EDUTAINMENT AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: INTERFACES WITH DIGITAL MEDIA

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Abstract
The thrust of the paper is the growing interest in edutainment as a means of raising awareness. Being a global initiative that conveys development oriented messages edutainment focuses on institutionalized media by providing the much needed interface with the social media as tools. Using qualitative research and tenets in Uses and Gratification Theory, the paper is of the view that the same principles that undergirds the acquisition and the use of knowledge can offer huge support by productive engagement with digital media

Keywords: edutainment, media, interface, development, awareness

Introduction
Edutainment is the process by which learning and amusement are woven seamlessly together with no clear dividing line between the two (De- Fossard, 2004). Edutainment uses emotional and cognitive factors to engage the learner in a didactic context in which socio-cultural barriers are broken by capturing people who are not likely to pay attention to conventional messages (Tulloch and Lupton, 1997).

With globalization that promotes interaction, interconnection and interdependence, the process that accentuates the surreptitious spreading of attractive cultural influences in music, fashion, dance, and even masquerades as Onaiyekan (2002,p.99) contends, provides useful escapes and learning outcomes through media-constructed values. Since development is marked by discovery, experimentation, and changes, the goal of edutainment is to, as it were, approach learning through its techniques that motivates the audience. This is the rationale for the use of edutainment for HIV/AIDS education and other social issues (De-Fossard, 2004).

Uganda is one African example where edutainment has been extremely useful in influencing behavioural change, especially in the eradication of HIV/AIDS pandemic. Between 1992 and 2002, Airhihembuwa, Makinwa & Obregon (2008), aver that the successful application of edutainment

remarkably affected the spheres of public health such as nutrition, family planning and anti-smoking campaign. Thus, fundamental to the foregoing is the sharing of ideas to solve human problems, discover and understand issues from diverse cultural resources and lift the society to the next level.

According to Kakembo (2012, p. 175), "edutainment approach is premised on the same philosophy behind media values of how televised programmes including drama and soap opera logically present contents in more attractive ways." The spread of ostensibly dominant viewpoint that contradicts permissiveness and also expands the frontiers of knowledge to perpetuate itself and universalize values are the issues. Televised programmes create some sense of reality; one without pretence. This is the attribute that extends in more specific ways the capacity to make learning easy by touching the salient areas of knowledge and life in general. The extent of this impact is, perhaps, why it is necessary to escalate the approach by interfacing social media.

Social media are internet based tools and services that allow the users to engage with one another and to generate contents, distribute and search for information online. They are interactive web-based media platforms (Chatora, 2012). Social media emerged with the advent of the internet and the World Wide Web (www) often associated with the term "web2.0". While the media constructed values-fashion, hairstyle, artistic tastes are features of edutainment, the popularly televised soaps that focus on the application of techniques in the control and prevention of challenges facing the society is the concern. One of such is malaria in pregnancy. How pregnant women learn about medication through televised programmes in drama and localized television series.

Edutainment: A Conceptualization.
The mass media are tools for mass communication which have unique responsibilities to keep members of the society informed, educated and entertained**.** In carrying out these functions several methods are used to ensure the dissemination of information so as to engender more participation, plausible view and general development. Edutainment messages are laden with fairy stories, songs, myths, proverbs, riddles, rhymes and idioms that make it easy for the target to overcome extraneous influences that come as a result of crowded choices. Humans do not respond to all of the signals or messages that come across. They select their messages according to importance they attach based on their perception.

It seems clear from the foregoing discussion that edutainment has African traits. Africans are known for telling stories which are unique due to the modus operandi of communication extant in the model identified above. Since we know that generally pregnant women are some-worth delicate and they find it difficult to process idealistic adventurous and stereotypical messages which are typical of the conventional media, they need guidance in play lets, drama and stuffs that are   " too good to be true" to easily assimilate the messages (Husain & Shaikh (2005).

Educational dramas for instance, presents flashes of conflicts developed with the aim of arousing the interest of the viewers. According to Mayers(2000):

> Radio drama on malaria, has made quite a huge success of malaria prevention and control as presented by (World Bank Report in UAC 2017). Televised programmes with interesting plots and storylines make messages loud and clear. A key element of edutainment is for understanding and this stresses what should be done and not what they have failed to do. The family is also woven into the programme, aimed at teaching the values intended, while targeting the culture to reflect values e.g. female doctors and care workers for anti- malaria drugs in the Northern part of the country (Udoakah 1998).

From whatever perspective edutainment is viewed, what is central is its purpose which is to help the society by improving understanding. Cologne (1973) makes an implicit statement about qualitative growth implying not only the material but the immaterial aspect of life. Edutainment serves the same

purpose of educating the people through the means of entertainment as an all-embracing concept encompassing all facets of life, but more importantly as a widely participatory process of deep and accelerated socio-political change geared towards producing sustained advancement of the majority of the population within condition of generalized quality, dignity, justice and liberty.

Malaria Situation and Pregnancy
        In the tropics to which we belong, malaria is a deadly health challenge and this is complicated by the fact that in most pregnancy cases, treatment is handled with some reasonable care because of the fetus. Asaba, Ibusa and Ogwashi-Uku are on the borders of the River Niger and shares boundary with Onitsha in Anambra state. With almost round the year prevalence of stagnant pools of water that provides natural breeding grounds for mosquitoes, cases of malaria especially among pregnant women are quite rampant in the areas and neighboring communities. Although Government has increasingly launched campaigns and initiated medical approaches towards this goal, concerted efforts on the part of the focal communities to improve their sanitary condition on-going, yet, it seems not much is really happening due to the number of incidence and as such this makes the area an important point of reference compelling this study.
        Generally, about half of world's population is at risk of malaria with women and children more at risk. According to the latest WHO estimates released in September 2015, there are several cases of malaria in that year that resulted in 438,000 deaths and this figure continue to increase by the day. Malaria is caused by plasmodium parasites and spread of people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. Aside from the direct health impact of malaria, there are also huge social and economic burdens on families and communities in terms of treatment costs, prevention efforts and loss of work time.
        National Malaria Elimination Programme (NMEP), formally National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP), was established to lead and drive the country's effort to fight malaria. The mandate of this body is to formulate and facilitate policy guidelines for coordinated activities of partners and stakeholders towards technical support for malaria control. The plan as at 2014 when this initiative was launched was that by 2020, the malaria elimination mandate would have been realized. The goal of edutainment here is the provision of support to the on-going efforts through community partnership in the mission of using televised programme to assist in the following seven objective areas: malaria prevention, diagnosis, treatment, advocacy, communication, and social mobilization (National Malaria Elimination Programme)

 Edutainment as Social Initiatives for National Development
     Social development has to do with the way individuals learn new experiences that help them function as full members of the society. Socialization is the actual process that takes place in one's life in order to realize the above. Very many agencies are responsible for socialization including traditional institutions, the family, school, church and the media to name only a few. The approach used by different agencies to socialize in Africa involves contents that are value oriented. The voice of America constantly talks about 'news that you can use'. This means that news can be used to make one's life meaningful.
        Newsmen are conscious of items that have consequence for many people and impact on lives. Okoye, (2006) contends that much of the education given through televised experiences is aimed at managing and directing people. Roman and Greek educators learnt how to manage workers because they were in predominantly an agrarian system. Boys were trained to be tough, to bear arms and exercises meant to toughen the body such as swimming across cold and rapid streams, acrobatics and parades were embarked on. The new initiative could serve in inculcating skills that could help in fighting health related scourge as well as associated challenges.
        Thus, health information and communication are powerful tools for the adoption of healthy behaviours necessary to prevent and control malaria prevalence especially among pregnant women. Stagnant pools of water that provides natural breeding grounds for mosquitoes are quite rampant.

Edutainment programmes have the potentials for improving group interactions in clinical situations; among members of health profession and patients in such collaborative ways(Thomas, 2006).

Radio and TV impact on Edutainment

Although Government has increasingly launched campaigns   to improve sanitary conditions generally, it seems not much is happening especially in rural areas. With yearly prevalence of stagnant pools of water that provides natural breeding grounds for mosquitoes, cases of malaria especially among pregnant women are still quite rampant. As a versatile and ubiquitous media, radio started the experiment in the electrical industry. Communication scholars believe that radio is the most effective communication medium for promotion of economic and social development. Radio educational programmes have impacted on the process of learning from time immemorial. Radio messages transcend the barriers of illiteracy and infrastructural facilities. This is why radio is best for the rural man and factoring the radio into edutainment programmes to educate pregnant women on the dangers of malaria is worthwhile. Areas that lack such amenities as electricity can be linked to the population through radio educational progeammes (Kombol,2010, p.277).

Equally, television has changed over the years. Gone are the days when the whole nation was glued to the Nigerian television Authority (NTA) with its stations in the various states linked at different times of the day to a network studio. There are now private television stations that provide wide choices of channels and programme to choose from. The proliferation of satellite television has saved the trouble associated with limited viewing channels, making it possible to escalate edutainment oriented programmes. In such places viewing centers can be powered by small generating plants known as *" I beta pas my neighbor"*.

Interface with Social Media

Beside the radio, television can be equally effective and powerful because of the power of combining both sound and visual which makes real life impression on the viewers. Television educational programmes can be woven around other social/ community events through video handles, musicals and so on. Today, the internet media has continued to grow, driven by online knowledge of commerce and entertainment as well as social networking. Its user interactive nature is why other media of mass communication can find it useful and significant in many ways. One with a website has the capacity to interact with a global audience.

There are several online platforms that enhance edutainment. These sites include: Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace, Twitter, You Tube, Flickr, WordPress, Google, Opera mini, Caricare, Wikipedia, Hangout, Snapchat, Instagram, palmchat, Typepad, Livejournal, Wetpaint, Wikidot, Del.icio.us, Digg, Raddit, Lulu, Sahara reporters, etc. Facebook is one of the most popular of the social networks or the most trafficked site with over 25 million registered members generating 1.6 billion pages each day.(Danladi, 2013).

Concepts such as cross media or media convergence came about because of the internet. Cross media is the idea of distributing same message through different media channels. Local edutainment programmes can be escalated through the internet. Of equal importance is the transfer of culture, artifacts and beliefs, especially the spread of dominant viewpoints. According to Idakwo, (2012), Nigeria's facebook users are about 5 million as at 2014. Facebook was created in February 4004 by a Harvard second-year undergraduate named Mark Zuckerberg. Zuckerberg co-founded it with three of his roommates: Edward Severin, Dustin Moscovik and Hughes. The site was created initially for Harvard students but later escalated when its impact became widespread outside the university community. Next is Twitter; followed by istagram with networks around the globe.

Okunna (2012) agrees that the internet allows for a vast and engaging exchange of information and ideas between the hospitals and their patients because of what he termed an "equal playing field" in accessing information that the internet provides. This is very consistent with the experience of educators and learners today as a result of the positive changes that abound. Within the context of edutainment,

programmes aimed at a population in a remote setting can be escalated through the internet to many viewers who would benefit from the experience thus conveyed.

Thus, the functions of the internet in education can be summarized as:

(i)   Storehouse for information,
(ii)   Communication without boundaries,
(iii)   Online interactive learning,
(iv)   Electronic/on line entertainment,
(v)   Innovation in the new world,
(vi)   improved interest in health issues,
(vii)   Information catalogue,
(viii)   Global education.

Access to enormous information comes with several benefits including non- mainstream obscure and arcane programmes. This makes the internet a handy source although the level of cognitive dissonance encouraged is staggering because it is quite hard to find unbiased sources.

Fig.1: A Model of Radio/Television Edutainment Strategy for Malaria in Pregnancy (MIP)

SN	TV/R Prog.	Message Type	Time/ Duration	Expected Outcome	Target	Media Mix	Language	Remark
1	1.Regular weekly clinic	1. Prevention of malaria	I. (15 mins)	1.To keep the environment free from dirt and mosquitoes	1.Pregnant women and other targets	1.Dance	I. English	1.Once a week
2	2.Monthly Clinic	2.Malaria in pregnancy	2.(25 mins)	2.-Danger of untreated malaria in pregnancy -Baby will not grow well -Premature Baby. -Baby can die -Mother; Persistent Fever	—	2 Playlet	2 Pidgin English	—
3	3.CMT clinic	3.Treatment	3. (20 mins)	3-Visit nearest hospital preferably where you registered -Test and treat properly with a combined malaria therapy -Don't use self medication	—	3.Short story	3.Local language of choice	—
4	4. Regular An Natal Talk sho	4. Reduce maternal	4. (20 mins)	4 -Sleep under treated net after delivery -prevent Malaria	—	4. Soap opera	4. English	—

Source: Isika, 2019 Survey

Theoretical Underpinnings

Uses and Gratification explain why individuals seek information or contents selectively and why they choose certain media and not others (La Rose, Mastro & Eastin2001). The theory was espoused by Elihu Katz, Jay Blummer and Michael Gurevitch in 1974, and posits that the audiences of the media are conceived as active and goal-oriented and tend to achieve their goal through the media they believe in. In other words, this encompassing idea is summed up by the fact that the receivers determine what they are willing to absorb and does not allow the media to decide otherwise. This helps the individual cope with the challenges of non-media related sources thereby providing the needed balance.

It is important to note that in the mass media process, much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies within the audience members. Katz and Blumler (1974) identified four needs that motivate individuals to access and use media:

(i) the need for diversion from the routine of work and pressures of everyday; (ii) the need to enhance personal relationships (getting companionship either with the television characters or through conversation with others); (iii) the need to enhance personal identity (whether the viewer is able to relate with characters and situations on television); (iv) the need for surveillance where the media are looked upon for supplies of information (Kakembo, 2012).

Finally, value judgments about cultural significance of mass communication in the view of these authors should be suspended since the audience can determine the content of the media. Although the theory has been a useful reference point and source of knowledge on needs gratification among communication researchers, analysts are of the view that the theory takes a more humanistic approach at the media. Aneto et al (2008) aver that Katz and Blumler think that media consumers can choose the influence media has on them. They contend that users choose media alternatives merely as a means to an end.

Whatever, the theory has successfully shifted the focus from media production to consumption. But then again, Fischer and Melnik in 1979 have come up with Entertainment –Education Theory which abrogates the needless dichotomy in mass communication contents. The theory advocates that media programmes must be either entertaining or educational in order to increase audience members' knowledge about educational programmes so that social change can happen at the level of the individual, community and society; while maintaining that effects are in the socio-political spheres. All of these conclusively, add to the thoughts that provide the bearing for this study.

Methods and Approaches

The researcher adopted the focus groups approach which was aimed at providing penetrative insights as discussed by Mayers, (2000). Three types of televised programmes were investigated by the groups in three hospitals in the focal areas of this study: Federal Medical Centre Asaba, General Hospital Ibusa, and General Hospital Ogwashi-Uku, all in Delta State. The Hospitals were constituted into three groups apiece, making nine groups all together. The groups were mainly expectant mothers, female ward attendants who were mostly on duty in the hospitals and other women of child -bearing age purposively sampled.

Also, arrangement was made to show each of the video on a different day and the participants encouraged by discussing the recorded excerpts alongside related televised programmes that they had seen. They were equally not privy to the type they were going to be assigned to watch. There were thirteen persons (13) in each group. In all, a total of 117 participants took part in the study.

The research questions were:
1.   How do you see the televised MIN education programme?

2. What knowledge, skills, and values suggested should be incorporated in the television programme?
3. And how do health educators and television staff assess televised (MIN) programmes?

The groups were told to begin discussions with shared experiences so that they can have a common base to start. They finally wrote their detailed report which was analyzed.

Results

On their choice of televised MIP, the result was 64 % for type A, shown. This type has the edutainment component. Members confirmed this to be same as the regular experience during antenatals where prayer groups come on visitation and join the expectant mothers to clap, dance and cheer themselves up. As indicated by the group that watched the programme also, 23% preferred the straight narrative type B. The analysis shows as above that 75 (64%) of the participants preferred the edutainment programme and the reasons adduced range from: the role model used in the television soaps, described as attractive and convincing; good plots, interesting storyline and sophisticated presentation of MIP issues. .

They also noted that the events captured in the episodes they watched flows naturally as in real life. They were also able to grasp the message according to the reports presented. This is similar in some ways to the experience below with television;

> David Sarnoff a TV star many years ago did some files on a site in South Africa: a mosquito infested swamp was cleared in what was described as a magical transformation. NBC's parent company had chosen this event as a public demonstration of the television marvels. David Sarnoff did the recording; a new art considered so important in its implication that it is bound to affect its viewers.(Dominick,2000)

The groups noted: "without attempting to preach, the soaps brings out the message loud and clear." It is the easiest way to fill the information gap. There were also a few neutral responses by and large. The majority of the groups liked the edutainment messages they watched and they confirmed that they were not distracted all through the presentation. This goes to show that the programme was enjoyed by the audience and that its message was internalized seamlessly.

Concerning the skills incorporated into the programmes, it was suggested that skills of Rapid Diagnostic Training (RDT) as explained during the briefing suggesting promptness in treatment and preventive approach were recommended.67% agreed that this skill was life-saving. 20% could not be bothered about the uniqueness of presentation, just the message. The Delta State 2018 operational plan for malaria elimination provides some sort of insight on how to tackle malaria using edutainment strategy. A clip from the report shows the need for:

> increasing the capacity of health workers across primary, secondary, and private health facilities via TV and Internet as a means of ensuring prompt and effective treatment of malaria cases is imperative; while the state is ready to train health workers to promptly respond to malaria cases, through malaria focal persons, the paucity of finances is the main obstacle.

Finally, health workers access to televised (MIN) programmes based on the group's report indicates that there were very limited opportunities for health workers to show their patients such televised programmes. 73% were not given any exposure, 78% says they never had basic training on how to handle television soaps. This is, no doubt, a very significant finding that should lead to attention on the part of stakeholders for increasing use of edutainment programmes in reducing malaria scourge especially in pregnancies in our communities.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages we contended that edutainment captures people who are not likely to pay attention to conventional messages and this is the rationale for its use for HIV/AIDS education and other social issues. Since edutainment makes use of televised programmes including drama and soap opera to present contents, it was necessary to apply this concept in 'malaria in pregnancy' which we identified as a major health challenge particularly in the focal communities of the study and the nation in general.

We equally contended that edutainment as a concept is not quite different from the pedagogue that we are familiar with, that encompasses aspects such as songs, riddles and rhymes including stories that serve a sweet coating to the therapeutic lessons that are conveyed through a widely participatory process. It was also noted that the edutainment programmes that captured episodes flowing naturally as in real life is desirable, with the possibility for accelerated socio-political development especially in MIN programmes.

The emphasis on the use of social media in interfacing edutainment programmes in the view of the researchers was intended at escalating this process, as a medium of the age. Televised educational programmes studied in the affected communities, it is expected, would in no time be communicated via video handles, musicals and by online knowledge of social networking. It is for this reason that the reader would find this effort useful and significant in many ways.

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