
COMMUNICATION FOR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE THROUGH ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION

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Abstract

Ensuring sustainable behavioural change requires efficient utilization of information and communication strategies through entertainment education. The key reasons for this could be ascribed to the role communication plays in entertainment education as a major carrier of culture in most African societies. It is on this backdrop this article dovetailed the usefulness of behavior change communication in entertainment education and identified that greater educational value in the field of Theatre for Development practices are made manifest in order to bring about positive outcomes to enhance sustainable community norms. This also has been enhanced through the facilitative efforts of development communication leading to the entrenchment of popular participation and utilization of messages for transformational programmes and policy objectives for the individual's wellbeing in the society.

Keywords: *Communication, Behavioural Change, Development, Education, Participation & Entertainment,*

Background to the Study

What provide the enabling environment to initiate ideas and execute actions that sustains desirable positive outcomes are manifestations of behaviour change communication. Behaviour change communication as a set of organized communication interventions and processes is aimed at influencing social and community norms, which promotes individual behavioural change or positive behaviour maintenance for a better quality of life (Ellina, 2012). In order for human societies to develop effective communication strategies which tendency is to promote appropriate positive behaviours in any setting, requires vehement mechanisms of leaving through entertainment education.

In Nigeria, entertainment education has become an instructional intervention which has a close interface with education and communication. It is a strategic and group oriented form of communication to perceive a desired change in behaviour of target group. However, it is succinct to note that behaviour change communication differs from ordinary instructional method of communication; hence it is target specific even as the strategy varies from group to group.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this article dovetailed the usefulness of behavior change communication in entertainment education and identified that greater educational value in the field of Theatre for Development practices are made manifest in order to bring about positive outcomes to enhance sustainable community norms.

Literature/ Theoretical Framework

Communication can help individuals and societies to establish relationships which are fostered through strategic infusion of behavioural change propelled by reactions and influences of language expressed through the emotion of feelings. It is on this back drop that the theoretical framework of this paper is predicated on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of communication.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis of communication as could be adapted is made up of two complementary principles; linguistic communication determinism and linguistic communication relatively. According to Emenanjo (2006), linguistic communication determinism refers to how people think by reacting to the content and context of messages expressed them that shape their opinions. This inturn influences their behavioural patterns towards social interactions that extenuates to changes in the environment and society. Prescriptively, linguistic relatively holds way to the fact that every communicative language has its own peculiarities and ways of encoding facts about the culture of language which inadvertently affect their thought processes and act upon their behaviours.

The foregone, explicates what communication does for an individual and society. Gamble and Gamble (2002) identified communication for behavioural change as a function that enforces understanding and provide insight on the individual. In that regards, communication helps an individual to understand him/her self as well as others. It behooves us to understand that it is our knowledge of others that enables us to know ourselves and how others affect us (Agbo, Ojobor and Ezinwa, 2010). Infact, we depend on communication to develop knowledge that helps us to shape opinions in the course of our interactions with others. Moreso, this theoretical conceptualization is in tandem with "media literacy" which further exorcises the ability of individuals to be shaped in terms of their behaviours through entertainment education as a result of their ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate media messages they are exposed from the media (Baran and Davis, 2007).

At the heart of these perspectives are notions about an active audience that uses media content to create meaningful experiences (Bittner, 1998). The moderate-effects perspective acknowledges the important media effects that can occur over longer periods as a direct consequence of viewer's or reader's intent. People can make media serve certain purposes, such as using media to learn information, manage moods, and seek excitement. When we use media in these ways, we are intentionally working to induce meaningful experiences. The "meaning-making perspective" asserts that when people use media to make meaning-when they are able to intentionally induce desired experiences-there are significant results. So when young adults download billions of songs from the net in order to alter or sustain a mood, there will be consequences. Sometime these consequences are intended, but sometimes the results are unanticipated and unwanted.

Prospectively, it implies that behaviour change communication through entertainment education should focus on people's success or failure in their efforts to make meaningful use of the media. Both intended and unintended consequences of media use should be studied especially in areas of communication content and context of messages that is tilted towards socio-political and economical growth of the society.

Why Advocacy Communication for Behavioural Change?

In order to ensure the masses on the use of the mass media for intended purposes of human capacity building and development, especially in the areas of decision making and

policy implementation by governments in developing countries, a new twist has evolved in propelling the attitude of individuals regarding Advocacy Communication for Behavioural Change (BCC) in the society. These reasons enunciate a new model of communication known as development communication (Tobechukwu, Naribo and Akunabi, 2012).

Advocacy communication is infused in the ambits of development communication which strives to re-engineer attitudes change through the mass media. In line with this view, some development communication scholars contend that the primary goal of advocacy communication towards behavioural change is anchored on development communication. Hence it entails the delivery of useful social and economic information to developing the masses (Okon, 2001).

Moreso, the mass media play the dominant role in the delivery of useful information and messages to the rural population in order to enhance behavioural change. Thus the role of development communication in articulating the exigencies of behaviour change through entertainment education becomes strategic in enhancing communicative activities for social and economic advancement.

One of the key pillars of behavioural change is strategic communication through entertainment. In supporting these views Ugulah (2013), upholds the importance attached to effective communication strategies in the areas of development communication and stressed that “strategic communication intervention is one of the key means through which access to and application of knowledge and information are facilitated towards behavioural change that translates to sustainable social, political and economic development”. It helps to establish a common understanding among stakeholders on development initiatives, creating a base for knowledge and information that can be applied to effective decision making to enhance transformational development (Mozammel and Schechter, 2005).

It's on this backdrop, development communication pundits ascribed that communication for behavioural change is fundamental to the process of any intervention be it at the individual, community or society level, behaviour change communication aims at developing communication strategies in order to promote positive behaviours which are appropriate to their settings.

Moreso, these processes of communication are imbued to influencing social and community norms so as to promote individual behavioural change or positive behaviour maintenance for a better quality of life. This in turn, provides a supportive environment which enable people to initiate and sustain positive and desirable behaviour outcomes. However, it is succinct to note that behaviour change communication should not be misinterpreted or confused with behaviour modification which is a term with specific meaning in clinical psychiatry setting.

In relating the role of advocacy communication in behaviour change and applying the Sapire-Whorf hypothesis of language and culture as explicated in linguistic determinism and linguistic relatively, Emenajo (2006) emphasized that language and indeed, communication determines the way people think and reacts to issues concerning their social existence in the society. This further explains that communication for development in which advocacy communication derives its orthodox generation is crystallised towards the adaptation of linguistically hypothesized forms of communication determinism in behaviour change or in other words attitude change in human societies.

Advocacy communication is strategic to behaviour change as infused in the tenets of development communication in the following areas as identified by Sean MacBride (1980).

- i. A social need
- ii. A political instrument
- iii. An economic force
- iv. A catalyst to behaviour change for leadership and governance

- v. A tool for educational development and
- Vi. For technological transformation.

However, it is succinct to note that behaviour change communication through entertainment education requires an interactive process with individuals in communities which of course is integrated with an overall program to develop tailored messages and approaches using a variety of communication channels to drive positive behaviour and promote sustained individual, community or societal behavioural changes and thus, maintain appropriate behaviours geared towards achieving socio-political and socio-economic transformation. Think-tanks in the areas developmental media studies upheld the view that behavioural change is pontificated by the nexus of communicative attributes which adopts a multi-level tool working at the individual, couple, family, community, organizational and environmental levels mainly for the purposes of:

1. Promoting and sustaining risk reducing behaviour
2. By distributing tailored social messages in variety of communication channels (i.e. Radio, Television, Newspapers, Magazines, Mobile-Phones, Internet, etc).

In carrying out advocacy communication for behavioural change, the fact remains that the individuals, communities or populations desirous of change must first of all; understand that they are susceptible to risk. Though risk perception is key to motivating behaviour change through entertainment education. Thus, changing behaviour requires:

- i. Understanding the basic facts in communication
- ii. Adopting the key attitudes that want change
- iii. Learning a set of skills and
- iv. Being given or provided access to appropriate products and services in the process of entertainment (Baran and Davis, 2007).

Crystallizing Behaviour Change Communication Through Entertainment Education

The fundamental lesson that the entertainment arts has consistently posited, is the fact that human culture which is dynamic, has always been in constant change and has accelerated in pace with the passage of time. One way of identifying human behaviour and changes in the development of the individual hinges on study of the artists and their roles in society (Ampe, 2012). Entertainment education in the areas of theatre and drama has always been used as a form of communication to lubricate effective means of expression and learning in African cultures. According to Ogunbiyi (1981), through entertainment education, drama and especially, the theatre have become vanguards for positive behavioural change that are meant to benefit the generality of members of the society or community.

Crystallizing the importance of entertainment education, Ekwueme (2013) undertook critical examination on "Theatre in education and sustainable educational development in Nigeria" and observed that theatre which is the ambit of entertainment engages the attention of people through a dramatic presentation of problems. It makes the audience see their problems in fresh and critical ways. By so doing, it has the capacity to engage the audience with persuasive messages that appeal to all the senses at the same time, and this is a very important potential for bringing behavioural change positively as a form of arts. When strategically and properly used, it could have a positive influence on the audience.

In Africa and often times in Nigeria, the need to remain socially relevant as a dramatist, through dramatic entertainments such a comedy, songs, cultural displays, story telling and so forth has been used to resolve problems affecting the society. These problem ranges from cultural conflicts to development problems such as corruption, exploitation, insecurity, oppression and other behavioural issues (Ekwueme, 2013). While expressing the use of popular theatre as a form of entertainment education, Ampe (2012), upheld the view that popular theatre as a researched performance of drama can be used as tool for communication through poetry, songs and story telling that can be understood by the

educated, the semi-literate and illiterate members of a given community. It behooves us to understand that, through discussions that follow such performances, the participants and the audience usually exchange useful information, ideas and suggestions that vehemently contribute in solving ensuing problems amongst them and these entails:

- i. Discussing the problems raised with others
- ii. Agreeing with others to do something about the problems and
- iii. Learning other information and skills needed to solve the problems e.g. sanitation habits, eating habit, balanced diet, cooking, practices, relationships among family members and so forth.

Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) is propelled by the synergies attributable to development communication. Entertainment education thus, enhances development through behaviour change especially in areas regarding Theatre for Development (TFD). In supporting these views, Ugbada (2013) emphasizes that, Theatre for Development which adopts participatory communication enables people to respond favourably to issues affecting their social, political and economic wellbeing tilted towards fulfilling their developmental aspirations in the society.

In entertainment education, theatre for development and behaviour change are to a large extent, synonymous and thus, share some sorts of symbiotic relationships. It is just like the two sides of a coin in terms of their nomenclature. However, it is succinct to know that, theatre for development is a tool for driving home the message of behaviour change through acceptable modes of communication that are strategic to fulfilling human development needs so has to enhance the political, cultural and economic well being of masses in the society. It is on this fulcrum, Theatre for Development becomes a fundamental crystallizing force that po-faced developments through behaviour change communication.

Dovetailing on the need for strategic application and adoption of the essential functions of communication in enhancing behaviour change through education, Mozammel and Schetchter (2005) emphatically noted that strategic communication can add value as an operational tool by helping to identify development-related perceptions and the level of knowledge that fulfils human needs through culturally sensitive education and human mobilization efforts. Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) promotes the adoption of new practices, empower people, build networks and capacity among individuals that drives major aspects of developments.

It is therefore necessary to state that the process of creating an avenue for people to come together and identify their basic attitudes towards issues, would mean that they discuss all these aspects of human endeavours and think of the ways to create new ideas so as to enhance in providing understandings that facilitates behaviour change for development. These processes according to Ugbada (2013) empower and enable people to fight against those things that disempowered them. The entertainment theatre can go a long way in such a direction.

The Need for Participatory Communication in Entertainment Education

The fact remains that communication has become the life wire of human existence. Communication is so pervasive in the sense that it bed-rocked the multi-purposeful nature of human activities in the society and as such stimulates continuous relationships among and between individuals in every social setting. Thus, it is predicated on symmetrical and complementary transactions (Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, 1967).

In a symmetrical relationship, two individuals mirror each other's behaviour. The behaviour of one person is reflected in the behaviour of the other person, while in complementary relationship; the two persons engage themselves in different behaviours as one serves as the stimulus for the complementary behaviour of the other person (Devito, 2006). It is the transactional nature of communication that promote participation

among individuals and groups which prognosticates the navigating elements in behaviour change that can be easily fostered through entrainment education.

The concept of participatory communication dominated in justifying the existence of development communication that infuses communication for behavioural change. Since the 1970s, participatory communication increasingly provides serious concerns and attention. It is on this backdrop that some pundits in Theatre For Development Communication (TFDC) had advocated a liberating kind of communication in entertainment as against what was referred to as barking system of communication which is tended towards enhanced dialogue that is receiver centered with respect to culture and all social structures (Ugbada, 2013).

The role of participatory communication in Behaviour Change can not be undermined. However, the nomenclature has been seen as the process of collaborative efforts in bringing about useful forms of communication strategies that promotes social wellbeing amongst individuals and societies in a manner that is geared towards sustainable development.

The rapid development of participatory communication and the expansion of various forms of communication in many countries, and in particular of audio-visual communication that is combined with the spread of informatics, have opened-up new horizons of multiple linkages between education and communication (Sean MacBride, 1980). It is on this backdrop entertainment education provides an evident increase in educational potentials of communication which of course is propelled by the endowment of greater educational values in the field of Theatre for Development (TFD) practice. It is succinct to note that in theatre for development practice, participatory form of communication generates an educational environment in which the impact on intellectual development is inexplicable towards behaviour change communication. The reason according to Mody (1991), hinges on the fact that, it transcends all main streams and conventional communication practices. Moreso, it extenuates the facilitative efforts of development communication which is an entrenchment of popular participation in research and problems solving processes in the communities with a greater projection for sustainable development.

Dovetailing the need for participatory communication and dissecting the intrinsic roles in entertainment education, Ugbada (2013), emphasized that participatory communication is strategic to the utilization of messages to attain desired intents in information sharing of transformational aspirations amongst individuals in the society due to the following:

1. The strategy introduces a two way interactive process through which all participants horizontally exchange information with dialogue that is central.
2. It empowers people by enabling them to actively contribute in decision-making at all development programmes.
3. It provides a platform of creating and sharing knowledge, understanding and meanings among stakeholders.
4. The idea of vertical push of information from the so called experts to the people has no place in participatory communication. It is often times a bottom- top approach.
5. Participatory communication strongly advocates the emphasis of planning by stakeholders using their knowledge.

As prescribed above, the basis of participating communication which has continuously increased the weight of communication in society tends to compel it to a vast responsibility in educational systems. These entail proper use of effective strategies and apparatuses in a manner that transforms communication messages into meaningful understanding between and amongst individuals in any setting. Moreso, in order to foster the lubrication of intended messages or interactions that bring about behaviour change; experience and language sharing are precondition, for achieving results as regards entertainment education.

The effort to strike a balance between entertainment education and communication takes very different forms; some consider that the media serve to supply contemporary knowledge, while education is responsible for transmitting the heritage accumulated by tradition. For others, the school should devote itself to generating more effective social awareness, equipping the individual to fill responsible positions, and assisting the economic growth of the nation, while communication should be at the service of leisure and pleasure, and also of entertainment as an ambit of development theatre practical exchange of ideas and understanding. Yet others feel that the function of individuals is to provide, in face of the hubbub of communication, a haven of silence, reflection, intellectual exercise and integration. The essential function of educational systems should be to introduce order into the elements of knowledge scattered in all directions by the communication networks, since such systems are founded on an order of values and on methods which teach the individuals how to pick out essentials.

Entertainment education is an essential tool for behaviour change communication. In its absence illiteracy persists, limiting communication abilities at the threshold; its expansion becomes a basis for further communication. Any discussion of the need to remedy communication imbalances cannot therefore ignore the importance of universal education and upgrading the quality of education and educational opportunities. Similarly, discussion of the communication handicap faced by developing nations cannot ignore the potential of education as a factor in human development and the transfer of technology. Likewise, if popular participation is to become a reality in the communication field, the educational and training potential must be better understood by those called upon to play a bigger role in the organization of communication as participants, subjects, consumers, managers and decision-makers in all areas and at all levels.

These increasing links between communication and education force us to ask how the relationship can be made more fruitful and positive. But it remains necessary to take account of the specific nature of each process. By its very nature, education cannot be indifferent to tradition and to the transmission of cultural values inherited from the past. It has to function, nevertheless, in a world that is less and less obedient to authority and respectful of tradition, a world conscious of the task of creating a new future. The basic task of the education, especially in applying theatrical practices is to teach young people what the world is, and this necessarily involves a perspective drawn from the past. Communication turns its eyes more naturally to modernization and to fitting young people to take their place in a world that is being remade. Its mission is to bring to light social possibilities which have not yet been explored or applied. Thus, individuals, groups and communities are encouraged to work out their own values and their own culture but they cannot do so without some sorts of equipment in the form of knowledge practices and ideas which of course are achievable through entertainment education.

The role of communication in entertainment education may be regarded as that of a major carrier of culture. According to Sean MacBride (1980), the media of communication are cultural instruments which serve to promote or influence attitudes, to motivate, to foster the spread of behaviour patterns, and to bring about social integration. They play, or should play, a major role in implementing cultural policies and in helping to democratize culture. For millions of people, they are the principal means of access to culture and to all forms of creative expression. Communication is involved, too, in the management of knowledge, the organization of the collective memory of society, and in particular the collection, processing and use of scientific information. Potentially at least, it can recast the cultural mould of society. But in this sphere, as much as in others, the rapid development of new technology and the growth of industrialized structures, which extend their grasp over culture as well as over information, introduce problems and dangers.

Although a great body of cultural expression maintains its traditional and interpersonal forms, it is also true that in the modern world the mass media supply the cultural fare, and shape the cultural experience, of many millions of people. For coming generations,

they are creating a new culture; it is not easy to define its character, still less to judge its value. Masterpieces of creativity, both from the past and from the present, have been introduced to new audiences on an international as well as national scale. Entertainment in various forms has been made far more readily available, and undoubtedly responds to human needs and demands. Though to some extent, entertainment is so banal and stereotyped that it dulls instead of stimulating the imagination. Even at that, entertainment provides a fulcrum for exercising communicative activities that are geared towards behavioural change in human societies all over the world.

Conclusion/ Recommendation

Apart from its omnipresent and omnipotent nature, communication is also omnificent, and this means it has creative power (Aina, 2003). It implies that communication for Behavioural change become inexplicably essential in man's quest for brilliance to maintain social order. Thus, as aptly posited by Khvilon & Patru (2002), it is behaviour change communication that enhanced people's conscious development in order to be able to act together through information sharing and experience development in human society.

Succinctly, it is quite susceptible and risky to get individuals to change certain behaviour that are inherent and endemic to the social, political and economic growths in their environment and locality. Thus behaviour change communication requires, understanding the basic facts of an issue, learning a set of skills, given reverence to access to appropriate products and services and adopting the key attitudes that drives the required change through entertainment education.

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