

THE EMERGENCE, DRIVERS AND INDICATORS OF DADVERTISING IN NIGERIAN MARKETING LANDSCAPE: CRITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVERTISING

GOSHIT, Raymond

Department of Mass Communication, University of Jos, Nigeria
Email: goshitrm@unijos.edu.ng; raymondgoshit@gmail.com

Abstract

The study problematizes dadvertising - the portrayal of fathers in advertisements as nurturing, emotionally engaged and active participants in childcare and family life - by exploring its drivers, defining indicators and socio-cultural implications in Nigeria, where gender roles are deeply ingrained in patriarchy. Employing the mixed methods as well as Social Constructionism and Cultivation Theory, the study leverages content analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Twenty television commercials were sampled purposively for content analysis, generating quantitative data for the study, while 14 participants partook in two focus group discussions and five key informants were interviewed for the generation of qualitative data. Findings reveal that dadvertising in Nigeria is driven strongly by strategic brand positioning by advertisers, the domino effect of the global advertising trend on local advertising and the increasing role of fathers in family dynamics, among other factors. While revealing the depiction of fathers in central narrative character as the most defining characteristic of the trend, findings also indicate that dadvertising is struggling to gain traction in Nigeria largely because fatherhood, steeped intricately in patriarchy, is overly tied to traditional provider/authority masculinity. The research recommends mainly that brands should prioritize cultural authenticity in their messaging by ensuring that dadvertising remains grounded in local nuances and realities in order to maintain brand integrity and consumer trust.

Key words: Masculinity, Patriarchy, Fatherhood, Portrayal, Perpetuation

Introduction

The portrayal of men in advertisements has historically revolved around their predominant stereotyping as breadwinners, protectors and leaders (Agujiobi-Odoh, 2022; Eirini, 2020; Ghozlen, 2020). For long, men were depicted in ads primarily as decision-makers, financial providers and disciplinarians who were distant and emotionally unconnected with the home, while active nurturing, caregiving and parenting were mostly associated with women. These stereotypical depictions, steeped in extant social norms have perpetuated traditional gender roles, while also reinforcing hegemonic

masculinity (Goshit & Ayedun-Aluma, 2025; Asogwa et al., 2020; Stover & Ibroscheva, 2020) in many societies. Even when shown as primary providers, fathers were yet depicted in many advertising narratives as generally clueless about childcare and housekeeping (Nas, 2025). In accentuation of the father's degree of ineptitude, especially in parenting and in the domestic space, mothers were almost always shown stepping in to the rescue (Mueller et al., 2022; Nas, 2025). Consequently, in many proto-typical advertisements, dads were positioned in the home negatively - despite their acclaimed leadership and breadwinning roles.

However, in recent years, gender roles are changing (Akestam et al., 2021; Odionye 2024), driven by socio-cultural dynamics which are upending traditional gender stereotypes and redefining the indices of masculinity. In what can be described as a paradigmatic shift, fathers are now increasingly portrayed in advertising cleaning, cooking, taking care of children and generally involved in family life, beyond their hitherto “provider” and “disciplinarian” stereotype. The portrayal of this ‘new’ father in advertisements is a trend that has come to be known as dadvertising. According to Stover and Ibroscheva (2020), dadvertising can be referred to as a shift in advertising which valorises fathers not just as providers and authority figures, but as actively engaged, nurturing, homemaking and parenting figures. Since its early emergence in Western societies in the wake of the 21st century, advertisers have begun to show men as stay-at-home fathers and professionals, more involved than before in nurturing, housekeeping and parenting (Mishra & Gautam, 2023; Yarimoglu, 2022).

While dadvertising has been widely embraced and researched, especially in the Western world (Dogan & Karaman, 2023), it remains largely unstudied in many developing societies, including Nigeria, where little is known about how this rebranding of fatherhood influences societal values, attitudes and expectations of men in homemaking and real life parenting. Even lesser is known

about its cultural congruity and social implications. Also, whereas advertisers are globally adopting the trend, dadvertising remains relatively unexplored in Nigeria, where the portrayal of gender and people's gender expectations are deeply ingrained in prevailing patriarchal culture. It is therefore pertinent to address not just the paucity of scholarly enquiry about dadvertising but also whether the trend is perceived by Nigerian audiences as an authentic representation of masculinity and fatherhood or just a simplistic imposition of western marketing gimmick on gullible audiences without any concrete understanding of its local functionality and domestic nuances. Furthermore, despite its growing global embrace as an evolving strategy for targeting men (Nas, 2025), dadvertising has not gained significant traction in Nigeria's advertising landscape, for reasons largely unstudied.

These gaps highlight underlying concerns about the viability and authenticity of dadvertising and its impact on the strategic positioning of brands vis-a-vis contemporary gender discourse in a patriarchal, nuanced market like Nigeria. Therefore, the study critically interrogates the rise of dadvertising in Nigeria, exploring its drivers, indicators and implications for gender representation, while identifying the potential challenges and opportunities it presents for shaping the perceptions of fathers in furtherance of advertising objectives. A pilot study revealed that rather than synergizing as part of a holistic intentional move, local campaigns that have adopted dadvertising seem to do so impulsively and haphazardly, and are still replete with traditional depictions of men and fathers, rooted in extant cultural norms.

Statement of the Problem

Whereas the portrayal of fathers in advertising has changed in recent years, with the advent of dadvertising, there is a dearth of research on the trend in Nigeria. While it is uncertain whether Nigerian advertising audiences have genuinely connected with dadvertising, it is more uncertain whether the trend aligns with Nigeria's family and cultural norms or is merely an ambitious attempt

at disrupting the gender power dynamics in the society. Given that dadvertising is an emerging development, it is pertinent to examine the extent to which it challenges or reinforces existing gender stereotypes in the Nigerian advertising space, especially as many brands still target fathers using stereotypes that emphasize hegemonic masculinity. Thus, the study enriches scholarship in advertising by potentially imbuing scholars, consumers, advertisers and regulators with insights for responding appropriately to how gender roles may be changing in the society.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Explore the factors that have contributed to the emergence of dadvertising in Nigeria
2. Examine the defining characteristics of dadvertising in Nigeria's advertising landscape.
3. Determine the perception of Nigerian advertising audiences on dadvertising.
4. Explore the socio-cultural implications of dadvertising in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted the mixed-methods as research design, combining content analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Using purposive sampling technique, 20 TVCs were selected and content analysed, while 14 discussants were constituted into two focus groups, consisting of seven participants each and discussed findings of the content analysis as well as other related father-child advertising portrayals. As additional method for collecting qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and by telephone with five purposively selected advertising professionals. After interviewing the five professionals as key informants, the researcher considered further interviews superfluous, having attained information redundancy and reached data saturation (Guest et al., 2020), the threshold when all the data needed

have been collected and no new relevant information could be collected from the respondents (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

The content analysis used coding sheets as instruments of collecting quantitative data, while the units of analysis were primarily TVCs and secondarily father-and-child character appearances in an audio-visual narrative lasting at least 15 seconds of viewing. Thus, the TVCs were selected based on the fact that they were aired pan-Nigeria, through cable or terrestrial television channels. Whereas discussion guides were employed as instruments for gathering data for the focus group discussions, interview guides were used by the researcher for engaging the key informants in the semi-structured interviews.

Although causality may not be directly discernible using content analysis, recurring patterns, narrative themes, product categories and socio-cultural cues embedded in the TVCs examined provided empirical indices for inferring the factors driving the emergence of dadvertising in Nigeria. These factors were coded based on their presence or absence in each TVC analysed. While quantitative data are presented using frequencies and percentages, consistent with standard content analysis procedures, qualitative data are presented as discursive and thematic narratives in tandem with established qualitative research protocol.

Literature Review

Gender is one of the strongest social identifiers, instrumental in the construction of a system of inclusion and exclusion of what it means to be either male or female, man or woman in the society (Ayedun-Aluma, 2025; Akpan et al., 2024; Ghazlen, 2020). As a social category and cultural force for organizing relations, gender is a powerful tool which advertisers leverage for identifying, segmenting and targeting audiences with persuasive commercial messages. Consumers are cast in advertisements in different gender roles and representations largely because

people define and identify themselves in society essentially by their gender (Santonniccolo et al., 2023). Thus, gender roles are powerful cultural forces which, intersecting with advertising, have profound consequences for targeting individuals and shaping their behaviours positively towards the purchase of products and services.

However, beyond connecting consumers to a product, advertising serves as a social force and integral part of modern society by impacting the formation, adoption and reinforcement of the norms, values and culture that undergird society (Borchers, 2022). Advertising does this by targeting the consumer's gender and identity, and constructing the consumer as one among many anonymous consumers of goods and services, while leveraging how people think, behave and act, congruent with their gender. Consequently, many roles and tasks tend to be performed by individuals in everyday human life based on social constructions of what defines them as male or female or intersex.

Masculinity in Traditional Gender Roles

Historically, advertising has portrayed men and women in traditional gender roles using stereotypes that emphasize their masculinity or femininity (Akpan et al., 2024; Ewang, 2022). People are largely portrayed in strict gender binary as males or females, masculine or feminine, in alignment with dominant cultural ideologies, associating femininity with caregiving and domesticity and masculinity with leadership and breadwinning roles. In many societies, men have been depicted in advertisements in stereotypical roles, reproducing, normalizing and legitimizing dominant masculinity as strength, leadership and breadwinning, while excluding them from domestic roles. While fathers were typically projected as decision makers and providers, mothers were portrayed primarily responsible for the home and childcare. Whereas a few portrayals often cast men in some progressive and positive gender roles, most of the older portrayals have shown

men in traditional gender roles, in perpetuation of patriarchal norms and gender inequality (Agujiobi-Odoh, 2022; Ewang, 2022; Nash, 2020).

From available literature (Ayedun-Aluma, 2025; Tremmel & Wahl, 2023; Santoniccolo et al., 2023; Endicott, 2022; Agujiobi-Odoh, 2022; Asogwa et al., 2020;), advertising has generally depicted men in their masculinity in the following curated stereotypes:

1. Breadwinners: Men are depicted primarily as breadwinners, typically hardworking and responsible for providing financially for their families.
2. Strong, dominant and aggressive: Men are depicted as strong beings who are expected to be in charge always by being assertive, dominant, protective and competitive, especially in social and public spaces.
3. Authoritative leaders and decision-makers: Men are portrayed as heads of the household, expected to be tough, confident, authoritative and almost infallible decision makers. They make important decisions and provide solutions for problems in and out of the home-front.
4. Work and career-oriented: Men are shown driven by the quest for success and professional achievement in business and workplace, especially in the military, politics and STEM domains, which are considered male-dominated.
5. Disciplinarians: Men are portrayed as strict disciplinarians, enforcing rules and order in the household, and intolerant of any misbehaviour.
6. Unemotional and stoic: They are almost always shown as resilient, super heroes and invincible machos who do not show their fears, tears and vulnerability.
7. Absent or less involved domestically: Men are not expected to do household chores, as by extant social norms, cooking, housekeeping and several domestic chores are considered

exclusively feminine tasks. Consequently, they are portrayed distant and emotionally unavailable in the home.

8. Clueless and clumsy dad: Even where men are shown active in the domestic space, they are rarely depicted as competent in the performance of nurturing, housekeeping and parenting tasks. In many ads, they are portrayed so generally inept, especially in basic childcare and housekeeping that mothers would always step in, only to accentuate the father's degree of cluelessness.

Thus, advertising has for long framed fatherhood through the prism of hegemonic masculinity, portraying men primarily as strong, authoritative, decision makers, disciplinarians and providers who work largely outside and are emotionally distant from the home. In most TVCs in Nigeria, traditional masculinity has been woven around societal expectations of male hegemony in and out of the home (Adelabu & Sanusi, 2020; Asogwa et al., 2020), rarely portraying fathers as primary caregivers, nurturers or involved parents.

Modern Portrayals of Masculinity

Research indicates that dads are more involved in parenting and making household purchases than ever before, yet they are often disregarded and portrayed as fumbling, secondary caregivers and occasional parents, creating a significant gap between advertising messages and the reality of modern families. This situation is changing, as recent gender and advertising studies suggest a shift towards more progressive portrayals of men, with brands increasingly featuring men in caregiving and domestic roles, challenging traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. (Santoniccolo, et al., 2023; Tremmel & Wahl, 2023; Asogwa, 2020). Since the advent of dadvertising at the turn of the 21st century, men are increasingly portrayed in non-traditional, gender-neutral and positive roles as authentic, everyday fathers in different product promotions.

Unlike traditional ads that reinforce male hegemony, dadvertising communicates a progressive male image by encouraging men to partake in household and parenting duties hitherto associated with women, even while embracing their vulnerabilities as men. Rather, the TVCs blend dadvertising ideals with traditional masculinity, portraying men in their hybrid masculinities as both economic providers and competent caregivers. Thus many modern portrayals of manhood often intersect with the representation of fatherhood, as fatherhood is a crucial aspect of constructing masculinities (Nas, 2025). Where they are prevalent, dadvertising ads challenge hegemonic masculinity by deconstructing fatherhood and presenting it as central to modern family power dynamics.

According to Nas (2025), dadvertising has emerged as a specific genre of ‘menvertising’, focusing on evolving fatherhood roles in contemporary times and lampooning the traditional, authoritative typecasts of fatherhood that perpetuate unequal power dynamics in the society. Today, dadvertising has emerged, positioning men in many marketing promotions as emotionally available fathers actively engaged in homemaking, caregiving and parenting as authentic, rather than symbolic proof of their masculinity. The rationale is essentially to espouse the normalization of nurturing, emotionally responsive and active fatherhood as legitimate indicators of masculinity both in advertising and society.

Discussion of Findings

This study set out to probe the portrayal of men as fathers in selected Nigerian TVCs by advancing four research questions developed to guide the collection of useful data. Quantitative data from the content analysis of 20 TVCs as well as qualitative data from focus group discussions and informant interviews conducted were obtained to answer the research questions posed in the study.

Research Question One

What are the factors driving the rise of dadvertising in Nigeria's advertising space?

Data derived from the TVCs analysed, thematic analysis from focus groups discussions and semi-structured interviews with advertising practitioners reveal a combination of underlying factors, global and local, accounting for the emergence of dadvertising within Nigeria's marketing landscape. Table 1 below indicates the frequencies and percentages of how the identified drivers of dadvertising appear in the TVCs analysed. While the frequencies represent the number of commercials in which each driver is evident based on recurring patterns and narrative themes, multiple frequencies occurred, as a single commercial could reflect more than one driver of dadvertising.

**Table 1: Drivers of Dadvertising in the Nigerian TVCs Analysed
(N = 20)**

S/N0.	Factors (inferred)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Evolving gender roles and family dynamics	14	70%
2	Growing role of fathers as a consumer segment	12	60%
3	Increasing father involvement in family life	15	75%
4	Increasing brand differentiation	10	50%
5	Domino effect of global advertising trend	15	75%
6	Gender equality agitations	7	35%
	Strategic brand positioning		

7		20	100%
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Table 1 above indicates that strategic brand positioning (100%) appears in all the TVCs analysed, suggesting that advertisers intentionally leverage fatherhood narratives to enhance brand identity and appeal to consumers. In all the analysed TVCs, advertisers try to build compelling fatherhood narratives in a deliberate attempt to position their brands as progressive, socially sensitive and family-friendly. This branding strategy enables advertisers to connect emotionally with consumers, while simultaneously allowing brands to stand out from the clutter of competitive advertising propositions. The increasing involvement of fathers in the family life (75%) is another strong driver of dadvertising in the analysed Nigerian TVCs, underscoring broader cultural expectations of active fatherhood in contemporary Nigerian society. Unlike in the past, more fathers are now participating actively in family life, engaging in childcare, offering emotional support and contributing to household activities, in a radical shift from their traditional positioning as primarily breadwinners and authority figures.

The domino effect of the global adoption of dadvertising (75%), ranking equally with growing involvement of fathers in family dynamics, earlier mentioned, is another driver of the trend in Nigeria. The adoption of dadvertising as an innovative marketing strategy by multinational brands is a global contagion which has put pressure on local advertisers to ‘modernize’ by adopting it in order to avoid appearing dated in their engagement with fatherhood and masculinity. Thus, many local brands leveraging dadvertising are followers reacting to the trend set by global market leaders. Evolving gender roles and family dynamics (70%) constitute another prominent factor driving the trend in

Nigeria, reflecting the gradual transformation of Nigerian family structures. The change in gender roles has blurred the lines between men and women in the society, challenging traditional patriarchal norms as more fathers are participating in household chores and co-parenting, especially among urban, middle-class families. The increasing rejection, especially among the younger Nigerian demographics, of the tough, cold and authoritative father stereotype - quintessential of hegemonic masculinity - and preference for the more appealing, egalitarian masculinity of the modern dad underscore this change.

This rejection represents a generational shift in what it means to be a man, especially among the Millennials and Gen Z, who prioritize fatherhood “presence” over fatherhood “fear”. Advertisers assert that the persona of the playful, available dad resonates better with Nigerian audiences than that of the fearful, tough but distant father. Astute advertisers mirror this cultural shift in dadvertising in order to appeal to younger Nigerian consumers. The increasing portrayal of fathers in these ‘new’ roles hitherto associated mainly with women suggests that advertisers are mirroring and reinforcing the dynamics and responding to changing expectations of modern fatherhood.

The need for brands to position and differentiate themselves (50%) in the increasingly competitive marketing environment is another factor fuelling the emergence of dadvertising in Nigeria. In many of the TVCs analysed, advertisers try to build compelling narratives featuring fathers as central characters in a deliberate attempt to position their brands as progressive, socially sensitive and family-friendly. This branding strategy enables advertisers to connect emotionally with consumers, while simultaneously allowing brands to stand out from the clutter of competitive advertising propositions.

Table 2: Role of Father in the Selected TVCs

S/No.	Role of Father	Frequency of TVCs (%)
1	Emotional bonding	18 (90%)
2	Financial provision	6 (30%)
3	Caregiving	15 (75%)
4	Nurturing/mentoring	18 (90%)
5	Doing domestic chores	3 (15%)
6	Co-parenting	13 (65%)
7	Central character	20 (100%)

Results further suggest that dadvertising in Nigeria is partly driven by the growing recognition of fathers as an important consumer demographic (60%), who determine decisions concerning household purchases, across multiple product categories. In many families, fathers play a significant role in in deciding major purchase, especially of education, telecoms services, financial services, food and beverages and several FMCG products (Nas, 2025). Thus, brands are able to target fathers better using dadvertising narratives that appeal particularly to fathers because their preferences matter. This finding is reaffirmed especially by advertising practitioners who in their interviews argued that advertisements must reflect the changing masculinity in the society in order to resonate especially with fathers who are increasingly influential in consumer purchase decision-making in the family.

Data further show that the emergence of dadvertising is also attributed to the increasing agitation for gender equality and eradication of gender stereotyping in the Nigerian society (35%), driven especially by regulatory, feminist and civil society campaigns. Practitioners interviewed opined that with regulatory authorities pushing for more socially responsible messaging, dadvertising is a tool for self-censorship. Consequently, for many brands, the recourse to dadvertising is a “regulatory safeguard” to insulate themselves from any likely infringements and sanctions for the promotion of harmful gender portrayals. Conscious of this regulatory imperative, many advertisers are positioning themselves strategically as ethically and socially responsible by aligning their brand promotions with social change campaigns aimed at advancing gender equality, shared parenting and positive masculinity.

Research Question Two

What are the defining indicators of dadvertising campaigns in Nigeria?

Table 3: Defining Indicators of Dadvertising in the TVCs analysed

S/No.	Brand	Product Category	Key Dadvertising Indicators
1	Opay (Nigeria)	Payment Systems	Emotional bonding with child, nurturing, mentoring son in market smartness.
2	(People’s Payment Shield)	Body Care	Father in emotional bonding, nurturing, caring moments with son.
3	Nivea Men	Alcoholic Beverage	Responsible father figure, emotional availability, mentoring, childcare.
4	(Caring for the Family)	Telecom	Family-centred storytelling, active fatherhood involvement, shared laughter, emotional availability, supporting child’s aspiration.
	Guinness (Nigeria)		Mentoring children, emotional availability, nurturing beyond financial provision.
	(Made of More)		
	Airtel (Nigeria)		
	(Together We Can)		

5	Stanbic IBTC	Financial Services	Father changing diaper, in shared-parenting, emotionally available, intimate home locale, father centrality.
6	Pampers (Nigeria)	Childcare	Feeding toddler, shared early-stage parenting, domestic availability. Emotional availability, financial provision, active caregiving, financial provision.
7	Nestle (Nigeria) Cerelac	Food	Father bathing child, active bonding and caregiving, father showing emotional concern, active co-parenting.
8	Axa Mansard Insurance	Insurance	Active parenting, fatherhood availability, mentoring, caregiving, nurturing.
9	Dettol (Nigeria) (Protect What Matters Campaign)	Hygiene	Father as central character, cooking, preparing child for school, in nurturing masculinity, emotionally available.
10	Peak Milk (Kanu Nwankwo in Father's Day 2025)	Food	Father as central character, helping with homework, in active caregiving, participation in child's life.
11	Indomie (Nigeria) Family Mealtime Campaign	Food	Fathers in active caregiving, childcare, parenting and in central character.
12	MTN Nigeria Family Moment	Telecom	Father centrality, father washing clothes, assisting with house chores, participating in shared parenting, depicting child-centred domestic scenes, egalitarian household norms.
13	UNICEF Nigeria	NGO	

14	(Fathers Are Caregivers Too) Omo (Nigeria)	Detergent	Shared domestic moment, playful emotional warmth, active parenting. Father preparing meals, preparing children for school, emotionally present, co-parenting. Dad using the app to pay child's school fees, attending child's birthday, responsible parenting, blending financial provision with fatherhood availability.
15	Maltina	Beverage	Father as central character, emotional bonding with child, financial responsibility, positive fatherhood portrayal.
16	Peak 4-5-6 (Nigeria)	Food	Father as central character, emotional bonding with child, financial provision, responsible fatherhood.
17	First Bank (Firstmonie)	Financial services	Fatherhood availability, emotional bonding with family, fun time with family, father centrality.
18	Leadway Assurance (Family Protection)	Insurance	
19	Jumia (Nigeria) (Father's Day Campaign)	Marketing/sales	
20	Toyota SUV	Automobile	

Data (in Table 3 above) reveal several characteristics of dadvertising in Nigerian advertisements, with the major indicators being: father-centred storytelling, financial planning and provision, emotional father-child bonding, co-parenting, mentorship and moral guidance, fatherhood availability, active involvement in childcare, participation in domestic activities, brand loyalty engagements that foster connections with consumers, and providing financially for the family. However, while data in table 2 above indicate the depiction of fathers as central characters (100%) as the most defining indicator of dadvertising in the TVCs analysed, emotional bonding (90%) and nurturing/mentoring (90%) appear as the next commonest features of the trend. From the aggregation of literature and results of the study, it can be extrapolated that the key indicators of dadvertising is the depiction of fathers in several hybrids combinations involving:

- Active caregiving, visibly engaging in dispensing caregiving responsibilities.
- Domestic space participation, present and doing household chores.
- Shared parenting, partaking in joint tasks with mum, not just helping mum.
- Nurturing masculinity, expressing emotions, empathy and vulnerability.
- Hybrid masculinity, blending economic masculinity with caregiving competence.
- Emotional availability, bonding with children and family.
- Central narrative character, being key human figure in the storytelling.
- Aspirational and realistic portrayals that are relatable in everyday life.
- Experiencing the product as user, not as an objectified father figure.
- Challenging gendered stereotypes in repudiation of traditional fatherhood stereotyping.
- Normalization of caregiving, nurturing and parenting in real life, not in symbolic or exceptional role.

While literature may be replete with several indicators of dadvertising, it is instructive that for a campaign, commercial or marketing promotion to be classified as dadvertising, it must reflect two or more of the indicators listed above. In Nigeria, where family roles are still evolving even within strong patriarchal norms, the portrayal of hybrid masculinity is prevalent in dadvertising, enabling advertisers to navigate the intricate balance between tradition and modernity. Hybrid

masculinity is the fusion of traditional paternal authority and financial provision with modern, nurturing fatherhood, enabling brands to portray fathers simultaneously as strong providers and emotionally active caregivers and parents (Connor et al., 2021). Dadvertising does this by communicating the idea that fathers can remain providers and authority figures, while also being caring and nurturing parents.

Research Question Three

How do advertising audiences perceive dadvertising in Nigeria?

Table 4: Perception of Dadvertising among Focus Group Participants

S/No.	Perception	Frequency (%)
1	Positive/welcome	60%
2	Negative/culturally incongruous	30%
3	Uncertain	10%
	Total	100%

Data in table 4 above shows that majority of the focus group discussants (60%) perceived dadvertising as a positive development because it promotes the image of fathers as responsible, caring and supportive family members, evidencing changing masculinity in tandem with modern global trends. They welcomed the trend for its promotion of cultural values that valorise parental duty, emotional father-child bonding, changing gender roles and shared parenting, among other positives. This perception, especially among advertising practitioners suggests that dadvertising is a creative, emotionally engaging strategy, reflecting broader social transformations in Nigerian family life. However, findings show that not all reactions to the trend are positive, as dadvertising can provoke a backlash from different quarters. Thus, a significant segment (30%) were sceptical,

perceiving dadvertising negatively as a risky advertising strategy that is largely Western and culturally incongruous with African gender norms.

While the majority of the focus group discussants (60%) welcomed the trend for being both authentic and aspirational depictions with potential to instil egalitarian values in men, they were optimistic that repeated exposure to dadvertising has the potential to shape audience attitudes about what constitutes responsible parenting. Those who perceived it negatively expressed fears that among other objections, shared parenting and domestic involvement of fathers, embedded in dadvertising are idealized, threatening male hegemony and power dynamics within Nigeria's patriarchal structure. While worrying that fatherhood is still overly portrayed tied to the traditional provider masculinity, those against dadvertising observed that caregiving is framed not as an essential masculine role, but as a role supportive of women, reinforcing its feminine centrality.

Also, in their criticism, by pandering only to urban, middle-class fathers to the exclusion of urban men, dadvertising lacks inclusivity and diversity. They argued that because traditional patriarchal roles still dominate in many Nigerian homes, dadvertising might just be another ambitious marketing strategy rather than a reflection of everyday life. However, results also reveal that another smaller segment (10%) of participants in the study was uncertain in its perception of dadvertising. This segment indicated that because dadvertising was still an evolving phenomenon, they were yet to fully understand and evaluate its nuances and concluded that there was often inconsistency in dadvertising campaigns across different brands, making it difficult to interrogate the trend.

Generally, findings suggest that the perceptions of Nigerian audiences toward dadvertising are deeply nuanced, characterised by a contest between progressive ideals and traditional cultural preservation. Fundamentally, while most respondents in the study claimed awareness of ads

portraying men in nurturing, caregiving and parenting roles, they did not identify the ads specifically as “dadvertising”, suggesting that it is a relatively new concept. Notwithstanding, many of them observed that such portrayals of men are less frequent compared to the traditional portrayals of women as caregivers, nurturers and mothers. This finding further suggests that although dadvertising may be present in Nigeria’s advertising space, its limited frequency undermines its popularity and acceptance among audiences.

However, advertisers who were interviewed observed that dadvertising was slow to resonate in Nigeria for several reasons: the prevalence of strong patriarchal norms which still associate caregiving overwhelmingly with women, over-reliance of advertising on traditional gender stereotypes and cultural insensitivity around redefinition of fatherhood and masculinity. Consequently, public criticism of ads that fail to depict men in domestic spaces still abound, suggesting that advertising messaging may not be keeping traction with changes in audience expectations about gender roles (Bhattacharya & Satapathy, 2024). Critics have also observed that many ‘dadvertisements’ still frame fathers not as equals with women in the domestic space, but as secondary helpers, assisting women and learning from them. According to Schmitz (2016), fathers may not internalize fatherhood values and see themselves as true fathers if they do not see themselves positively depicted in generalist parental portrayals. Notwithstanding its pitfalls, dadvertising remains an emergent trend in Nigeria and audience responses suggest that it has the potential to reshape public perceptions of masculinity and parenting, while capitalizing on egalitarian family values to strengthen emotional connections between brands and target audience.

Research Question Four

What are the socio-cultural implications of the rise of dadvertising in Nigeria?

Findings from focus group discussants and practitioners interviewed reveal that the rise of dadvertising has significant multifaceted implications for Nigeria’s advertising and marketing

space. According to both set of participants, the primary socio-cultural implication of this trend is the increasing normalization of domestic equality between men and women. For decades, the Nigerian media portrayed the kitchen and caregiving as “female-only” territories, where men were considered incompetent intruders. However, by showing men as competent kitchen participants and co-parents, dadvertising provides a social template for the democratization of household labour, suggesting that caregiving, nurturing and parenting are human, not gendered responsibilities.

All discussants and interviewees in the study agreed that another implication of the emergence of dadvertising is that the increasing media portrayal of men as caring, empathetic and emotionally present - and by extrapolation, the repudiation of their definition solely by authority, toughness or economic power - has the potential to promote positive masculinity in the society. This is in tandem with cultivation theory. The consequence of exposure to dadvertising campaigns is that audiences would begin to view masculinity from a progressive lens as appealing and not toxic or hegemonic. For society, the rising visibility of nurturing and responsible fathers in media representations has the potential to influence the framing of the agenda for defining a good father, the social perception of fatherhood and the promotion of media narratives espousing greater, positive, paternal involvement in child development. The more fathers are depicted performing roles that are traditionally associated with mothers, such as cooking, helping with homework, feeding the children and participating in domestic tasks or shared parenting, the more this will enhance the humanization of the Nigerian male and transformation of gender roles within the family.

For many families, dadvertising communicates the supplanting of presence over power and accessibility over authority as progressive markers of fatherhood and masculinity, signalling a

desired future where the Nigerian father is measured not by his distance from the domestic space, but by his active availability and participation within. For advertisers, dadvertising provides opportunity to connect with audiences through authentic and emotionally appealing storytelling about family life. It provides opportunity for the continuous redefinition of fatherhood and masculinity in tandem with progressive gender roles, transcending the traditional portrayal of men as providers and disciplinarians who are emotionally distant with children and the family. The increasing depiction of fathers actively participating in childcare and emotional bonding, beyond their stereotyping with financial provision has the potential to rebrand masculinity, gradually reshaping public expectations about fatherhood. Dogan and Karaman (2023) opined that while many brands have perfected the art of marketing to moms, they are struggling with how to target and appeal to dads. Through authentic and sentimentally resonant representations, dadvertising also presents opportunity for marketers to connect with target audiences by positioning brands to strategically appeal to progressive family values, while standing out from the ubiquity of “good mother” narratives (Nas, 2025).

However, while dadvertising promotes positive media representations about men generally, it also raises concerns about the potential commercialization of fatherhood narratives to drive consumption. Findings, especially from focus group participants suggest that brands may want to appropriate egalitarian fatherhood values for marketing purposes, thereby upending emotional fatherhood narratives and manipulating them as symbolic marketing tools, rather than authentic, social behaviour change drivers. Furthermore, it is feared that while dadvertising sets a new standard for involved fatherhood, it can stimulate feelings of insecurity and inadequacy among fathers who are unable to navigate between being breadwinners and being ever-present

emotionally and physically as active parents in the home. Nas (2025) believes this fear puts tremendous pressure on men to prove themselves as fathers.

Also, whereas dadvertising is both a mirror and moulder of generational change, it may resonate more with the youth demographic - who often embrace more divergent views about gender - and less with most conservative, elderly audiences. Thus, the emergent trend has the potential to raise the ante in social rhetoric, as younger people's expectations about gender equality and shared parenting may conflict with the expectations of older generations whose gender views are more rigid and traditional. While some traditionalists may see dadvertising as a questionable Western influence which is antithetical to dominant gender norms, portraying a father co-parenting might be construed by them - within African traditional context - as abominable babysitting for a man.

Conclusion

The study concludes that dadvertising in the Nigerian marketing landscape transcends mere commercial strategy; it serves as a powerful instrument of social re-engineering, with profound implications deeply entrenched in the evolving socio-economic fabric of the country. Dadvertising is emerging as a fledgling marketing strategy in Nigeria, underscoring the importance of fathers who determine consumer spending in many families but are hitherto under-targeted as an audience demographic. By increasingly projecting images of involved, nurturing, parenting and authentic fatherhood, 'dadvertisements' are potentially dismantling extant patriarchal stereotypes and replacing them with a more inclusive and egalitarian model of masculinity and fatherhood. Consequently, masculinity is increasingly being defined in the Nigerian media not primarily by authority, control or financial dominance but by the portrayal of men as empathetic, caring and emotionally present.

Having emerged ab initio as an innovative marketing strategy, dadvertising is transitioning into a viable tool for the social rebranding of fatherhood and masculinity. Although replete with negative implications, dadvertising encapsulates an ongoing negotiation between tradition and modernity on the one hand, and gender equality and family dynamics on the other hand. Consequently, navigating the pathways of progressive fatherhood ideals within Nigeria's patriarchal landscape, while still connecting with a broad masculine audience demographic remains the challenge facing many brands and their advertisers.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are advanced to ensure the maximization of the positive potential of dadvertising, mitigating its negative consequences and transitioning it into a sustainable, social change and marketing asset.

1. Advertisers and creative agencies must eschew any superficiality by ensuring that portrayals of fathers as nurturers, caregivers and involved parents are driven by authenticity rather than fatherhood symbolism. Whereas highlighting real dads in active nurturing roles within real life nuances helps to build believability and trust with audiences, brands that fail to be authentic risk exposing their dadvertising campaigns to costly scepticism.
2. Media and content creators can promote dadvertising by developing talk shows, documentaries and social media narratives that foster public dialogue and debate around the realities, challenges and thrills of modern fatherhood in Nigeria. This is critical for raising the ante in deconstructing dadvertising and elevating it on top of social and behaviour change agenda of the media.
3. Policy makers and civil society organizations can escalate dadvertising by leveraging the change in gender roles and family dynamics as well as the enhanced image of the "new" father

for promoting social and behaviour change campaigns aimed at combating negative patriarchal tropes and achieving gender equality in the society. This is necessary, as the continued use of patriarchal gender representations is considered antithetical to achieving gender equity, especially in households.

4. Beyond penalizing harmful stereotypes, the advertising regulatory council of Nigeria (ARCON) should recognize and reward campaigns that portray responsible fatherhood, positive masculinity and balance modernity with tradition. Annual awards could be instituted to promote professionalism by appreciating brands and promotions that challenge gender norms and shatter patriarchal, gender stereotypes. This way, advertisers and integrated marketing communications firms would be encouraged to own and internalize the challenge of combating gender stereotyping in all ramifications.

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