

## Role of Educational Broadcasting in Shaping Public Opinion in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This paper tries to look into the role of educational broadcasting in the shaping of public opinion about various pertinent problems, such as environmental sustainability, health education, and civic involvement. The paper argues that through aid to educational broadcasting, public opinion is shaped in ways that provide for disseminating information that is accurate, media literacy, and critical thinking, encouraging discourse and community engagement. The literature review in this context comes with an extensive review with empirical studies. In essence, the paper reviews the probable drawbacks and challenges of educational broadcasting with fears of bias and false information. The research that follows attempts to untangle this complicated interrelationship of public opinion and educational broadcasting to provide further insight into the impacts of the medium on cultural attitudes and behaviors for policymakers, educators, and media professionals. Finally, the present study has the purpose of providing insight into the efficient application of educational television as a vehicle able to provoke social change in an ever-complex media environment.*

### Keywords

Broadcasting, Educational, Public Opinion, Role, and Shaping



## I. Introduction

One of the pressing issues debated in the current digitally networked society concerns the role and influence of the mass media on public opinion. Although the traditional print and broadcast media had always been accepted as a force to contend with in public debate, digital media introduced new actors. Of these, educational broadcasting holds a potentially significant role with respect to framing public opinion, particularly so while considering further change and innovation in society. It is known that educational broadcasting comprises various audio-visual materials aimed at developing knowledge, raising consciousness, and comprehension. For a long period, this is known to be one of the effectual ways of influencing public opinion.

The power of educational broadcasting in changing people's opinion, attitude, and action lies in its wide reach to the audience. It becomes very essential in the present information societies that proliferate information at a much faster and further rate. With that, it grows to become an integral part of civic discourse and thus helps in shaping public opinion on a good number of current issues (Aondover et al., 2024). The potentials of educational broadcasting have been harnessed for raising awareness and engendering understanding to bring about social change in themes ranging from politics to environment, health, and education sectors. It has also become an effective platform for the legislature,

academia, and advocacy groups to sway public opinion, in that it reaches out to audiences through interactive formats and multimedia content (Aondover et al., 2025).

Of the products that have not been well researched in mass communication study is educational broadcasting. This seminar paper shall, therefore, try to fill the knowledge gap by exploring how educational broadcasting shapes public opinion. A research into how educational broadcasting shapes public opinion and behavior on principal problems like civic engagement, environmental sustainability, and health education has been conducted. The current paper argues for the deployment of educational broadcasting in shaping public opinion through information dissemination, endowing media literacy and critical thinking skills, and boosting discourse and community engagement, based on a review of literature and empirical studies. The prospective pitfalls and challenges of educational broadcasting shall also be addressed.

The paper seeks an increased understanding of the subtle relationship that exists between public opinion and educational broadcasting through nuanced discussion of how the latter impacts cultural attitude and behaviors. On the other hand, it is an attempt to enlighten the policymakers, educators, and media practitioners on probable benefits and drawbacks of resorting to this medium for effecting social change by looking at ways in which educational broadcasting impacts public opinion on issues of great significance. That is, there is a need for more research on how educational broadcasting works in the shaping of public opinion. The usefulness of this powerful tool in processes of learning has to be realized as we go through the complexity of today's media environments.

## **II. Review of Literatures**

### **2.1 Historical Context of Broadcasting in Nigeria**

Broadcasting in Nigeria began to take progressive development in the 1950s. What had largely begun as a medium for entertainment and the dissemination of information today turned into one of the most important factors in national development, whereby it also helps in shaping public opinion and strengthening national unity that also works in information distribution throughout the nation. In 1951, the British colonial government laid the foundation for the first radio broadcast in Nigeria. The Nigerian Broadcast Service came into being as a result of the need to keep the public abreast of time with relevant information on news, entertainment, and educational programs in the country. This gave rise to television services in the 1960s and brought into being the Nigerian Television Service in 1960. Most of these services were largely aimed at entertaining and informing the rising urban population at that time.

In 1977, the government of Nigeria nationalized the broadcasting industry. The Nigerian Television Authority and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria were established. The years spanning the 1980s were those of high expansion of services, marked by a spate of new stations and strings of programs. In 1999, the country made an incursion into democracy, and with it came some sea changes in the broadcasting industry. Industry deregulation precipitated a spate of privately-owned broadcasting stations; thereby, it multiplied competition and resulted in increased diversification in programmes. The Nigerian Communications Commission came into being in 1992 to regulate the Telecommunications sector, whose wings also sprawled over broadcasting. Satellite television and digital broadcasting made their way onto the scene in this period.

Digital technology altered the face of broadcasting in Nigeria. Establishment of DTT made multi-channel options within a household with improved quality signals. Online

streaming brought global content and international news to Nigerians (Aondover et al., 2022). Numbers of licensed radio stations rose to over 100 and that of television stations to over 20, with varied programs on offer by the different stations.

## 2.2 Role of Broadcasting in National Development

There are several areas in which broadcasting has played a very important role in the national development of Nigeria, such as:

1. *National Unity*: This role is so vital that it served to provide a platform for national discourses, debates, and cultural exchange.
2. *Information Dissemination*: This has been a very important medium through which government policies, programmes, and initiatives have been broadcast to the general public.
3. *Entertainment*: The entertaining options that broadcasting created included music, drama, comedy, and sports for the people of Nigeria.
4. *Education*: It has been harnessed in providing educational content by way of lectures, documentaries, and quiz shows.
5. *Economic Development*: The potential for economic development engendered by the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation cannot be overemphasized, as well as consumer information.

## 2.3 Broadcasting As a Tool for the Dissemination of Information and Promotion of Local Culture

At various instances, broadcasting became very instrumental in many societies in terms of information dissemination, mass education, and promotion of local culture. The points that best explain this are as followed:

*Information dissemination*: News broadcasting: Radio and television news programs have been the number one source among the people all over the world. They bring the public the current events in politics, economy, social issues, and any other relevant subjects that would enable every citizen to be abreast of what currently goes on locally and globally. (Source: "The Effects of News Broadcasting on Public Opinion" by Pew Research Center).

*Emergency alert systems*: Radio has been used in times of emergency to relay information important to the members of the public in terms of disaster, crisis, and health alert messages, among others. For instance, the United States has a national alert system known as the Emergency Alert System, whereby emergency messages are broadcast to the public via radio and television stations.

*Weather forecasting*: Due to the invention of broadcasting, people are now prepared in case the weather turns bad, hence preparing them and guiding them on their daily running. Source: "Impact of Weather Broadcasting on Public Awareness" by National Weather Service.

*Education*: Programming for Education: There are television channels and radio stations that have delivered educational content to millions of people across the world, covering subjects like literacy, mathematics, science, and history. Source: "The Effectiveness of Educational Television" by Journal of Educational Psychology.

*Distance learning*: Broadcasting has helped in taking educational content to far-flung areas of the country, thereby bridging the gap between the rural and urban areas of a country. For example, Doordarshan, an Indian channel, has been broadcasting some educational programs into the countryside since the 1950s. ("The Role of Broadcasting in Rural Education" by International Journal of Educational Development, Source)

*Public service announcements:* It has been a great medium to bring about public awareness with respect to some very important social issues, such as health, education, and civic engagement. Source: "The Impact of Public Service Announcements on Public Behavior" by Journal of Applied Psychology.

*Promoting local culture:* Cultural programming: Used in the promotion of local cultures through the airwaves of traditional music, dance, and art forms. For example, the "Come Dancing" program on BBC institutionalized ballroom dancing across the UK during the 1950s and 1960s. Source: "The Cultural Impact of Television" from The Guardian.

*Local news and current affairs:* Through broadcasting, local communities became updated with problems at their place, developing a sense of community and civic awareness. Source: "The Importance of Local News" by Pew Research Center.

*Community programming:* This helped advertise events, festivals, and traditions of the community with an aim of creating cultural identity and social cohesion. For instance, Australia's SBS network is broadcasting programs in Indigenous Australian Cultures and languages. Source: "The Role of Broadcasting in Promoting Indigenous Culture" by The Guardian.

Broadcasting has, therefore, been a very strong tool regarding the dissemination of information, propagation of education to the public at large, and promotion of cultural heritage in different societies. It has contributed much toward the building of public opinion, civic engagement, and cultural conservation.

### **III. Research Methods**

#### **3.1 Educational Broadcasting: A Tool for Public Awareness**

It plays a huge role in raising public awareness of issues ranging from the social to the economic, environmental, and health aspects. It is a channel through which knowledge could be disseminated, critical thinking encouraged, and an enhancement of the community engagement enriched within educational broadcasting scope.

The International Telecommunication Union describes broadcasting as "an effective way of reaching a large audience and providing information and education to people who may not have access to other sources of information." Therefore, education can be offered via broadcasting, whether it is through television, radio, online, streaming, or in podcasts. All means are a way of projecting information to the largest number of people, hence proving quite an efficient tool in raising general awareness (Maiwada et al., 2025). One example of educational broadcasting that tends to raise public awareness is through the PSAs on health-related issues. Therefore, PSAs are such short messages that get aired on radio and television with an aim of educating members of the public about health matters, for instance, preventing diseases, vaccination, healthy lifestyles, among others. It has been shown that PSAs alter people's attitude and behavior towards their health effectively.

Another example is an educational broadcasting facility to disseminate environmental awareness. Various documentaries and news programs may be made on the various impacts of climate change, deforestation, and pollution and the kind of emergency these issues are with the view of engaging the viewer in such actions. Indeed, research reveals that this kind of media attention to the problems at hand raises public concern, which works toward behavior modification (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). Apart from simple sensitization of the public on various issues, another form in which educational broadcasting may take is the one promoting critical thinking and media literacy.

Furthermore, it provides viewers with the opportunity to improve their critical thinking regarding various subjects via diversified viewpoints and appeals for analysis and debate.

These findings are supported by a number of studies related to the role of educational broadcasting in raising public awareness. A Pew Research Center poll showed that 77% of the American people believe that the news media should have some responsibility to the public to inform the public about key issues. Educational broadcasting boosts knowledge and attitudes on social issues among young people. Summary: One of the most valuable functions of educational broadcasting is for raising awareness on various issues in general public opinion (Onyejelem et al., 2024). With different forms of programs and multiple contents, it has opened the window toward knowledge diffusion, critical thinking, and community participation. Actually, several studies documented the effects of educational broadcasting to increase public awareness in terms of returning health-related information, environmental concerns, and media literacy.

### 3.2 Programmes, Documentaries, and Campaigns that have Contributed to Educating Nigerians

Over the years there are various programs, documentaries and campaigns that have significantly contributed to educating the public. Some of such contents include:

#### Programmes

- a. *Your Health in Your Hands*: This is a weekly television program by NTA hosted by Dr. Ajibade. This 30-minute segment highlights issues affecting Nigerians in particular, including mental health/brain disorders, cardiovascular concerns (e.g. hypertension) and cancer, and is viewed at least five times a week by millions both within and outside the country.
- b. *Inside Africa*: A weekly program by CNN that introduces you to innovators, entrepreneurs, tech trailblazers and artistic visionaries shaping the future of the African continent and beyond.

#### Documentaries

- a. *Naija Diamonds*: The Naija Diamonds is a documentary sponsored by Diamond Bank and directed by Mo Abudu. This documentary brings to life the stories of ordinary Nigerians doing extra-ordinary things in making life better for others amidst the myriad of challenges. The show displays how these unsung heroes positively contribute to the community and to the nation at large.
- b. *Fueling Poverty*: This is a documentary by Ishaya Bako, made against the backdrop of the January 2012 protest after the removal of the fuel subsidy, attempts to compress in less than 30 minutes the sad story of corruption in Nigeria and the mismanagement of oil wealth—the mainstay of Nigeria’s economy. It is a story that brings to life the pain and helplessness of Nigerians who are caught in up in the reckless policies of a government that has continued to impoverish them and has continued to foster an environment of impunity where corruption is the norm, rather than exception.
- c. *Talk Your Own*: This is one of the BBC media action program that is encouraging accountability in Nigeria through radio drama and discussions. This is a campaign geared towards bridging political awareness and good governance in Nigeria. The campaign urges Nigerians to speak out and hold those in positions of leadership accountable. This campaign has contributed to political education.
- d. *Sweet Crude*: This is a story of Niger Delta, the human and environmental consequences of 50 years of oil extraction and the members of a new insurgency who, in the three years after the filmmakers met them as college students, became the young

men of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Set against a stunning backdrop of Niger Delta footage, the film shows the humanity behind the statistics and sensationalized media portrayal of the region gives voice to a complex mix of stakeholders and invites the audience to learn the deeper story.

### **Campaigns**

- a. *CodeLagos*: This is an initiative of the Lagos state government targeted at making coding education framework accessible to every student in Lagos and training 1 million Lagosians to code. The programme launched in 2016 with about 300 coding centers.
- b. *Bring Back Our Girls*: Initially, usage of the hashtag came from individuals attempting to raise awareness of the kidnapping. It was then used by a group of Nigerian activists protesting about the government's slow response to the kidnapping to tag tweets as they marched down a highway in protest. The movement has been involved in the organization of several protests against the Nigerian government's slow response to the kidnapping.

### **3.3 Challenges and Opportunities in Educational Broadcasting**

In Nigeria, educational broadcasting plays an important role in the promotion of education and molding the opinion of the public, most especially in nations where the access to formal education is very limited (Oreoluwa et al., 2024). Some of the challenges faced in educational broadcasting are:

1. *Funding Constraints*: Low financial inflow has remained a persistent stress among educational broadcasters in Nigeria. Besides, most of these broadcasters struggle to seek regular funding, which not only limits production quality but also circumscribes the scope of the programs on offer. Without proper funding, content production, staff training, and technology upgrades are certainly all underfunded.
2. *Content Quality*: Most of the content broadcast through educational broadcasts is sometimes below par. Outdated curricula, unengaging and non-interactive content, and unqualified personnel involved in content creation translate to programs that could hardly engage the attention of the audiences or listeners. This compromises the potential impact of educational broadcasts on shaping public opinion.
3. *Poor Infrastructure*: Some of the major infrastructural deficits that are identified include frequent power outages, outdated equipment, and very limited access to modern technologies such as digital broadcasting and Internet-based platforms. The results have significantly impacted their ability to reach wider audiences, especially in regions where accessing stable electricity and the Internet is a problem.
4. *Limited Audience Reach*: Poor Infrastructure and Funding has made the reach of educational broadcasting very poor in Nigeria. Actually, the divide is quite wide between urban and rural areas in terms of access to broadcasting services. Most of the rural populations remain unserved or underserved because of poor signal coverage and unavailability of content in local languages.
5. *Government Regulations and Censorship*: Regulations and, not uncommonly, censorship may constrict the issues that may be dealt with by educational broadcasters, especially regarding sensitive topics such as political education or sexual health. The side effect of such actions would then inhibit the development of critical thinking and put a cap on education.

Although educational broadcasting in Nigeria faces substantial challenges, there are numerous opportunities for growth, innovation, and improvement. Some of which are:

1. *Leverage Digital Platforms:* The trend of accessing the internet through mobile phones and relatively affordable smartphones provides the opportunity to increase the reach of educational broadcasters through digital platforms like YouTube, podcasts, and social media. Digital broadcasting can reduce costs while allowing broader and more interactive audience engagement.
2. *Localized Content:* Localized content makes education broadcasting relevant to the community within which it exists. Broadcasting in local languages and addressing local issues also raises public participation and strengthens the chances of better learning outcomes.
3. *Approaches to Interactive Learning:* Making more interactive educational content is going to innovate it. It is necessary to give more emphasis to making multimedia, quizzes, discussions, and practical demonstrations that enhance viewer participation and improve the retention of learning. Some incorporation of gamification or the use of real-life examples can help make the broadcasts all the more engaging and effective in changing public opinion.
4. *Community-Based Educational Broadcasting:* Establishing community radios and television stations, with content relevant to education for the local populations, will help in narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas. These can also serve at the very heart of local development by availing very specific contents on agriculture, health, and civic education relevant to the contexts.
5. *Training and Capacity Building:* Investment in training for broadcasters and content developers may be a multiplier in ensuring improvement in the quality of content. Such capacity-building programs should target the pedagogical competencies necessary for producing relevant and engaging educational content which can reach hearts and minds and elicit active critical thinking among the public.
6. *Public-Private Partnerships:* Partnership with private companies, NGOs, and international organizations may help improve the financing challenges. In such a partnership, investments in the sector will provide the much-needed capital, expertise, and high-quality educational content.

In this direction, while the challenges facing educational broadcasting in Nigeria are enormous, there are prospects for growth, innovation, and improvement (Vitalis et al., 2024). Thus, a general improvement in the operations of educational broadcasting stations- in terms of financial bottoms, infrastructure, and good quality content with an embrace toward digital platforms and local content-would greatly increase its potential for shaping public opinion and contributing to national development.

### **3.4 Impact of Educational Broadcasting on Public Opinion**

Education broadcasting has a deep impact on perceptual change, attitude, and behavioral change of the public through access to information, creating awareness of critical issues, and shaping societal norms. Radio, television, and new media have recorded giant strides in this respect for influencing public discourse for positive behavior change in Nigeria, where literacy rates and access to formal education could be relatively low. Through the transmission of instructional contents in health, politics, education, and social issues, educational broadcasting shapes people's understanding of and responses to some fundamental challenges faced in society.

1. *Shaping Public Perception:* It educates the public about current topics of concern whereby the public worldview is consequently shaped, including opinions on these issues. Subjects specifically centered on civic education teach people their rights and responsibilities as citizens, hence shaping attitudes about governance and democracy.

Example: "Talk Your Own" by BBC Media Action

This radio program focuses on civic education; it creates a medium whereby information regarding voting, governance, and community involvement reaches the people. It has shaped public perception about democracy and political participation through encouraging active citizenry, especially in rural areas where formal political education may be scant.

2. *Shifting Attitudes*: Educational broadcasting plays a very important role in the changing of cultural attitudes and the effecting of social change. In issues such as gender equity, health practices, and environmental conservation, these shows ensure continuous engagement with their audiences in challenging stereotypes and stimulating new ways of thinking.

Example: "Wetin Dey" by BBC World Service Trust

This drama series addressed health-related topics such as HIV/AIDS awareness, family planning, and maternal health. The program effectively shifted the public perception concerning these sensitive subjects through the use of relatable characters and storylines, thus making the associated stigmas non-threatening, and behaviors healthier.

3. *Influencing Behavior*: Besides shaping perceptions and attitudes, educational broadcasting goes a step further in attempting to change behavior through the transmission of useful information which the public could make use of in daily life. Such shows on health education, agricultural practices, and personal development have been effective in that sense.

Example: "The Sesame Square" (adaptation of Sesame Street)

This Nigerian television children's educational program teaches young viewers literacy, numeracy, and health habits such as how to wash one's hands and maintain hygiene. It has reached millions of children and influenced early childhood development, setting healthy behaviors in place when children are young.

4. *Nurturing Social Cohesion and Cultural Understanding*: The media also encourages national unity and leads to greater cultural awareness through broadcasting that showcases the many ethnic groups and languages that are a part of Nigeria. This can reduce friction and allow different communities to learn to coexist with one another.

Example: "NTA's Your Health in Your Hands" This perennial TV program has created awareness among the populace on everything from malnutrition to infectious diseases which Nigerians have faced over the years. It has both educated the populace and made them share to some extent in the responsibility of being the solution to national health problems, by inviting professionals and presenting cases which are always relatable.

5. *Encouraging Political Participation*: Broadcasting aimed at informing the masses about political processes and matters of governance impacts directly on the political attitudes and interest in political activities of citizens. Programs on impartially educating citizens about politics enable them to make informed decisions during elections and understand how government works.

Example: "The Presidential Media Chat" (NTA)

It is through this same television programme that the President of Nigeria engages the public in live question-and-answer sessions on topical national issues. As a result, the public has been made aware of governance; more so, the active participation of citizens in the political discourse has resulted in changes in public opinion on government policies.



### 3.5 Role of Educational Broadcasting in Promoting Human Right

It is, therefore, at this point that educational broadcasting can be quite instrumental in bringing into focus a range of human rights issues in Nigeria, with the aim of creating awareness and sensitizing the public on the subject matter, besides stimulating discussions around the respect of human rights (Vitalis et al., 2023). The following is a detailed look at how educational broadcasting can contribute to the promotion of human rights in Nigeria.

1. *Awareness of Human Rights Issues:* Except for educational content, radio and television broadcasting would be used to disseminate information on human rights issues to an even larger group. In Nigeria, with varying levels of ease of access to information, radio and television stations reach many remote areas and marginalized populations.
2. *Educational Contents and Programs:* These will include, but not be limited to, human rights education programs touching on rights provided for in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and international human rights treaties that Nigeria is a party to. This may involve documentaries, interviews with experts, and educational series targeting the general public to keep them informed of their rights.
3. *Dialogue and Promotion of Advocacy:* Educational broadcasting can make discussions on human rights issues possible, whereby it can act as a conduit for the voice of activists and ordinary citizens. This may encourage a culture of accountability and human rights advocacy.
4. *Success Stories and Best Practices Highlighted:* Educational broadcasts can showcase various successful initiatives on human rights that are working in Nigeria and around the world, highlighting best practices. Rather than being symbolic, they can serve as functional beacons of hope out of human rights challenges.
5. *Training and Capacity Building:* Broadcasting can also include training workshops and sessions for human rights activists, journalists, and the general public. These types of programs can help develop the skills and knowledge needed to effectively advance human rights.
6. *Encouraging Civic Participation:* By educating the public about their rights and the mechanisms available for seeking justice, educational broadcasting can encourage greater civic participation and empower individuals to advocate for their rights.

## IV. Conclusion

It is not only important for educational broadcasting to disseminate knowledge, but it also needs to create public opinion and contribute toward informed citizenship. As seen in democratizing access to education and influencing public discourse, improving its impact can lead to great societal benefits (Smith 2021; Johnson & Lee 2019). Targeted content creation, engaging formats, expert collaborations, advanced technologies, and strategic feedback mechanisms are some of the ways in which educational broadcasting can be optimized to serve and inform the public better, thus enabling positive contributions toward an educated and aware society.

### Recommendations

Education broadcasting plays a major role in informing and shaping public opinion. A set of strategies or techniques which may further strengthen this are:

1. *Audience Analysis:* The knowledge of demographic and psychographic profiles makes one convert the content to the needs and interests of the audience. For instance, educational programs meant for children need to be appealing and appropriate for the age group, while those targeting adults can range to include more complex subjects.

2. Curriculum Integration: Aligning the content with educational standards and curricula too often makes broadcasts more relevant and useful to students and educators alike.
3. Interactional elements: Incorporate quizzes, polls, and interactive segments that will get the audience more actively engaged with the content. It may serve to enhance retention and make learning more vibrant.
4. Integration of multimedia: depending on the learning styles, mix different videos, animations, and info graphics; real-time data flow will make the content visually appealing.
5. Educator Partnerships: Partner with teachers, professors, and field experts to provide content that is accurate and at the right depth. This again will make sure the content is pedagogically well-founded.
6. Guest Appearances: Also, many diverse guest appearances often present expert and thought-leading views, adding to that content by making it more engaging and even more authoritative.
7. Digital Platforms: Expand education broadcast on online platforms and social media. This enables access to wider coverage's, on-demand access, and multiple options for viewing.
8. Adaptive Learning Technologies: Use technologies that can automatically adapt to the individual learner progress and needs; provide personalized learning pathways, AI-driven recommendations.
9. Audience Feedback: Continuously collect and analyze feedback from viewers to understand the needs and tastes of the audience. This can help inform improvements in content to maintain relevance.

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