

American Journal of Communication (AJC)



**GENDER-SENSITIVE ADVERTISING AS AN EFFECTIVE
TOOL FOR REPOSITIONING WOMEN IN TO PUBLIC
OFFICES IN NIGERIA**

Catherine Isioma Nwokoro

Rosemary Obianuju Ekwunife



GENDER-SENSITIVE ADVERTISING AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR REPOSITIONING WOMEN IN TO PUBLIC OFFICES IN NIGERIA

Catherine Isioma Nwokoro,
Ph.D student in the Department of Mass Communication,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University,
Anambra State.
Email: isyamra2013@gmail.com

Rosemary Obianuju Ekwunife,
Ph.D student in the Department of Mass Communication,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University,
Anambra State.
Email: rosyekwus@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The objectives set for this study were to; examine if gender – sensitive advertising can be an effective tool for repositioning women in to public offices, to find out what stereotypical gender roles as portrayed in advertising that are used against Nigerian women can be changed through gender- sensitive advertising, to identify the ways that gender- sensitive advertising can help curb the negative stereotypes against Nigerian women in advertising, to identify the mass medium that is prone to portraying stereotypes against Nigerian women in advertising. The theoretical framework for this study was the Muted Group and Agenda- setting theories of the media.

Methodology: The methodology for this study was survey and the study also offered a review of three selected products advertised on television.

Findings: The study revealed that, the need for gender- sensitivity in advertising has become imperative given the way women have been negatively stereotyped as ‘ less capable’ compared to their male counterparts who are termed ‘active and capable’ for public offices.

Unique contribution to practice and policy: This study recommends that; advertising should not be gender biased to favour one sex over the other and also, advertisements should be gender- sensitive in other to help correct the stereotyped views held towards women in Nigeria so as to enhance their chances of been public office holders.

Keywords: *Gender, Advertising, Gender- sensitive advertising, Women, Public offices.*

INTRODUCTION

Despite the mainstream policies and movements for gender equality in all spheres of human endeavours, gender equality according to the USAID (2012: 1) has recorded little progress ‘ as substantial inequalities remain across all sectors... especially in the third world countries where women are seen and regarded as the weaker sex (De Beauvoir, 1997 cited in John & Ken, 2005).

Some of these attempts to enhance gender equality, cited in Jimoh (2017: 205) and as codified in various international instruments includes but not limited to;

1. Beijing Platform for Action signed in 1995 at the fourth World conference on women in Beijing, China.
2. UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and its subsequent ‘sister’ resolution 1820 (gender- based violence) Resolution 1888 (sexual violence), Resolution 1889 (women in post- conflict reconstruction), Resolution 1960 (sexual violence in conflict).
3. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now the SDGs adopted by 189 governments in 2000.
4. Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

When one is talking about gender equality, it majorly concerns women and men, boys and girls in other to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviour, roles and responsibilities at home, in the workplace and the community at large (Jimoh, 2017). Taking a critical look at the African setting, there is a wide divide between the man and the woman. As a result, gender studies associate the African woman as par those fighting for fairness and not equality like the European Union (Curran & Sue, 2010).

The traditional arrangement of the society in Africa sets great stories by men as dominant forces in political, social and economic decision making and execution process (Jimoh, 2012), having little or no room for women to hold public offices. Omenugha (2001:1) cited in Jimoh 2017, states that, the issue of excluding women from holding public offices is based on culture, class, gender and even religion in this part of the World’s divide, Nigeria in particular. It is on this note that this study wants to take a good look at how gender- sensitive advertising can help to handle these issues as regards women becoming public office holders.

On this note, advertising which is a good tool for changing people’s attitudes (through persuasion) towards positively or to favour a product or a cause (Clow & Baack, 2007) will form the basis of this study. According to O’Guinn, Allen and Semenik (2009), advertising is an effective communication process in promoting good ideas to enhance a desired change from the target audience, in this case Nigeria.

Gender- sensitive advertising therefore becomes the way out as regards reshaping the thought processes of every Nigerian in to embracing gender equality in general and the emancipation of women towards becoming leaders in various sectors of the economy.

In Africa, it is a common knowledge that women are relegated to the background and often times muted from been heard or suppressed from having the chance to hold a public office (British Council Report, 2012). The stereotypical gender roles assigned to women in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular is as a result of the traditional arrangement of the Nigerian setting that recognises men as dominant forces in political, social and economic decision making and execution process (Jimoh, 2017) in public offices thereby excluding the women from having key roles or if peradventure they are given the chance, subordinate roles holds

supreme for such women. This is not to say that women are not leaders in their careers but they are usually too few compared to men. It is on this note that this study wants to take a look at how gender-sensitive advertising whose core principle is to showcase unbiased advertisement towards both sexes, can be used as an effective tool in repositioning women in to public offices in Nigeria.

Gender: An Overview

De Beauvoir (1970) once said: "One is not born a woman, one becomes one." This view proposes that in gender studies, the term "gender" should be used to refer to the social and cultural constructions of masculinities and femininities and not to the state of being male or female in its entirety. Gender therefore refers to the socially constructed roles of and relations between men and women. According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 'gender is the fact of being male or female'.

The term gender has to do with the social construction of behaviours and actions. Before the study of gender, the issue of gender simply meant the sex: male or female. The term took its new value from the 1970s when academic feminist started 'complaining' about the universal use of sex as an independent variable in determining one's behaviour and thinking. The words of De Beauvoir (1997) cited in John & Ken (2005, p. 304) states, '**He is the subject, he is the Absolute- she is the Other**, throws more light on the issue of gender as regards the stand a woman has in the society as presented by man and other variables in the society.

The conceptual differentiation between gender and sex pointed to the possibility that sexual anatomy would eventually become irrelevant, thus no longer able to predetermine the abilities or potential of men and women as a whole or as an individual. The word gender according to John & Ken (2005, p. 309), is the social aspects of differences and hierarchies between male and female. This is so because gender is evident throughout the world, shaping how we think about ourselves, guiding our interactions with others as well as influencing our work and family life.

Whereas sex simply means the biological distinction between females and males, gender on the other hand, pertains to much more than these differences. Rather, gender talks about the social meaning of masculinity and femininity (Saul, 2014). In this case, gender is seen as the social construct that shape women and men as to what they become in a given social context.

Some of these feminist theorists argue that, many differences between women and men were socially produced and therefore changeable. Saul (2014), states that although biological differences are fixed, gender differences are the oppressive results of social interventions that dictate how men and women should behave in a given society.

However since gender is mutable or changeable, it then means that it can be altered by a political or social reform that would ultimately bring an end to women's discrimination and exploitation, since the bulk of what goes on in the society is majorly prime to favour the male as a role model while subjugating the woman to oppressive tendencies in the society (Curran & Sue, 2010). One issue that remains consistent in different stages of development in Nigeria is women having a weak voice when it comes to decision-making. One of the reasons for this is due to stereotype which has moved decision-making down to levels at which women's voice is often weakest and where even the women's civil society movement, which has been a powerful advocate at national level, struggles to organize and be heard (CEDAW, 1992).

Advertising Management

Advertising simply means, the paid mass- mediated attempt to persuade an audience (O’Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009: p. 9). For an advert to be taken as a professional one, it has to be paid for by a sponsor, placed in a mass media (print, television and radio or the internet), otherwise it cannot be said to be an advertisement (Arens, 1999). Since advertising can be used to persuade, driving home the point of designing corrective adverts that can change the image and standing of women is key. In the words of Michael (2009), advertising is based on the assumption that words, symbols, ideas or use of audio- visual input have the power to produce change- a change in thinking, attitudes, beliefs and ultimately behaviour. He went on to add that, any advertising message that does not accomplish this change or aid in accomplishing such is regarded as worthless (Michael, 2009).

Clow and Baack (2007) noted that, most adverts that use sex appeal (focus on women) are most effective to breakthrough advert clutter, which can be considered to be a reason for using women in adverts. In this same line of thought, Clow and Baack (2007: p. 179) added by saying that, the presence of an attractive model-female most times, enhances advert recognition which also produces higher purchase – intentions than if such advert is not sexually relevant. But on the contrary, according to scholars of Gender studies, the showcase of the body parts of women has a way of enhancing their vulnerability as well as breeding negative stereotype when compared to men in the society (Okeke, 2005).

The right scenario therefore should be to create and place the right kind of advertisement that can help persuade and re-orientate Africans in general and particularly the Nigerian audience in other to reshape and change the perceived views about women, specifically aiding women in to holding public offices.

Due to this, Kathy (2017) stated that the move to end gender disparity on the status of women compared to men have not come to an end instead to her, ‘the campaigns and admonitions of non- governmental organizations and the resolution by the UN agencies, have till date yielded minimal results especially in the area of mainstreaming women in to societal agenda pacesetters and in a sense public office holders’. To buttress the above point, the British Council Report (2012) cited in Jimoh (2017: p. 207) shows that the Nigerian woman is indeed a ‘back bencher’ when it concerns holding public offices.

Table 1: British Council Report on Women in Public Offices in Nigeria

YEARS OFFICES	1999		2003		2007		2011	
	Seats available	Women	Seats available	Women	Seats available	Women	Seats available	Women
President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Senate	109	3(2.8)	109	4(3.7)	109	9(8.3)	109	7(6.4)
House of Rep.	360	7(1.9)	360	2(5.8)	360	27(7.5)	360	25(6.9)
Governors	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0
SHA	990	24(2.4)	990	40(3.6)	990	57(5.8)	990	68(6.9)
SHA Committee	829	18(2.2)	881	32(3.6)	887	52(5.9)	887	-
LGA Chairpersons	710	13(1.8)	774	15(1.9)	740	27(3.6)	740	-

Source: British Council Report (2012)

From table 1 above, it states clearly the place of a woman in the Nigeria setting. There is the need therefore for proper sensitization and for gender equality and fairness to the feminine gender to be gradually entrenched in to the scheme of things through gender- sensitive advertising.

A Conceptual Analysis of Gender- Sensitive Advertising

Advertising is concerned with selling or promoting a brand/ idea/ product through persuasion before the target audience (Arens 1999). According to Owumamalam, (2016), advertising is a form of communication that typically attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume more of a particular brand of product or service or agree to a cause. He went on to add that, advertising is increasingly invading how people buy, think and how they live their lives be it the type of advertisement that create awareness about a product (commercial) or the type that will improve on people's habit or public attitude or their perception towards a cause (non- commercial).

From the foregoing, it can be stated here that, the usual advertising that have been the norm, have not helped out in correcting the stereotypical notion that goes on in the third World, Nigeria in particular, where in most cases, woman are stereotyped to belong to the home where she is to nurture the children, cook food and tidy the home (Okeke, 2005). These negative views have turned out over the years to favour the men and discredit the woman in public circles leading to varied opinions that woman cannot be seen as a capable hand to man a public office (Okeke, 2005).

It is good to note here that, the very few women that have proven their prowess in their areas of interest, notable amongst them are; Senator Oluremi Tinubu, former Minister of Finance Mrs Ngozi Okonjo- Iwella, former Minister of Education Mrs Oby Ezekwesili just to mention but a few, did well in office. The question then is; why do Nigerians still hold the notion that women are not capable to handle a public office despite such female pacesetters in Nigeria?

Wikipedia adds that, a gender- sensitive advertisement is that advertisement that makes use of the language that avoids bias towards a particular sex or social gender for example, using words that represent both the masculine and feminine gender like Spokesperson instead of spokesman/ woman to give room for both sexes to be generically represented equally.

As a matter of emphasis, it is stereotypical to claim that women are known for no other role than to nurture the children, cook food amongst other views while the men are praised as strong and gallant in battlefronts and good political heads. But to be analytical here, it is good to device an analogy here with these sets of questions; are there women soldiers? On the other hand, do we have men that cook food for themselves and their children? The answers to these scenarios all boils down to the fact that, the society has a huge role to play in defining what is to be gender role of one sex and another and in the same vain manipulating it in such a way that one gender automatically becomes more important than the other.

This gender inequality are noticed in religious bodies, sports, mass media, government and governance, organizations, in fact all the sectors of the economy are manipulated by members of the society to suit one sex over the detriment of the other (Okeke, 2005).

Wikipedia (2019) also adds that gender advertisement involves the use of images (non- verbal communication) and words that depict stereotypical gender roles. Ironically, these gender roles are highly emphasised on in advertising communication so as to establish the role of one gender over the other or even when the aim of the advert is not to enhance the sex of male over that of

the female, it will still be a basis of biases held against the woman. This is the more reason why this study is advocating for gender- sensitive advertising since advertising is a significant agent of socialization in developing and modern industrialised societies (Vivian, 2009).

Advertising as Vivian (2009) puts it, is a tool for maintaining certain social constructions such as gender. It is good to note that men and women are depicted as differing in attitudes, behaviour and social statuses- it is these differences that separate the two sexes in to different gender.

Erving Gooffman in his book ‘gender advertising’ as cited in Wikipedia states that, gender advertising gives the viewers a glimpse in to world laden with socially defined and constructed gender relations, displays and roles. In the same vain, authorities in advertising believe that, the images portrayed on viewers from been exposed to gender – sensitive advertisement teaches viewers the idea that, to be a woman is to be feminine and to be a man is to be masculine.

Historically speaking, Elizabeth (2017) cited in Kathy (2017) states: Toys for girls from the 1920s to the 60s focused heavily on domesticity and nurturing, a more sure way of preparing the girls to be a ‘home maker’ ... such toys like a toy broom and a toy mop set proclaims the girls role in the home while those for the boys emphasis on engineering and becoming hero of some sort with such toys that will teach him how to build a house, bridge and so on. The import of these is that, these gender roles were built upon regressive gender stereotypes portraying socially- oriented masculinity and a passive relational femininity.

Empirical Findings

Some of the findings in this area of research includes the following works done by these researchers. One of them is the research carried out by Sam & Mark (2014) on a research titled ‘How do media messages and images affect our lives’. From the research, they discovered that the following words and actions as demonstrated in advertisements portray gender stereotype against women. Such as: Lying on the floor, vulnerable, dressed like a child, seductive and confused, body contorted, playful and careless, holding a man for support with eyes closed.

They went on further to add that, gender roles in favour of men as emphasised by advertisements for products and services are: Alert and conscious of surroundings, physically active, eyes open, standing upright, hands in pockets, bodies are controlled, and mean expression on their faces.

Another empirical work is that done by UNDP research Project on gender (2014). According to this report, some language expressions are intended to cause offense, to bring about a difference in meaning or outright misrepresentation. In other to avoid these stereotypical gender- biased treatment while communicating through advertising, the following steps were developed by the report. They include: ensuring that women and men are well represented, challenge gender stereotypes with images and advertisements, avoid exclusionary forms of language like he/ she instead, ‘they’ should be used to avoid using gendered pronoun, create a gender balance in both written and oral communication, same thing also applies to audio and visual forms of communication. For example, a gender- biased term like mankind could be replaced with a gender- sensitive language like humanity/ human beings, promote gender equity through titles, labels and names. This is necessary because, titles for people and occupation often reflect inequitable assumption about males and females; gender- sensitive language promotes more equitable representation for males and females.

Justification of the Study

This study was necessitated upon the need to help expose women who according to the statistics of the British Council Report (2012) as cited in Jimoh (2017) have been ‘unnoticed among the public offices holders that have been pre-dominantly male- exclusive’ in Nigeria.

Although there has been countless efforts by non- governmental organizations, governmental agencies and concerned individuals to reinforce gender equity in terms of men and women having equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities, a lot still needs to be done in this area. This is so because, women’s right in this part of the World have been down- played and discriminated against thereby rendering women ‘unfit’ for holding public offices. In Africa in general and Nigeria as a third world nation, women are considered as a set of people with a second place position compared to the men (Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women-CEDAW- 1992 General Recommendations).

As defined by CEDAW article 1 (1992), ‘discrimination against women shall mean, any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field’.

With this standing in mind therefore, one can see that there is need to refocus the place of the woman among the scheme of things in Nigeria by advocating for gender- sensitive advertising in the media.

A Close Look at Public Office and Women in Nigeria

The Oxford English Dictionary puts it that, a public office is a position held by a person that concerns the people as a whole. In this regard, one can see that, a public office is meant for all persons as it is an effort carried out to help the society. But due to the backward views held against women in Nigeria, it has been very difficult for the woman to rise up to the standard of been on the same level with the men. Take an instance, USAID (2012) have stated in its findings that, there has not been a Nigerian woman through popular participation been democratically elected as a Governor nor a President till date.

According to Jimoh (2017), the case of the woman in Nigeria is that of been the inferior and subordinate one compared to the man in virtually every field of human endeavour. This does not mean that, there are no women who can man public office or any other human endeavour when given the chance, but the dictates of the society has made such move to be cut short (Ross 2009) cited in Jimoh (2017). Some research studies note that, the media reinforces the cultural image of women as ornamented objects who are dependent on the men and has the primary function of looking good, pleasing the men, staying quiet among other things.

According to Erving Goffman cited in (Okeke, 2005) a Sociologist who conducted a research in 1979 on the non- verbal signals and gender representation in advertising, adverts are hyper-ritualised representations of social action. He went on to add that, when women are used through sex appeal to attract the attention of men, it advertently teach or reinforce social cues that would have serious consequences especially with the way that they are largely accorded child- like status (or other gestures or demonstrations that tend to subordinate women) typically show that women are smaller or lower than men.

The import of this statement is that, these stereotype held against women as showcased in advertising becomes interpreted by the beholder of the message in actual life as the expected role of the woman.

The Nigerian woman have over the years been portrayed through stereotype in advertisements as a kitchen role player, one who is waiting for her man to sweep her off her feet and a home maker/ housewife as demonstrated in a few adverts mentioned thus; Indomie noodles, Pampers diaper, Gino tomato paste, and Dettol disinfectant, Maggi Naija Hotpot cubes (Source: televised adverts, 2018/ 2019) amongst others. These set of adverts that enhance gender disparity where one sex seems to be praised while the other in this case the woman- suffers, have in no small measure added to the subjugation faced by women in the society (Sam & Mark, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria and most countries of the third World, the fact remains that women are relegated to the background in fact treated as ‘the other one’ (De Beavoior, 1997 cited in John & Ken; 2005 pg.309). It is important to note that, USAID (2012) still maintains this same view on how women are made by forces in the society to believe that they occupy the second place compared to men especially when it comes to holding public offices.

There has been countless moves by organizations (both Government and non- governmental) and Feminist/ gender studies scholars to help checkmate this regressive negative trend and if possible bringing to existence gender equity but none have been able to effectively put a stop or correct the way women have been placed in the society. It is on this note that this study hopes to emphasize the place of media through gender- sensitive advertising which can help to correct the negative notion held against women in Nigeria and the third World (CEDAW, 1992) as the ‘unfit’ and senseless or lesser beings, all name- calling or designation depending on the circumstance (De Beauviour, 1997 cited in John & Ken, 2005).

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. Examine if gender- sensitive advertising can be an effective tool in repositioning women in to holding public offices in Nigeria.
2. To find out what stereotypical gender roles as portrayed in advertising that are used against Nigerian women that can be changed through gender- sensitive advertising.
3. To identify the ways that gender- sensitive advertising can help curb the negative stereotypes against Nigerian women in advertising.
4. To identify the mass medium that is prone to portraying stereotypes against Nigerian women in advertising.

Research Questions

The research questions set for the study were:

1. Can gender- sensitive advertising help in repositioning Nigerian women towards holding public offices in Nigeria?
2. What stereotypical gender roles used against Nigerian women as portrayed in advertising can be changed through gender- sensitive advertising?
3. What are the ways that gender- sensitive advertising can help curb the negative stereotypes held against Nigerian women in advertising?

4. What mass media channel is most prone to portraying stereotypes against Nigerian women in advertising?

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the Muted Group and Agenda- setting theories.

Muted Group Theory

The Muted Group theory is concerned with the way dominant groups in the society create and maintain their dominance by stifling the speech and ideas of the dominated group. In this instance, the dominant group is the male gender and the dominated group is the female gender.

The Muted Group theory which was formulated by Edwin and Shirley cited in Jimoh (2017; pg. 210) focuses on the way the communication practices of the dominant group suppress, mute or devalue the words, ideas and discourse of the subordinate groups.

The female gender in this context have been suppressed in to oblivion that many Nigerians see women as ‘unfit’ to hold public offices. This discrimination has taken a toll on even discouraging women that would have loved to be a public office holder www.un.org/women/watch/cedaw/recommendations-1992.

This trend has been compounded by gender- biased advertisement which centralizes on portraying males as ‘fit’ for any circumstance or hold a public office and the women ‘unfit’ and vulnerable except the said office is that of been a subordinate to a man who is the head. According to the founders of this theory, dominant forces like religion, race, ethnicity, class and other fissures of the society help to reinforce the dominant place of the men against women in Nigeria (Jimoh, 2017).

Agenda- Setting theory

This theory was propounded by an American journalist, Walter Lippman. The Agenda - setting theory simply states that, the mass media have as (Daramola, 2003) cited in Ndimele & Innocent (2006 pg. 234), ‘the ability to mentally order or organise the World for the people’. Proponents of this theory are of the view that the media often present to the audience certain basic socio- political and economic issues that dominate popular discussion. According to Walter Lippman, the mass media has the power to set agenda by making an issue a matter of everyday discourse / place extraordinary attention on the issue for the audience, in this regard, with the manner in which the mass media have laid emphasis on stereotype/ gender- biased advertising on women thereby intensifying how the society perceive the place of the Nigerian woman, making it more and more difficult for the woman to be viewed in the positive light as regards handling public offices in Nigeria.

In the words of Asemah, Edegoh & Ojih, (2013), the media most prone to this portrayal of stereotype is the Television as it deals with the audience audio- visual senses. Some of the products which majorly appeals to the senses of sight like cosmetics, food and beverages, clothing and shoes, kitchen and interior decorations amongst others are more appealing to the senses of sight. Women cannot be avoided in this case but are used as models to showcase the products on television and as well attract the market. But ironically, this move is interpreted as the ideal nature and character for the women in the society (O’Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009: p. 9).

Synopsis of the three selected Products advertised on media (A case in Point-Television)

The three advertisements which were used for this analysis were; Pampers diaper, Dettol disinfectant and Maggi Naija Hotpot cubes. The review of these three selected advertisements were based on the research conducted by Sam and Mark (2014) titled ‘ How do media messages and images affect our lives’. The research discovered that some words and actions as demonstrated in advertisements portray gender stereotype against women. The two television channels that were used for this review were: TVC news, a private station based in Lagos state and Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS), a government- owned station, with a specific reference to the branch based in Asaba, the State capital of Delta State.

This review so carried out is necessary in other to better comprehend the influence that the media has on its media consumers (in this context the Nigerian audience) through some stereotypical/ gender- biased adverts as portrayed in these selected adverts. The review is presented thus in the following table;

Table 2: A Review of Pampers diaper, Dettol disinfectant and Maggi Naija hotpot cubes advertisement

Product advertised	TV station	Review of the advert
Pampers Diaper	TVC News DBS Television	Vulnerable, always tired, dressed like a maid, Body contorted due to hard work, carrying/ nurturing a baby and a baby- sitter.
Dettol disinfectant	TVC News DBS Television	Dressed as a maid who takes care of the home and all persons in it, Body contorted due to hard work from cleaning, dresses wounds on anyone in the home, Playful and leans on her husband for support.
Maggi Naija Hotpot cubes	TVC News DBS Television	Seductive and confused at work and at home while trying to meet with daily routines, the cook of the house while the husband is seen as an active, well- to- do type of man, the cleaner and the one who brings smile on all in the home after the good Naija meal.

Source: TVC News and DBS television advertisements of these three products, 2018/2019

With such orientation from the message themes derived from these advertisements placed upon the consumers of these three advertisements, it becomes clear how the mass media have to a very large extent set agenda on the roles to be performed by women in Nigeria and most countries in the third World through these advertisements of products that

reinforce stereotypes or the idea that one sex is defined to play a subordinate role (woman) while the other (man) is the superior.

Methodology

Research design- The study adopted the survey method. The essence was to make the research an authentic and dependable result (Owumamalam, 2016). The survey research method (Ohaja, 2003) which is a quantitative method was used to gather data from the sample size.

Sample size- The study made use of 360 close ended copies of the questionnaire as its measuring instrument. A sample size of 360 was purposively selected based on the advice of Wimmer & Dominick (2006) that for multi- variate studies, 50= very poor, 100= poor, 200= fair, 300- good, 500= very good, 1,000= excellent. It should be noted that the chosen sample size of 360 is good for this study to be significant.

Population of Study- The sample size chosen to represent the population of Nigerians who consume the advertisements of Dettol disinfectant, Maggi Naija Hotpot Cubes and Pampers diaper are not known. In the absence of any recorded empirical data, stating the exact population of Dettol disinfectant, Maggi Naija Hotpot Cubes and Pampers diaper advertisement viewers in Nigeria, it becomes difficult to use any statistical method like the Taro Yamani's Formula (Yamani, 1971) to determine an exact sample size hence the researchers' usage of 360 as the study's sample size.

Three major metropolitan cities were delimited as the scope for this study. They were chosen to represent three major regions in Nigeria due to the cultural/ religions undertone that these three regions represent as regards the place of women in Nigeria as a whole. Lagos (Western part of Nigeria and a Yoruba speaking people), Abuja (Northern part of Nigeria and Hausa speaking) and Port Harcourt (a major city in the Niger- Delta and Igbo speaking people of Nigeria).

Instrument for gathering Data

The questionnaire was distributed equally at 120 copies per chosen city to women who are exposed and have viewed such advertisements on television. In other to add more credibility to the study, such copies of the questionnaires were distributed to these women (competent enough to respond to questions on the questionnaire) in four sectors selected for this study. They were: tertiary institutions, offices, markets and restaurants. These locations were chosen as they are good places to find women who will be familiar to this area of study.

Research Findings

It was observed that, out of the 360 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 341 which indicates 94.7% were valid and recovered while 19 were invalid such as 8 from Abuja, 5 from Port Harcourt and 6 from Lagos due to non- compliance and mutilation in answers on the questionnaire.

Answer to Research Question 1

Can gender- sensitive advertising help in repositioning Nigerian women towards holding public offices in Nigeria?

Table 3: Respondents View on Gender- Sensitive Advertising as a Way for Repositioning Women in to Public Offices in Nigeria

Response / option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Good for repositioning Nigerian women towards holding public offices in Nigeria	327	96%
Not good for repositioning Nigerian women towards holding public offices in Nigeria	14	4.1%
Total	341	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The data presented in table 3 shows that many women (327) that were administered questionnaire in these three major cities believe that gender- sensitive advertising is a good medium for repositioning Nigerian women towards holding public offices in Nigeria.

Answer to Research Question 2

What stereotypical gender roles against Nigerian women as portrayed in advertising can be changed through gender- sensitive advertising?

Table 4: Some Stereotypical Gender Roles used Against Nigerian Women in Advertising

Response/ Option	No. or respondents	Percentage
Leans on her man for support, cannot take decision on her own	95	27.9%
Women seen as only mothers, maids, cooks, home makers, nurses wounds, vulnerable and careless	75	22%
Subordinate, weak, sex object and has a second place in creation as portrayed on religious adverts.	81	23.8%
Nurtured to become housewives, taken to be the sex without enough zeal to further academically compared to men	90	26.3%
Total	341	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

In table 4 above, the stereotypical portrayals held against women were itemised and it is the hope of this study to showcase ways that such image can be repositioned for the better.

Answer to Research Question 3

What are the ways that gender- sensitive advertising can help curb the negative stereotypes held against Nigerian women in advertising?

Table 5: Ways that Gender- Sensitive Advertising can help to curb the Negative Stereotypes on Nigerian Women

Response/ Option	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Creation of Adverts that are not biased against the female gender or marginalize women should be a guiding principle in advertising	90	26.4%
Adverts that do not limit/ suppress what the average woman can do, should be regularly showcased on the media	61	17.9%
Advertisements should help in the re-orientation of the masses by emphasizing the place of women in Nigeria through its setting agenda for the people to follow	54	15.8%
Ethical codes for advertising by APCON and other regulatory bodies should be a norm in the advert industry	66	19.4%
Adverts that do not create the impression that women are vulnerable (leaning on their man for support etc) and men portrayed as strong (like having 6 packs etc) should not be the popular axiom in the media	70	20.5%
Total	341	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 5 above indicates some ways that gender – sensitive advertisement can be used to help check the spate of negative gender stereotypes portrayed through advertising on Nigerian women.

Answer to Research Question 4

What mass media channel is most prone to portraying stereotypes against Nigerian women in advertising?

Table 6: The Most prone Mass Media Channel that portrays Negative Stereotypes against Nigerian Women

Response/ Option	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Print (such as newspapers)	5	1.46%
Radio	22	6.5%
Television	243	71.3%
Internet	71	20.8%
Total	341	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 6 above indicates that television is the most prone to the portrayal of negative stereotypes against Nigerian women than other mass media channel as it has both audio- visual qualities which helps to enhance the influence of these stereotypes in the viewer and presents it as societal reality.

Discussion of Findings

This study assessed gender- sensitive advertising as an effective tool in repositioning women in to public offices in Nigeria. The findings reveal that gender- sensitive advertising can help to reposition Nigerian women to holding public offices in Nigeria. The findings also indicate that, the negative stereotypical portrayals held against women through some stereotypical advertising adds in no small measure to the subjugation of women from holding public offices and it is the hope of this study to suggest ways that such image can be changed for the better through gender- sensitive advertising.

In addition, the findings also revealed some of the ways that negative stereotypes towards Nigerian women can be controlled. Some of them were: Creation of Adverts that are not biased against the female gender or that marginalize women should be a guiding principle in advertising, Adverts that do not create the impression that women are vulnerable (leaning on their man for support etc) and men portrayed as strong (like having 6 packs etc) should not be the popular axiom in the media and advertisements should help in the re-orientation of the masses by emphasizing the place of women in Nigeria through its setting agenda for the people to follow.

This study also found out that, the mass media channel most prone to the showcase of negative women stereotype is the television since it is a media vehicle that combines the audio- visual qualities which as a matter of emphasis can influence the opinion of the viewer since it has the enablement to work on the person's sense of sight and hearing.

Conclusion

The place of the Nigerian woman when compared to the man has been that of 'second place' figure in almost all endeavours of this terrestrial existence as noted so far in this research. This is so due to the kind of agenda set up by the mass media through incessant negative stereotypes of the Nigerian woman in advertising through demonstrated roles as a sex object, vulnerable, one with a weak personality, maid, mother who takes care of the home and cannot pursue a

career, is to be married off as a result she is taught to be a wife, a cook, cleaner, homemaker and nurturer/ dresser of wounds, societal forces and so on which on the long run, becomes acceptable values that are upheld by members of the society.

Due to all these and more stereotypes, the Nigerian woman have become nurtured to believe that she is 'unfit' to handle certain tasks that the society has earmarked for the men.

As regards this negative notion which has helped to reduce the place of the Nigerian woman to the subordinate level where she now finds herself, this study therefore hopes to use this medium to sensitise and educate Nigerians to shun such unprogressive attitude by suggesting that, gender- sensitive advertising should be enforced while creating adverts so that such will help to reshape the mind set of Nigerians because this will help in promoting the opportunity for women to hold public office.

Recommendations

This study recommends that:

1. Advertisements should not be gender – biased or filled with negative stereotype to favour one sex over the other in Nigeria.
2. Advertisements should be gender- sensitive in other to help correct the stereotyped views about the place of women in Nigeria so as to enhance their chances of been public office holders.

References

- Asemah, S. E, Edegoh, L. O. N & Ojih, E. U (2013). Audience perception of the portrayal of women in television advertising, In *International Journal of language, literature and gender studies*, Ethiopia, AFRREV LALIGENS Vol. 2 (1) February, 2013 (pg. 21- 37).
- Arens, W. F (1999). *Contemporary advertising*; Boston, Mcgraw Hill.
- Clow, K. E. & Baack, D. (2007). *Integrated marketing communication: Integrated advertising, promotion and marketing communication*, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Pearson education.
- Curran, J. & Sue, T (2010). *Media and Feminism: Media and society*, (5th ed.), United Kingdom, Bloomsbury publishing (pg. 63-78).
- John, M.J. & Ken, P (2005). *Sociology: An introduction*, (3rd ed.) United Kingdom, Pearson Education.
- Jimoh, J. (2017). Gender sensitivity in coverage of conflict situations, In Umaru Pate and Lai Oso (ed.), In *Multiculturalism, diversity and reporting conflict in Nigeria*, Ibadan, Evans Brothers Limited.
- Kathy, C (2017). Getting gendered, accessed from www.forbes.org. Retrieved on 22/1/2020.
- Michael, R. S (2009). *Consumer behaviour: Buying, having, and being*, (8th ed.), New Jersey, Pearson education.
- Okeke, D. I. (2005). Gender communication, In Nnayelugo Okoro (ed.) in *Contemporary readings in media and communication studies*, Enugu, Rhyce kerex publishers.
- O'Guinn, T. C, Chris, T. A & Semenik, R. J. (2009). *Advertising and integrated brand promotion*, (5th ed.), USA, Cengage Learning.

- Ohaja, E. U (2003). *Mass communication research and project report writing*, Lagos, John Lettermom publishers.
- Owumamalam, E. O (2016). *Communication issues in public relations and advertising*, Owerri, Image Press.
- Sam, F. & Mark, N. (2014). How do media images affect our lives, accessed from www.medialit.org/reading-room/how-do-media-images-affect-our-lives. Retrieved on 7/ 1/2020.
- Saul, M. (2014). Biological theories of gender, accessed from <https://simplypsychology.org>, Retrieved on the 21/1/2020.
- USAID (2012). Gender equality and female empowerment policy, accessed from <http://www.usaid.gov>. Retrieved on 6/1/2020
- Vivian, J. (2009). *The media of mass communication*, (9th ed.), Boston, Pearson international
- Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (2006). *Mass media research: An introduction*, (6th ed.) California, Wadsworth publishing company.
- www.UNDP.org/reesrach-project-on-language-expressions/2014. Retrieved on 6/1/2020.
- www.un.org/womenwatch/CEDAW/recommendations/1992. Retrieved on 6/1/2020.
- www.wikipedia.org/gendered-language-and-advertising-2019. Retrieved on 21/1/20.
- Yamani, T. (1971). *Statistics: An introduction analysis*, New York, Harper and Row publishers.