



Assessing Information Dissemination Channels as Valuable Tools for Educational Development in Nigeria

ABDULLAHI SHUAIBU DANBABA, TUNNYANG NAANFWANG TITUS
TITUS NANPAN PANSHAK
University of Jos, Nigeria

Abstract. Information is a vital tool for the development of education in any society. This paper looked into the meaning of information, information dissemination and the different channels of information dissemination such as Information Communication Technology (ICT), training and professional preparatory programmes, mass media, conferences/workshops/seminars and its role to educational development in Nigeria. It also discusses the importance of educational development to national development. Some constraints of informational dissemination channels and recommendations stated. The value of education is underlined by the fact that each society establishes an educational system designed to serve its present and future needs. Education serves as an instrument for stability, change and renewal. Thus, the transmission of knowledge, skills and values is basic and information dissemination has been the key to achieving these laudable goals.

1. Introduction

It is important that any communication strategy should be based on the communication processes, techniques and channels that are most appropriate for specific audiences. Different communication processes and channels will reach different or specific targets depending on the social, economic, political, educational context and will have a different impact on achieving both short-time and long-term goals. Disseminating the right information through the right channels lead to effective achievement of its purpose to be accomplished. Information sharing in education is as vital as education itself, this is because no any educational process could be achieved without proper dissemination of the right information with all its

expected aims and objectives. There would hardly be any educational development without the exchange of information from one ends to the other.

Information: Information is any message or news, viewed or read or told verbally which add to knowledge, awareness or understanding of some topics, or events problems that prepares you for uncertainty of life. Gilbert and Watteville in Omogor (2013) opined that information is whatever is capable of causing a human mind to change its opinion about the current state of real world. Therefore, information and information dissemination is imperative to the socio-economic and educational development of any nation.

Education: Generally speaking, education is said to be the life wire for socio-economic development of any society. As Kalusi (2001) sees education as “a chain of activities that is geared towards the development of desirable qualities- critical thinking, respect, integrity of character, being creative, acquisition of skills, tolerance and open-mindedness-in a person”. The highest goal of education is man's search for himself in a constantly changing world where he is compelled to make choices that affect his environment. Education brings about the overall development of a person which invariably leads to national development because no nation rises above its citizens and education.

2. Information Dissemination

Information dissemination is the transfer of information from person to person or from one place to another. Omogor (2013) posited that "information delivery is not a one way affair. There must be a sender to transmit the message, and a receiver to

make appropriate decisions. These involved the exchange of ideas, facts, opinion, attitudes and beliefs between people". There is, therefore, no other way to understand the process of change without considering information dissemination.

The term "dissemination" has become a familiar part of our vocabulary within higher education and it is easy, therefore, to talk about doing it without having a real grasp of what it means, "to disseminate" or what it is you are trying to achieve by doing it. There will be a number of groups/audiences that you will need to target directly with your dissemination. This will be because you believe that they can benefit from what your message has to convey. As Granga and White (2001) see success in dissemination as more likely to occur when the packaging and overall nature of the information has been influenced by appropriate input from the potential recipient/user audience. Dissemination should produce an effect-use of the information- on the part of the recipient. It will be important therefore, that these groups/audiences have a deeper understanding of your intention or message. An information dissemination channel must therefore, be credible to recipients if it is to be utilized and have an impact upon them.

3. Information Dissemination Channels

3.1 Information Communication Technology

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays an increasingly important role in the way we communicate, learn and live. ICT are electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval. Development is partly determined by the ability to establish a synergistic interaction between technological innovation and human values. The rapid rate at which ICTs have evolved since the mid-20th century, the convergence and pervasiveness of ICTs, give a strong role in development and globalization (Nwagwu in Adomi and Kpangban, 2010). ICTs have a significant impact on all areas of human activity. In a rapidly changing world, basic education is essential for an individual to be able to access and apply information... the ability to access and use information is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for development. (Adomi and Kpangban, 2010).

Kaka (2008) observed that the field of education has been affected by ICTs, which have undoubtedly affected teaching, learning, and research. ICTs have the potential to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students, to help relate school

experience to work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, as well as strengthening teaching and helping schools change. New instructional techniques that use ICTs provide a different modality of instruments. For the student, ICT use allows for increased individualization of learning. In schools where new technologies are used, students have access to tools that adjust to their attention span and provide valuable and immediate feedback for literacy enhancement, which is currently not fully implemented in the Nigerian school system (Adomi and Kpangban, 2010). The challenge is to effectively harness these technologies in a way that serves the interests of learners and the larger teaching/learning community. As UNESCO (n.d) considers that ICTs can contribute to universal access to education, equity in education, the delivery of quality learning and teaching, teachers' professional development as well as improve education management, governance and administration provided the right mix of policies, technologies and capacities are in place.

3.2 Conferences Workshops Seminars

Conferences, seminars and workshops are avenues where intellectual ideas are often shared in order to salvage any prevailing circumstance. Takayama in Edwanis (n.d.) says that conferences and conference proceedings are more timely means of information transfer than publications. Conferences generally precede the publication. They supplement pre-service and in-service educational efforts. Informal as well as formal information exchange marks this dissemination strategy where experts and non-experts come together to exchange information in order to improve educational service delivery or taking decision that may need urgent attention. This serves as a conduit for robust and effective information dissemination for educational development.

3.3 Training and Professional Preparation Programs

Training and educational programs have been a significant dissemination strategy. These include pre-service and in-service. Pre-service educational programs are also referred to as professional preparation programs In-service refers to education provided on the job in the form of induction training, apprenticeships, and short-term workshops or courses. Both offer vehicles for getting new knowledge into practice.

Professional preparation programs are a major vehicle over time for knowledge dissemination. Such

programs include, but are not limited to, lectures, labs, discussions, and practicum. In education programmes like teaching practice, industrial attachments, and practicum provide field experience which invariably improves the educational system both prospects and practice.

3.4 Mass Media

Media is known to be the most powerful mean of information dissemination. The print media, electronic media and the internet are all the subsets of mass media. According to Mcluban (2013) sees mass media as "the means of communication that reach large number of people in short time". The mass media therefore, provide indirect, one-way communication and include community, national and international radio and television as well as newspapers, magazines, comic books, cinema or other situations where a large number of people can be reached with information without personal contact. Mass media is an effective way of communicating with people living in different parts of the world. The birth of media has put a new look on education and has affected Nigerian educational landscape. Ema and Ajayi (2006) stipulated that television is primarily an instructional tool that has a very wide and continuously fast growing audience. That television by its nature of combining pictures and sound possesses a very powerful influence in providing actual information in that the learner will understand and appreciate. Radio can also be used in teaching to a great advantage in the transmission of knowledge due to its wider coverage and the affordability by the users.

There exist also some media channels known as the small media. The small media are often tools used to support larger communication initiatives or to illustrate interpersonal communication. They include posters, cassettes, leaflets, brochures, slide sets, video, flipcharts and flash cards. All these help in no small measure in the business of education as process and also as a system. Mass media helps speed the process of acculturation by making available to diverse audiences the opportunities for simultaneous exposure to a given event, story or kind of information (Edwards, n.d).

Books are also parts of the printed media provide wide range of information covering almost all issues in the world. Books are more permanent but less timely than other print media. They are more personal and more respected. They have a higher rule of reusability.

While books at one point in history were written for a more literate or elite audience, today's books appeal to the less literate. As a tool for disseminating information about new research or technology, books contribute to the enlightenment models of utilization or the spread effect. Production schedules, display practices, and marketability factor into decisions on whether to communicate new research via books.

4. The Impact of Information Dissemination and Educational Development on National Development

Education hitherto remains the gateway to knowledge and ultimate to power. Every industrialised nation of the world attained that status only by tapping into the tremendous power of education in their march towards attainment of national objectives. Adewole (2000) maintains that in order to achieve a full realisation of the potentials of the new heritage embedded in thought of scholars, and only on paper policy document the need for a willingness to respect their thoughts as well as the political will to implement laudable policy objectives cannot be overemphasised. Information dissemination has played and is still playing an important role in the development of education in Nigeria while education remains a remedy for healing the nation's wounds as we march through the decades of national problems.

Education in Nigeria is seen as unifying factor to the heterogeneous nature of the country considering the diverse culture, beliefs, customs, tradition, tribes and religion. It is through education that we have been able to arm ourselves with our diversity which has ultimately given birth to our unity. The establishment of unity schools, federal polytechnics, federal colleges of education, universities have been of immense contribution to national development because these institutions of learning have served and still serving as rallying point of our togetherness through information sharing.

Educational system in Nigeria is more or less elaborate social mechanism designed to bring about in the persons submitted to it skills and attitudes that are judged to be useful and desirable to the nation. The value of education is underlined by the fact that each society establishes an educational system designed to serve its present and future needs: that is to say, to serve as an instrument for stability on one hand and, on the other, as an instrument for change and renewal. Thus, in every such system the transmission of knowledge, skills and values is basic and information dissemination has been the key to achieving these laudable goals.

5. Constraints of Information Dissemination Channels on Educational Development

Despite the role of information dissemination channels play on education development, it faced with challenges which are identified below:

- Low interest by government in establishing an educational system designed to serve its present and future needs in terms of information dissemination.
- Inadequate provision of information dissemination facilities by the government.
- High Cost of Information dissemination facilities: An obvious barrier is cost, especially in providing facilities to educational institutions and others with often very restricted funding.
- Information gathering and dissemination is marred by lots of barriers such as political interference.

6. Recommendations

Based on the constraints of information dissemination channels as valuable tools for educational development aforementioned, the recommendations are stated below:

- Since solid educational system aid in information and dissemination, each society should be encouraged to establish an educational system designed to serve its present and future needs.
- Government should adequately fund the educational sector. This will aid in improving the channels of information dissemination for educational development.
- Since information dissemination serves as a unifying factor to the heterogeneous nature of the country, all barriers to effective information gathering and dissemination should be eliminated.
- Bearing in mind the significance of information dissemination and to achieve the desired results in the educational development, the sources that provide for the flow of information should not be monopolized and politicized.

7. Conclusion

Generally, it is believed that information is power. It is obvious from contributions of various authors that there are different channels of information dissemination for educational development in Nigeria. No nation of the world can thrive without viable education and invariably no education can be

considered relevant without the proper dissemination of the needed information. For information to achieve the desired results in the educational development, the sources that provide for the flow of information should not be monopolized and politicized.

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