

MASS MEDIA AND POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION FOR TECHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the importance of the mass media in polytechnic education and overall relationship in socio-economic development of the country. The mass media have proved in many ways to be the most valuable supplements in the transmission of knowledge, increased intellectual development, the formation of character and the acquisition of skills and capacities at all stages of human life. These fundamental functions of the mass media are seen to enhance polytechnic education's capacity to create a pool of skill-based manpower to support the industrial sectors of the economy. This study has shown that the synergy created by the mass media and polytechnic education in preparing the students to be productive, enterprising and self-reliant can significantly contribute to increased improvement in the lifestyles of individuals in the society through improved means of education, skills development, employment and incomes. Anchored on Uses and Gratification theory as the framework for understanding how people use the mass media, the study builds on the assumption that people use the media to gratify their cognitive needs such as the acquisition of knowledge and information. In view of the contributions of the mass media to polytechnic education and the resultant effect on socio-economic development of the country, the study recommends among others that both the state and national governments should create the enabling environments for the facilitation of effective spread of and access to the mass media so as to actively support polytechnic education for a rapid and sustainable socio-economic development of the country.

Keywords: Mass Media, Polytechnic Education, Socio-Economic Development.

INTRODUCTION

Mass communication is essential to society and human survival. According to Hanson and Maxcy (1996), every society depends on communication to enable its members to live together to maintain and modify working arrangements about the social order and social regulation and to cope with the environment. Thus, through mass communication, acquisition of knowledge and participation in public affairs, establish a person as a social being and as a functioning member of the society.

Today, throughout the world, social and technological changes are taking place rapidly due to expanding world of information. So there is explosion of knowledge. In Nigeria, there is population explosion, so also the student population is immensely increasing year by year due to the growth of population. It is imperative that the country must respond to the growing technological changes by investing in technology education so that the country can meet the technological requirements for individual and national development. The essential requirement for attaining technological capacity successfully is educational technology consisting of various media of mass communication. In the growing sophisticated world, there are more things to be learnt and more people to be taught to cope with the modern environment. Khan (2017) posits that in educational technologies; both quantitative improvement and quantitative expansion of education can be facilitated and accelerated with the help of mass media.

Polytechnic education is more concerned with the technical and vocational education and training, technology transfer as well as skills development to enhance the socio-economic development of a country (Lawal and Atueyi, 2017). On this perspective, the mass media can act

as indirect teachers to the society, educating members of the society on various social, political, economic programmes and more importantly, serving the society as the principal means of acquiring knowledge and cognitive abilities. In fact, the mass media have become a well of messages around the world of today and have entered into all the structures of daily life which can be used and in fact, are being used as substitutes for human beings.

Overview of Polytechnic Education

Polytechnic is the technical educational institution which offers variety of programmes and courses in various spheres of technology or human endeavour, ranging from fine and applied arts to engineering. The education offered by polytechnics is described as polytechnic education.

Polytechnic education grew in importance in the first half of the twentieth century, emerged as a crucial problem in the second half of the twentieth century and became a highly topical problem at the turn of the twentieth century, that is, at the time of what had been described as a post-industrial, information society and/or learning society. Polytechnic education has asserted itself hand in hand with the industrialization of society. The development of machine production has led to profound changes in the organization of society. Ale cited in Ogungbe (2020) highlights the importance of polytechnics education in any society as follows:

1. Human resource development through the provision of skilled manpower.
2. Train people who can apply scientific knowledge to solve environmental problems for the convenience of man.
3. Offers opportunities for students to personally practice the theoretical models in the classroom.
4. Provision of technical knowledge and skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development of the nation.
5. Provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental hazards.
6. Give exposure on professional studies in technology.
7. Give training and impart the necessary skills for the production of technicians, technologists and skilled personnel who shall be enterprising and self-reliant.

This point is further emphasised by Bloskij cited in Semrad and Milan (2017) who state that the purpose of polytechnic education is only meant to help students to become familiar with the use of various tools and pieces of equipment and the development of practical skills, but also to become acquainted with world of labour, learn how to cooperate and professionally solve problems resulting from working with the latest technologies and new scientific discoveries. All these activities can take place within the context of increasing the effectiveness of the national economy and socio-economic transformation of the society.

Theological Framework

This study is anchored on the uses and Gratification theory propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blunder and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. According to Vinney (2019) uses and Gratifications theory asserts that people use media to gratify specific wants and needs. This theory sees uses as active agents who have control over their media consumption. Uses and Gratifications theory release two principles media users. First, it characterizes media users as active in their selection of the media they consume. Second, people are aware of their reasons for selecting different media choices that will help them meet their specific wants and needs.

This theory demonstrates that an academic community is not an exclusive jurisdiction or territory within which an individual can acquire knowledge and cognitive skills. The mass media also contribute to these roles. Students are among the mass media audience. The rewards that students benefit as a result of exposure to the medium of communication such as newspaper, radio, television, internet or any medium designed to reach the mass of the people underscore the relevance of the uses and Gratifications theory.

Polytechnic Education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, polytechnic is traditionally an institute that offers education in many arts and science at the diploma level. It plays a crucial role in preparing the students to be productive, enterprising and self-reliant through the acquisition of technical skills. Polytechnic education contributes significantly to economic development. The abundance and use of polytechnic products in educational, industrial, manufacturing, agricultural and construction sectors have led to the economic development of the country.

In Nigeria, there are public and private ownership of polytechnic institutions. Although Nigeria places emphasis on technical education, practically both the state and national governments give very little value to polytechnic education. This is reflected in the low status accorded polytechnic graduates. There are disparities in employment and promotion between polytechnic and university graduates. The Government agencies and some private organisations do not only place a polytechnic graduate lower than his university counterpart of equivalent qualification but also do not allow polytechnic graduates to rise above certain managerial positions or enjoy the rights and privileges of their position as their university counterparts. Without sufficient commitment to its development needs, Nigeria should not expect to effectively its infrastructure or improve the standard of living of its citizens.

The polytechnic as other higher institutions of learning is governed by the policy for higher education. According to Freeman cited in Tadama, Suleiman and Midala (2016), the policy is embedded in the National Policy on Education, as well as other issues approved from time to time by National Council on Education (NCE) which is the highest-decision making body of education related matters and other policies legislated and passed into law in respect of higher education operations and management in the country. The policy for higher education in Nigeria is based on what the government approves as the practice to be promoted in Nigeria. According to the National Policy on Education, (NCE) higher education is expected to:

- Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- Promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
- Forge and cement national unity.
- Promote national and international understanding and interaction.
- Education beyond school such that we will furnish the students with more complicated and fresh knowledge and consequently develop better skills.
- Conducting research which should be speculative and imaginative and accumulate knowledge and ideas for the benefit of society. (Freeman, 2007)

The National Policy on Education document also specifies how these goals shall be pursued by higher educational institutions in Nigeria. These include teaching, research and development, virile staff development, generation and dissemination of knowledge, a variety of modes of programmes including full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich, etc, access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES); maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies; inter-institutional cooperation, dedicated service to the community through extra-moral and extension services.

The Role of Mass Media in Polytechnic Education

In the vast area of education, polytechnic is one of the institutions that the mass media play a vital role in the transmission of knowledge so as to foster intellectual development, the formation of characters and the acquisition of skills and capacities at all stages of human life. The power of the media is so extensive and huge that they can be used to educate people on a wide range of

issues at a very little cost. The effectiveness of this role depends heavily on the medium of transmission of information or knowledge to the audience. McLuhan's (1964) famous statement cited in Rodman (2006, p.452) that "the medium is the message" demonstrates that "the medium of communication is more important than the message and conventional values less relevant than the depth involvement. In clarifying this hypothesis, McLuhan states that each medium alters people's psychic environment, imposing on people a particular pattern of perceiving and thinking that controls people to an extent they scarcely suspect, McLuhan's axiom further demonstrates that the same information when conveyed on a printed page or over the telephone, by radio or television, will appear different and have entirely a different effect on the audience. Thus, the effectiveness of a piece of information depends on the medium through which it is transmitted.

In Nigeria, there are a good number of media for educational communication. The most prominent education media which are often used to support the teaching/learning processes are the press, radio, television and internet.

The Press

The press is an institution of society. As an institution of society, it is an agency of mass communication. The technological developments have given the press the scope, variety and immediacy required to make it such an agency.

The press covers the entire printed matter such as books, magazines, journals or newspapers, etc. The press has vast potential benefits. According to Baran (2002, it exerts good influence on individuals and acts on the individuals in shaping out attitudes and philosophies of life. The print media contribute very largely to an educated person. Creaseman (2017) describes an educated person as a creative thinker who possesses an openness to connections that others may not see. He thinks against the grain and weighs each viewpoint on its own merit, regardless of who expounds it. He has a general awareness and knowledge of the world around him.

The press does not only perform the surveillance functions, it also presents programmes on science and technology and famous landmarks. A student must be aware of innovations in the world around him. He can be inspired by the information to become more studious and creative.

Radio

Radio is everywhere. It is common in the bedroom, in kitchens, in cars, in offices and in a dozen other places. In the past ten years, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of radio stations in Nigeria. This is a boon to polytechnic education as radio is capable of spreading information or knowledge to the audience in both urban and rural cities.

Radio acts as the medium of mass communication. It is used mainly to broadcast events to far and wide places of the world. It is also a very important source of technical education. Every day, radio presents programmes concerning new technological developments to inspire students. These are extremely important and useful for the students. Evidently, radio acts as a great recreational and educational force. It stimulates students' curiosity and interests. Radio has proved a valuable supplement to class teaching and learning. Expert teaching in such diverse fields of science and technology, current affairs and other areas, can provide information and enrichment for students.

Television

Television is a great way to open people's minds to a variety of things and help them learn about topics they may not be exposed to at school. On the other hand, television can reinforce what people learnt in school. Today, television has become an extremely popular source of learning as a result of audio and visual effect. Students are fascinated to listen and see the instruction of the speaker from the television. So the whole personality of the audience is engaged in the task. Hence, it has become the most important and powerful agency of mass communication. In television, news about new technological devices are not only read out but the events are shown. As a result, learning becomes more enthusiastic and stimulating.

Internet

Internet is the most useful technology of modern times which helps people not only in their daily lives but also in professional lives. For educational purposes, it is widely used to gather information and to do research or add to the knowledge of various subjects.

Internet plays a very vital role in education. It is no doubt that in this modern era everyone prefers to Google for their queries, problems or doubt. Popular search engines like Google yahoo etc. are the topmost choice of people as they offer an easy and instant reach to the vast amount of information in just a few seconds. It contains a wealth of knowledge that can be searched at anytime. The internet has introduced improvement in technology, communication and online learning, seminar presentation, etc. This has added an impetus not only on polytechnic education but also on other levels of education.

Today, it has become more important as well as a powerful tool in the world which is preferred by everyone. Everybody needs internet to solve problems. Students need internet to search for information for intellectual and skills developments as well as for social connections.

One of the largest barriers to education is high cost. The internet improves the quality of education, which is one of the pillars of sustainable development of a nation. It provides education through videos (like youtube tutorial videos) and web tutorials which is affordable to everyone and it is cost-effective.

Enhancing Socio-Economic Development through Mass Media in Polytechnic Education

There is a consensus among economic scholars that socio-economic development is the transformation of a society with regards to social and economic dimensions. In supporting this hypothesis, Munichiello and Potters (2021) argue that socio-economic development is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation of individuals or groups in a society. When people are educated, employed and financially secured, they are better and more able to positively contribute to their society in a meaningful way. Thus, the unquestionable roles of the mass media in polytechnic education in providing the foundation for human resource development through the transmission of knowledge, intellectual development and acquisition of skills, have the potential of unlocking the potential of individuals to be highly productive, enterprising and self-reliant. These developments are capable of addressing the challenges of rising unemployment and social crises as well as expanding the horizons of income generating activities through which enormous impact on socio-economic transformation can be accomplished for a stable society. A stable and balanced social conditions and economy can create safety and security that then will allow other aspects of society's life to flourish.

CONCLUSION

This paper has alluded that the influence of the mass media on polytechnic education in the transmission of knowledge, fostering of intellectual development and acquisition of skills and capacities is huge and intensive. Through this collaboration, people can develop more talents and skills necessary for industrialization of the society.

This study asserts that polytechnic education is designed to promote industrial technology. This necessitates the expansion of the communication infrastructure in the country to promote the spread of mass media in order to effectively and increasingly support the polytechnic education in the training and skills development of individuals.

It is reiterated that a serious investment in polytechnic education can facilitate quality technical education that will bring about well educated and highly skilled individuals in the society who will be more productive, enterprising and self-reliant. These are the most important and tangible factors in socio-economic development of the country.

Suggestions

Based on the foregoing, the review suggests that:

1. The state and national governments should create an enabling environment for private sector involvement in the spread of interactive and participative media which should give priority in their content to the acquisition of knowledge and the development of abilities and skills.
2. A serious commitment to adequate funding of polytechnic education is the imperative duty of the government and stakeholders at all levels. This will enhance effective training of a substantial body of personnel in the array of special skills required for efficient functioning of the educational media industry.
3. The governments and private organizations should accord due respect and value to polytechnic education. This will not only check the lingering dichotomy between university and polytechnic education but will also inspire students to embrace polytechnic education in order to increase efficient manpower needs for industries and advance the socio-economic transformation of the country.

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