencies and advocacy groups on the need for the education of the girl-child in the country seem to have impacted positively on enrolment figures of females at all levels of the educational system in Nigeria. Informal discussion with colleagues drawn from several universities and polytechnics where Mass Communication or media studies are on offer in Nigeria shows that there are now more female than male students pursuing courses in mass communication. In Nigeria, little is known on female participation in advertising agency management. Accordingly, this research attempts to find out the extent to which the growing interest and number of females in communication-related disciplines is adequately reflected in female participation in advertising agency business and management in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to determine the proportion of female participation in advertising agency management; the perception of female professionals on their degree of involvement in decision-making at top management level in advertising agencies; identify the most dominant component of advertising agency practice where female roles are more pronounced as well as the cadre that females tend to occupy in the advertising agency profession; and investigate the extent to which female professionals are satisfied with their level of involvement in advertising agency ownership in Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted which involved the use of 18-item close- and open-ended questionnaire. Using the simple random sampling technique, a sample size of 110 female advertising professionals, drawn from 20 (or 26%) of the existing 78 officially registered advertising agencies in Nigeria participated in the study. The study finds that: 76% of the female respondents agreed that there are more male employees in advertising agencies in Nigeria compared to females; there is a preponderance of junior level female employees in Client Service departments of existing advertising agencies; 76.4% agreed that more number of female employees in advertising agencies belong to the junior category, although a majority (58.2%) agreed that the percentage of females that occupy management position are well integrated in agencies' decision-making processes; and 67% are dissatisfied with the level of female involvement in advertising agency ownership. The implications of these findings for the development at the industry and national levels are presented in the discussion of findings and recommendations.

Biography

Rotimi Williams Olatunji, PhD, is an associate professor, Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos, Nigeria. His research interests are in the areas of advertising, women, children and society; consumer studies; marketing communication; tourism marketing; health communication; political communication and public relations. He is widely published and serves on the editorial board of some leading international journals.

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