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**PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF MASS  
MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIGERIAN LIBRARY SYSTEM**

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**Introduction**

Human beings by their nature, come in contact with one another quite often. Its purpose may be to give order or instruction. The contact may even be to share common feelings and ideas. Ogundele (1987) defines communication as “an act of passings on news, information or feelings to another person”. To be effective, various means of transport are important because they make communication easier. Communication can therefore, be defined as the process whereby information, instructions, feelings, ideas, or even emotion are passed on from one person or group of persons to another (Fadeiye, 1992)

It is possible for two people to communicate without seeing each other. This has been made possible by the advanced development of various means of communication. Ajose (1981) defined mass media as the process by which human beings interact, share information and ideas. Mass media is a means to inform, educate and entertain audience.

**Objectives of Mass Media**

Fagbo, (1980) describes the objectives of mass media as agreed upon by mass media practitioners as a method to promote national unity, indigenious culture and to educate, inform, entertain, motivate, mobilize the people in right direction of attaining national goals for development. In the same vein Momoh (1984), formulates a comprehensive objective of mass media in Nigeria as “ to up-bold the political, economic social, education and culture” of the people.

The Nigeria Television Authority Handbook (1991) edition, summarizes these objectives as follows:

- a. Social objective is meant to cover the areas of education, information and entertainment
- b. Cultural objectives are those, which essentially cover the areas of aesthetics, religion, ethics, philosophy, language, history and arts.
- c. Economic objective is designed to achieving a united and self-reliant nation.

- d. Political objective is also primarily meant to ensuring national cohesion in the process of nation building and political awareness.

It goes further, that the press (mass media) must ensure that all organs of government i.e. the executive, legislative and judiciary, uphold their functions and duties and in upholding these duties interact with people at various geographical locations. Significance of the study Result of this study would be of use to librarians, teacher librarians and students offering library and information science as a course for revising existing materials in library to enhance their efficiency. It could equally serve as a guide to student librarians. The librarian and the patrons of library would find the results of this study useful in promoting the ideals of mass media in terms of the role played in the development of Nigeria libraries.

### **Research Question**

This study attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

- a. What significant influence has the mass media played in the operation of the library system and in regulating students' attitude to the use of library?
- b. What significant influence do the mass media have to help many users/ patrons of the library to remove narrow-mindedness and negative attitude about the library?
- c. What significant influence do the mass media have in promoting independent learning among the users of library?

### **Literature Review**

The history of Nigeria mass media falls into two broad categories. These include:

- a. Pre-independence era and
- b. Post independence period to the present time.

Daily newspapers, weeklies and periodicals have had a modest beginning in Nigeria. The publication of Iwe-Irohin by the Late Rev, Henry Townsend in Abeokuta, first appeared in december 1959, before that time until 1890, about a dozen weekly newspapers were published at different periods in Nigeria. Thereafter, came a newspaper "weekly Record which was published by late John Jackson between 1890 and 1930. During the formation of the Nigeria National Democratic party in 1992, the then Late Herbert Marculey, established the Lagos "Daily News". In the ensuing process, several national daily newspaper houses were established in various parts of Nigeria. These newspapers primarily put across the views of different political parties, in addition to their other functions of public awareness. Most of these newspapers facilitated various nationalist struggles but many of them have died with their proprietors.

After the attainment of independence, the press had to assume a new roles. Among them was the agitation for rapid socio-economic and industrial development of Nigeria. One of the most recent development has been the establishment of newspapers, founded by the federal and the state governments. We also had the "West African pilot," a regional publication

which was being published in Ghana and brought about political awareness to the entire West African countries. These newspapers existed side by side with those owned by individuals and corporations. Some of the Nigerian newspapers are; Daily times founded in 1925; Daily sketch 1964; New Nigeria; Nigerian Tribune; Punch; Observer; Standard and many others.

### **Mechanism/Strategies for Communication**

Before the European arrived in Nigeria, communication between people was mainly traditional, i.e. through town criers, use of messengers, trained animals and the popular Africa drums. In those days, people sent out messages through different traditional means. For example, information could be given to a whole village through the beating of gong (which is a form of bell made of iron; indigenous trumpet made of animal horns, through town crier usually a messenger to the village head. The message could be through smoke signal made in the bush. Other forms of traditional methods of communication include, the use of talking drums, beaten in times of wars or disasters to alert the people of the imminent dangers. In many other cases, objects like leaves and stones were used as signs while some villages used Peculiar objects to communicate to their members in a particular manner.

Improvement in science and technology has produced and further facilitated the modern mass media and telecommunication systems. Ogundele (1987) identified the following means of mass communication in Nigeria.

- A. Television - This is the process of transmitting a view or events to distant places. Television receiving set with synchronized, sound has enabled the viewers watch films and hear sounds. It has the powerful impacts of light, sound and motion in the viewer's home. Hence it is an important organ of communication in modern time.
- B. Radio - It involves the transmission and reception of messages (without wires over the air) by means of electromagnetic waves Radio is used by people for entertainment on journeys, through ships, aeroplanes and trains and it also conveys messages. Although radio lacks the impact of television, it is an agent of socialization and advertisement.
- C. Postal services - they are means of collecting, conveying and delivering pockets, letters and parcels. Post offices are found in villages and towns. They serve as public utilities for the society.
- D. Printed matter - these include books, newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals, etc. They record information and print them for people. All printed news Items should not carry the biases of a reporter or else, the information becomes distorted and faulty. Correct information and unbiased reporting are good assets in journalism. Ogundele (1987) further explained that telecommunication has to do with the following instruments:
  - i. Telephone: It is a means of transmitting the human voice by electric current usually through wires called telegraphic wires. Telephone enables people to speak directly to each other whatever be the distance between them.

- ii. Telex: This is a system of communication using tele printers. It enables people to receive messages from distance places in printed forms.
- iii. Telegrams: This is a means of sending messages by telegraphic machine. It an apparatus for sending messages by the use of electric current along wires or by radio. Telegrams is used as a means of sending messages more quickly than letter.

Cables: This is the protected bundle of insulated wires laid underground for conveying message by electric telegraphy.

Satellite: This is a: object placed in the orbit around the earth for the purpose of receiving radio signals, telephones signals and television signals. Patterns of ownership in Nigeria. Most of the brought and print media are controlled by the government. The radio and television are exclusively owned and controlled by both the state and federal governments. There are however, a few private television and radio houses in recent items. These include Mackson Utilities Radio International (MURI), Africa Independent Television (AIT), Africa Independent Radio Station (AIRS) and others in various parts of the country. Some printed media or the newspapers are jointly owned by both the private individual and government parastatals.

In America, many newspapers are in the hands of the financial indicates. In England, they are in the hands of capitalist while in Russia, they in the hand of the government.

But given the pattern of media ownership in Nigeria, one must admit that a reporter or a newspaper story is influenced by what the news organization stand for. Such media organization like the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) has to voice its views or be the mouth piece of the ruling political party. In some cases; it is the government agents that tells the local radio what to say. In such cases; its usefulness is reduced for whoever controls the government. This necessarily limits its freedom. In this wise, most of the activities of such printed and news media are tele-guided, dictated, distorted, manipulated and stage managed in line with the objectives of their proprietors.

### **Management of Organization**

The importance of science and technology cannot be over emphasized and for this, it needs to be properly bandied in all arms of our institutions of returning. Therefore, the responsibility for the management and organization of the modern media houses in Nigeria libraries should be with the media Librarian who is a specialist and has a strong interest and background in the formats and the requirements to be used. It is the duty of the librarian to train the staff to handle and maintain the materials and equipment in the library.

In order for the media to be effectively organized and managed, the staff working in the various sections must have positive attitude, experience and training towards the modern media. This is because negative attitude by the staff would adversely affect the users thereby discouraging the extensive use of the available media resources.

Futhermore, for an effective management to be derived, from the staff members should be willing and ready to render their services at all times and whenever the library is open. It is difficult to change non -users of the modern materials to start using them, they would not like to encounter problems, if they do, they should endeavour to avoid similar experience next time by not attempting to use the materials. As a result of this development, careful explanation regarding the operations of the different devices of the modern materials help to alleviate the confusion and discouragement hitherto encountered by users.

### **Mass Media and Nigeria Libraries**

The importance of mass media in Nigeria libraries cannot be over emphasized. This is especially because developments in modern science and technology are viewed against the background that the new and more recent facilities are flexible for disseminating information. Technologies are susceptible to multiple usage by the users and appealing to many senses at a time.

The mass media has given the non - book materials more descriptive information on the catalogue card than books themselves because the nature of the materials and storage system may hinder clients from examing and Using these materials effectively. Ogunmilade (1996) was of the view that the ease with which access is gained into the modern media will determine the extent of their use of the clients and to be able to use them effectively would be sequel to the degree of the skills exhibited by the librarian.

The important functions of mass media in Nigeria libraries is that it assists clients to interpret the world, to gain a knowledge themselves as apart of society and to stimulate talented users. Another positive impact is that, it has helped many clients to change their narrow - mindedness and negative attitudes about the libraries. It has in addition, generated awareness that many clients are now using the libraries for needed information than the previous experiences.

However, the power and influence of mass media in Nigerian libraries have been used to replace the old tradition of the stocking, acquiring cataloguing, classifying and shelving in order to educate and mobilize the clients to action aimed at achieving their positive purposes in the library. Little wonder Marmion (1998) remarked that “because computer have assumed such role in our profession over the last few years, all librarians need to know more about them “there is no doubt there for, that computer, connectivity and electronic information are playing an increasingly important role in what we do as librarian.

The acceptance and recognition of mass media in Nigeria as an informal medium of information and education have been supported by the quality and size of patronage that they now enjoy by the clients of the library. It is important therefore, to note that no matter the type of library involved, public, academic, school or special, the librarians obligation is to continuously evaluate and up-date library service to reach an over -widering circle of patrons.

They must therefore provide resources in all libraries with those media that will best establish communication link with every potential library patron.

### **Methodology**

It is necessary to select a studying population, since it is impossible to carry out inquiry that covers all the people working in media houses, I public and institutional libraries. Sample are drawn from these categories of people.

However, an attempt was made to select a cross section of the above mentioned three major necessary areas. The sample population was made up of 100 respondents. A total number of 80 out of 100 projected respondents gave the investigator responses rate of 80%. The respondents, were all found within Kwara, Niger, and Kogi states only. The members of this public selected are working class and people that are self employed with or without education. Open ended questions and interviews were drawn and the writer approached the respondents to seek their opinions. Each respondent's opinions were recorded against each questions.

RQ1 What significant influence has the mass media in the operation of the library system and in regulating student's attitude to the use of library?

**Table1: Summary of responses on influence of mass media in regulating students' attitude to the use of library.**

S/NO	QUESTION	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Do you think mass media in the library regulate students attitude to the use of library?	65	81.05	15	18.05
2.	Do you think mass media plays a vital role in the library?	80	100		
3.	Do you think mass media in the library serve as great educator of users mind?	72	90	8	10

From the table 1, 65 respondents which is (81.05%) agreed with the question (1) only 15 which is (18.05%) disagreed; while in question (2) 80 respondents which is (100%) agreed with the question and no objection. Lastly 72 respondents agreed with question (3) which is (90%) and 8 respondents which is (10%) only disagreed with the proposition. It can therefore, be interpreted hypothesis one propounded that mass media in the libraries plays a vital role to the users and at the same time serves as a great educator to users because they are able to solve their problems with ease is valid.

RQ2. What significant influence do the mass media have to help many users/ patrons of the library to remove narrow mindedness and negative attitude about libraries?

Table 2: Summary of responses on influence of mass media on users/patron narrow mindedness about libraries.

/NO	QUESTION	YES	%	NO	%
4.	Do you think mass media helps many users of the library to remove narrow mindedness and negative attitudes about the libraries?	73	91.25	7	8.75
5.	Do you think mass media in the libraries have been used to replace the traditional methods of cataloguing, stocking, classifying. acquiring and shelving materials in the libraries?	67	83.75	33	16.25

### Discussion of Results in Table 2.

The result in table 2 shows that 73 which is (91.15%) agreed with the hypothesis while 7 which is (8.75%) disagreed. 67 respondents agreed with it in question (5) which is (83.75%). while 13 which 16.25% disagreed.

Students agreed with these questions because they know that mas-media in the libraries help to remove narrow mindedness and negative attitude about the libraries and also replace the traditional method of cataloguing, stocking, acquiring and shelving materials in the libraries. R.Q3. What significant influence do the mass media have in promoting independent learning in the users?

Table 3: Summary of responses on influence of mass media in libraries-promoting independent learning in the users.

S/NO	QUESTION	YES	%	NO	%
6.	Do you think mass media in the libraries promote the growth of independent learning in the users? Discussion of Results in Table 3.	70	87.5	10	12.5

The Table 3 indicates that 70 respondents which (87.5%) agreed with question (6) only 10 which is 12.5% disagreed. It was mentioned that, ability of mass media was stronger daily,



which become apparent and obvious from a large number of students who seek for information during and after their research work.

## **Conclusion**

The word communication in our daily life cannot be overemphasized because communication is with us from the time we wake up till we go to bed. In higher institution of learning, books and teacher, help us share information about our world. therefore, communication protects us.

In conclusion, therefore, the growing prevalence of microforms and facsimile admission systems including the satellite system which are really different format from books emphasize that flexibility in the area of uses should be examined. Modern media technologies have great potentials in the improvement of library services in Nigeria libraries. The federal, State and local governments should as matter of urgency, provide sufficient funds for subsequent acquisition of these materials and equipment in order to ease the users problems of spending a lot of time in the library looking for one information or the other

However, if the aforementioned issues are attended to, standard of Nigeria libraries will be improved, the academic standard in our various institutions of learning will be raised and the socio-economic levels of the citizenry would be enhanced for the desired rapid sustainable growth and development in science and technology.

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