

## ETHICAL STANDARDS AND THE QUEST FOR PROFESSIONALISM IN NIGERIAN ADVERTISING PRACTICE

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### Abstract

The advertising profession in Nigeria occupies a critical space in shaping consumer perceptions, promoting brands and influencing socio-cultural values. However, the ethical foundations of this practice have been persistently challenged by issues of unregulated conduct, deceptive messages, and weak enforcement of professional codes. This paper examines ethical standards and their role in sustaining professionalism within Nigeria's advertising practice. Drawing insights from the role theory and Deontological theory, it analyses the relationship between ethical compliance and professional integrity among advertising practitioners, particularly within the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) chapters in South-West Nigeria. Using a mixed-method approach that combines survey data and interviews with industry stakeholders, the study reveals that although ethical frameworks exist, adherence is inconsistent due to weak enforcement mechanisms, poor professional training, and economic pressures. The paper concludes that the quest for professionalism in advertising practice depends on a robust ethical culture, strengthened regulatory oversight, and continuous ethics-based education. It recommends integrating ethics more deeply into advertising curricula, enhancing ARCON's enforcement capacity and cultivating a value-driven culture among practitioners.

**Keywords:** Advertising Ethics, Professionalism, ARCON, Regulation, Nigeria, Media Practice

### INTRODUCTION

Advertising occupies a strategic position in contemporary market economies by shaping consumer preferences, influencing socio-cultural values and stimulating economic exchange. Advertising is believed to boost sales, service patronage, image and ideas in today's world of highly competitive market economies. It achieves this by using a variety of communication channels to spread messages that are both imaginative and well-crafted (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Individuals are exposed to advertisements either intentionally or unintentionally daily because people are bombarded with advertisements, whether in the form of artworks or drawings displayed on the bedroom walls, media setups in the living rooms or billboards strategically located on the streets and roads (Burgh-Woodman, 2018; Hovland & Wolburg, 2015; Olatunji, 2018). Consequently, advertising plays a crucial role in effective marketing and overall persuasion.

Advertising, as a vital part of marketing communication, plays a dual role of persuasion and information dissemination. In Nigeria, it has evolved from the days of physical displays or wares or traditional oral promotion to a sophisticated multi-platform enterprise comprising print, broadcast, and digital media (Ekeanyankwu & Obianigwe, 2019; Yakubu & Musa, 2021). This transformation reflects the global shift in communication practices influenced by technological advancements (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). Today, advertising practitioners use digital media ecosystems to reach consumers more effectively and at a lower cost (PwC, 2022; Statista, 2023). Therefore, the advertising profession in Nigeria has evolved from traditional print and broadcast channels to a technology-driven ecosystem powered by digital platforms, data analytics and interactive media. Technology has enabled advertising practitioners to reach broader audiences at reduced costs and with improved precision (Okoye, 2021). Beyond its economic importance, advertising exerts significant social influence by shaping tastes, aspirations and perceptions Kaser, 2012; Olatunji, 2018; Veerkumar and Jaiswal, 2016). However, this power comes with a responsibility to uphold ethical standards that ensure fairness, truthfulness, and social accountability.

In recent years, the ethical credibility of advertising practice in Nigeria has been under scrutiny. Misleading advertisements, exaggerated claims, unverified endorsements, and cultural insensitivity have raised public concerns about the moral compass guiding practitioners (Adegbola & Olatunji, 2020; Olubodede, 2025). Despite the existence of professional regulatory bodies such as the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), unethical practices persist across various sectors. The commercialisation of media spaces and economic pressures on agencies have often led to compromises in truth and integrity.

Ethical standards in advertising are central to maintaining professionalism because they define the principles and values guiding practitioners' conduct. Professionalism, in turn, implies not only competence and skill but also adherence to codes of behaviour that prioritise public interest over commercial gain. The challenge in Nigeria, however, is that many practitioners lack formal ethical training, while enforcement of professional standards remains weak and inconsistent. This negates modern reality, which necessitates that any activity with aspirations of societal relevance must have standards to back them up. This is in line with Olubodede (2013) that any practice that does not have proper training and education is still a craft and as such it is vulnerable to unscrupulous practitioners, quack remedies, impossible complications and dilemmas.

This paper, therefore, explores the intersection between ethics and professionalism in Nigerian advertising practice. It seeks to understand how ethical standards influence professional credibility and what institutional mechanisms can reinforce ethical compliance within the industry.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the institutionalisation of advertising regulation in Nigeria through the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), ethical concerns continue to undermine the credibility and professionalism of the industry. Persistent cases of misleading advertisements, political propaganda, exaggerated product claims, unverified endorsements, and culturally insensitive messaging suggest a disconnect between established ethical codes and actual practice. While regulatory frameworks and professional guidelines are in place, compliance among practitioners appears inconsistent and, in many cases, weakly enforced. This situation raises critical concerns about the effectiveness of regulatory oversight and the extent to which ethical standards truly guide professional conduct within the industry. Furthermore, the increasing commercial pressures within Nigeria's competitive advertising landscape have intensified the tendency of practitioners to prioritise profit over ethical considerations. The emergence of digital media platforms has further complicated the regulatory environment, introducing new forms of advertising that often bypass traditional monitoring mechanisms.

Additionally, the apparent lack of structured ethical training and continuous professional development among practitioners contributes to a weak ethical culture within the profession. As a result, advertising practice in Nigeria continues to grapple with issues of quackery, poor accountability, and declining public trust. Given these challenges, there is a pressing need to critically examine how ethical standards influence professionalism in advertising practice and to identify the institutional and structural factors that either promote or hinder ethical compliance. Without such an examination, efforts to strengthen professionalism in the Nigerian advertising industry may remain ineffective and unsustainable.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent are advertising practitioners in the select ARCON chapters in the South-West aware of existing ethical advertising standards in Nigeria?
2. How compliant are the practitioners in the select ARCON Chapters in the South-West with established ethical codes in advertising practice?
3. How effective is the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria in enforcing ethical standards in the South-West?
4. What factors influence ethical or unethical behaviour among advertising practitioners in the select ARCON chapter in South-West?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Ethics in Advertising Practice**

Ethics refers to the moral principles that govern individual and collective behaviour. It is a set of generally accepted principles for how members of a particular profession or organisation should act. It is possible to interpret these norms and practices as ways of leading, managing or operating within a certain domain (Papanilitans, 2018). Accordingly, honesty, fairness and transparency seem to be the three most crucial terms for professionals. Supposedly, these served as a source of inspiration for advertising experts all around the globe. When it comes to advertising, ethics is more than just following the letter of the law or statutory control; it is also about upholding a self-imposed standard of honesty. Ethics in advertising refers to moral principles governing persuasive communication. It transcends legal compliance and encompasses voluntary adherence to fairness, truthfulness and social responsibility (Snyder, 2017)

In advertising, it determines whether persuasive messages align with societal norms of truthfulness, decency, and responsibility. According to Arens et al. (2020), Ethical advertising is rooted in honesty, substantiated claims and respect for public intelligence. This denotes that ethical advertising avoids deception, respects audience intelligence and promotes goods or services honestly. Studies have shown that when advertising misleads or manipulates, it erodes consumer trust and damages brand reputation (*Belch and Belch, 2021; Snyder, 2017*). In Nigeria, ethical breaches have manifested in misleading health product claims, exaggerated political campaign messages, and inappropriate gender representations. The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), now ARCON, established codes of conduct to mitigate such abuses, emphasising legality, decency, honesty, and truthfulness in all advertisements. However, enforcement challenges and the influx of untrained practitioners have undermined compliance.

### **Professionalism in Advertising**

Professionalism is the standard required in a profession. Such a standard may be skill, competence, or character expected of a member of the profession (Murphy et al., 2018). This is the high standard which is expected of a person who is in a profession. It is often linked to the upholding of the principles, laws, ethics and conventions of a profession as a way of practice becoming a profession (Freidson, 2001; Evetts, 2011). Professionalism denotes adherence to ethical standards, continuous skill development, accountability and compliance with industry codes of practice (Olatunji, 2019). Therefore, professionalism in advertising refers to adherence to ethical standards, accountability, creativity and competence in delivering effective messages (Yakubu & Musa, 2021). It is the standard set up by the body that may be regulating and controlling advertising practice to guide advertising practitioners. It is mandatory for whoever wants to practice advertising to abide by the dictates of the ethics of the profession. In Nigeria, ARCON regulates and enforces standards to ensure professionalism (ARCON, 2022). Professionalism in advertising goes beyond technical competence to include moral accountability and self-regulation. A professional advertising practitioner should not only master persuasive techniques but also understand the ethical boundaries of influence. Therefore, professionalism in advertising entails adherence to standards that protect public interest while advancing industry credibility.

Advertising professionals in Nigeria are expected to register with ARCON, undergo structured training, and adhere to the industry's code of ethics. Nonetheless, studies suggest that the profession remains vulnerable to quackery and non-compliance, with many operators functioning without registration or professional supervision (*Olubodede, 2023; Olubodede, 2025*).

### **Relationship Between Ethics and Professionalism**

Ethics and professionalism are interdependent; professionalism without ethics is hollow, while ethics without professionalism lacks structure. Ethical standards provide the moral compass, while professionalism institutionalises these standards through education, certification and regulation. A culture of ethical professionalism enhances public trust, strengthens institutional legitimacy and promotes long-term sustainability within the advertising industry (Evetts, 2011; Olatunji, 2019). Without ethical commitment, professionalism becomes procedural rather than moral (Freidson, 2001).

However, globalisation and digital media have introduced new ethical dilemmas. Technological disruptions often test the ability of practitioners and regulators to uphold the ethical standards (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Influencer marketing, native advertising, and algorithmic targeting blur the line between persuasion and manipulation (Turow, 2011). Ibriahim et al. (2019) note that technological acceleration exceeds preparedness, particularly in emerging markets. Advertising in Nigeria, like other parts of the

world, must adapt ethical frameworks to the realities of digital communication. Therefore, sustaining professionalism in Nigeria requires integrating ethical culture, regulatory enforcement and educational reform.

### **Empirical Studies**

Recent scholarship indicates that ethical concerns in advertising have intensified globally due to digital transformation and platformisation. In Nigeria, like many other countries, the shift toward digital marketing has introduced new ethical complexities such as data privacy concerns, influencer transparency and algorithm-driven persuasion (Antolovic et al., 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Granstedt et al., 2024; Jatto et al., 2025).

Studies show that while regulatory institutions such as the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria have expanded their oversight to digital platforms, enforcement remains inconsistent due to the decentralised nature of online advertising and the proliferation of user-generated content (Jatto et al., 2025). This reflects a broader global challenge where regulatory frameworks struggle to keep pace with rapidly evolving digital advertising ecosystems (Antolovic et al., 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Empirical research further reveals that although practitioners demonstrate awareness of ethical codes, compliance is influenced by structural and economic constraints. For instance, a study in Enugu State found that financial pressures, limited access to regulatory updates and perceived complexity of ethical guidelines hinder full adherence among practitioners (Anyadubalu et al., 2025). Studies in emerging markets show that resource limitations, institutional weaknesses and uneven access to regulatory information significantly affect adherence to ethical standards (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Similarly, content analyses of Nigerian media platforms indicate selective compliance with ethical standards, particularly in areas relating to targeted advertising, product claims and persuasive techniques, suggesting that ethical enforcement is uneven across sectors (Nwankpa et al., 2025). This is largely due to the opacity of platform algorithms and the increasing reliance on data-driven systems (Boerman et al., 2025; Carah et al., 2024).

Beyond regulatory issues, ethical controversies in Nigerian advertising increasingly intersect with socio-cultural sensitivities. Recent studies highlight public backlash against gender representation and cultural misappropriation in advertising messages, reinforcing the need for context-sensitive ethical frameworks (Adesemoye et al., 2025).

Moreover, industry and academic research suggest that regulators and stakeholders are intensifying efforts to address unethical practices, particularly misleading digital advertisements and unverified endorsements. However, these efforts are often reactive rather than preventive, limiting their long-term effectiveness, as legal and ethical frameworks continue to lag behind technological innovation (Antolovic, et al., 2025; MSME Africa, 2024).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored in Role Theory and Deontological Ethics Theory. Role theory posits that individuals internalise behavioural expectations associated with their social positions. It explains how individuals conform to socially defined expectations associated with their professional roles. Advertising practitioners are expected to embody values of honesty, creativity, transparency and social responsibility. When they deviate due to financial pressure or institutional failure, their professional credibility diminishes. This creates role conflict and ethical dissonance. Deontological Ethics Theory, derived from Immanuel Kant's philosophy, emphasises duty-based morality, asserting that actions are ethical if they align with established moral rules, regardless of outcomes. In advertising, this means practitioners should tell the truth and respect consumer autonomy, even if dishonest messaging could yield profit. Together, these theories provide a lens to examine how ethical duty and professional roles interact within Nigeria's advertising environment. They explain how ethical obligations and institutional roles interact within ARCON-regulated practice.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The paper draws on data from a broader doctoral study on professionalism in advertising practice in South-West Nigeria. The research employed a descriptive survey design complemented by qualitative interviews. The population comprised registered advertising practitioners under ARCON's Lagos, Ogun,

and Oyo chapters. A total of 356 practitioners participated through questionnaires, while 12 senior advertising executives and regulatory officers were interviewed. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to ethics and professionalism. The study’s methodological triangulation strengthened the validity of its findings by combining perceptions, institutional data, and real-world practice experiences.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Awareness of Ethical Advertising Standards (Item-Specific Data)**

Ethical Awareness Variable	Lagos (%)	Ogun (%)	Oyo (%)
Advertising practice requires ARCON registration	98.5	100.0	100.0
Individual practitioners must be ARCON-registered	94.0	77.7	100.0
Annual practice fees are mandatory	95.5	88.8	100.0
Attendance at ARCON conferences/seminars is required	54.5	77.7	92.9
Advertisements must be vetted before exposure	94.0	88.8	100.0
Ethical violations attract sanctions	88.9	66.6	100.0

Table 1 presents specific data on advertising practitioners’ awareness of ethical advertising standards across Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States. The data show that awareness of core regulatory requirements is generally high across the three chapters, although the level of awareness varies by ethical dimension and by state.

Taken together, the data indicate that advertising practitioners in the select ARCON chapters of South-West Nigeria possess a generally high level of awareness of ethical advertising standards, particularly those related to registration, vetting, and financial compliance. Nevertheless, awareness is not uniform across all ethical dimensions. Obligations tied to continuous professional development and the certainty of sanctions appear less firmly embedded in practitioners’ consciousness, especially in Lagos and Ogun. This suggests that while ethical awareness is broadly established, it is shaped by contextual factors such as market size, regulatory visibility, and the intensity of professional competition. Consequently, the table implies that high awareness of ethical standards exists alongside selective gaps, which may have implications for ethical compliance and enforcement outcomes within different advertising environments in the South-West.

**Table 2: Ethical Compliance Behaviour among Practitioners**

Ethical Compliance Indicator	Lagos (%)	Ogun (%)	Oyo (%)
Unethical advertisements are withdrawn	80.6	55.5	14.2
Advertising agencies operate with an ARCON licence	86.0	64.6	100.0
Licence withdrawal occurs after an ethical breach	64.1	55.5	100.0
Unregistered practitioners are barred from practice	20.4	22.2	100.0
Unregistered practitioners are penalised	32.9	44.4	100.0
Unapproved advertisements are sanctioned	35.9	55.5	100.0

Table 2 presents data on the extent to which advertising practitioners in Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States comply with established ethical codes of advertising practice. The table focuses on observable compliance behaviours and enforcement outcomes rather than awareness, thereby providing insight into how ethical standards are translated into practice across the three ARCON chapters. Overall, the data in Table 2.1 indicate that ethical compliance among advertising practitioners in the select ARCON chapters of South-West Nigeria is uneven and strongly influenced by location. Taken together, the table suggests that ethical compliance in advertising practice within South-West Nigeria is not solely a function of awareness or regulation but is significantly shaped by the strength and consistency of enforcement within each ARCON chapter.

**Table 3: ARCON Ethical Enforcement Effectiveness**

Enforcement Dimension	Lagos (%)	Ogun (%)	Oyo (%)
Vetting for cultural & constitutional compliance	96.1	100.0	100.0
Vetting against misinformation/disinformation	94.3	88.8	100.0
Regulation and control of advertising practices	94.7	88.8	100.0
Enforcement of local-content policy	89.5	88.8	100.0
Formulation & implementation of advertising guidelines	91.6	88.8	100.0
Maintenance of practitioners' register	87.1	88.8	100.0

The data presented on enforcement dimensions indicate a generally high level of effectiveness by the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) in enforcing ethical advertising standards across Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States, although the degree of effectiveness varies slightly by enforcement function and location.

The data indicate that ARCON is highly effective in enforcing ethical advertising standards in the South-West, particularly in areas related to vetting, policy formulation, and cultural compliance. The consistently perfect scores recorded in Oyo suggest that enforcement effectiveness is enhanced in less congested and more administratively manageable environments. In contrast, the slightly lower figures in Lagos and Ogun reflect the pressures of larger, more competitive advertising markets, where enforcement remains strong but is occasionally constrained by scale and complexity. Overall, the table demonstrates that ARCON's enforcement mechanisms are well established and functional, though their effectiveness is moderated by contextual factors across different state chapters.

**Table 4: Structural and Institutional Factors Influencing Ethical Behaviour**

Influencing Factor	Lagos	Ogun	Oyo
Intensity of market competition	High	Medium	Low
Client pressure on practitioners	High	Medium	Low
Employment of unregistered practitioners	High	Medium	Very Low
Proxy/fronting practice	High	Medium	Very Low
Media houses' non-compliance with vetting	High	Medium	Low
Strength of regulatory deterrence	Low	Medium	High
Adequacy of professional training	Mixed	Moderate	High

The data on influencing factors reveal clear contextual differences in the conditions shaping ethical and unethical behaviour among advertising practitioners in Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States. These factors reflect the interaction between market dynamics, regulatory strength, and professional capacity within each advertising environment. Taken together, the data demonstrate that ethical and unethical behaviour among advertising practitioners in the South-West is shaped primarily by structural and institutional conditions rather than by awareness alone. Overall, the table underscores that ethical behaviour in advertising practice is context-dependent and strongly influenced by the interaction of market dynamics, enforcement strength and professional capacity.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Existence of Ethical Codes but Weak Enforcement

Findings revealed that ethical codes and professional standards are well-documented within ARCON's regulatory framework. However, compliance remains inconsistent. Many practitioners admitted that enforcement mechanisms are either reactive or selective, often influenced by political or commercial interests. This aligns with studies emphasising that Institutional weakness has been identified as a major barrier to ethical compliance in developing media systems, particularly where enforcement mechanisms are inconsistent and resource-constrained (Anyadubalu et al., 2025; Nwankpa et al., 2025).

The findings reveal a high level of awareness of ethical standards and regulatory requirements among advertising practitioners in South-West Nigeria. Respondents across Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo overwhelmingly affirmed that registration with the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) is a prerequisite for professional practice. This suggests that ethical norms are institutionally embedded and widely recognised within the industry.

However, this awareness does not fully translate into uniform understanding or practice. Divergent responses regarding mandatory registration for all employees indicate ambiguity in the interpretation of professional boundaries. From a Role Theory perspective, this reflects role inconsistency, where practitioners recognise formal expectations but do not uniformly enact them (Evetts, 2011). Such inconsistencies weaken the clarity of professional identity and dilute regulatory effectiveness. State-level variations reinforce this interpretation. Respondents in Oyo demonstrate stronger alignment with regulatory expectations compared to Lagos and Ogun. This suggests that highly commercialised environments -particularly Lagos -introduce competing role pressures, where market demands may override institutional expectations. Consequently, while awareness is high, role performance remains context-dependent.

### **Compliance with Ethical Codes**

The results indicate moderate-to-high levels of compliance with ethical standards, particularly in licensing and the withdrawal of non-compliant advertisements. This reflects the presence of functional regulatory mechanisms within the industry. Nonetheless, compliance is inconsistent and unevenly enforced. Oyo records near-total compliance across multiple indicators, while Lagos exhibits weaker enforcement outcomes, especially regarding penalties for unregistered practitioners and unapproved advertisements. The high level of neutrality among Lagos respondents further suggests limited visibility or inconsistency of enforcement actions.

From a Deontological Ethics perspective, this pattern reveals a critical gap between ethical duty and actual behaviour. Deontological theory emphasises adherence to rules irrespective of consequences (Kant, 1785/modern applications in Shaw, 2020). However, the findings suggest that practitioners' compliance is often conditional rather than principled, influenced by situational and economic considerations. This indicates that ethical standards in Nigerian advertising are not yet fully internalised as moral obligations but are instead applied selectively. Such conditional compliance undermines the normative foundation of professionalism and reinforces a culture of instrumental ethics.

### **Effectiveness of ARCON Enforcement**

Respondents expressed **strong confidence in ARCON's regulatory role**, particularly in:

1. vetting advertisements for cultural appropriateness;
2. controlling misinformation and deceptive content;
3. promoting indigenous content and professional standards;
4. Maintaining registers of practitioners and organisations.

Affirmative responses exceeded 80% across all states, indicating that ARCON possesses significant institutional legitimacy.

However, a critical contradiction emerges when these perceptions are compared with compliance data. While ARCON is viewed as effective at the normative and policy level, enforcement outcomes remain uneven in practice. This suggests a distinction between:

1. regulatory visibility (high)
2. Regulatory enforcement capacity (variable).

From an institutional perspective, this aligns with findings in media regulation studies that symbolic regulatory strength does not always translate into operational effectiveness (Nwankpa et al., 2025; Anyadubalu et al., 2025). In effect, ARCON's authority is recognised, but its enforcement reach is constrained, particularly in complex and competitive markets.

**Structural and Institutional Factors Influencing Ethical Behaviour:** Findings identify formal professional training as a key determinant of ethical behaviour and professionalism. A strong majority of respondents agreed that training enhances performance and improves the quality of advertising practice. This supports existing literature that links professional education to ethical orientation and competence development (Murphy et al., 2018; Olatunji, 2019). However, the results also reveal a significant gap between training and applied competence. Respondents expressed uncertainty regarding the impact of training on specific professional skills, including media planning and selection; communication strategy development; account prospecting and execution.

High neutrality levels -particularly in Lagos and Ogun- indicate that formal training does not consistently translate into professional expertise. From a Role Theory standpoint, this suggests incomplete

role socialisation, where individuals acquire credentials but lack the practical capacity to perform expected professional roles effectively. In addition, the findings imply that ethical behaviour is shaped by broader structural pressures, including economic competition and client demands. In such contexts, practitioners may prioritise commercial outcomes over ethical obligations, reinforcing earlier observations of conditional compliance.

Another significant finding was the limited ethical education among practitioners. Many advertising professionals entered the industry through related fields -such as marketing or mass communication -without formal training in advertising ethics. Consequently, their decision-making is guided more by intuition or employer pressure than professional conscience. The advent of digital media has amplified ethical challenges. Online influencers, viral marketing, and algorithmic targeting have made it difficult to monitor truthfulness and accountability. Respondents cited cases where unverified online content circulated as paid advertisements without ARCON's approval, thereby bypassing ethical review panels.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethical standards remain the backbone of professionalism in advertising practice. The Nigerian advertising industry has made strides in institutionalising ethics through ARCON, but enforcement gaps, economic constraints, and weak education continue to hinder progress. Without strong moral foundations, professional regulation becomes ineffective, and public trust diminishes.

To consolidate professionalism, advertising ethics must be reimagined not as a regulatory burden but as a moral and strategic advantage. Ethical advertising enhances credibility, fosters consumer loyalty, and sustains industry reputation.

It is, therefore, recommended that ARCON should establish regional compliance units with autonomy to monitor and sanction violations effectively. Advertising programmes in tertiary institutions and professional bodies should embed applied ethics courses and case studies into curricula. Mandatory ethics workshops should be conducted annually for practitioners to renew their registration. Agencies should publish ethical compliance statements as part of their corporate responsibility reports. ARCON should develop a digital ethics monitoring system to address online advertising irregularities. There should be collaborative regulation through partnership with media organisations, consumer protection agencies and civil society to uphold integrity in advertising.

By embedding these measures, Nigeria's advertising profession can achieve a balanced blend of creativity, responsibility and respect for public trust — hallmarks of genuine professionalism.

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