

Cultural reflections and the role of advertising in the socio-economic and nation...

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Few studies have examined the cultural reflections and the role of advertising in the national development of Nigerian or other African countries. This study, which explored the meaning of development, the debate on the role of culture and mass media on social modernization, African political economy as well as Nigerian history, politics, economic and communication development efforts, serves as an attempt to bridge that gulf.

The study focused on the role of advertising in the process of social mobilization and modernization in Nigeria by examining the cultural reflections, the nature and characteristics of the messages, and the values and symbols conveyed in Nigerian mass media advertisements.

In order to accomplish the task, the study used content and ideological analyses to analyze 500-plus advertisements published or aired in the last quarter of 1998 and the first quarter of 1999. The study's findings demonstrated the difficulty of ascertaining the role of the mass media including advertising on a nation's social, economic and national development and modernization.

However, some of the conclusions drawn from the exploration could be summarized as follows: (1) The Nigerian government as well as native-owned enterprises and public corporations do not use advertising adequately to promote their goods and services; (2) Nigerian advertisers used both Western or traditional African cultural values, but neither of them dominated the other; (3) Developmental themes were found in Nigerian mass media advertisements, but they tended to concentrate on individual instead of

group goals as traditional African value system dictates; (4) The nature and target(s) of advertisements in Nigerian mass media demonstrated that the Nigerian economy is distorted and underdeveloped; (5) The underdeveloped nature is clearly demonstrated because the majority of consumer products and services advertised in Nigeria were of foreign origin and mostly non-essential; (6) The products advertised often targeted the elites because the Nigerian masses could not afford them; (7) Financial advertisements were the most dominant products and services of Nigerian origin; (8) Broadcast advertisements seemed to be more “ democratic” than print advertisements because they promoted more products and services that the average Nigerian could afford Alozie, Emmanuel C.