

A Look at the Phenomenon of Hybridization of the Professional Activities of Consulting Agencies and Advertising Sales Agencies in Cameroon

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How to cite this paper: Assomo, A., & Ngouana Akoa, A. (2022). A Look at the Phenomenon of Hybridization of the Professional Activities of Consulting Agencies and Advertising Sales Agencies in Cameroon. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*, 10, 233-252.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/ajc.2022.102015>

Received: April 21, 2022

Accepted: June 14, 2022

Published: June 17, 2022

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Abstract

The central question that structures this research is as follows: How does the phenomenon of hybridization of the activities of actors in the advertising chain manifest itself in Cameroon, particularly at the level of Consulting Agencies and Advertising Sales Agencies? To find some answers, information was collected through direct observation to see the activities of Ascèse consulting, B and C communication, Média plus and Elfi Events. Documentary research was also carried out with a view of compiling a corpus and open interviews conducted with officials from Ascèse, Média plus and B and C communication. The analysis consisted of describing the activities carried out by the actors in the field of communication, particularly in consulting agencies and those carried out in management. In particular, it was a question of highlighting the tasks carried out by the Ascèse and B and C communication agencies on one hand and those carried out by the Média Plus and Elfi Events advertising agencies on the other. The interpretation of the data collected after analysis was based on the axis of socio-professional hybridization. The results showed that consulting agencies carry out both consulting and governance activities. In the same vein, it has been seen that advertising agencies deploy both in the field recognized for them and in the field of expertise recognized for consulting agencies. This highlights that the phenomenon of hybridization in the advertising market in Cameroon is manifested by the fact that Consulting Agencies carry out co advertising sales activities and advertising sales agencies carry out Advertising Consulting Agency activities.

Keywords

Advertising Consulting Agency, Advertising Sales Agency, Professional

1. Introduction

The term “hybridization” evokes a fertilization that does not follow natural laws: it is the fact of crossing two species or two different genera, to cause the birth of specimens combining, to a more or less marked degree, specific characteristics of both parents.” (Hybridation, <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/hybridation>, consulted March 23, 2022). If the intergeneric hybridization is quite rare in nature (the mule, product of the crossing of the donkey and the mare, is the classic example), interspecific hybridization is much more frequent, in particular in the kingdom plant: the flora is rich in examples of hybrids between related species (Ibidem). Hybrid is what results from a crossing or a mixture of different types, which is composed of disparate elements not falling under a single logic, of a single genre Larousse (<http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/hybride/40717>). We consider the term hybridization in this research as the fact for Consulting Agencies to carry out both activities dedicated to itself and those dedicated to Advertising Agencies, and also the fact for Agencies to carry out Board and Management tasks of Consulting agency.

1.1. Literature Review

It should be noted that studies relating to the phenomenon of hybridization have already been carried out in several fields such as science (where it originates) and journalism. In the field of advertising, they are almost embryonic. Nevertheless, researchers have problematized professional practices by noting phenomena sometimes qualified as aporias because of the slippages generally observed. Boyomo-Assala (1993) in an article noted aporias in the practice of Advertising in Cameroon. The author in this article evokes the monopoly of CPE, its break with SOPECAM and its conflicts with CRTV. In a clearer way, he believes that the disorder observed in the business sector is a priori caused by the State. Moreover, the economic agents of advertising, in particular the supports (media), the advertisers (the State, the ministers, the mayors), the advertisers (directors and agencies) “set themselves up as specialists in advertising communication: the supports act like advertisers, who do not hesitate to print advertising brochures or to finance the printing” (Idem, p. 55).

This article highlights a certain disorder in the practice of advertising and highlights that the CPE in particular, which produced advertising messages for advertisers and marketed the broadcasting spaces of CRTV and SOPECAM; the production of messages being a consulting activity and the marketing of spaces being a management activity, we can see there hybridization in the practices of this state company.

Robin & Modin (2017) (in <http://www.ladn.eu>, consulted on March 15, 2022) present the concept of hybridization as a phenomenon imposed on them by digital in order to better satisfy advertisers. Indeed, with digital, there is the birth of expertise in the profession of consulting agency. Brand content producers, community managers, media traders, data analysts are part of the new expertise offered by digital. For the authors, it is necessary to combine all this expertise under its roof to offer advertisers a more efficient production. For them: The answer is rather to be found on the side of the agency, which must adapt to the organization of the client: the vast majority of advertisers no longer appoint a manager per communication discipline, but a communication manager who has several hats. It is up to the agency to do the same, by mixing expertise under its roof. With the key to a real integrated model: a single pilot, several expertise and more integration (Ibid.). The authors define the hybridization of the traditional activities of Consulting Agencies and the new activities offered by digital. This article presents hybridization only in Consulting Agencies, however we will carry out an analysis both in Consulting Agencies and in Boards. For Thao (2017) hybridization in an advertising product manifests itself on two levels. Both in form and in substance. At the substantive level, to design his message, the advertising strategist uses several sciences. With regard to the examples of advertisements that made up her corpus, she distinguished three sciences, namely sinology, Umberto Eco's semiotics and discourse analysis and plastic semiotics. On the form, the hybridization manifests itself through the organization of space, the female body and the written sign.

This text presents the manifestations of hybridization. It manifests itself in an advertising product through the bringing together of sciences on the content, and on the form, the mixture of iconic elements. The advertising product is thus a leading example of hybridization. This text falling within our field of study, presents us with another manifestation of hybridization but in a finished advertising product. On the other hand, we evoke this phenomenon in the practice of the trade.

1.2. Research Problem

In the advertising chain, the role assigned to an advertiser is to initiate advertising. A consulting agency develops on behalf of the latter an advertising communication strategy and monitors its operationalization (article 3 of the law of December 29, 2006 governing advertising in Cameroon). An advertising agency acts on behalf of an advertising medium, recruits and markets advertising space opened by the latter for advertisers (Ibidem). The 2006 law governing advertising activity in Cameroon prohibits actors from carrying out activities recognized for others. It is expressly stated that: "As such, no company may claim to exercise simultaneously one and the other advertising professions referred to in paragraph 1 above, nor exercise an advertising profession other than that to which it has been accredited". (Idem, Article 11). However, a first observation of the activities of Media Plus, an advertising agency based in Douala, leads us to iden-

tify the typology of the tasks carried out by it in its commercial relationship with its customers. It appears that this management designed and implemented in 2014 an advertising campaign for the overhaul of the VIP lounges of the company “Les Aéroports” du Cameroun. In addition, during the same year she designed the content and produced flyers for “La boucherie charcuterie du littoral”. Two activities recognized for consulting agencies and not for management. In the same vein, the advertising consulting agency Ascese, also based in Douala, was asked to organize the University Games organized in Dschang, from May 4 to 11, 2019. It was observed that, apart from the design media and communication around the event, this company was also responsible for selling the spaces to the various advertisers. In particular, it was a question for Ascèse of listing companies in the public and semi-public sectors, of establishing a subscription form which was made available to them. In this sheet, we could appreciate the locations available in the different sites of the Games (Foumban, Bandjoun and Dschang). Advertisers used this sheet to choose a location that they purchased from Ascese; an activity that is nevertheless recognized for advertising agencies and not for consulting agencies.

This situation of professional and legal discomfort seems not only to create blurring phenomena in the Cameroonian advertising market but also to put itself on the sidelines of Law No 2006/018 of December 29, 2006, which in its article 11 paragraph 1 provides that: “the Consulting Agency and the Advertising Board are incompatible”. As such, no company may claim to exercise simultaneously one and the other advertising professions referred to in paragraph 1 above, nor exercise an advertising profession other than that for which it has been approved. The analysis of hybridization phenomena in the Cameroonian advertising market therefore constitutes the problem of this research.

1.3. Problematic

In general, this research attempts to show how the phenomenon of hybridization manifests itself in the advertising professions in Cameroon; hence the central research question is formulated as follows: How does the phenomenon of hybridization of the activities of actors in the advertising chain in Cameroon manifest itself, particularly at the level of consulting agencies and advertising agencies?

The main hypothesis as for it is formulated as follows: the phenomenon of hybridization in the advertising market in Cameroon is manifested by the fact for Consulting Agencies to carry out sales activities and for sales agencies to carry out Advertising consulting agency. This work strives to show that the phenomenon of hybridization exists among the two major players in the advertising chain in Cameroon, in other words, that consulting agencies carry out activities recognized by the boards and *vice versa*.

In the work of this research, we are interested in two consulting agencies, namely Ascese conseil and Brand and Consumers Communication (B and C) and two advertising agencies, in particular Media plus and Elfi Events. This choice is justified by the fact that they were founded by Cameroonians. In terms

of time, we will present as part of this research, hybridization activities carried out between 2010 and 2020. We plan to analyze at least two activities that took place in the margin of this temporal space.

2. Methodology

This work centered around the question of hybridization in the activities carried out by actors of the advertising chain in general, by advertising consulting agencies and the boards in particular commands to highlight these manifestations to follow a methodology that is highlighted here.

2.1. Collection Technics

In this work, we use three techniques which are: direct observation, documentary research for the constitution of a corpus and open interview.

- Direct observation

For this research, we opted for direct observation. This technique seems effective here because it allows us to see actions taken. It supplements the interviews with the managers of communication companies. We were thus able to closely observe the activities carried out by the advertising agencies Média Plus (Douala) and Elfi Events (Yaoundé) and by the advertising consulting agencies B and C communication (Douala) and Ascese (Douala and Yaoundé).

- Documentary research for the constitution of a corpus

The collection of data enabled us to carry out the following activities: The collection of information contained in the pages of the social networks of agencies and advertising agencies and which reported on the activities carried out by them. We went through the Facebook page of *Ascése consulting* (<https://web.facebook.com/AsceseConseil/>, consulted on March 18, 2019). Similarly, the Facebook page of the Elfi Events management (consulted on March 18, 2019), the Facebook page of *Média Plus* (<https://web.facebook.com/MediaplusCMR/?rdc=1&rdr>, accessed March 20, 2019) and that of *B and C Communication* (<https://web.facebook.com/BC-communication-1414753568787001/>, accessed March 20, 2019). Besides this, we have collected the posters and advertising spots produced by these four communication structures. We have also consulted the presentation brochure of the agency Elfi Events. It presented the achievements of this company. Finally, we consulted an internship report produced by *Ebah (2019)* and entitled Management of event projects at Elfi Events, advertising management agency which described some of the activities carried out by this management.

- Open interviews

Part of this research, interviews were conducted with managers of several advertising companies. The option of open interviews was taken in order to bring these managers to describe all the activities carried out by their structures without filtering. The aim here is not to orient them, but to give them all the latitude

to express themselves without reservation regarding the activities carried out by their companies. The question asked was: “Tell us about the overall achievements of the communication company and describe the activities carried out during these”. Those, interviews were conducted with the following officials: Mireille Fomekong, Founder and Managing Director of Ascese consulting agency; Gabrielle Ngaleu, assistant advertising manager at Ascèse consulting agency; Armand Ngaleumo, Account Coordinator at B & C consultant agency; Awal Pacha, head of the creative department at Média plus and César Doualla, head of sales and marketing at Média plus. **Table 1** presented here highlights the locations and periods of the interviews conducted with these agency managers.

2.2. Analysis and Interpretation of Data Collected in the Field

The analysis is descriptive since it will consist in describing the activities carried out by the actors in the field of communication, particularly in consulting agencies and those carried out in the Regis. This will include highlighting the tasks carried out by the Ascese and B and C communication agencies on the one hand and those carried out by the Média Plus and Elfi Events advertising agencies on the other. The interpretation of the data collected after analysis will be based on the axis of socio-professional hybridization. It will show how actors in the advertising chain carry out hybridization activities; in other words, we will show after analyzing the data collected, how consulting agencies carry out activities dedicated to advertising agencies and *vice versa*.

3. Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the sociology of professions, in particular the one developed by Neveu (2001), supplemented by the approach to the hybridization of

Table 1. Area and period of interviews.

Names of interviewers	Quality	area of interview	period of interview
Mireille Fomekong	Founder and Managing Director of Ascese consulting agency	Douala	May 19, 2020 from 11 a.m. to 11:50 a.m
Gabrielle Ngaleu	assistant advertising manager at Ascèse consulting agency	Douala, interview by telephone	May 23 and 26, 2019 from 8 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. and 10:19 a.m
Armand Ngaleumo	Account Coordinator at B & C consultant agency	Douala	August 29 and September 7 2019, respectively from 4 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. and from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. then on November 8, 2020 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m
Awal Pacha	Head of the creative department at Média plus	Douala	August 29, 2019 from 5:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. then by telephone on September 9, 2020 from noon to 5 p.m.
César Doualla	Head of sales and marketing at Média plus	Douala	August 29, 2019 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m

Source: Authors.

the functioning of organizations within the framework of the so-called post-bureaucracy theory developed by Emery & Giaouque (2014).

3.1. The Sociology of Professions within the Framework of This Work

In the dictionary of sociology, Ferreol et al. (2002), believe that the theory of the sociology of professions advocates for the definition, the evolution of the profession. Added to this, the analysis of the various transformations of the profession in the organization of work. They add that this theory revolves around three trends, namely the deepening of the study of professional groups. It is a question of making an analysis of the profession from the historical point of view and an analysis of the division of labor. The second area of study concerns reflections on professionalization and its ambiguities. Here, the researcher wonders about the way in which the groups are structured. Professionalization is analyzed as a trend that goes hand in hand with the schooling movement. The third approach is related to research on closed market labor. It is a matter for the researcher to account for the genesis and structure of the market, to interpret its place in the division of labor and to grasp the changes that this place is likely to experience.

The sociology of professions helps to shed light on organizational changes. It is inspired by pre-existing theses on the organization of industrial work to deal with the transformations in the organization of professional work⁵⁸.

We choose in this work to rely on the way in which Eric Neveu leads a reflection on the sociology of the profession of journalism (Neveu, 2001). It describes the activities carried out by professionals at work. The exploration proposed here is organized into three major moments, which are interactions within an editorial office, journalism as a routine job and the journalist's relationship with sources of information.

Firstly, the author begins by presenting the positions found within an editorial office. Indeed, in an editorial office, there is the Director of publication, an editorial director and his assistants, editors-in-chief of specialized sections, an editorial secretary, a mediator. He then takes the example of a daily newspaper to describe how journalistic work is done in a newsroom. Indeed, at the beginning of the day, professionals make a comparison of the edition of the day before with that of the competition. Then, the follow-up of the events via the consultation of the other media, the examination of the facts of the day to be covered which will have been pre-selected from the dispatches of the press officers. Discussions within the departments and between heads of departments allow, after a first drafting conference held at the end of the morning, to draw up a plan [...] A second drafting conference at the end of the midi leads to final arbitrations, to the composition of the "one" and to the completion of the layout" (Neveu, 2001: p. 45).

Secondly, the author considers that this work of journalists is routine because "social life is made up of a web of calendars that make the cyclical return of facts

predictable” (Idem, p. 51). Given the fact that news sources are active today, the author suggests professionalizing them so that journalists can better anticipate routines.

Advertising is a profession in which the consulting agency and the management are among the professionals who practice it. Conducting research on the analysis of hybridization activities in these two actors refers to describing the different tasks performed in one and the other. We intend to use the functionalist sociology of journalism as Neveu does in writing.

3.2. Hybridity in the Functioning of Organizations in Yves Emery and David Giaque in This Work

Hybridization in the functioning of public and private organizations developed by Emery & Giaque (2014). Indeed, Emery, Giaque exposed their reflection on the phenomenon of hybridity in the administration in an article entitled “The hybrid universe of the administration in the 21st century” (2014: p. 26) within the framework of the theory of post-bureaucracy. By analyzing it, hybridization makes it possible to appreciate more concretely the effects on the management systems and the behavior of public actors at different levels of the hierarchy. It is therefore to a hybridity in action that they invited the readers of this article distributed as part of a symposium organized by the publishers in 2011, under the aegis of the Thematic Research Group GRH in the Public Services of the French-speaking Association of Human Resources Management (AGRH). Emery is Professor at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Public Administration (IDHEAP), University of Lausanne and David Giaque is Associate Professor at the Institute of Political and International Studies (IEPI), University of Lausanne, Switzerland. For the two researchers, in most OECD countries, the management practices of public organizations as well as the employment conditions of public officials have been strongly questioned by the implementation of new public management. (Ibidem).

“The recent economic crisis, marked by a questioning of the hegemony of the market model and the absolute primacy of the economy, contributes to this institutional questioning, pushes to redefine the role and the methods of intervention of the State, and questions the massive introduction of private management methods which very often do not sufficiently take into account the specificity of the public and are based on context-free generics. The myth of the ‘public service company’, modeling most of its operation on that of the private company, is followed by a more vague model, not corresponding to any well-defined type in the literature” (Idem, pp. 26-27).

For them, contrary to what many authors put forward at the time when the new public management was born, these new reference systems did not oust the traditional logics of public administration, they came to be added to it. without the question of their articulation in relation to each other being thermalized, either by the political authorities, or by the public managers in search of new identity and motivational anchors, somewhere between the traditional civil servant,

bearer of an ethos and a form of public service motivation (PSM), and the private company employee embodying, in a stereotypical way, performance and the spirit of enterprise. Borrowing from [Rondeaux & Pichault \(2007\)](#), the two thinkers believe that the post-bureaucratic universe sees the rise of professional and managerial logics which bring new identity anchors to public employees who no longer necessarily recognize themselves in the designation of “civil servant”, even seeking to clearly distinguish themselves from them while emphasizing their belonging to the public sector. They indicate that this is an apparently paradoxical behavior, but probably typical in a hybrid environment that shows potentially contradictory facets.

Explaining the hybrid functioning of public and private organizations in the theory of post-bureaucracy or the New Administration, Emery and Giauque (Idem, P.28) indicates that: “The boundaries between public and private organizations therefore tend to blur, even if the missions and objectives of the private sector and the public differ fundamentally, which sometimes leads to conflicts of interest, as shown by certain political scandals in Europe, in particular”. It should be noted that private companies in search of renewed legitimacy adopt the semantic repertoire of the public sector (corporate citizenship, social responsibility, etc.) to restore their image, which produces another form of hybridity.

It is this idea of hybridity in the functioning of organizations that applies to this article since it specifically questions hybridity in the functioning through the activities carried out by consulting agencies and advertising agencies where the activities recognized by some seem to be done by others and *vice versa*.

4. Communication Activities Carried out by Consulting Agencies and Advertising Agencies

4.1. Professional Activities of Consulting Agencies

This section aims to present the activities carried out by the consulting agencies and advertising agencies selected. In turn, the activities of Ascese and B and C communication will be presented, on the one hand, then the activities carried out by Media Plus and Elfi Events, on the other.

4.1.1. Activities Carried out by the Ascese Agency

During the period chosen as the time frame of this research, the communication consulting agency Ascèse carried out several communication activities which are highlighted here. [Table 2](#) highlights the communication activities carried out by this agency on behalf of its clients as well as its responsibilities during the projects carried out.

[Table 2](#) shows that the communication activities of the Ascese agency were carried out at the level of advertising campaigns and at the level of event management.

4.1.2. The Activities Carried out by the B and C Communication

B and C communication, based in Douala, has between 2012 and 2022 carried out several activities that have emerged here.

Table 2. Communication activities carried out by Ascèse.

Campaign or main activity	Advertiser	Period	The responsibilities of ascèse
The SABC group is you. No1 in Corporate Social Responsibility	“Société Anonyme des Brasseries du Cameroun”	November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of the strategy - Production of communication media - Follow up of media broadcast
Good students follow good examples	SAFCA	August 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conception of strategy - Production of communication vehicle - Follow up of media broadcast
One day, you too will win big	Urban mutual bet of Cameroon	December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conception of strategy - Production of communication vehicle - Follow up of media broadcast
Water is live, water is vitale (launching campagne of the brand Vital)	Mineral water company of Cameroon	September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conception of strategy - Production of communication vehicle - Follow up of media broadcast
Organization of the event “3 rd edition of the international forum of SMSE”	ECAM	05-09 December 2015 at Douala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of creative brief - Elaboration of the strategic recommendation document - Production of communication vehicle - Arrangement of the event site - Prospection - Sales of spaces and stands - Event management
Organization of the event “insurance day”	Association of insurance companies of Cameroon	29 Mai – 1 st June 2019 at Douala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of creative brief - Elaboration of the strategic recommendation document - Production of communication vehicle - Arrangement of the event site - Prospection - Sales of spaces and stands - Event management
Organization of the event “22 nd edition of university games”	University of Dschang	4 th to 11 th Mai 2019 at Dschang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of creative brief - Elaboration of the strategic recommendation document - Production of communication vehicle - Arrangement of the event site - Prospection - Sales of spaces and stands - Event management

Source: Authors.

Without already analyzing the activities carried out by this consulting agency, **Table 3** nevertheless shows that this company has invested in both advertising campaigns and events.

4.2. The Activities Carried out by the Advertising Agencies Média Plus and Elfi Events

This section intends to present the communication activities carried out by two Cameroonian advertising agencies. These are Média Plus and Elfi Events.

Table 3. Communication activities carried out by B and C communication.

Campagne or principal activity	Advertiser	Period	Responsibility of Ascese
Campagne of Tangui “back to school is here...”	Mineral water company of Cameroon	October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conception of strategy - Production of communication vehicle - Follow up of media broadcast
Campagne of Vital “the joy of meeting”	Mineral water company of Cameroon	ND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conception of strategy - Production of communication vehicle - Follow up of media broadcast
Campagne of wafacash service “it is back to school of bonus with wafacash”	Wafacash	September-November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conception of strategy - Production of communication vehicle - Follow up of media broadcast
Organization of a mini-concert event “MTN at home Bertoua”	MTN	10 November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of creative brief - Elaboration of the strategic recommendation document - Production of communication vehicle - Arrangement of the event site - Disposition of stands
Organization of the event “3 rd edition of Dixiades”	The national olympique and sportive commission of Cameroon	17-22 December 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of creative brief - Elaboration of the strategic recommendation document - Production of communication vehicle - Arrangement of the event site - Prospection - Sales of spaces and stands - Event management

Source: Authors.

4.2.1. The Activities Carried out by Médias Plus in the Field of Communication between 2012 and 2022

Media Plus advertising agency, based in Douala, has set out to carry out several activities to satisfy its customers in terms of communication. The following **Table 4** is a summary of these actions.

Table 4 which has just been presented shows that the Média Plus advertising agency has been deployed in the implementation of communication campaigns, in display and in the production of billboards.

4.2.2. Activities Carried out by Elfi Events

The advertising agency Elfi Events, based in Yaoundé has, within the framework of its relations with its advertisers, carried out several activities in the field of communication. The following **Table 5** outlines these actions.

Table 4. Communication activities carried out by media plus.

Campagne or activity principal	Advertiser	Period	Responsibility of ascèse
Production and sales of advertising billboards	- Airport of Cameroon - Guinness Cameroon		Production and sales of pane to advertises
Posting	Company of	ND	Sales of advertising spaces per urban poster
Campagne of Dangote cement “buy 10 bags of Dangote cement x3. Winne instantly et take part in the grand raffle”	Dangote group	December 2019	- Elaboration of creative brief - Graphic conception of communication vehicle - Production of communication vehicle
Realization of the poster “good labor day. Corporate social responsibility and trade union for Decent work”	Douala Urban council	April-Mai 2016	- Elaboration of creative brief - Graphic conception of communication vehicle - Production of communication vehicle - Broadcasting of posters
Awareness champagne against incivility in Douala	Douala urban council	September 2018	- Graphic conception of communication vehicle - Production of communication vehicle - Posting of posters

Source: Authors.

Table 5. Communication activities carried out by Elfi events.

Campagne or principal activity	Advertiser	Period	Responsibility of ascèse
Organization of the inaugural ceremony of hotel “le bon Samaritan”	Hotel “le bon Samaritan”	December 2011	- Elaboration of creative brief - Graphic conception of communication vehicle - Production of communication vehicle - Broadcasting of outdoor communication vehicles - Event management
Launching campagne of the mineral water “pura”	Equatorial water company of Cameroon	September-November 2010	- Elaboration of creative brief - Graphic conception of communication vehicle - Production of communication vehicle - Broadcasting of communication vehicle
Tunisian day	Tunisian embassy in Cameroon	2011	- Elaboration of creative brief - Graphic conception of communication vehicle - Production of communication vehicle - Broadcasting of outdoor communication vehicles - Event management

Sources: Authors.

Table 5 shows that the advertising agency Elfi Events carried out activities both in events and in advertising campaigns.

This section has permitted us to present the different tasks carried out in the activities of Ascèse, B and C communication, Media plus and Elfi Events. The following articulation which is based on analyses will bring us to the description of the activities carried out by actors in the domain of communication notably in advertising consultant agencies and advertising sales agencies.

5. The Mixed Nature of the Activities Carried out

According to <https://www.1min30.com>, *Ne soyez plus seul pour relever vos challenges marketing!* (consulted on March 24, 2022), an advertising network is “a company, or the department of a company, whose the objective is to market the available advertising space”. In the same sense, <https://www.journaldunet.f> informs that an advertising agency is a company or an entity responsible for connecting the owners of advertising space and advertisers interested in the dissemination of an advertising message on these media (<https://www.journaldunet.fr/business/dictionnaire-du-marketing>). The advertising network appears in this sense as an intermediary between advertisers and sellers of advertising space.

The advertising consulting agency is seen as an actor in the advertising chain responsible for studies, the development of communication strategies and the production of advertiser media. Advertising agencies advise and support their clients partially or fully in their communication strategy (*Qu’est-ce qu’une agence de publicité et quel est son rôle?* <https://www.anthedesign.fr/communication-2/agence-de-publicite>, consulted on March 24, 2022). The above leads to see that advertising management and advertising consulting agency are two different actors in the advertising chain and that each is approved by an organization to carry out very specific activities and that the other should in principle not carry out. Moreover, the Cameroonian law of December 28, 2006 governing advertising indicates that no company can claim to simultaneously exercise one and the other advertising profession (article 11). This articulation intends to show that in the Cameroonian advertising market, there are manifestations of the phenomenon of hybridization of professional activities; in other words, that consulting agencies carry out activities that are recognized by advertising agencies and *vice versa*.

5.1. The Activities Carried out by Ascèse and B and C Communication: A Mix Integrating Those Devolved to the Two Professions

Anything that allows us to see if they are part of those recognized to consulting agencies or if they fall rather under the prerogatives of the boards.

5.1.1. The Hybrid Nature of the Activities Carried out by Ascèse

During the time frame chosen for this research, the advertising consulting agency has, with regard to the previous articulation, carried out the following activi-

ties: Design of the strategy, Production communication media, monitoring of media distribution, development of the creative brief, development of the strategic recommendation document, production of communication media, development of the event site, prospecting, sales spaces and stands and the Event Management. **Table 6** below shows which type of advertising professional is recognized for each of these activities carried out by Ascèse.

The present distribution of the activities carried out by Ascèse by advertising profession to which it is recognized shows that the advertising consultancy agency Ascèse has deployed itself both in the field, for which the legitimacy of the consulting agencies is recognized, and in that belonging to the advertising agencies. Of advertising. In the field of expertise of consulting agencies, she notably carried out the design of the strategy, the monitoring of media distribution, the development of the creative brief and the production of communication media. In addition, this agency has exceeded the limits prescribed in the professional framework and by Cameroonian law governing advertising to: develop event sites, to prospect with sponsors, to sell spaces and stands and to manage events. These are all activities that fall within the recognized field of competence of advertising agencies. We are therefore entitled to see in the light of the foregoing that during the time frame of this research, Ascèse has carried out recognized activities both for consulting agencies and advertising agencies.

5.1.2. The Heterogeneous Nature of the Activities Carried out by B and C Communication

The advertising consultancy agency B and C communication has deployed in the field by carrying out several activities. Among these are: Strategy design, Production of communication materials, Monitoring of media distribution, Development of the strategic recommendation document, Production of communication materials, Development of the event site, Prospecting, Sale of spaces and stands and Event management. **Table 7** shows which type of advertising professional is recognized for each of these activities carried out by Ascèse.

Table 6. Indication of the centers of recognition of the activities carried out by Ascèse.

Activity carryout by ascèse	Advertising profession to whom the activity is recognize
Conception of strategy	Advertising consultant agency
Fellow up and media broadcast	Advertising consultant agency
Elaboration of brief	Advertising consultant agency
Elaboration of the strategic recommendation document	Advertising consultant agency
Production of communication vehicles	Advertising consultant agency
Arrangement of the event site	Event management
Prospection	Event management
The sales of spaces and stands	Event management
Event management	Event management

Sources: Authors.

Table 7. Indication of the centers of recognition of the activities carried out by B and C communication.

Activity carryout by B and C Communication	Advertising profession to whom the activity is recognize
Conception of strategy	Advertising consultant agency
Production of communication vehicle	Advertising consultant agency
Follow up of media broadcasting	Advertising consultant agency
Elaboration of the strategic recommendation document	Advertising consultant agency
Arrangement of the event site	Event management
Prospection	Event management
The sales of spaces and stands	Event management
Event management	Event management

Source: Authors.

We note in the activities carried out during the time frame of this research that B and C communication was not limited to those devolved to consulting agencies, but that this company was also deployed in the professional field which is legitimately and legally to advertising agencies. Indeed, with regard to the activities assigned to the consulting agencies, B and C communication notably proceeded to the design of the strategy, the production of communication media, the monitoring of media distribution and the development of the recommendation document strategic. As for those recognized to advertising agencies, the agency carried out the development of event sites, the prospecting of sponsors, the sale of spaces and stands and event management; thus exceeding the competences which are recognized to him. Anything that shows that the activities carried out by B and C communication have a hybrid character in the sense that they do not fall under a single field of competence. They are a mixture of those falling to consulting agencies and those devolved to advertising agencies.

5.2. Activities Carried out by Advertising Agencies: A Mix Integrating Those Devolved to the Two Professions

The major activity of advertising agencies is the marketing of advertising space belonging to a media medium. In view of this, it is a question in this articulation of exposing the existing link between the activities actually carried out by the two advertising agencies, namely Media Plus and Elfi Events, and the professional field of competence which is recognized for them.

5.2.1. The Heterogeneous Nature of the Activities Carried out by Média Plus

Média plus is an advertising agency approved in Cameroon and based in Douala. Its activities have led it to deploy on several axes to meet the needs of its customers. The following **Table 8** shows them and indicates to which type of professional it is normally assigned.

Table 8. Indication of the centers of recognition of the activities carried out by Media plus.

Activity carryout by media plus	Advertising profession to whom the activity is recognize
Production and sales of advertising billboard	Event management
Sales of advertising spaces per urban posters	Event management
Elaboration of brief	Advertising consultant agency
Graphic conception of communication vehicle	Advertising consultant agency
Production of communication vehicle	Advertising consultant agency
Posting of posters	Event management

Source: Authors.

In view of the table above, we can note a heterogeneity in the recognition of professional skills for the activities carried out by the Medias plus management. This one indeed also carries out the activities recognized in the field of competences of the consulting agency: it is respectively about the elaboration of the creative brief, the graphic design of the communication supports and the production of the supports. Média plus is also deployed in its activities in the field of professional skills of advertising agencies, in particular by: the production and sale of billboards, the sale of advertising space by urban display and the installation of posters. Anything that shows the mixed nature of the activities of this management in relation to the two advertising professions that are the consulting agency and the advertising management.

5.2.2. The Heterogeneous Nature of the Activities Carried out by Elfi Events

The advertising agency Elfi Events Média plus is an advertising agency approved in Cameroon and based in Douala. Its activities have led it to deploy on several axes to meet the needs of its customers. The following **Table 9** shows them and indicates to which type of professional they are normally assigned.

From the above we can see the mix of communication activities carried out by Elfi Events in relation to the skills recognized for professionals in the advertising sector. This Yaounde-based agency thus carries out tasks that are legitimately and legally recognized by advertising consulting agencies. These include: the development of the creative brief, the graphic design of communication materials and the actual production of the materials. With respect to the field of competence recognized for advertising agencies, Elfi Events has invested in the distribution of non-media communication media and in event management. Anything that shows that this company, approved to practice as an advertising agency, has gone beyond the professional skills that are recognized for it to also perform tasks assigned to advertising consulting agencies; hence the mixed nature of the activities carried out.

Table 9. Indication of the centers of recognition of the activities carried out by Elfi events.

Activity carryout by media plus	Advertising profession to whom the activity is recognize
Elaboration of brief	Advertising consultant agency
Graphic Conception of communication vehicle	Advertising consultant agency
Production of communication vehicle	Advertising consultant agency
Broadcasting of outdoor media communication	Event management
Event management	Event management

Source: Authors.

6. Hybridization in the Professional Practices of Consulting Agencies and Management Companies

We consider the term hybridization in this research as the fact that consulting agencies carry out both activities dedicated to it and those dedicated to management companies. advertising and *vice versa*. In the articulations that have just followed, the professional activities carried out by both advertising consulting agencies and by the boards have been showcased. This reveals manifestations of hybridization in the practices of these major players in the advertising chain.

6.1. When Consulting Agencies Carry out Both Activities Falling within Their Field and Those Falling within the Competence of Advertising Agencies

Let us remember that the phenomena of hybridization in the Consulting Agencies Ascese and B & C refer to the activities they carry out but which are reserved to advertising agencies.

It has been seen previously that the two consulting agencies, namely Ascese and B and C communication, have carried out several activities to satisfy their customers.

- **Consulting activities:** Here it should be noted that the advertising consulting agency has the following functions, according to *À propos d'Etudier* <https://www.etudier.com> (accessed March 25, 2022): “the development of the advertising communication strategy, the creation and design of messages, the production of creative material, the development of the media strategy (when the advertiser does not use a media agency), and the execution and control of publications”. By espousing this unfolding of the prerogatives of the advertising agency, we are entitled to see that Ascèse and B and C communication carried out advertising consulting activities. Indeed, on this plan Ascèse carried out the following tasks: the design of the strategy, the Monitoring of the media distribution, the Development of the creative brief, the Development of the document of strategic recommendation and the production of the communication supports. For its part, B and C communication, in the same

area, carried out the following activities: the design of the strategy, the production of communication media, the monitoring of media distribution and the development of the strategic recommendation document. These activities carried out make it necessary to see that the advertising consulting agencies selected have actually carried out professional tasks falling within their field of competence.

However, with regard to the previous analysis, we note that these consulting agencies did not remain solely of competence, but that they also carried out activities assigned to advertising agencies.

- **Management activities:** According to [regie-publicitaire](https://www.regie-publicitaire.fr), <https://www.regie-publicitaire.fr> (consulted on March 25, 2022), the marketing function is the first mission of the advertising management. Thus, on this plan, Ascese and B and C communication carried out the following tasks: the development of the site of the event, the prospection, the sale of spaces and stands and the management of the event.

It is therefore clear that of the work of advertising consulting agencies in Cameroon, we note both consulting and management activities. Anything that leads to say that there is a mix of the field of skills of the work done by this category of companies in Cameroon.

6.2. When the Agencies Carry out Both Activities Falling within Their Domain and Those Falling within the Scope of Competence of the Consulting Agencies

Between 2010 and 2022, Média plus and Elfi Events, the two advertising agencies selected to illustrate this work, invested in the field of advertising to satisfy their customers. The tasks carried out by them seem to have gone beyond the mere field of management to also embrace that of consulting agencies.

- **After:** production and sale of billboards, sale of advertising space by urban display and installation of posters (Média plus) and distribution of communication media outside the media and event management (Elfi Events). The two companies, having been approved in Cameroon as advertising agencies, have thus carried out activities recognized for players in this category. Which seems logical and professionally coherent. Only, in reality, these advertising agencies have also deployed in consulting activities.
- **Consulting activities:** Média plus and Elfi Events, did not believe it necessary to stick to the activities for which they have requested approval. The two companies also carried out the following advertising consultancy tasks: the development of the creative brief, the graphic design of the communication materials and the production of the communication materials. And Elfi Events highlight the heterogeneous nature of the tasks performed. They have exceeded their professional skills; which allows a mix of practices to emerge.

Infact, it has just been seen that the consulting agencies carry out both the consulting activities and those of the advertising agencies and that it has also happened that the advertising agencies approved in Cameroon carry out the

management and advisory tasks. Anything that shows that in professional practices in Cameroon, there is a hybridization in the activities of two of the actors of the advertising chain, namely the consulting agency and the advertising management.

7. Conclusion

At the end of this research focused on the theme: A socio-professional look at the phenomenon of hybridization of the professional activities of consulting agencies and advertising agencies in Cameroon. The main question of this research is that of knowing how the phenomenon of hybridization of the activities of the actors of the advertising chain in Cameroon manifests itself, particularly at the level of Consulting Agencies and Advertising Agencies?

The research was based on the cases of two consulting agencies, namely Ascese and B and C communication, and on two advertising agencies, Média plus and Elfi Events. The observation, the documentary research and the semi-structured interviews carried out made it possible to collect information relating to the activities carried out between 2010 and 2022 by these companies. The results showed that consulting agencies carry out both consulting and governance activities. In the same vein, it has been seen that advertising agencies deploy both in the field recognized for them and in the field of expertise recognized for consulting agencies. Anything shows that the two players in the advertising chain carry out hybrid professional activities. This highlights that the phenomenon of hybridization in the advertising market in Cameroon is manifested by the fact that Consulting Agencies carry out Regis activities and Regis carry out Advertising Consulting Agency activities. This work strives to show that the phenomenon of hybridization exists among the two major players in the advertising chain in Cameroon, in other words, that consulting agencies carry out activities recognized by the boards and *vice versa*. The hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this work is thus validated.

This work reveals shortcomings in the regulation of the advertising sector in Cameroon. Indeed, if advertising consulting agencies also carry out activities recognized for advertising agencies and *vice versa*, it is because the authority responsible for this area must make more efforts to avoid these professional slip-pages. The control brigades housed in the departmental and regional delegations of the Ministry of Communication which are responsible for this must be more observant. The hybridization of activities is neither legitimate nor legal; moreover, as we said previously, article 11 of the law of December 29, 2006 on advertising clearly indicates that the activities of consulting agencies and those of management are incompatible.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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