

Reinforcing Family Values through Entertainment-Education Programmes

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Abstract

Charity begins at home; it is this aphorism that aroused the curiosity of the researchers. The need to understand the place of the family in society and how the family is implicated in the development of society ultimately has birthed this work. This work is an incursion into the efficacy of entertainment education programmes as a tool for the reinforcement of family values amongst residents of Port Harcourt. The Social Learning theory was used as a theoretical base, to explain media effects on the one hand and media use on the other hand. Concepts related and reviewed in the study included development communication and entertainment education. Empirical evidences were also chronicled. From the qualitative analysis made, it was discovered that entertainment education was a veritable tool in the hands of

development programme planners and should be deployed as panacea for every development campaign.

KEY WORDS; Entertainment-Education (EE); Family; Family Values; Programmes; Media Campaigns; Development; Development Communication.

Introduction

The Nigerian society is today undergoing bouts of social challenges at the individual, group, and organizational levels. These issues are such that if treated with levity can be inimical to the growth and development of the society. Thus, seeking ways to curb these ills has become expedient. The family as a social institution, functioning within the larger society, has been identified as one of the five basic institutions in any society that play a very crucial role in the survival and development of any society. Lending credence to this line of thought is, Chaput, (2012) who describes the family as the “the first vital cell of society”. This truth can be hinged on the many functions performed by the family, but more especially the education and socialization of members. Institution building started with the family thus, making it the main vehicles of group identity, and the chief receptacles of vested interests. Explicit in the foregoing, is that the family is the first agent of the socialization process (Okodudu, 2007). He notes that, the family continues to play an important role in the life of individuals even in adult life. This line of thought is congruent with the popular saying that “charity begins at home”.

Family Values and the Nigerian Society

Family values are strong tenets that individual families build their life on and around. These values are often passed down from previous generations, and handed down to the younger generation for continuity. They can help define behaviours in various situations, help members make good choices, and solidify the bond that family has. Although every

family's list of values differs, there are different categories of values that tend to be similar. According to Guertin (2006), Values could be categorized as social, religious, moral, political, and recreational. However, family values are subsumed under the social and moral categories. The diversity of the Nigerian society is one of the reasons for the country's rich cultural heritage. However, the conglomeration of these diverse cultures does not erase the fact that each entity has distinctive values that differentiate one group from another. However, in spite of the diversity that characterizes the Nigerian state, there are general values that are regarded as common between them, thus, generally form the core family values which are the focal point of the study. These values include; integrity, honesty, patriotism, moral rectitude, hard work, selflessness, respect for elders, respect for fellow citizens, resourcefulness and education (Vision 2020, p. 133). The importance of reinforcing these core values stems from benefits that can accrue from such move. Putting it succinctly, the Vision 2020 document reiterates that:

Re-orientation in values is therefore important for the fight against corruption to succeed, and the teachings of our core values as a people and the benefits such values will bring to the attainment of our greatness as a nation and the achievement of our developmental growth (p. 133).

In tandem with the foregoing, is the assertion by Kigama & Avenya (2015) that:

A nation is itself a family of families, a community of persons, and the family is a nucleus of the community of persons that a nation is. Every nation needs effective institutions and leaders of intellectual, moral and technical competence to administer these institutions. The family, as a vital cell of the society, is where such leaders are born and nurtured. Hence, both the

effectiveness of such institutions and the emergence of good leaders in the nation largely depend on the family (No. 5).

The Nigerian family basically, is anchored on a tripod consisting of extended family system, patriarchal authority and patrilocal habitation and patrilineal mode of inheritance and succession. However in recent times, the family has progressed into a modern system. Family structures, as well as, the core traditional family values of the society, have been challenged by the level of acceleration in technology and the embrace of urban family patterns. Stressing the eminent digression from the core values in the society the Nigerian Vision 2020 states: "Over the years the core values that bind the Nigerian people together have been eroded. There has been a crisis of identity, perception and (National) orientation which has resulted in unacceptable behaviour" (p. 140). In fact, Anele (2004) believes that the family in modern societies have undergone what he calls "structural transformation" (p. 169). This transformation according to the scholar stems from the shift in emphasis from the extended to the nuclear family sizes, amongst other examples that tend to relegate the African traditional values of collectivism to the background, and embrace of the modern family size which encourages the "foreign tradition" of individualism among African families. Further stressing the issue, Rotimi (2005) reiterates that:

The family has not been immune from the rapid social changes which have swept through the country in recent times. Although these changes have been engendered by the influence of Western education, they have also been affected by other closely related phenomena. These include rural-urban migration, urbanization, industrialization and modern mass communication, just to mention a few... (p.138)

At the dawn of the twentieth century, major changes in the family structure were manifest in different parts of the world, and this led to a corresponding strain in the family values than at the end of the century before (Schoen, 1992). In Nigeria for instance, the quality of communal life has been eroded (Fadipe, 1970). Christianity, modernization and the impact of Western influence have had an overwhelming effect on traditional family values that were once revered by individuals. The status of women has changed; consequently, young urban wives now prefer living away from their husbands families in a bid not to appear subserviant in the family. In the face of these changes, Rotimi (2005) explains that extended family system has almost collapsed, the relationships between spouses has been re-defined, parental authority weakened, mate selection undergone a complete metamorphosis, and traditional gender role relationships challenged.

This raises a lot of concern, which is the motivation for the work because values are pivot upon which future sustainable national development rests. They are the bedrock and prospective sources of national growth, and sustainable change and development. It is plausible to say therefore that there is a need for the reinforcement of family values as a veritable way of curbing societal vices that tend to keep society in a state of perpetual under-development. This thinking stems from the belief that every individual is affiliated to a family, and has a hue of same. Thus, the need to rejuvenate the consciousness of such positive traits in individuals, has become timely as an effective channel to curb societal vices on the one hand, and encourage social change and development on the other hand.

The media are implicated in this fight for the resuscitation of the dying family values, thus, have not relented in dispensing their duties to the society. This they have done successfully over time through properly educating, entertaining, mobilizing, and correlating different parts of the country. The success they have recorded could be hinged on the packaging and disseminating of programmes that will effectively pass on

vital messages that are necessary for social change and development in society. The issue of reinforcing family values is one of such issues that the media have instituted campaigns about, and disseminated through entertainment education programmes (especially those coded in dramatic formats) geared towards encouragement of same. Some of these programmes include; *This Life*, *Family Ties*, *Happy Family*, *New Masquerade*, and *Face to Face*.

The use of entertainment-education (EE) as a communication strategy in development initiatives has grown significantly over the years (Rogers & Singhal, 2004). As a communication strategy EE has been applied increasingly in sectors such as environment, rural development, conflict resolution and peace building (Skeie, 2004). The importance of the strategy stems from promoting individual behaviour change to supporting social change, from enhancing social mobilization to articulating peoples' participation and empowering minority or marginalized groups to collective action. The genre connects so well in dramaturgical rhythm and in content with the everyday lives of individuals, thus, the format is very appropriate in order to reach a large audiences. This format affords audiences the opportunity to engage, identify, and involve themselves strongly with the stories of such programmes, and even encourage debate about 'difficult-to-talk-about' issues as noted by Martin-Barbero (2002). The turning point in EE is the use of drama and entertainment for educational purposes through the integration and proliferation of prescriptions to the audience. The fictional narrative serials on television or radio are deployed as tools to communicate to the audience how to tackle specific issues in their everyday life. Corroborating this line of thought, Okon, Ochonogor & Cookey (2015) assert that:

The essence of entertainment-education is to encourage change of attitude and adoption of advocated innovations, which is achieved basically by providing the audience

with fun and amusement while passing vital messages across simultaneously (p.9).

The importance of the enter-educate model is that the audience while seeking for the fun embedded in the media, get certain education that did not form the original motivation for exposure to the media. The Nigerian mass media offer dramatic works in English language, the Nigeria Pidgin, and Nigeria indigenous languages as major entertainment items in their programming menu. Consequently, most of Nigeria's successful development campaigns have used dramatic formats, which creative contents have being effective in eliciting and evoking audience participation. Thus, development planners, with the use of dramatic formats can get better results from such programmes, which serve to re-instil those values that are acceptable and necessary for the development of the society.

Little wonder, in recent times, development- oriented programmes through the media, have focused on the need to revive the dwindling family values amongst their audience through the use of dramatic themes that encourage the sustenance of these values. Some examples of such programmes include; Family Ties drama, Super Story, My Mom & I, So Wrong So Wright, amongst others. It is this interest and efforts to revive family values amongst families by such programmes that raise one of the many concerns of this study which is, to ascertain the positive potentials imbedded in drama programmes, as one initiative that has out lasted many other development-based programmes produced and packaged in other formats. However, in practical terms, the role of drama is yet to be fully comprehended and appreciated by audience members. Consequently, some development projects coded in dramatic formats have failed to achieve their set objectives. This therefore raises some vital questions about the effectiveness of entertainment education programmes in disseminating development-oriented themes that encourage social change and development through the reinforcement of family values.

Theoretical Framework

The social learning theory will be reviewed in order to explain media functions and effects, media use and attitude formation.

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory was formulated by the psychologist Albert Bandura in 1977. The theory emphasizes the pertinent roles played by vicarious, symbolic and self-regulatory processes, which have been de-emphasized by other theories of learning (Bandura, 1971). The proponent reiterates that so many classical theories of learning depict behaviour generally as the end-product of directly experienced response outcomes. Thus, through direct experience and observation of other people's behaviour and its consequences, learning can occur. According to the tenets of the social learning theory, man is neither controlled by inner forces, nor irrationally incited by environmental influences. Rather through a continuous symbiotic interaction between behaviour and its controlling conditions. Thus, man is considered rational and possesses a cognitive capacity that determines to a large extent how he will be affected by his experiences, and his future actions. In other words, through experience, behaviour can be altered and actions taken as a result of the cognitive prowess that allows for both insightful and foresightful behaviour. In line with this thought, Bandura (1971) outlines two (2) levels of analysis of how patterns of behaviour are acquired and the different factors that necessitate learning outcomes. These are; Learning by Direct Experience and Learning through Modelling.

Learning by Direct Experience

Learning by Direct Experience is an analysis of learning which posits that reinforcing outcomes partly form an unarticulated means of informing performers what action they must take in order to gain beneficial outcomes on the one hand, or to avoid punishment on the other hand. As a rudimentary form of learning, individual experiences ultimately form

the premise on which future action may rest. This according to Bandura (1971) is a function of the perceived consequence of that action taken. Thus, learning by direct experience is governed by what he calls "Differential reinforcement" (p. 3). This refers to the process by which individuals pick-on, or drop certain behaviours as a result of the gains, or pains it portends ultimately. This explains the relationship between one's action and their consequences. It is worthy to note that reinforcement, going by the social learning theory, has an informative and incentive function. According to a study conducted by Dulany & O'Connell (1963) it was observed that differential reinforcement leads to the selectively strengthening, or disconfirmation of cognitive events. Thus, based on their analysis of learning by experience, reinforcing consequences partly served as premise on which action may be taken, thus represents the informative function of reinforcement. On the other hand, the motivational function of reinforcement stems from the opinion of Bandura (1971) that:

Through the capacity to represent actual outcomes symbolically, future consequences can be converted into current motivators that influence behaviour in much the same way as actual consequences. Man's cognitive skill thus provides him with the capability for both insightful and foresightful behaviour (p. 3).

Learning through Modelling

This second analysis of learning is concerned with the notion that learning takes place through a process of imitation. Individual actions are believed to be a product of the influence of example. Although, Bandura (1971) asserts that there was no research in this area of learning until the publication by Miller & Dullard in 1941. The duo according to him, advanced research and the view that:

In order for imitative learning to occur observers must be motivated to act, they must be provide with an example of the desired behavior, they must perform

responses that match the example and their imitative behavior must be positively reinforced (p.6).

The social learning theory holds that modelling influences birth learning fundamentally through their informative functions and that observers pick up symbolic representations basically of modelled activities instead of particular stimulus-response associations (Bandura, 1969). In line with these thoughts, Bandura (1971) identifies four (4) interrelated sub-processes that guide the modelling process. The thrust of the modelling concept according to Bandura (1971) is summarized as:

...To transmit information to observers on how to organize component responses into new patterns of behavior. This response information can be conveyed through physical demonstrations through pictorial representation, or through verbal description (p. 10).

This assertion premises the influential role played by television, films, and other pictorial displays in the process of social learning. There is enough empirical and theoretical literature that serves as evidence of how individuals in society acquire attitude, and behavior change from exposure to such programmes. The theory appreciates the ability of audience members to learn and acquire some behaviour merely through observation, and utilizing observations made as guide for future behaviour. The social learning theory to a great extent recognizes that much human learning occurs as individuals expose themselves to watching other individual's model various behaviours. Thus, the cognitive and recall ability of the audience makes it possible for individuals to benefit from observation and experience of models. Social learning is particularly most effective through the use of the mass medium, especially the television which has multiplicative power from a single model transmitting new ways of thinking and behaving to many people in different locations (Bandura, 1994). Different studies carried out

to find out the practicality of the claims of the social learning theory, have proven that individuals consciously, through mere exposure to certain characters, make models out of same, and over time, tend to behave in ways portrayed by those models.

Televised models remain a major avenue through which attitude change can be achieved by development oriented programmes. Bearing in mind the viewing habits of individuals, and the frequency of watching televised models act out certain behaviors, the mass media no doubt, play a very pertinent role in shaping behavior and social attitudes. In fact, Bandura (1971) talking further about the televised modelling as a better means of achieving desired social attitude opines that:

Different forms of modelling however are not always equally effective. It is frequently difficult to convey through words the same amount of information contained in pictorial or lives demonstrations. Some forms of modelling may also be more powerful than others in commanding attention. Children or adults for that matter, rarely have to be compelled to watch television, whereas verbal characterizations of the same activities would fail to hold their attention for long. One might also expect observers who lack conceptual skills to benefit less from verbal modelling than from behavioural demonstrations (p. 10).

Development Communication and Social Change

Development communication or DEVCOM is referred to in a number of ways. Some call it communication for development while others prefer development support communication. In all of these, it is evident that a close relationship exists between communication and development. Because of this relationship, it has become generally accepted that development is not possible without communication. Ekwelie (1999, p. 6) captures it this way: "We have proof that

development and communication may fail to generate development. But after making all the allowances for accident in nature and society, we are still left with a paradigm that links communication with development”.

Ekwelie reiterates that the need of the people as determined by them is the core of development communication. Development communication, according to him, concerns itself with people’s welfare as defined by them. Continuing, he describes development communication as news coming from below instead of news coming from above. It is news as put together by those who believe they know what the people need. This definition emphasises the participation of the target population (from below). The thought here is that the participation of the target population will make the execution of the development project a lot simpler for the change agent. The UNICEF, WHO and their other partners in the health sector (2001) define Communication for Development as:

A researched and planned process, crucial for social transformation, operating through three main strategies: advocacy to raise resources and political and social leadership commitment for development goals; social mobilisation for wider participation and ownership; and programme communication for changes in knowledge, attitude and practices of specific participants in programmes (P. 6).

Paterson (2005) views development communication as an organised effort to use communication processes and the media to bring social and economic improvements in people’s lives. He writes that the field of Devcom emerged in the late 50s as a result of the high hope that radio and television could be used to bring about dramatic progress among the most disadvantaged nations of the world.

In furtherance of his point of view, Paterson identifies three commonly used types of development campaign. Persuasion - It stands for an attempt to change what people do. The second type is education which seeks to change social values. The third is informing which empowers people to change by increasing knowledge. Education, Paterson asserts, is now recognised as the most useful way of executing development campaigns. In the process of education, modernisation is not the issue, instead, effort is made to reduce inequality; involve people in their own development; grant them independence from central authority and employ small and appropriate technologies. The emphasis is therefore on basic needs and not economic growth.

Not applying communication properly despite knowing it as an essential intermediary between policy decision-makers and the public, can lead to unforeseen failures and distortions in the development process (p. 61). Uwakwe aligns himself with the six approaches articulated by Habte (1983) which indicate a positive correlation between economic development and mass communication. The approaches are that: the media are the reflections of a society's development process; that empathy is higher among people who are exposed to the mass media; that the media make the vital signs of development like innovation, achievement motivation, educational and occupational aspiration evident; that communication systems can make the importation of complex technical skills possible; that mass communication is effective in creating social cohesion and integration among diverse tribal, ethnic and religious groups and that national development objectives can be achieved faster if the media function simultaneously with other national, social, economic and political institutions.

It has been noted that efforts to bring about development through the practice of development communication are not without problems. Although, development communication plays the role of a transformer which seeks social change in the direction of a higher quality of life and social justice and, strives to maintain some of the established values of

society that are in consonance with development, Udeoba (2003, p. 82) points out that these goals face serious obstacles including poverty, illiteracy, lack of infrastructural facilities, poor access to the channels of communication, alienation of the target audience, lack of proper training for change agents, intra and inter-ethnic conflicts and tribal isolationism.

The World Bank (2007) in an internet posting "What is Development Communication" is of the opinion that development communication is the integration of strategic communication in development projects. Strategic communication is seen as a powerful tool that can improve a development project's likelihood of success. Its goal is behaviour change and not just the dissemination of information, education or the raising of awareness.

Entertainment-Education and the Reinforcement of Family Values

Entertainment-education (EE) strategy is a development communication strategy that is premised on behavior-change. As a communication strategy, it is used to disseminate development oriented messages basically via the mass media. As defined by Singhal & Rogers (1999):

Entertainment –education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about education issues, create favourable attitude, and change overt behaviour. Entertainment-education seeks to capitalize on the appeal of popular media to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier, and happier lives (p. 12).

Entertainment-education can be traced to the 1950s and 1960s deriving from social marketing yet relevant for today's development interventions (Tufte, 2000). The scholar noted that Social marketing emerged in the 1970s and was garnished with music, drama and some form of

storytelling, and entertainment was basically a media-based strategy, mostly television and radio.

Tufte (2000), on the other hand, recorded that the first entertainment education programme could be traced to the Mexican Soap operas produced by Miguel Sabido between 1975 and 1985. He reiterated that Miguel produced about seven soap operas that were didactic and broadcast at Mexico's largest Network- Televisa, and these programmes recorded a huge level of success. The use of entertainment education spread to other parts of the world such as India, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, amongst others in the 1970s. Initially, these programmes were designed to educate audiences on health related issues such as family planning, sexual behavior, and other health issues. The progressive development of EE strategy was the later inclusion of fictional genres that formed a tangible backdrop for the strategy in communicating development based messages (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Sherry, 1997; Tufte, 2000).

On a general note, EE strategy is geared towards the deployment of entertainment genres for social change purposes. Embedded in EE programmes such as radio and Television drama is the genre that aligns with dramaturgical rhythm and themes that people can relate with in their everyday living. The programmes have the capacity to raise issues that are topical and capable of initiating rational discourse amongst viewers. Through the level of engagement EE programmes offer, individual identification and involvement with stories so told leads to positive development outcomes.

It becomes clear therefore, that contrary to rational communication of information through news genres and other news related formats, the point about using the narrative and melodramatic is to articulate emotional engagement. By using melodrama to draw attention, recognition and identification the purpose is to promote insight and change of attitude and behaviour.

Empirical Evidence

A study conducted by Ebele(1986),as an empirical evidence revealed that even the Nigerian government during the administration of president Shehu Shagari, attempted to use entertainment education to implement an agricultural program, which was meant to achieve and maintain a reasonable level of self- sufficiency in food production tagged 'Green Revolution' the project targeted upper and higher classes of the working population and the business community to accept large- scale mechanized farming. To that government, the program meant a collaborative effort to attain and maintain a reasonable level of self-sufficiency in the production, marketing, and consumption of essential food stuffs. Spots for the implementation of the 'green program' were not lacking. Among them was that of the Television Authority (NTA), working in tandem with the United Bank For Africa (UBA). The NTA had asked one of its most interesting writers, Mr Peter Igho, to conceive a program for the "green revolution", and the result was a 30- minute weekly drama which was aired over the NTA network across the nation, titled "Cock Crow At Dawn". The goal of the serial was to 'sell' through entertainment, mechanized faming, largely to the upper and higher working population and the business community.

According to the study, the drama apparently achieved a measure of success from its screen debut in April 1980, a total of 104 episodes. The plot of "cock crow at dawn' is double- barrelled, in the sense that while it fulfils pure entertainment needs, it belies a social cause. The dramatic format is significant and relevant in that it was capable of satisfying the multi-function of informing and educating. It was also the most effective format to launch new ideas and destroy old ones: This dramatic form extended the journalistic purpose of 'cock crow at dawn' to a psychological objective, in which the audience could relate and empathize with the characters. This tells one that there can be no barrier to the achievement of a dramatic goal. Cock crow at Dawn, instructed and informed, motivated and challenged the viewer. It was replete with struggle, which somehow brought about some changes. And for Drama,

changes advance the attainment of crises, thus heightening dramatic moments for audience participation and enjoyment.

In some respects, it would be argued with conviction, that in the framework of recent Nigerian experiences, the thematic note "Cock Crow at Dawn"- Agrarian Revolution-will remain an unattainable goal for some time. But the dramatic format adopted for the attainment of the goal provided, by indirection, a horizontally layered approach to problem solving through vicarious audience involvement and participation. In this context, "Cock Crow at Dawn" went beyond being just a practical "concretization theory"-a process in which the community is helped to articulate it's problems, rather than provide solutions to them, but went on to providing model suggestions to solving technical and practical problems.

Conclusion

The family is to a large extent, implicated in the development of the society through proper education and socialization of its members about their conduct, and societal expectations (Okodudu, 2007). However, the very existence of such basic, important and integral factor for the development of society is being threatened. The values of the average Nigerian family are undergoing a progressive level of change that has resulted in the neglect, and in some cases, final relegation of the original values of the family. It is this concern that has led the mass media to packaging media campaigns aimed at reviving family values, through entertainment –education programmes. The effectiveness of drama for social change and behavior cannot really be over-emphasized, capturing the success inherent in the use of edutainment succinctly; Ryerson (2008) is of the opinion that; One of the imports of deploying serial dramas, as opposed to documentaries or single-episode drama is that they make time for the audience to form a bond with characters and allow characters to change their thinking and behavior with regard to various issues at a gradual and believable pace in response to problems that have been well

illustrated in the story line. Just as important, entertainment programs forge emotional ties to audience that influence values and behaviors more forcefully than the purely cognitive information provided in documentaries. In addition, the emotional context of a melodrama improves retention of lessons learned by the audience.

There is strong evidence that mass media, particularly entertainment education programmes, have played a significant role in a number of countries in bringing about changes in behavior and in promoting adoption of other advocated ideas. The vicarious learning from models is a powerful teacher of attitudes and behavior. Besides peer and parental role models, role models from the mass media are of particular pertinence in shaping, and reinforcing family values amongst viewers.

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