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Assessment of the Variability in Content Specifications of Educational Broadcasting Curricular in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

"Educational Broadcasting" is a course studied in universities and it promotes national development by providing widespread quality education where classroom teaching-and-learning is difficult/impossible, like during the Covid-19 lockdowns. By teaching the course with rich curricula, Nigerian universities would be heeding Development Media Theory's (DMT) call for broadcasters (and their trainers) to collaborate with the government to enhance national development. The study adopted survey and content analysis to examine the availability of "Educational Broadcasting" in selected Nigerian universities and the curricular variability. We analysed data with simple percentages and ANOVA and findings show a high level of "Educational Broadcasting" availability and rich variability in curricular content specifications. Broadcasting educators in Nigerian universities partner with the government to promote quality education through the proper training of educational broadcasters proposed by DMT. The study calls on all communication studies departments in Nigerian universities to offer educational broadcasting with significant enrichment on the prescribed benchmark.

Introduction

Educational broadcasting refers to the production and transmission of radio and television programmes designed to teach the audience defined formal, non-formal and informal knowledge. Nwabueze, Ugonno and Ngomsor (2012) described it as disseminating educational messages through radio and television designed to enlighten target audiences on specific knowledge fields

or develop/improve knowledge in such areas. According to Ijeh and Ojebode (2015:170), it is the exploration of the dynamics of the broadcast media of radio and television to promote the effectiveness of education', and records abound of how this 'exploration' has promoted teaching and learning with positive contributions to the development of humanity globally (Ijeh 2010). A good example here is its deployment to continue teaching different categories of students at home during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns in 2020 in some parts of Nigeria in particular.

Educational Broadcasting is a course in communication studies departments in Nigerian universities, as provided by Section 1.6.0 of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (National Broadcasting Commission [NBC] 2012) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) Minimum Benchmark. This recognition of *Educational Broadcasting* by NBC and NUC suggests its significance.

Educational broadcasting, just like every successful endeavour, requires adequate preparation beginning from curriculum development and training. Its level of availability, status and curricular content specifications in Nigerian universities are essential inputs to grooming Nigerian educational broadcasters.

Statement of the Problem

Educational broadcasting has received a lot of research attention in Nigeria and beyond. Olumorin, Aderoju and Onojah (2018) examined educational broadcast programmes' contributions to the learning of technology subjects among secondary school students. Another study by Oyinloye and Adeleye (2010) examined the impact of educational broadcasting on learning while Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (2011) focused on the need for appropriate research in planning, preparing and executing educational broadcasts.

While the above scholars provide useful insights on educational broadcasting, they did not examine the training of educational broadcasters in Nigerian universities as a specialised area of broadcasting as indicated in the NUC Minimum Benchmark. Therefore, the problem is that there is a need to determine the level of availability, status, and curricular content specifications of *Educational Broadcasting* as a course in Nigerian universities in the process of domesticating the NUC Minimum Benchmark. What is the level of availability of *Educational Broadcasting* as a course in Nigerian universities? What are its status and curricular content specifications in Nigerian universities? These questions indicate a knowledge gap which this analysis of variability in content specifications of *Educational Broadcasting* curricular in Nigerian universities attempts to fill.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1 - find out the level of availability of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities;

2 - ascertain the status of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities and

3 - Identify the variability among curricular content specifications of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities and NUC Benchmark.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

In pursuit of the above objectives, we were guided by the research questions and hypothesis below:

Research Question 1: What is the level of availability of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities?
Research Question 2: What is the status of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities?
H_1 The content specification of *Educational Broadcasting* curricula in most Nigerian universities vary from the NUC Benchmark.
H_0 The content specification of *Educational Broadcasting* curricula in most Nigerian universities do not vary from the NUC Benchmark.

Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited to analysing the curricular content specifications for *Educational Broadcasting* as a course in Nigerian universities' communication studies departments from 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 academic sessions.

Overview of Educational Broadcasting

Educational broadcasting is a deliberate process that gives educators opportunities to share knowledge with learners via radio and television in ways that impact learning environments positively (Edwards and Helvie-Masson 2010). These educational programmes can be presented as live broadcasts and pre-recorded formats in audio/videotapes, audio/video CDs and DVDs for repeat transmissions or distribution for off-air consumption by learners at their convenience. They also explore edutainment contents, which blend entertainment and education (Zacharia and Twinomugisha 2020). According to Aghadiegwu (2013), the educational potentials of broadcasting were discovered early and educational broadcasting significantly influenced expansions in the industry. During the Covid-19 lockdowns, many countries worldwide explored educational broadcast programmes to sustain their educational system (Zacharia and Twinomugisha 2020). In Nigeria, radio and television stations transmitted school subjects to learners at home during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown in many states. Even though all educational sectors may not have benefitted from these educational broadcasts, the gesture served national interests and development. According to Ijeh (2010), education is a significant development index that every government seeks to treat specially.

Educational broadcasting is effective at the three levels of knowledge acquisition viz: informing, educating and directing (Ijeh and Ojebode 2013). The first level of knowledge acquisition informs/reminds audience-cum-learners and does not dig deep. Broadcast quiz programmes are good examples here. At the second level of knowledge acquisition, educational broadcasting educates audience-cum-learners by explaining the broadcasts' knowledge through illustrations, examples and demonstrations. Examples here include the teaching of formal and non-formal subjects via radio and television. At the third level of knowledge acquisition, educational broadcasts direct the audience to engage in specific activities that help them understand and apply topics taught. Examples here include work-along educational programmes (e.g. cooking, farming techniques, and children's early number/alphabets learning rhymes and sundry constructions from scrap papers/materials). Educational broadcasting can be a catalyst for improving standards in Nigeria and other developing countries. It can promote literacy, social orientation and mobilisation of the citizens towards imbibing acceptable and beneficial socio-economic attitudes and behaviour.

Educational broadcasting requires systematic preparation and planning to be effective (Ijeh and Ojebode, 2015). The systematic preparation and planning should involve Nigerian universities, which are significant suppliers of higher-level management and skilled human resources. The input of Nigerian universities in educational broadcasting development through training is critical to its effectiveness and Section 1.6.0 of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code recognises this. The Code stipulates that tertiary institutions offering broadcasting related courses should incorporate educational/instructional broadcasting in their curricula (National Broadcasting Commission 2012).

Educational Broadcasting Training and Curricular in Nigerian Universities

Educational Broadcasting is offered in communication studies departments in Nigerian universities under broadcast sequence in line with the Nigeria Broadcasting Code. Many Nigerian universities today host communication studies departments because they are popular demands among students and candidates seeking admission (Gambo, 2013). According to Mojaye (2009), as at the 2007/2008 academic session, forty-three universities in Nigeria were running communication studies departments. Ten years after, the figure had risen to eighty-two (Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board 2017).

The teaching of communication studies is traceable to the Jackson School of Journalism, Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, established in 1962 (Gambo 2013). From these early days of university education in Nigeria, communication studies have gained tremendous recognition in Nigeria over the years leading to professional careers in Journalism, Broadcasting, Film and Cinematography, Advertising, Public Relations, Photojournalism, Book Publishing, and Change Advocacy, among others (Agba, Oshega and Ogri 2018).

Educational broadcasters are among the professional broadcasters produced by communication studies departments of Nigerian universities. However, some might not have studied these departments and, therefore, not fit to be called professionals. We agree with the submission by Gambo (2013) that the broadcast industry in Nigerian has non-professional broadcasters despite the need for higher-level expertise to manage the different professional stages of the country's mass media industry. Nevertheless, the nature of broadcast training available in communication studies departments in Nigerian universities should contribute to educational broadcasting efficiency. Proper training of broadcasters with a speciality in educational broadcasting is necessary to virtually explore its potentials for national development. Unfortunately, Ponnan and Ambalavanan (2014) observed that broadcast education in universities in many developing countries is in a dilemma because of the challenges of meeting workplace expectations by training curricular.

Curricular influence the quality of training available to trainee-broadcasters in Nigerian universities in the specialised area *Educational Broadcasting.* A curriculum is a comprehensive breakdown of all that a learner needs to experience under training in an educational environment to demonstrate desirable learning outcomes (Egbule; Eboh and Ogaga 2015).

A curriculum covers the systematic definition of knowledge/skills students are to be exposed to; learning standards/objectives; units/lessons that teachers would teach; assignments/projects given to students; resources to be used; and the tests/assessments/methods for the evaluation of learning (Great Schools

Partnership 2015). Curricular for *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities is derived from the NUC Minimum Benchmark course description and expectedly plays a critical role in graduate broadcasters' ability to demonstrate desirable learning outcomes and professional competencies in the specialised area. Universities usually domesticate the NUC Benchmark in their curricular content specifications for *Educational Broadcasting.* In doing this, Wilson (2018) postulates that the development of communication studies curricular should be based on objectives emanating from what roles the society seeks to assign to the students upon graduation.

Training on educational broadcasting ought to be practical-oriented. Broadcasting is taken as a form of applied science requiring students' training to go beyond textbooks and classrooms to sufficient practical-based knowledge relevant to contemporary industry practices (Ponnan and Ambalavanan 2014; Davis 2009). In the same line of reasoning, Agba et al. (2018) aver that communication education needs a practical approach tilted towards harnessing Information Technology (ICT) tools since the world is going online. Many Nigerian universities have responded to this by establishing functional training campus radio stations for practical broadcasting training. They also deploy broadcasting students to broadcast stations for media attachments under the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) to further expose them to industry-based practical training and experience (Gambo 2013). Nevertheless, there is a need to examine their *Educational Broadcasting* curricular variability concerning the prescribed benchmark to prove or disprove Agba et al. (2018) that low curriculum description is a challenge to communication studies in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework - Development Media Theory

Development Media Theory (DMT) is a normative theory propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987 and it examines and prescribes how mass media personnel (including broadcasters' trainers) ought to operate to obtain specific values in the society which foster national development (McQuail 2007; Anaeto et al. 2008; Ijeh 2010). One key postulation of the theory is that the "media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy" (Wogu 2013: 74). The term "media", in the context of this study, includes broadcasters and their trainers. Simultaneously, the "nationally established policy" refers to the NUC benchmark on *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities as prescribed by NBC.

Education is a national development index that broadcasters and their trainers need to partner with the government to promote educational broadcasting. This is because educational broadcasting facilitates widespread knowledge delivery to more parts of the country than conventional face-to-face teacher-learner encounters. This potential of educational broadcasting has been described as a mind-boggling sophistication that makes it very important to promote education in any society (Ijeh and Ojebode 2015). The quality of training received by broadcasters on educational broadcasting in Nigerian universities will expectedly enhance its effectiveness and facilitate the national quest for education improvements. This is the link between DMT and this study.

Furthermore, it is noted that the Nigerian broadcast industry lacks higher-level expertise to effectively manage and derive maximum benefit from it (Gambo 2013). This calls for an examination of the nature of broadcast training in the

country (educational broadcasting inclusive). It is expected that efficient training on educational broadcasting will help effectively manage and derive maximum benefit. The importance of adequate training for educational broadcasters in Nigeria is reflected in the Nigeria Broadcasting Code requirement that tertiary institutions teaching broadcasting should make provisions for educational/instructional broadcasting. Therefore, DMT prescribes that broadcast industry personnel (which include trainers) should fine-tune all aspects involved in grooming broadcasters (including in the specialised area of educational broadcasting) in line with national policy as contained in both the Nigeria Broadcasting Code and NUC benchmark. This postulation of DMT drives this analysis of variability of content specifications of *Educational Broadcasting* curricular in Nigerian universities.

Methods and Materials

This study combined survey and content analysis. The study's population is 82 communication studies departments in Nigerian universities, and the analysis was based on their operational curricular from 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 academic sessions. A sample of 66 universities was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table of Sample Size Determination from a population of 82. Participating universities were selected by simple random sampling with blind balloting. The eighty-two universities in the study population were arranged alphabetically and assigned serial numbers 1-82. Similarly, eighty-two ballot papers with serial numbers were put in a bag and shuffled. We adopted blind balloting to draw 66 of them and universities with corresponding serial numbers picked were included in the sample. The survey involved a structured interview via phone calls and WhatsApp chats. The content analysis of course curricular was based on Level of Study, Course Status, Course Units, and Content Specifications as units of analyses. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (simple percentages and charts) and inferential statistics (Analysis of Variance [ANOVA]).

Data Analysis

Research Question 1 enquired into the availability of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities. Figure 1 indicates that the availability level is significant, with 41 out of 66 (62.12%) of the sampled universities hosting communication studies departments offering it.

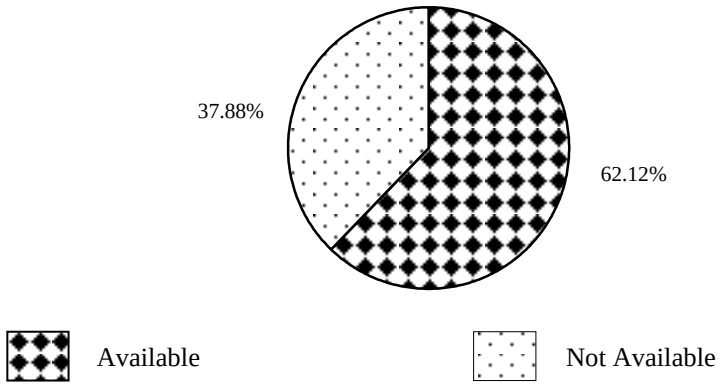

Figure 1: Pie Chart Showing Availability of *Educational Broadcasting* as a Course of Study in Communication Studies Departments in Nigerian Universities (Source: Field Work 2020)

The second research question focuses on Educational Broadcasting's status as a course in Nigerian universities' communication studies departments. Data indicate that it is a 400 Level (final year) course in 39 universities (95.12%), a 300 Level course in 1 university (2.44) and a 200 Level course in 1 university (2.44) out of the 41 universities where it is offered in the sample. Available data further show that the course is 2 Units in 34 universities (82.93%) and 3 Units in 7 universities (17.07), while it is a compulsory course in 33 universities (80.49%) and an elective course in 8 universities (19.51). This distribution is illustrated in Figure 2.

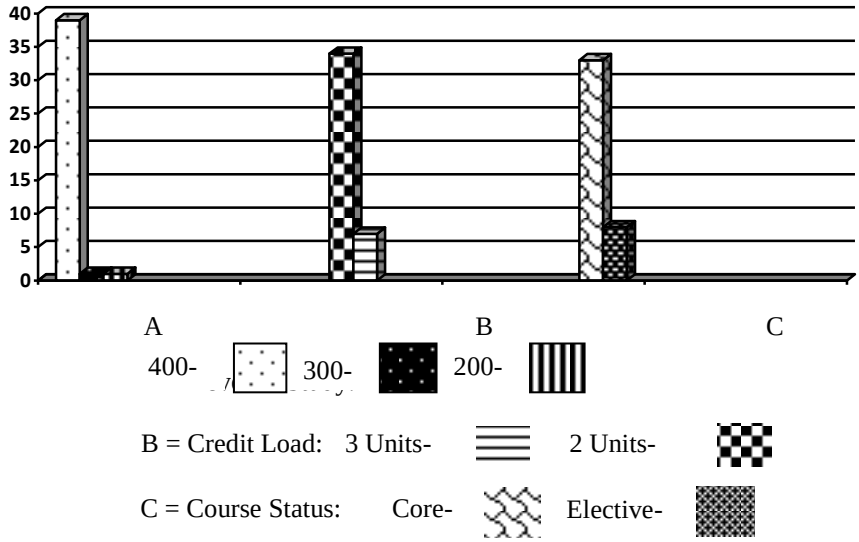

Figure 2: Composite Bar Chart Showing Status of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian Universities (Source: Field Work 2020)

The above figure shows that *Educational Broadcasting* is predominantly a final year 2-units core course in Nigerian universities' communication studies departments.

Test of Hypothesis:

H_0 The content specification of *Educational Broadcasting* curricular in most Nigerian universities do not vary from the NUC Benchmark.

In this study, we conducted a content analysis on the course descriptions from a sample of 32 out of the 41 communication studies departments offering *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities based on Krejcie and Morgan Table and availability sampling. We observed from the content analysis (Appendix 1 and 2), that the NUC Benchmark for *Educational Broadcasting* yielded ten units of analysis, whereas the selected universities' curricular yielded an aggregate of 38 units of analysis. ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance where the degree of freedom (fd) = 1, 36 and the Critical Value of F (F_{crit}) = $x < 4.08 > 4.00$. The Decision Rule is to reject H_0 where $F_{cal} \geq F_{crit}$ and accept H_0 where $F_{cal} < F_{crit}$. Table 1 presents the summary result of the test of the hypothesis as contained in Appendix 3.

Table 1: Summary of ANOVA Result

S/N	Group	F Value	P-Value	No. (%)	SN of Universities in Sample	Remark
1	A	< x	≥ 0.05	6(18.75%)	11; 18; 24; 26; 30 and 31	Indicates variability
2	B	< x	< 0.05	10(31.25%)	1; 5; 7; 9; 14; 15; 20; 25; 27; and 28	Indicates No variability
3	C_1	≥ x	< 0.05*	12(37.5%)	2; 3; 4; 7; 8; 12; 13; 16; 17; 21; 29 and 32	Indicates variability
4	C_2	≥ x	< 0.05**	4(12.5%)	10; 19; 22 and 23	Indicates variability
	TOTAL			**32(100%)**		

Note: * significant at 1%; ** significant at 5%

Table 1 shows that ten universities had F_{cal} that were less than F_{crit} with p-values less than 0.05. Impliedly, at 0.05 level of significance, we observe that the curricular in 10 universities (Group B) out of the 32 (31.25%) universities in the sample is not different from the NUC minimum benchmark. As further observed, available data (Appendices 1-2) show that the ten universities in the sample (Table 1, Group B) had precisely the same content specifications as the NUC Benchmark. Hence, their F-values were 0 accordingly. Also indicated in the result, six other universities (18.75%) (Table 1, Group A) returned F_{cal} below Fcrit, but p-values ≥ 0.05 indicated variability from NUC Benchmark.
Further results from the table indicate that the curricular content specifications in 12 universities (37.5%) (Table 1, Group C_1) returned F_{cal} that were above F_{crit} with p-values of 0.000, indicating that at 1% level of significance, the curricular of this category of university vary from NUC Benchmark. Finally, four universities (12.5%) (Table 1, Group C_2) returned F_{cal} that were greater than F_{crit} with p-values below 0.05 (p-values > 0.01 < 0.05) thus, indicating that at 5% level of significance, the curriculum content of this category of universities varies from NUC Benchmark. In summary, the ANOVA result shows that the curricular content specifications in 10 universities (31.25%) did not vary from the NUC Benchmark, while that of the remaining 22 universities (68.75%) vary. Accordingly, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted: the content specification of Educational Broadcasting curricula in most Nigerian universities vary from the NUC Benchmark.

Discussion of Findings

The study shows that the level of availability of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities is high. The result suggests that many broadcasters trained in communication studies departments in Nigerian universities are exposed to educational broadcasting training, especially since it is mostly a core course. This widespread availability of university training in this specialised field of broadcasting provides educational broadcasters with opportunities to acquire high-level expertise and become catalysts for academic development in Nigeria, as suggested in Gambo (2013). The above situation indicates that most communication studies departments in Nigerian universities abide by the tenet of DMT that media workers-cum-trainers should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with the nationally established policy as noted by Wogu (2013). In providing training

for educational broadcasters, they have accepted a nationally prescribed role in the Nigeria Broadcasting Code and the NUC Benchmark, thus partnering with the government and the broadcast industry to pursue educational-cum-national development in the country.

The observed level of variability in educational broadcasting curricular in selected Nigerian universities indicates that many communication studies departments significantly improved the NUC Benchmark. While the NUC Benchmark yielded only ten units of analysis in its curriculum content specifications, the selected communication studies departments' curricular yielded 38 units of analysis in content specifications. This introduction of knowledge and skills overlooked in the NUC Benchmark by communication studies departments in Nigerian universities is an effort to enrich educational broadcasters' training. These knowledge and skill fields include educational broadcasting history, principles, concept, discipline, structure, dynamics, functions/importance, execution, outcome evaluation, and improvements. Others are an effective use of supplementary materials/teaching aids; levels of education; academic potentials of the film; emphasis on formal and non-formal education; ingraining instructional stimulus into students; practical uses of educational broadcasting in the teaching-and-learning process; assessment of the potentials of computers, Internet and new media for educational purposes; foundations of broadcasting; qualities of good educational broadcasters; audience of educational broadcasting; general teaching skills; world view of educational broadcasting as well as the relevance of education to individuals and groups in the society (Appendices 1-2). By these additions, concerning communication studies departments in Nigerian universities have made significant efforts to develop *Educational Broadcasting* curricular to match society's roles upon graduation as prescribed by Wilson (2018).

This study's findings also show that the central theme of *Educational Broadcasting* curricular content specifications in the NUC Benchmark and communication studies departments in Nigerian universities include practical planning and production of educational programmes and supplementary materials/teaching aids. This practical-oriented training in educational broadcasting upholds the observation by Ponnan and Ambalavanan (2014), Agba et al. (2018), and Davis (2009) that broadcasting, including *Educational Broadcasting,* as a form of applied science cannot be taught adequately without appropriate practical component relevant to contemporary industry practices.

Conclusion

Educational broadcasting is a catalyst for educational development in any society because of its potentials in making quality education in different areas easily accessible to target audiences over broad geographical regions simultaneously, without inhibitions from rugged terrains, disease outbreaks, cost, distance, time, workforce, security concerns, and lots more. There are records that educational broadcasting significantly improves learning at different levels of education globally. Many countries, including Nigeria, deployed educational broadcast programmes to keep the education system going during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The majority of the communication studies departments in Nigerian universities collaborate with the government to provide rich practical-oriented

training in educational broadcasting as canvassed by DMT. This collaboration is evident in the significant variability among the NUC Benchmark and curricular content specifications of selected universities, promoting professionalism and expertise with expected attendant commendable service delivery and work outputs.

Recommendations

This study makes the following recommendations to further improve on the teaching of *Educational Broadcasting* in Nigerian universities:

1. All communication studies departments in Nigerian universities should offer *Educational Broadcasting* as a compulsory course (not elective).
2. Universities where *Educational Broadcasting* curricular merely copied the NUC Benchmark or fell short of it should review their curricular and significantly enrich them.
3. Government/universities should encourage practical exercises in *Educational Broadcasting* by providing funds, facilities, electricity, and incentives to lecturers and students.

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