

## ADVERTISING EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: ANALYSIS OF CCMAS

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### Abstract

Technologies have become the fulcrum of knowledge economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, be it in advertising, public relations or any other form of marketing communications. It is no longer the issue whether the university should be in the marketplace but the trajectory is the degree of interface between town and gown, if the university, particularly in Nigeria would continue to play its role in propelling a knowledge economy with every sector gravitating towards artificial intelligence advertising education ought not to be left out. Advertising (ad) law and practice in Nigeria lay emphasise on employing graduates of mass communication and allied fields. Consequently, it is expected that advertising graduates would be equipped with artificial intelligence knowledge and skill required in advertising practice in the emerging knowledge economy in Nigeria. Advertising graduates from Nigerian universities are expected to be global players in marketing communications. The thrust of being global players is based on the current collaboration between National Universities Commission, (NUC) Nigeria universities, and Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) in development of new curriculum for advertising degree programme in Nigeria which takes off soon. A content analysis of the new advertising curriculum in the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) reveals that there are no courses on artificial intelligence (AI) in the advertising programme curriculum. Also it shows that advertising educators in Nigeria, NUC, and ARCON are yet to realise that AI is the new driver of ad practice in present knowledge economy globally. The CCMAS should be reviewed to incorporate AI in advertising education and all communications education in Nigeria.

**Key words:** AI, Ad education, CCMAS, Knowledge-economy

### Introduction

Advertising has remained one of the key areas in marketing programmes among businesses, non-governmental organisations and governments in Nigeria and across the global. The Nigerian advertising industry has contributed over N286billion to the country's GDP in 2017 and 2020 (Media Reach OMD, 2019; Guttman, 2022). The advertising industry in Nigeria consists of the advertisers, advertising agencies, advertising media, advertising education institutions, advertising audience, and advertising regulatory body. Advertising is considered a very important aspect of business in Nigeria. Hence in 1988 the Federal Government of Nigeria elevated advertising to a chartered profession through an

enactment of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) decree 55 of 1988/Act 55 of 1988. The law established a Council charged with overall regulation of advertising profession, practice, and education in Nigeria. The regulatory council is collaborating with the National Universities Commission (NUC), and Nigeria universities to promote advertising education in the university system. The National Universities Commission responsible for regulating university education in Nigeria last year introduced Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), an updated curriculum for degree programmes in Nigeria university system to be in tandem with global best practice in Communication and Media Studies university education. The

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CCMAS generated criticisms from a section of university lecturers, nonetheless, the implementation of the new curriculum has been scheduled to commence across disciplines for first year students in the 2023/2024 academic session. Advertising has been taught as one of the courses and sequences of mass communication since the commencement of mass communication education in Nigeria in 1962 at the department of mass Communication of University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Ayeni et al, 2014). Among the numerous innovations of CCMAS is the upgraded of mass communication to a faculty and unbundled into nine different degree programmes. One of such programmes is advertising elevated to a full Bachelor of Social Science degree programme. How prepared Nigeria university system is to deliver advertising education in era of artificial intelligence, which propels knowledge economy remains an interesting discourse. However, the curriculum is at the center of advertising education, for it prescribes the content, deliverable skills, infrastructure, and equipment required for advertising education in the 21st Century Nigeria.

### Statement of the Problem

The introduction of advertising education in Nigeria is synonymous with mass communication education, which commenced at the current department of mass communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1962 (Ayeni, Nyitse, & Ogbu, 2014). In Nigeria; advertising became a chartered profession via decree 38 of 1985 but been taught in the university as a subset of mass communication. However, 38 years after professionalization of advertising, it has been elevated to a full degree programme in the Nigerian university system by the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS). The introduction of advertising degree programme has generated controversy among advertising experts in Nigeria. Some experts contend that the curriculum is lacking in technological knowledge and skills required for an advertising degree in a knowledge economy driven by artificial intelligence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While some others believe that the curriculum is good enough for an advert degree programme in Nigerian University System. Earlier study on advertising education in Nigerian university system focused on ad as a sequence of mass communication not as a

degree programme on its own (Ayeni et al, 2014). The study was a mere historical analysis of mass communication education in Nigerian university system. Advertising contributed N88.3 billion in 2017, and N198.5 billion (\$897 million) in 2020 to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (Media Reach OMD, 2019; Guttman, 2022). The controversy about CCMAS for advertising degree programme in Nigerian university system may likely abate from the outcome of this study. Also, the earlier study did not focus on CCMAS and its artificial intelligence component in advertising degree programme in Nigerian university system.

In the light of the above, it is imperative to focus on Advertising Education in Nigerian University System in Era of Artificial Intelligence: Analysis of CCMAS.

### Objectives of the study

The following objectives were developed to guide the study.

1. Ascertain the extent to which technological knowledge and skills were incorporated in the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for B. Sc degree programme in advertising for Nigerian University System.
2. Determine the extent to which Artificial intelligence knowledge and skill were part of the technologies incorporated in the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards for B.Sc. degree programme in advertising for Nigerian University System.
3. Ascertain the extent to which the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards for B.Sc. degree programme in advertising for Nigerian University System for hands on practical for students.
4. Ascertain the extent of difference between unbundled Mass Communication curriculum Basic Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) and CCMAS B.Sc. degree programme in advertising for Nigerian University System.

## Literature Review

Coffin (2022) construes advertising as a multidirectional matrix of communication not just a two-way communication between the firm and the consumer. Choi et al, 2016; Dean 2003; La Ferle, et al 2019) cited in Coffin (2022) contended that targets of advertising do not always assume the role of consumer; that pro-social projects may seek to persuade citizens, activists, or donors. However, the concept of consumer in advertising is not limited to purchase of product or service but extends to any individual or group or government that the subject of advertising is considered beneficial to by the advertiser. Advertising does not only provide opportunity for communication between advertiser and target audience but advertising also contributes to economy development of a country.

In the study of effect of advertising expenditure on Nigeria economy, Abdullahi and Mukhtar (2020) reveal that advertising has positive relationship with GDP in Nigeria, in terms of advertising contribution to GDP. Further findings show that during the economic slowdown between 2013 and 2017 advertising contribution to GDP in Nigeria also declined in terms of advertising expenditure to GDP within the period. The findings above reflect advertising as an important economic sector of the Nigeria economy.

## Conceptual Clarifications

### Knowledge Economy

Knowledge Economy according to Drucker (1969) cited in an article by Gajendrakar (2024) donates the economy dependence on the knowledge or intellectual capital of workers as integral production input element. Knowledge economy attainment by any country revolves around investment on innovative education system, technological improvement and efficient telecommunications. Knowledge economy entails that workers in the system should not only have skill but also have relevant technical, rational and problem solving skills. Relevant technical skills are also required in marketing communication such as advertising, where innovative creation of sales messages drive and facilitate competitive edge among competing brands. The CCMAS is expected to produce

sets of advertising graduates that will be equipped with artificial Intelligence skills required in the emerging knowledge economy in Nigeria in the advertising industry.

### Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) application in advertising is part of the efforts of technology innovators to ease use of human energy in advertising practice. According to Samuel et al (2021) reported in Coffin (2022) AI adoption in advertising is engineered primarily by advertising practitioners' not academic research. The adoption of AI in advertising education in the university appears to be taken the same route as formal advertising education to the university; which was promoted by the early advertising practitioners in United States. Artificial Intelligence according to Puntoni et al (2021) quoted in Coffin (2022) is an ecosystem comprising three fundamental elements: data collection and storage, statistical and computational techniques, and output systems, that enable products and services to perform tasks typically understood as requiring intelligence and autonomous decision making on behalf of humans. Further Coffin (2022) identifies three levels of AI. The first level, he called the Narrow AI, (NAI) is the basic level of intelligence where AI can be applied to perform only specific tasks or one task at a time, second level is General AI (GAI). Here machine can be trained to perform more cognitively demanding and complex tasks which include perception, learning, problem solving. GAI can also be developed to have human sense- abilities. The abilities could include seeing, hearing, and feeling, and third level AI is a futuristic type, Super AI (SAI). It is expected that this AI would supersede human intelligence and act independently from humans. Coffin (2022) submitted that Narrow AI in the nearest future would take over the duties of tracking expenditure and reach, copy writing and creating alternative designs, and forecasting consumer behaviour in real-time across diverse platforms in advertising practice.

### Milestones in History of Advertising Education from 1911- 1994

Wharton School of Business in Chicago United States in 1893 developed a curriculum for its Journalism programme and advertising was part of one of the courses. Similarly, many correspondence schools of advertising were established by advertising

practitioners from 1896, and prominent among the schools include; Page-Davis School of Advertising, The International Correspondence Schools, Chicago College of Advertising, The Alexander Hamilton Institute, La Salle Extension University, and American School of Correspondence (Ross & Richards 2008). The correspondence schools created and increased the consciousness for advertising education in the United States.

Advertising education at the university level could best be described as evolutionary. In the book, □A century of advertising education,□ the first degree programme in advertising was mounted by the University of Missouri in 1913, and two years after 1915 New York University established the first department of advertising and marketing. In Hong Kong, Baptist University played a leading role in advertising education in Asia in 1968, when it commenced the first advertising education in that region, several years before Xiamen University in China commenced advertising education in 1983. In advertising education, Korea was ahead of China with the introduction of advertising education in 1974 at Chung-Ang University Korea. The South Russia Humanitarian University, in 1994 opened the door for advertising education in Russia.

In Nigeria, according to Ayeni, Nyitse, and Ogbu (2014) Journalism and mass communication education in Nigerian university system commenced at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. However, Advertising was first taught at the university in 1904 at the Northwestern, department of Philosophy. Prior to the commencement of formal advertising education at the university, Walter Dill Scott of Northwestern University in 1901 delivered a public lecture on Psychology of Involuntary Attention as Applied to Advertising (Ross & Richards, 2008).

However, the approval of CCMAS for use in Nigerian university system ushered in advertising education curriculum, but the National Universities Commission is yet to announce the approval for any university for commencement of degree programme in advertising.

### Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Diffusion of Innovation Theory developed by Bruce Ryan

and Neil Gross in 1942 (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). According to these theorists the process through which an invention gets accepted and adopted overtime within a social system is Diffusion of Information. They explained that an innovation is the introduction of something new. The new thing could be a project, practice, or idea. Within this context artificial intelligence is the idea and a current technology driving advertising practice across the globe. Innovation adoption is a decision process of progression an individual goes through from initial encounter with an innovation to its adoption. Diffusion of Innovation is a communication process. Innovation is brought to the public knowledge through communication channels; and as well as through formal education. If individuals are unable to find out about an innovation, diffusion of innovation cannot take place. Application of artificial intelligence in advertising practice is a recent innovation sweeping across the advertising education and practice. A key tenet of the theory is that decision of an individual to adopt an innovation depends on exposure and adoption by peers, institutions such as university advertising training curriculum. Consequently, if the CCMAS adopts artificial intelligence in advertising education in Nigerian university system, advertising graduates will be artificial intelligence complaint.

### Methodology

The paper adopted the Content Analysis of Mass Communication research and as an addition the Textual Analysis approach of research of cultural studies. The population of study was 42 courses in the advertising curriculum for Bachelors of Social Science degree in advertising in the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for Nigerian University System, produced and issued for use for advertising education by the National Universities Commission (NUC) effective from 2023/2024 academic session. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 core advertising and allied courses, in the curriculum. Three content categories were adopted for the analysis, and they are: (i) Artificial Intelligence knowledge/skill course(s) (ii) Inherent Artificial Intelligence knowledge/skill course(s) (iii). None Artificial Intelligence knowledge/skill course(s). The

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units of analysis created include: (i) Advertising Core Courses content (ii) Artificial intelligence courses or related courses (iii) Advertising allied courses content (iv) Title of courses

A code sheet was developed to code the variables based on the units of analysis and content categories. Also, the Philosophy and objectives of B.sc advertising education, basis of Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards, and Review of BMAS were analysed. The descriptive statistics was adopted for the content analysis. To ensure the reliability the researchers coded the contents twice.

### Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

**Table 1: Number of Courses per Level**

Level/Year of Study	Number of Courses	Percent
100	8	19
200	9	21
300	16	38.1
400	9	21
Total	42	100

The 42 courses include general study courses which are all prescribed by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in the Core Curriculum and Academic Minimum Standards (CCMAS) for advertising degree programme in Nigerian university system. Each university is required by the curriculum to provide 30 percent local content in terms of courses to be taught in the programme. In the 100 and 200 levels many interdisciplinary courses in communication and media studies formed bulk of the courses. The NUC should not leave the issue of technology contents to the universities to decide whether there are interested or not. Technological skill is key is achieving knowledge economy in advertising practice and the economy as a whole.

**Table 2: Core/Allied Advertising Courses 100 and 200 Levels**

100 Level Courses	200 Level Courses
1. Introduction to advertising & marketing communication	1. Digital Marketing
2. Advertising, Marketing & Society	2. Fundamentals of Integrated

	Marketing Communication
3. Advertising Development in Marketing Communications	3. Copy Writing & Media planning
	4. Creative Content Marketing for Advertising

At the 100 level there are only three (3) courses on advertising perhaps to serve as introduction. While 200 level has four courses on advertising and allied area marketing. 37.5% of all courses at 100 level are core advertising courses. At 200 level 44.4% of courses are core advertising courses. At least one relevant technology course should be introduced at each of the levels to reduce the number of course at 300 level. It will also accommodate the internship for three months from end of first semester 300 level.

**Table 3: Core/Allied Advertising Courses for 300 and 400 Levels**

300 Level Courses	400 Level Courses
1. Venture creation	1. Critical Issues in Advertising
2. Advertising and Market Research	2. Economics and Management of Advertising Agency
3. Advertising Production Techniques (Multimedia/Interactive)	3. Advertising Laws and Ethics
4. Media Planning, Buying and Execution	4. Social Marketing
5. Creative Content Development	
6. Art Direction and Design	
7. Advertising Campaign and Execution Workshop	
8. Quantitative Thinking in Advertising	
9. Entrepreneurship in Advertising	

The 300 level houses the largest number of courses in the four-year advertising degree programme. From the course titles none is on

artificial intelligence. The 400 level has just four courses that focus majorly on advertising. Nine (9) or 56.3% of the 16 courses designed for 300 level students are core advertising. 44.4% or 4 out of 9 courses to be taken by students at 400 level are core advertising courses. None of these courses has provision for expose of the students to technologies required for advertising practice in a 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy. To make a difference between what was obtained when advertising was taught as part of mass communication education there is to equip the students to be ad industry ready graduates. This can be achieved by incorporating relevant technologies such as artificial intelligence that appears to redefine ad practice in the nearest future

### **Research Question One: What is the extent of provision of technology skill acquisition in CCMAS for B.sc degree in Advertising?**

There are three courses in 100 level, all core advertising courses. The titles of the courses and the contents do not in any way contain anything technology and none provided for technological knowledge or skill acquisition. At the 200 level, there are four courses and only one course has its title related to technology. The course is digital marketing, though not core advertising but allied course. The course description focuses on use of digital media techniques for execution of online ad campaign. It is a relevant technological skill required for ad practice in a knowledge economy. There are 17 courses for 100 and 200 levels and only one technological course is provided for in the first two years of advertising degree programme. Altogether, there are 14 courses and related courses for 300 and 400 levels in ad degree curriculum. There is only one course Venture creation that has within its course contents provision for technologies such as cloud computing, e-commerce, and artificial intelligence. One course for a whole academic session is inadequate.

### **Research Question Two: What is the extent of Artificial Intelligence technology is incorporated in CCMAS B.sc degree programme in advertising for Nigerian University System?**

There are 42 core and allied advertising courses, but only one course at 300 level has within its course contents directly and indirectly incorporated exposing of the students to artificial intelligence. It is grossly inadequate for specialization in advertising, which by its nature requires a good dose of technological knowledge and skills for ad practitioners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy. A review of the advertising curriculum should be undertaken that should draw experts from ad industry and the university under the sponsorship of NUC and ARCON.

### **Research Question Three: What is the extent of provision in the CCMAS for B.Sc. degree programme in advertising for Nigerian University System for hands-on-practical for students?**

Practical sessions in the CCMAS was only made at 300 level and none at 400 level. The course is advertising campaign and execution workshop. So, the extent of hands-on-practical in the curriculum is very low for a meaningful training for ad practitioners in a knowledge economy. The students according to the course contents would be required to produce student-initiated advertising campaign. The reality most of the times in Nigerian university system is that environment frustrates lecturers and students and things are done as required. More practical courses should be provided to ensure that at least minimum practical will be carried out.

### **Research Question Four: What is the extent of difference between the unbundled Mass Communication curriculum-Basic Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) and CCMAS for B.Sc. degree programme in advertising for Nigerian University System?**

The Basic Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) curriculum used for the unbundled Mass Communication programme treated advertising as one of the courses taught in mass communication programme. There were only 7 core advertising courses in BMAS compared to the 20 core advertising courses provided for in the CCMAS for advertising education.

The B.Sc. advertising curriculum in the CCMAS has six specific objectives. Objectives numbers 2 and 4 talk about equipping students with requisite knowledge and skills required to be able to use tools that will make them

function as advertising professionals in emerging global knowledge economy. Also the curriculum emphasized equipping the students with the 21st Century skills. However, the course titles and contents do not have any course (s) specifically devoted to training the students on artificial intelligence and other technologies application in advertising.

### Summary

The introduction of degree programme in advertising in Nigerian university system is appropriate and timely as Mass Communication education is outdated. Advertising education at the university level has been the practice across the globe. The CCMAS provided 70% of courses and course contents, while each university is required to provide the remaining 30% local contents. However, the CCMAS is grossly inadequate in area of technologies, and practical required for advertising training and practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge economy. For advertising graduates from Nigerian University System to be global players as ad practitioners the training curriculum must make adequate provisions for acquiring the required technological knowledge and skills particularly Artificial Intelligence. There is the need to review the current CCMAS for advertising programme to incorporate technological courses from 100 level. Also there practical courses are not enough, some core courses could be merged to make room for practical courses at 300 level, as there is none presently. The curriculum made provision for internship at 300 level but did not detailed what is expected. The absence of details on internship will create problem for the required 70% uniformity in curriculum implementation among universities offering advertising education.

### Recommendations

The NUC, Universities, and all other stakeholders in advertising in Nigeria should review the CCMAS before its full implementation. The review should bring in more technological knowledge and skills courses into the curriculum such as artificial intelligence. The internship provided for at the 300 level period should be six months at a stretch. This will imply the rearrangement of the courses from 100 to 400 levels. The NUC, Universities, Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), and practitioners should jointly design a programme for internship placement and supervision. On graduation from

advertising degree programme, the graduates should be inducted into the membership of the professional body and issued license to practice, just as it obtainable in medicine, and legal professionals. Advertising lecturers should be encouraged to go to advertising firms or organisations for their sabbatical, similarly, the university system should make provisions for advertising practitioners with requisite academic qualifications or experience to spend their leave in the university.

### Implications

The review of the advertising curriculum will address the controversy generated by the introduction of the CCMAS. The inter-leave relationship between advertising educators in the university and advertising practitioners in the industry will engender the much desired relationship between the university and the industry. It will also improve the quality of advertising graduates from the Nigerian University System. Improved relationship between the industry and university system will eliminate suspicious of poor quality of graduates and minimize the gap between theory and practice. Also the review, and the environment it will create, will provide the avenue for employment of advertising graduates from Nigerian University System. The global rating of quality of university degree in Nigeria generally will increase and that of advertising degree in particular.

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