

ASSESSMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY AMONGST CREATIVE DESIGN ADVERTISING PRACTITIONERS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA.

Adesile Mercy Funmilayo

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria

mfadesile36@lautech.edu.ng

And

Etsename Louis Emmanuel

Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria.

leetsename@futa.edu.ng

Introduction

The creative department serves as the life blood or nucleus in disseminating effective communication to consumers, and is also essential to where ideas behind a campaign are born (Paul, 2012). Salz (1994), explains that a creative department's business is to create, produce advertising and other communications such as sale literatures, promotion, direct response and public relations. This department in the advertising agency oversees all forms and means of advertising from print to digital media. The members of the creative department consist of the creative directors, copywriters, art directors, designers and production artists. The advertising process involves a team of creative professionals who specialize in specific aspects of the advertising process which enables the smooth running of an agency. The input of an individual is never enough to get a copy to the desired destination. The professionals involved in the advertising process include graphic designers, public relations experts, marketing executives, illustrators, engineers, copywriters, artists, layout designers, among others. The advert copy begins from the minds of the advertisers through the office of the advertising agency for a distinct peculiarity on product and the prospective consumers (Agbana, 2013).

The world of advertising is a particularly insightful industry through which contemporary issues of gender, power, work and space come to play. It reveals with great acuity how media representations of increasingly empowered women in advertising are profoundly at odds with the occupational composition of the advertising industry's workforce (Sleinmen & Gurley, 2012). Female representation in creative practice in the advertising agencies have been a mainstream topic in historical accounts of advertising throughout the twenty-first (21st) century, but academic researchers have not given comparable attention to the subject (Mallia, 2006). However, a study conducted in 2003 showed that only 3% of the creative directors globally were women, signifying a severe lack of female leadership and representation in advertising creative departments (Windels, 2008). This number as reported at the Female Designer Movement Summit increased to about eleven percent (11%) in 2015 and fifteen percent (15%) in 2018 respectively. This indicator shows a good progress, but women are still under represented. Not only is this an issue from a gender equality standpoint, but also from a business perspective (Banwo, 2018). This global phenomenon also mirrors local conditions, when extrapolated to the Nigerian situation, this is what study intends to establish.

Although the fact has been established in literature that female advertising practitioners are much fewer as compared to their male counterparts in the agencies, this situation should not obtain in a progressive and liberal industry like advertising. Natalia (2010), suggests that there is a trend of vertical and horizontal segregation in the occupational structure of the advertising industry. An article titled 'Babes in boy land' appeared about the creative world and the question asked was why were there so few women in the advertising agency's workforce (Sheri & Jean, 2008). This brings up the big question of what reasons accounts for the lopsided ratio of more successful and eminent men to women in advertising agencies particularly in Lagos, Nigeria, which these researchers have

selected as case study. It is for these reasons that this study was conducted to ascertain the degree of gender equality within the advertising agencies' occupational structure and practice in Lagos, Nigeria.

Although females have demonstrated a productive attitude towards production efficiency, the female gender is still always affected by the societal structure of advertising, media and marketing (Olatunji & Ayodele, 2010; Hanan, 2016).

1. This study as the inequalities found in the creative departments of advertising agencies, which may have reduced the population, efficiency and skills of females in the agency.

Statement of the Problem

Female representation in creative departments in Nigerian advertising agencies has been limited (Aurora & Teresa, 2011). However, it has also been observed that there exists a gap in feminist literature with regards to gender equality in the Nigerian advertising professional work space, which the authors believe has adversely affected the output of most advertising agencies. Hence, it can be said that gender inequality in advertising agencies has far deeper economic and social repercussions

2. Than what existing literature on gender divisions of labour acknowledge. This study intends to assess the inequalities found in the creative departments in advertising agencies, which may have reduced the population, efficiency and skills of females in the industry. The researcher noted that there is little academic research on Nigerian human resource demographics and structure. Hence, it was therefore necessary to carry out a study on the advertising practice, particularly the creative aspect from a gender perspective.

This study at assessing gender equality amongst creative design advertising practitioners, with the view to ascertaining the degree of gender equality within the advertising agencies' occupational structure and practice in Lagos, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. determine the proportion of female to male creative design practitioners practicing in advertising agencies in Lagos, Nigeria;
2. ascertain the conditions influencing female career choices amongst creative design practitioners;
3. examine factors that affect the job performances in advertising agencies in Lagos, Nigeria; and
4. assess female creative design practitioners' perception on working conditions as different to their male counterparts in the advertising agencies.

To aid this study, the following questions were raised to assess gender equality in creative design practice in advertising agencies in Lagos, Nigeria.

1. What is the proportion of female to male creative design practitioners at all levels of the advertising agencies' workforce in Lagos, Nigeria?
2. Is there any condition(s) influencing female career choices amongst creative design practitioners in Lagos, Nigeria?
3. Is there any factor(s) that affects job performances in advertising agencies in Lagos, Nigeria?
4. Is the female creative design practitioners' perception on working conditions different from their male counterparts in the advertising agencies in Lagos, Nigeria?

This study is limited to the assessment of gender equality amongst creative design advertising practitioners in Lagos, Nigeria, with emphasis on a comparative study on gender demographics (male, female), challenges and satisfaction practitioners get from their work environment in Lagos, Nigeria. The pilot study revealed that as at November 2019, eighty-five (85) agencies were registered and issued licenses by the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN). Using a purposive sampling method, practitioners from six of the 85 agencies were interviewed. The interviews conducted served as follow-up to responses received from the questionnaires the researcher had

earlier administered. In this case, only interested respondents were interviewed. The interviewees were from the following advertising agencies: DKK & Associates, Adeptus Comms. Ltd., Explicit Comms. Ltd., Big & Bold Comms. Ltd., Brande Aristotle Ltd and 1201 Brandway Limited. This study was conducted in Lagos, Nigeria, which is the commercial and industrial capital of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Relevant literatures were reviewed in subject areas covering gender relations, gender inequality, profile of Nigerian women, advertising, portrayal of women and other related areas, themes and relevant subjects.

Concept of Gender Inequality

Gender is a socially constructed identity that rests on a binary constituting of both men and women. It describes not only the socially constructed differences between men and women, but also the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity (Dominelli, 2007). In almost all societies, women and men differ in their activities and undertakings, regarding access to, and control over resources, and participating in decision-making. Riley (2007) identified gender as a social institution, a cultural construct and power tool within a family, while men perform the role of bread earners, women function as homemakers. This difference between the man and woman generates common gender role stereotypes (Eagly & Wood, 2009).

Gender roles are attitudes and activities that a culture links to each sex. This is an active expression of gender identity which reflects one's gender. The first question people usually ask about a new born child in Nigeria is: "Is it a boy or a girl?" Such a question carries a great deal of significance for the child's entire life (Otitie, 2006). In global perspective, the preference for boys is more pronounced in Africa and most Asian countries, hence discrimination against females is common in these countries as well (Olaewaju, Kona & Dickson, 2015).

Gender Inequality in Nigeria

Gender inequality is influenced by the different culture and beliefs in Nigeria which cut across all political, economic, social, religious, cultural, industrial and financial spheres under which the overwhelming number of upper positions in society are either occupied or controlled by men (Okpe, 2005). In most parts of Nigeria, women are considered subordinate to their male counterparts, most especially in Northern Nigeria (Babalola, 2014). Feminism appeared in Nigeria roughly forty years ago when women freedom was a top issue. It is slowly having a larger impact in the Nigerian government.

Iloegbunam (2006) said one of the ironies of history is the fact that despite the role women play both at home and in the society, they have remained unnoticed and even belittled. This is borne out of the notion that women's function of being homemakers and caring for children is not important. Women, therefore, are to be seen and not heard. The patriarchal nature is a major feature of a traditional society in Nigeria and has made women to be at a disadvantage in the world of work. Unemployment was especially high among African women at 5.8% as estimated by International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2009). In the 2015 Nigerian election, women represented 35.8% of parliament (Adamu, 2016). In the Education Sector in 2015, the net female enrolment in Primary Education was 58.1%, 71.6% Secondary Education and 8.3% in Tertiary Education. Job disparities for women are improving, but still unequal. This occupational segregation is particularly problematic, given that recruitment into the advertising sector is equitable by gender. In Human Resources and secretarial roles, women account for 85.4% and 94.3% of the advertising workforce respectively (Institute for the Practitioners in Advertising IPA, 2016). It is only as people move up the occupational hierarchy that the percentage of women declines (Magee, 2016).

Industries and organizations such as Campaign and Institute for the Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) are calling for specific targets in relations to female employment, aiming for forty (40%) of the most senior employment roles to be held by women, arguing that “it is striking that as the roles become more senior, the gender split becomes considerably less balanced. While women account for 56.1% of the junior agency roles, this drops to 39.2% at the head of department level and 30.5% in leadership positions” (Magee, 2016). These figures illustrate an uncomfortable truth that currently prevails within certain agencies. There is a strong pattern of vertical and horizontal occupational segregation within advertising industry: whilst women account for 50.8% of employees, they account for only 27.3% of senior positions (Institute for the Practitioners in Advertising IPA, 2016). Even with what is widely considered to be one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, gender inequality is still prevalent in Nigeria.

Birth of Advertising Practice in Nigeria

Advertising in Nigeria has grown from its earliest beginning of using town criers to announce availability of goods and services, to becoming a big industry in Nigeria. Advertising is now very important in the economy of the nation, considering the fact that it serves as a source of information about goods and services, and also persuades consumers to patronize the advertised goods and services (Arens, 1999).

According to Bel-Molokwu (2000), advertising is as old as man. The word comes from the Latin word ‘advertere’, meaning ‘to draw attention to’. He further posits that in Nigeria, the earliest recorded activities that could be described as advertising in its crudest form include the town criers using early morning gong signals that alerted the village dwellers of an impending announcement. Town crying was also frequently employed to carry out advertisements or information about inter-tribal wars, disasters, important ceremonies including marriages, births, deaths, products, services, ideas, personalities and bargains. Ogbodoh (1990) went further to state that hawking and displays were the other known methods of advertising in Nigeria in the earliest times. Hawkers advertised their wares by calling out the wares they had, and asking people to buy them by extolling the quality and quantity of such goods.

The advent of the printing press in 1450 affected advertising a great deal. In Nigeria, the first printing press was established in Calabar by the Presbyterian Church in 1846. The establishment of the first Nigerian newspaper by Reverend Henry Townsend, by the Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S.), Abeokuta in December 1859, changed the face of advertising in Nigeria. Furthermore, Bel-Molokwu (2000) propounds that the first formal media advertisement ever carried in Nigeria was in *Iwe Irohin*, and was in form of information on shipping movement and cargo. It was a classified category advertisement.

From then on, other sorts of advertisements began to appear in the newspapers, while the growth of printing saw the emergence of well-printed black-and-white posters which led to the birth of organized outdoor advertising as we know it today (APCON, 2005).

Consequently, other advertisements like obituary, social activities, like christenings and ballroom dances began to appear in the newspapers. The latter part of the 19th century witnessed the establishment of many more newspapers. Most of these early newspapers were short-lived because they did not develop the flair for attracting advertising support. The early part of the twentieth century saw an upsurge in business activities in Nigeria.

In 1928 the Royal Niger Company established the West African Publicity Limited (WAP), the first ever advertising agency in Nigeria. It did not only service the publicity needs of her parent company but grew to become the father of organized advertising in Nigeria (APCON, 2005). The advent of radio and television broadcasting added flair to advertising. Radio was established in 1932 in Nigeria through the advent of the British Empire Service. The first Radio Distribution Service (Re-diffusion),

was established in Lagos in 1936 (Osunbiyi, 1999). However, radio advertisement started in Nigeria in 1955, with the birth of Western Nigerian Broadcasting Service (WNBS). Television broadcasting started in Nigeria in 1959, with Western Nigerian Television (WNTV). The first Television advertisement in Nigeria was for Star Beer and Krola Soft Drink (Bardi, 2010). With the oil boom in the early 1970s, there was an upsurge in business activities and turnover. This led to the need for more advertisements by these companies. also led to the formation of more advertising agencies. Today in Nigeria, advertising is a big business.

Theoretical Framework

This research adopted the African feminist theory, serving as the underpin for viewing the position of women in creative design practice in Nigeria. The theory provides the lens for the study of women's experiences in advertising agencies. African Feminist theory in this research serves as a social movement and ideology that fights for political, economic and social rights for African women (Oyewumi, 2003). Gender and design in creative practice are themes that have helped to shape feminist perspectives of social responsibility. A closer look at the occupational distribution of men and women in the creative departments of advertising agencies reveals that there is inequality on certain business categories (Lezzi, 2005). Despite high feminization of advertising courses, female creatives in the agencies are few (Grow & Broyles, 2011). The boys' club culture, institutionalized in the industry by pervasive masculine norms, dominates the advertising workforce and may serve as a key barrier to acceptance of women and their progress in job hierarchy.

Over the years, gender disparity has been attributed to males' physical structure, making them more productive and deserving of more earnings than females. Furthermore, Walker states that even in jobs that do not require physical strength or physical differences, women are not considered, as males still dominate, leaving females to be excluded from many job opportunities (Walker, 1872). This has forced female labour into other available occupations, and because of their large numbers, wages are forced down. Walker suggests that a widening of the range of occupations open to women will bring about equal wages. "Feminism in Creative Design Practice" focuses on the position of a woman in the design workplace. President Sheila Wellington notes that at the end of the day, many men head for drinks, women head for the dry cleaners (Windels & Yeh, 2010). Men pick up career tips, women pick up laundry, kids, dinner and the house. Arguments about pay disparities, differences in education by gender, the relationship between family responsibilities and wages and crowding of women into particular occupations have been hinged on this theory. Hence, the research tried to examine that the positions and powers of men and women are different too in design practice in advertising agencies and has led to the issue of gender inequality (Basharat & Amir, 2012).

Methodology

To gain further understanding and insights regarding the research, a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative approaches were deployed to elicit responses on the assessment of gender inequality in creative design practice in advertising agencies in Lagos, Nigeria. The sampling method was based on non-probability sampling (based on convenience) and criterion sampling. The research data for analysis were obtained in two phases. The First Phase was based on a survey where a questionnaire was administered, while the Second Phase was based on the interview of purposively selected persons. Six interviews were conducted for this research. The second phase of the research was the gathering of data through interviews. The criterion sample method was used to select the sample group (Patton, 2001), the respondents selected were those who had shown an interest in the previous survey. They are persons who had agreed that they could be contacted if the need arose to seek their opinions again.

Table 1: Respondents demographic Characteristics

	Interviewee A	Interviewee B	Interviewee C
Gender	Female	Male	Male
Age	33	25	29
Agency	DKK & Associates	Adeptus Comms. Ltd.	Explicit Comms. Ltd.
Qualification	BTECH	B.ART	BTECH
Employment Status	Full Time	Full Time	Full Time
Specialization	Copywriter	Editor	Art Director
	Interviewee D	Interviewee E	Interviewee F
Gender	Female	Female	Male
Age	30	28	33
Agency	Big & Bold Comms. Ltd.	Brande Aristotle Ltd.	1201 Brandway Ltd.
Qualification	HND	BTECH	BTECH
Employment Status	Full Time	Full Time	Full Time
Specialization	Editor	Copywriter	Graphic Designer

Data Generation and Presentation of Results

Data was gotten through both quantitative and qualitative means. The quantitative survey involved the use of structured questionnaires and was administered and results collected with the use of SurveyMonkey, a research instrument for data collection. Forty (40) questionnaires were administered for the research. As for the qualitative data generation, this was done through interviews. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and was transcribed into a computer. The responses were transcribed and organized into themes through coding using Quirkos Software Version 2.4.1. The interviews conducted among the six design practitioners' explored variables that include: exposure, dreams, passion, skills, memories and teamwork.

Gender Inequality in Workplace

The data presented in Table 2 from the questionnaire administered to forty (40) respondents in the research, indicate that there is a workplace gender inequality in advertising agencies in the study area. The table shows that 2.5% strongly agreed that there is gender inequality, while 47.5% agreed, 12.5% are undecided, and 5% strongly disagreed.

Table 2: Gender Inequality in Workplace.

Answer Choices	Responses Frequency	Percentages
Strongly Agree	5	12.5%
Agreed	19	47.5%
Neither agreed nor disagreed	5	12.5%
Disagreed	9	22.5%
Strongly Disagreed	2	5%
Total	40	100%

The above data suggests that women are less likely to be hired into staff positions and have less access to line experience, which is often a stepping stone to higher-level management positions. Women tend to report that their initial job assignments are less challenging than men's assignments. In addition, unlike jobs that tend to be held by women, jobs held by men tend to exist in job ladders that lead to positions of greater power and influence. Osunde's (2015) study confirms the above

assertion, that the labour market for male and female workers are disparate and that the labour market demand for both genders are in differs, and in favor of the male.

Sex Discrimination in Hiring

The researcher visited agencies registered with the Association of Advertising Agencies in Nigeria (AAAN). A total of six participants were interviewed. Table 1. Delineates the demographic background of the interviewees: age, gender, agency, Qualification obtained, employment status and field of specialization.

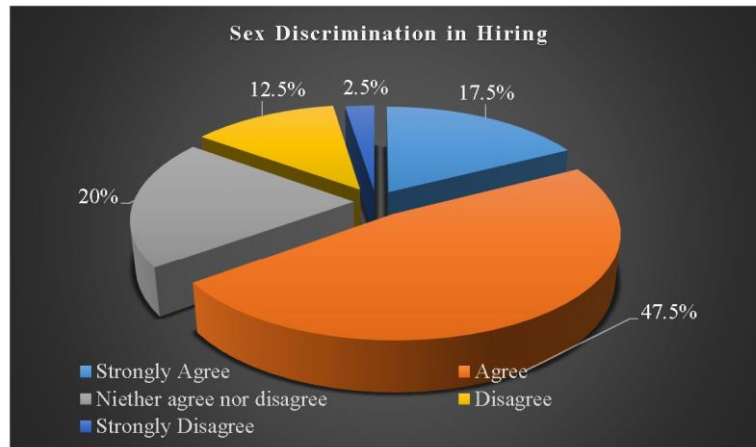


Figure 1: Sex discrimination in hiring

The data presented in Figure 1, shows the response to the statement that sex discrimination exist in hiring creative practitioners in creative advertising agencies. The data in the table shows that 17.5% strongly agreed to the fact that hiring in creative practitioners varies by gender in the creative department, 47.5% agreed, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, 12.5% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed. An interview was conducted with some agencies about company policies on the hiring of female practitioners. Responses received suggest that some females may be facing discrimination because of their inability to combine the profession with their parental roles.

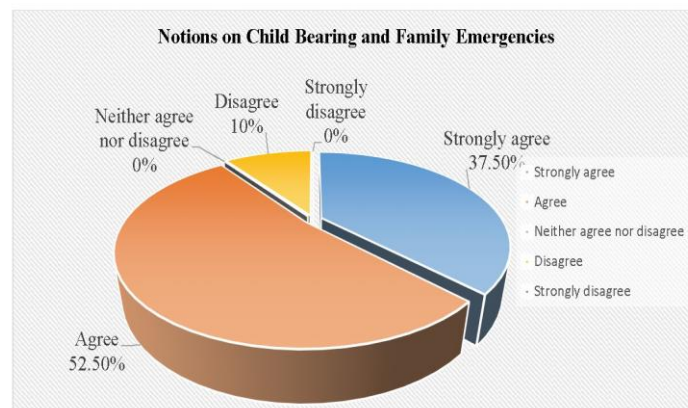


Figure 2: Notion of child-bearing and family emergencies in shortened careers of female practitioners

The data presented in Figure 2, shows the response to the statement on the notion of childbearing and family emergencies which have contributed immensely to the shortened careers of female practitioners in the advertising agencies. The data in the table shows that 37.5% strongly agreed to the fact that socialization experiences on individual's view on gender has great effect in career choices, 52.5% agreed, 0% neither agreed nor disagreed, 10% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed.

On the ratio of men to women in advertising agencies in Lagos as discussed among the interviewees suggests that the ratio of male in the agencies is way more populated than the female in the creative department of the agencies. This finding was consistent with the assertions of Hill & Johnson, (2003), that women are underrepresented in many fields of applied creative services.

Other supporting quotes from the interviews were:

Interviewee E: "presently at Brande Aristotle Limited, we currently have 4 males and 1 female."

Interviewee F: "At 1201 Brandway Limited, we have 4 males and no females in our creative department so far."

Interviewee A: "presently at DKK & Associate, our female staffs out weight the male, about 13 females and 9 males, but in the creative department we have about 60% male and 40% female that's about 3:2" (sic).

The respondents indicate that occupational segregation in creative departments of advertising agencies in Lagos has affected the female employees' job performance. Windels (2008), in his work titled Proportional representation and regulatory focus: the case for cohorts among female creative', states that it appears that the representation in communication arts of advertising is overwhelmingly male. According to the interviewees, sex discrimination and biological factors among the female has limited their growth in the creative department. The interviewees cited that:

Interviewer C: "factors that affects female efficiency can be categorized under cultural view of gender such as societal views, biological factors."

Interviewee A: "the factors that affect women and they include the following; Team failure, Personal distress, Pressure from the opposite sex, Managerial policies, Domestic issues, Technical fault, Lack of skills" (sic).

Research Findings

At the end of this research, the following findings were made:

1. The research findings show suggest that males in advertising agencies in the study area outnumber the female practitioners;
2. The findings show that certain conditions have influenced female career choices which include: design abilities, childhood experiences, parental influences and practical exposure have determined/influenced female practitioners' career choices;
3. The factors affecting job performance denoted from the findings include; self-efficacy, leadership style and organizational commitment; and
4. The study also suggested that certain perceptions, such as: biological factors, motherhood, notions of child bearing, family emergencies and family structure have most times affected career decision-making by female creative design practitioners as compared to their male counterparts which has led mostly to the shortened career trajectory of female practitioners in the agencies.

Based on these findings, the interviews provided a general understanding to the topic, assessing gender equality amongst creative department advertising agencies using Lagos as a case study. New and rich insights emerged directly from the studied population sample in their natural settings. The interviews aided the researchers to attain authentic personal experiences, views, and explanations regarding the assessment of gender equality in the creative departments of advertising agencies in Lagos. The data collection enabled the researchers to interpret the respondents' behaviours through their own individual lens of perception, enclosed within subjective judgments and prior academic references.

Discussion

Gender inequality is said to be an unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on their sex; this arises from the differences placed on them by their social environment as well as their biological forms. The study assessed gender equality amongst creative department advertising agencies using Lagos state as a case study. Concerns about the gender configuration and makeup of advertising agencies undoubtedly have become a mainstream issue. Past studies on gender representation in advertising agencies were mostly based in Europe, United States and Asia which findings cannot be generalized to developing climes like Nigeria.

The underrepresentation of women in the creative department of the advertising agency has led to a streamlined gender inclusiveness where masculine ideologies infiltrate feminine assignments.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the research recommends the following:

1. More females should be recruited within the creative agencies.
2. Females should be given opportunity to pursue their career and not be limited or judged by cultural or societal views.
3. Advertising agencies should give all staff equal opportunity to serve regardless of gender.
4. Any form of discrimination or favoritism should be avoided.
5. Advertising agencies should make favourable office policies that will enhance job performance for both gender, and also look into ways of improving workers job performance. This will in turn lead to growth, overall improvement in work output and general work conduciveness.

Conclusion

The results of this study reaffirm some of the findings noted in the contemporary research associated with gender and gender studies within the advertising agencies. Findings in this study indicate the need of gender equality. Therefore, based on this research, it can be stated categorically that men outnumber women in the creative department of the advertising agencies in Lagos and as such, more awareness should be done to encourage more female participation and inclusion. Moreover, equality structure on gender view should be put in place in the creative departments whereby making it more flexible and conducive to accommodate female creative in advertising agencies.

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