International
Journal of
Social Sciences
And
Humanities
Review

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES REVIEW

Media Preference of Nigerian Undergraduates for the Promotion of Quality Moral Education

IGBINOBA, ANGELA OSARIEME
+2348069454986/+2348082181868, warriousangel@yahoo.com
Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Covenant University
PMB 1023, Ota, Ogun state, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT
Nigeria's projection as a morally depraved economy on national and international borders is no longer news. There would be no debate on the presence or absence of corruption in various societies if each society had no set of moral values to uphold. Such moral values eventually serve as the basis for the manner in which the entire country's economy is run, pending the availability of and access to means of communication that would foster dissemination of moral education. It is appropriate to mention that the mass media, besides other social institutions in any given environment or society are obliged to champion moral education (i.e. the cultural transmission of acceptable moral values) to the heterogeneous audiences in the country of operation. The sensitivity/insensitivity of the Nigerian youth- the active group in the country's population- to quality moral education from social institutions such as the media, can either facilitate or hamper the development progress of the country. This paper, therefore, highlights the media preference amongst Nigerian undergraduates for the promotion of quality moral education.

Keywords- Education, Morality, Nigerian Undergraduates, Media Preference, Values, Nigerian Media.

INTRODUCTION
Moral values are known to mean 'those things in human character, conduct and social relations which we judge as good or bad, right or wrong, progress and reaction, noble and ignoble, etc' (Nwala, 1980:295).

> *Moral education, the founders of the American democracy asserted, is essential for the success of a democratic society, because the people must posses (sic) the appropriate character to build a free and just society and the moral foundations to make democracy flower in a land where it had never been cultivated. To this end, Thomas Jefferson noted that loyalty to these democratic virtues must be instilled in the people at an early age.* '

This quotation was cited by Dike (n.d), who opines that 'the society must endeavor to instill a sense of right and wrong in the youth, because "when people learn to do good and love the good, they take delight in doing the good." Therefore, the coming together of the stakeholders in education in a common cause will enable the people to raise moral human beings and to elevate the moral life of the nation.'

The contributions of religious publications to the development of Nigerian journalism as well as the pioneering role of missionaries in the establishment of modern media cannot be overemphasized. Some have argued 'that in a morally compromised society such as Nigeria's, religious instruction via the media is still needed' (Adeyanju & Okwori, 2006:12). Akinfeleye finds that while the number of journalism training institutions and the status accorded to journalism in society have both increased, the quality of journalism in the country remains low (Adeyanju & Okwori, 2006:21). He, however, urges media owners and media professionals to aspire in unity to journalistic excellence.

Moral Education
Moral education is said to be focused on the development of moral behavior. Related to moral life are two main points of view- the social and the psychological. 'From the social point of view,

moral phenomena are presented in a prescriptive or standard meaning; from the psychological point of view, they appear as cultural-axiological' (Calin, n.d). The prescriptive/standard meaning of moral phenomena is 'obligation' that can either be negative ("you should not") or positive ("you should") and thus expressed by a negative or positive moral attitude. Whereas the cultural-axiological meaning considers moral phenomena from the standpoint of different translations of value the world over.

As noted by Calin (n.d), the constant interaction of moral education with man's eternal values (such as cooperation, justice', honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, solidarity, trust, discrimination, etc) would enhance discovery of the axiological structuring of moral values. The concept of moral education can·be defined based on two moral life components: (1) the objective/social-axiological (which views the aim of moral education as the knowledge of moral values and their benefits by an individual or a group for an active and responsible integration, in contrast to moral vices) and (2) the psychological (which views the aim of moral education as moral behavior, within diverse manifestations in human relations i.e. moral feelings/expectations, moral motives and interests, portrayal of likes and decisions.

Nwala (1980:306) notes, however, that 'moral and religious teaching may provoke moral indignation against the evils in our society. Such moral indignation can influence our attitude for a while, and then we fall in line again with the goings on in the prevailing economic and social life in the society'.

Statement of problem

Educational reporting is one area of specialization in media news coverage. It takes a reporter with a special training in education to appreciate how to handle educational reports and related events (Alao, 1992:63). As social institutions, the mass media have been regarded as conveyors of culture. Therefore, the mass media are expected to be sensitive to the cultural needs/demands/values of the environment within which they exercise their jurisdiction.

The likely impacts of the media, in transmitting acceptable Nigerian cultural values, as well as their role of recognizing/preserving such cultural values have been noted. However, of more significance, is whether the mass media (compared to other media of communication) appeal to the audience (as regards individual uses and gratification) well enough to draw their attention to moral education needed for positive development of society. Also, the effectiveness of the mass media in disseminating quality moral education would depend on audience exposure and use of the mass media. It has become imperative, therefore, to determine the place of the mass media amongst the active population of the country- youths (i.e. the Nigerian undergraduates in this case) - as regards obtaining quality moral education for positive behavior in society.

Objectives

This study aims:

(1) To ascertain if Nigerian undergraduates use the media to obtain moral education.
(2) To determine the type of media used by Nigerian undergraduates in obtaining moral education.
(3) To determine the lowest/highest media preference amongst Nigerian undergraduates.
(4) To ascertain if affordability/accessibility determines most used mass medium among Nigerian undergraduates.
(5) To ascertain if performance/satisfaction determines highest media preference among Nigerian undergraduates.

Method

Survey was the research design adopted to elicit data for this study. A 30-item questionnaire was the instrument used for measuring the research data. The population of study constitutes undergraduates (that are running degree programmes in the selected Nigerian Universities). The simple random sampling technique was used to arrive at a federal, a state, and a private-owned university amounting to three Nigerian universities- RUN, OOU and UNILAG.

The disproportionate stratified sampling technique- one in which an equal number of cases are taken from each stratum regardless of how the stratum is represented in the universe- was used for the distribution of a 30-item questionnaire across the selected Nigerian universities as well as the selected degree programmes. This resulted in the administration of 150 questionnaire items in each of the three higher institutions- RUN, OOU and UNILAG- while 25 questionnaire items were administered across the 18 programmes (which were selected by simple random sampling with replacement, from three separate paper ballots done for each university programmes).

The study used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program software, frequency distribution, and simple percentages for the purpose of analyzing data. Data presentation was done with the aid of statistical tables which contain percentages and frequencies.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The many social woes and vices of the country could justifiably be traced to the non-achievement of the goals of the educational system in general, and those of higher education in particular (Yaqub, 2002). Nwabueze (1995:175) also concludes that:

> *Our universities have become perhaps the most fertile ground for social unrest and indiscipline, resulting in their being closed down for long periods of time in each year, with a consequent disruption in academic programmes and a fall in the quality of the cauldron which continually emits vapours of social unrest and instability; have been diverted from the very worthy objectives that informed their establishment in the first instance....*

Mass media use is a broad and dynamic phenomenon. It is ever changing because the society, technology making up mass media and the content of the mass media are always in a state of flux (Tejumaiye, 2007:24). Onabajo (2007:97-98), citing Munghem and Person (1976:23), states that 'youths can teach us a lesson or two and that the criticisms and antics of youths are in some sense salutary for the rest of us. Again, youths are heavy users of the media. It stands to reason that they do teach society some things since the broadcast-station may be driven by the expectations and predispositions of the critical audience segment towards the media.'

Of relevance to this study are the uses and gratifications approach, the media system dependency theory, and cultivation analysis theory. The uses and gratifications approach, however, is at the core of the theoretical framework.

Uses and Gratifications Approach

It is of great essence to determine/examine what the audience does with the media. 'The uses and gratifications approach involves a shift of focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purposes of the receiver. It attempts to determine what functions mass communication is serving for audience members' (Severin & Tankard, 1992:269). It provides, for instance, a way of classifying the needs of Nigerian undergraduates in Lagos state as they relate to media preference for the promotion of quality moral education. Media preference can be based on the needs to be met as well as the satisfaction to be derived from the media in question.

In Severin and Tankard (1992:272), McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) classified audience needs and gratifications in the following categories:

1. Diversion (escape from routine and problems; emotional release).
2. Personal relationships (social utility of information in conversations; substitute of the media for companionship).
3. Personal identity or individual psychology (value reinforcement or reassurance; self-understanding; reality exploration, etc).
4. Surveillance (information about things which might affect one or will help one do or accomplish something).

Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) also cited in Severin and Tankard (1992:273) 'see the mass media as a means used by individuals to connect themselves with others (or disconnect).' They categorize five of the audience needs thus: Cognitive needs (acquiring information, knowledge, and understanding); Affective needs (emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience); Personal integrative needs (strengthening credibility, confidence, stability and status); Social integrative needs (strengthening contacts with family, friends, etc.); Tension release needs (escape and diversion).

Amongst the five main groups of needs satisfied by the media, the informative/cognitive media function is of particular interest to this study. The informative/cognitive needs that the mass media satisfy for the audience 'can be described as *reality orientation, general knowledge, information on current events* and *stimulation of fantasy*. They can also be the needs for practical information and advice, norms and curiosity' (Feilitzen, 2002:361).

The dominant elements in the uses and gratifications model provided by Blumler and Katz in Real (1980:245) are outlined thus:

1) The audience is conceived of as active and goal-directed, rather than passive and purposeless;

2) The audience member links media choice and gratification, thus limiting any straight-line effect of media by producers-that is, audiences use media rather than media using audiences;

3) Media compete with other sources of need satisfaction, and understanding media requires taking into account personal and other functional alternatives to media;

4) Audience members can articulate or at least recognize their interests and motives in attending to media, and explanations of their activities more appropriately start with the audience rather than the producer; and;

5) Value judgment about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are being explored on their own terms.

The uses and gratifications model, as corroborated by Meyrowitz (2002:101), perceives the media audience as 'purposive and conscious selectors of messages that fulfill personal needs.... It suggests that it is not so much that the media affect people, as it is that people selectively use, and thereby affect, the media'. Some scholars believe individual needs are shaped by their psychological and social characteristics. 'That the psychological and social factors including the mass media system, and the type of society, are channeled through the needs structure of the child implies after all, that the child does not have unlimited freedom of choice. The child is selective, admittedly, but it is a selectivity that operates *within the framework* of all these conditions (Feilitzen, 2002:357).

Media System Dependency Theory

The media system dependency theory as cited in Baran & Davis (2003:320) posits 'that the more a person depends on having needs gratified by media use, the more important the media's role will be in the person's life and therefore, the more influence those media will have.' Several assertions that arise on media system dependency theory include:

(1) The core of media influence between the more massive social system, the media's role in that system, and audience relationships to the media. 'Effects occur ... because the media operate in a given way in a given social system to meet given wants and needs' (Baran & Davis, 2003).

(2) The degree of audience dependence on media information is the fundamental variable in understanding when and why media messages change audience beliefs, feelings, and/or behavior. 'The ultimate occurrence and shape of media effects rests with the audience

17

members and is related to how necessary a given medium or media message is to them. The uses people make of media determine their influence' (ibid).

(3) In advanced societies, individuals become increasingly dependent on the media for the purpose(s) of (i) understanding the social world (ii) acting meaningfully and effectively in society (iii) deriving fantasy and escape. The more complex the world around us becomes, the greater our need of the media to help us make sense, to help us understand what would be considered our best responses to issues, and to aid our relaxation and coping strategy. We 'ultimately come to know that world largely through those media.... As we use media to make sense of the social world, we permit media to shape our expectations' (ibid).

(4) Stronger dependency, resulting from greater needs, increases the chances of the media and their messages having effects. 'Not everyone will be equally influenced by media. Those who have greater needs and thus greater dependency on media will be most influenced' (ibid).

DeFleur and Rokeach explain an individual's level of dependency, in Baran & Davis (2003:325), as 'a function of (a) "*the number and centrality (importance) of the specific information-delivery functions served by a medium*" and (b) *the degree of change and conflict present in society.*'

Cultivation Analysis

This theory, with particular reference to television, perceives the media as having the ability to cultivate or create a global view which, totally true or not, is accepted as reality because people believe it to be so. It tackles macroscopic questions about the media's role in society. As it has been argued in the past, the mass media nurture values and behavior that are already present within a culture: the media maintain and spread widely these values amongst members of a culture, thus binding it together.

Cultivation analysis theory, according to several authors in Baran & Davies (2003:330), has been employed by researchers over the years to examine people's perception of the justice system, fear of victimization, affluence, divorce and working women, materialism, values, attitudes toward racism, feelings of alienation, environmental concern, work, social stereotypes, civil liberties, and anxiety. The cultivation aspect of focus in this study, out of the four-step process developed by cultivation analysis researchers, is the. television's contribution to the creation of a culture's frameworks or knowledge and underlying general concepts.

DATA ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

What is the chief source of moral education amongst Nigerian undergraduates?

Table 1.1: Greatest Source of Moral Education Amongst Nigerian Undergraduates

Greatest Morality Source	Frequency	%
Family	380	84.4
School	22	4.9
Media	7	1.6
Church	30	6.7
Others	11	2.4
Total	450	100.0

Going by table 1.1, the family unit (84.4%) is considered the greatest source of moral education amongst Nigerian undergraduates. The media unit (7%), on the other hand, is considered the least source of moral education amongst Nigerian undergraduates. If the media unit, compared with other units of education, does not appeal greatly to Nigerian undergraduates to the point of being their chief source of moral education, the mass media would be faced with the impossibility of addressing the moral needs of the Nigerian youth as majority may never get to depend on the

media for anything. With reference to the media dependency theory, any audience that would eventually be influenced by the mass media for whatsoever reason must be one that depends on the mass media for gratification of its needs.

Research Question 2

Do Nigerian undergraduates use the media to obtain moral education?

Table 2.1: Nigerian Undergraduates That Use The Media To Obtain Moral Education

Table 2.1.0   Table 2.1.1

Education Most Gained	Frequency	%
Political	34	7.6
Legal	6	1.3
Academic	360	80
Moral	41	9.1
Others	9	2.0
Total	450	100.0

Obtain Moral Education from Media	Frequency	%
TRUE	387	86
FALSE	63	14.0
Total	450	100.0

Table 2.1.0 illustrates that moral education (9.1%) accounts for the next highest type of education, after academic education (80%) that Nigerian undergraduates gain from the mass media. While table 2.1.1 illustrates that a total of 387 (86%) Nigerian undergraduates from the sample size of 450 respondents admitted using the mass media to obtain moral education from the mass media. The illustration above (table 2.1), shows that quite a good number of Nigerian undergraduates identify with moral education gained/obtained from the mass media. This, however, implies that the mass media are known to disseminate moral information in the first place and that the media have a good probability of imparting appropriate moral knowledge thereby influencing the moral character/behaviour of a good number of Nigerian youths.

Research Question 3

What is the lowest/highest media preference amongst Nigerian undergraduates?

Table 3.1: Least/Most Preferred Medium Amongst Nigerian Undergraduates for Moral Education

Table 3.1.0   Table 3.1.1

Least Preferred Medium	Frequency	%
Television	38	8.4
Radio	27	6.0
Magazine	28	6.2
Newspaper	30	6.7
Video	28	6.2
Book	37	8.2
Internet	262	58.2
Total	450	100.0

Most Preferred Medium	Frequency	%
Television	275	61.1
Radio	16	3.6
Magazine	16	3.6
Newspaper	20	4.4
Video	16	3.6
Book	59	13.1
Internet	48	10.7
Total	450	100.0

It is clearly indicated in table 3.1.0 above, that the internet (58.2%) is the least preferred medium amongst Nigerian undergraduates while table 3.1.1 indicates that the television (61.1%) is the most preferred medium amongst Nigerian undergraduates. Going by the theory of cultivation analysis, people have come to terms with reality representation in the mass media (especially the television) and are able to judge which and which media are successful enough to affect their lives positively as they make use of the various media. Perhaps, the television has overtime, been successful enough to affect the moral lives of Nigerian undergraduates positively unlike the internet (which happens to be the least preferred medium amongst Nigerian undergraduates).

Research Question 4

Do Nigerian undergraduates actually obtain quality moral education from the media?

Table 4.1: Mass Media Promote Quality Moral Education

Mass Media Promote Quality Morality	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	102	22.7
Agree	183	40.7
Uncertain	95	21.1
Strongly Disagree	34	7.6
Disagree	36	8.0
Total	450	100.0

Table 4.1 reveals that 40.7% (i.e. the highest majority of Nigerian undergraduates) agree that the mass media promote quality moral education followed by 22.7% (i.e. the second highest majority of Nigerian undergraduates) who strongly agree. However, 7.6% of the Nigerian undergraduates strongly disagree that quality moral education is promoted by the mass media. Considering the statistics presented above, more than half of the undergraduates from the selected Nigerian universities are positive about mass media promotion of quality moral education. According to the uses and gratifications model, the audience is an active not a passive one; the main focus is not on what the media intends to achieve rather it is on the need(s) the audience seeks to meet/satisfy by using the media. This means that Nigerian undergraduates actually obtain quality moral education from the mass media.

Research Question 5

Does affordability/accessibility determine most used mass medium among Nigerian undergraduates?

Table 5.1: Affordability/Accessibility Determines Most Used Medium

Table 5.1.0

Affordability/Accessibility Determines Most Used	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	201	44.7
Agree	168	37.3
Uncertain	51	11.3
Strongly Disagree	16	3.6
Disagree	14	3.1
Total	450	100.0

Table 5.1.1

Most Used Medium	Frequency	%
Television	294	65.3
Radio	37	8.2
Magazine	10	2.2
Newspaper	10	2.2
Video	15	3.3
Book	28	6.2
Internet	56	12.4
Total	450	100.0

To the fifth research question, Table 5.1.0 clearly indicates that the highest majority (i.e. 44.7%) of Nigerian undergraduates strongly agree. The next majority (i.e. 37.3%) of Nigerian undergraduates fall under the category of those that agree. Table 5.1.1 reveals that television (65.3%) is the most used medium of communication amongst Nigerian undergraduates. Anyone, therefore, targeting messages (that are moral in outlook) at the Nigerian youth may have to do so particularly with the aid of the television.

Research Question 6

Does performance/satisfaction determine highest media preference among Nigerian undergraduates?

Table 6.1: Performance/Satisfaction Determines Most Preferred Medium

Table 6.1.0   Table 6.1.1

Performance/Satisfaction Determines Most Preferred	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	208	46.2
Agree	178	39.6
Uncertain	37	8.2
Strongly Disagree	13	2.9
Disagree	14	3.1
Total	450	100

Highest Medium Satisfaction	Frequency	%
Television	310	68.8
Radio	19	4.2
Magazine	18	4.0
Newspaper	18	4.0
Video	12	2.7
Book	21	4.7
Internet	52	11.6
Total	450	100.0

To the sixth research question, table 6.1.0 shows that 46.2% (which accounts for the topmost figure) of Nigerian undergraduates strongly agree, however, 39.6% (which accounts for the next topmost figure) of Nigerian undergraduates agree. Table 6.1.1 portrays the television (68.8%) as the mass medium that Nigerian undergraduates obtain highest satisfaction from. About 386 undergraduates from the sample of 450 respondents affirm positively that performance/satisfaction determines the most preferred medium; any medium (like the television in this case) that is able to offer the best satisfaction to audience needs automatically would be most preferred by the audience.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study helped the researcher realize that the mass media, a social institution, is indeed sensitive to the moral needs/demands/values of the environment within which it exercises its jurisdiction. They revealed that Nigerian undergraduates actually obtain quality moral education from the mass media and that the television is the most used/preferred medium of communication amongst them. It is necessary for the various Nigerian mass media institutions to engage in constant evaluation of their performances and abilities to satisfy the growing needs (i.e. morality) of their various target audiences (i.e. the Nigerian youths/undergraduates) so as to improve their services to those that access or use the media. The Nigerian mass media may need to beef up strategies aimed at encouraging greater use of media information and/or attention to media education amongst their target audiences (i.e. the Nigerian youths/undergraduates).

REFERENCES

Baran, S.J., & Davis, D.K. (2003). *Mass communication theory: Foundations, ferment, and future*. Canada: Holly J. Allen.

Calin, M. (n.d). Moral values, moral development and education. Retrieved September 24, 2009 from, http://www.cryp.org/book/Series04/IVA-14/chapter_iv.htm.

Dike, V.E. (n.d). Educating for good character and the moral life of the nation. Retrieved September 24, 2009from, http://www.nigerdeltacongress.com/earticles/educating_for_good_character_and.htm.

Feilitzen, C.V. (2002). Needs as an explanatory factor of television viewing *In* McQuail, [ ] (2002). *McQuail's reader in mass communication theory*. London: SAGE Publications.

Meyrowitz, J. (2002). Media behavior- A missing link *In* McQuail, D. (2002). *McQuail's read* *in mass communication theory*. London: SAGE Publications.

Nwabueze, B.O. (1995). *Crises and problems in education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Boo[ ] Limited.

Nwala, T. U. (1980). Changing moral values and social development in Nigeria, In *Readings [ ] Social Sciences: Issues in National Development (Edited by E. C. Anucheazi)*. Niger[ ] Fourth Dimension Publishing Company Limited.

Onabajo, F. (2007). Perception of radio and television evangelism by Nigerian youths. *Babco[ ] Journal of Mass Communication (1)*, No. 2, pp.97-98.

Real, M.R. (1980). Media theory: Contributions to an understanding of American ma[ ] communications. *American Quarterly*, Vol.32, No.3. pp 238-258. Retrieved Novemb[ ] 13, 2006 from, http://www.jstor.org/

Severin, W.J., and Tankard, J.W. (1992). *Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses [ ] the mass media*. New York: Longman Publishing Group.

Tejumaiye, J.A. (2007). Using the mass media as interventionist agencies in environment[ ] awareness and education. *Babcock Journal of Mass Communication*, Vol. 1. No. 2.

Yaqub, N. (2002). Higher education in Nigeria in perspective. *Paths to the Sustainability [ ] Higher Education in Nigeria*, Vol. 3 No. 7, pp. 16-17.