

Uncertainty of Nomenclature and Relative Problems in Media, Journalism and Communications Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper provide a basic statistical picture of tertiary institutions that offer media, journalism and communications education courses in Nigeria; particularly in terms of uncertainty of nomenclature and problems associated with it. The Descriptive Name Theory provides the theoretical perspective for this paper. The paper concludes there is clearly an uncertainty of nomenclature in media, journalism/communications education in Nigeria and beyond. This situation considered completely unacceptable. The unbundling of mass communication into various sub-disciplines that are now approved by Nigeria's National Universities Commission [NUC] is considerably in the right direction –though with attendant emerging concerns such as staffing as well as serious tendencies of course description and learning experience duplications. However, if tailored properly, the unbundling of mass communication [from the hitherto amorphous *One Course, Many Professions* quagmire] is expected to be far more enriching-academically, professionally, and practically. Given the broader and more rewarding but complex contemporary media and communication realities, the specialisation of courses from the hitherto broader nature of Mass Communication should be then become more rewarding. Relative and concerned stakeholders, media educators, government, media experts, media and education researchers; both national and international should be purposefully involved and enriched.

Keywords: Uncertainty, Nomenclature, Media, Journalism and Communications Education.

Introduction

In Nigeria, many professions have quite been standardized and have a direct bearing with education that is formally designed, clearly named with appreciable curricula. Nyam (2008, p.5) posits that “in Nigeria, changes and developments culminated in the belief that mass communication practice has become more relevant and needs to be standardized. In the quest

for such standards, there is absolute need to take a second look at the system of names and naming in the media, journalism, and general communications education. This thoughtful, long expected scrutiny of nomenclature is not just a Nigeria necessity, but even beyond.

A cursory look at the patterns of naming and the names under which several variants of the media, journalism and communications education exist show a lot of worrying facts. The situation depicts among others, the following concerns:

1. The infancy of media, journalism and communications education, especially when compared to other endeavours like medicine, law engineering, psychology, sociology and geography; to mention but a few.
2. Inherent challenges in coordination, overall and generally accepted curricula -in the case of Nigeria; the kind of coordination that will ease to quest for standard by Nigeria's National Universities Commission (NUC).
3. The difficulties that surround the argument of studying communications under the college or faculty of arts or social sciences; administration; or even management sciences.
4. The difficulties that surround the quest for specialization in the study in areas like public relations and advertising, etc and practice of journalism, media and communications, generally.
5. Difficulties associated with standards for admission requirements into tertiary institutions; as well as progressive study entry qualifications into different levels of study; example, from diploma certificates to degree and furthermore, into post-graduate levels.
6. The questions of whether there should be specialization at the undergraduate levels or otherwise.
7. The question(s) of whether the study of communications should be decently appreciated under names like media arts, communications and languages, language arts, graphic arts, multimedia studies, mass communication, information technology or information communication and so on.
8. The issue, of staff and staffing standards and qualifications when media, journalism and communications education is stated under a particular name, different from other names that may be more legitimate or popular.
9. The issue of years of study if/when media, journalism and communications education is stated under a certain name.
10. The question of practical training, equipment and internship if / when media, journalism and communications education is understood under a particular name. And so on.

Though there it is hardly easy to pretend that there clear answers or solutions to these worrying realities at once and over night; it is very crucial to take them seriously. This is vital towards enabling an appreciation of the effects and philosophy of names and naming in formal education.

In view of the aforementioned, this paper dwells on illuminating the empirical nomenclatures under which media, journalism and communications study in Nigeria are stated. As such, the most reliable source of such illumination is the 2012 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination Brochure for the 2012/2013 Academic session in Nigeria. Also important, and for the avoidance of doubt; the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination Brochure is a book that contains guidelines for admissions to first degree, National Diploma (ND), National Innovation Diploma (NID) and National Certificate in Education (NCE) courses and programmes in Universities, other Degree-Awarding Institutions, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, Innovation Enterprise Institutes and Colleges of Education in Nigeria (Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, 2011).

Notable, the Nigeria education system at the tertiary level is flaunted with Federal Universities that offer general courses; Federal Universities of Agriculture that still offer some courses offered by the other “conventional” Federal Universities; Federal Universities of Technology that still also offer some courses offered by some “conventional” Federal Universities, and other Federal Government owned Degree Awarding Institutions. Others are State Universities; State Universities Of Technology; Degree Awarding Institutions that may also be State or Private Owned; Private Universities; Federal Polytechnics; State Polytechnics; Federal Colleges Of Education; Colleges Of Education Technology; State Colleges Of Education; Private Polytechnics, and Colleges, Monotechnics, as well as Innovative Enterprise Institutions.

All of these show the uncertainty of nomenclature and its attendant problems. However, this paper dwells on illuminating the varying nomenclatures under which media, Journalism and communications education exist and draw to attention, the attendant problems.

Statement of Problem

The understanding and appreciation of everything tends to often stems from identification of it through a name. The misplacement of names or change of names; differences in names mean often a lot; not in the sounds, spellings or pronunciations of the names as such, but in the meaning and understanding of names in relation to media, journalism and communications education, the issue of nomenclature is hardly an exception. The multiplicity of names associated with courses offered at various tertiary institutions and levels in the study of media, journalism and communications is worrying. This situation has already attracted the scholarly attention by Ali (1989); Akinfeleye (2001) and (2009); Chibita, (2009); as well as Oyewo (2009).

Though lofty, none of the foregoing scholarly efforts relating to uncertainty of nomenclature had attempt a coherent confrontation and appraisal of the situation towards any potential solution, let alone look at any official document towards articulation of the problem. As such, there is a gap in this aspect. Nevertheless, there is a proven feeling of the reality of

uncertainty of nomenclature in the study of journalism, media and mass communication, with attendant challenges and problems. At the moment though, many scholars of journalism, media and communication seem to remain worried. This paper therefore seeks to illuminate a better picture and reality of uncertainty of nomenclature in the media, journalism and communications education systems; especially as concerns Nigeria.

Objectives of Study

This paper looks towards fulfilling the following:

1. Provide a basic statistical picture of tertiary institutions that offer media, journalism and communications education courses in Nigeria.
2. Provide an outline of the various nomenclatures under which, various media, journalism and communications education courses are offered in Nigeria tertiary institutions.
3. Outline the problems associated with the difficulty or lack of a standard nomenclature in media, journalism and communications education in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the basic statistical picture of tertiary institutions that offer media, journalism and communications education courses in Nigeria?
2. What is the dominant outline of the various nomenclatures under which, various media, journalism and communications education courses are offered in Nigeria tertiary institutions?
3. Can there be insinuations to problems associated with the difficulty or lack of a standard nomenclature in media, journalism and communications education in Nigeria?

Definition of Concepts

Terms used in this paper are not ambiguous or too peculiar to this paper, as to necessitate a separate definition. In other words, the terms used are portrayed and understood in the light of their most general meaning. Such terms/concepts are: uncertainty, nomenclature problem; and media, journalism/communications education.

Review of Literature

While a host of communication scholars admit that there is an increase in the attractiveness and interest to study the media as well as indulge in media/communications education, the question of categories, areas of specialization, time of specialization, and indeed nomenclature is quite unanswered. (Akinfeleye, 1987) and (Akinfeleye, 2009).

According to Oyewo (2009) the Reading Centre at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria gave birth to the Department of Language Arts which consequently evolved into the Department of Communication and Language Arts in 1980. This appears to be the earliest

show of uncertainty of nomenclature. However, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was the first to introduce journalism/communication education in Nigeria. According to Ali (1989), this was established under the Jackson College of Journalism and Mass Communication where courses in print and broadcast journalism were dominant but not alone. The degree at Nsukka was offered as a Bachelor of Arts degree. This was just a year after the University of Nigeria was established in 1961.

As at 1989, four additional universities offered mass communication courses at degree level; these include University of Lagos. (B.Sc, M.S.c, M.Phil, Ph.D); Bayero University, Kano, (B.A); University of Maiduguri (B.A.) and Anambara State University (B.S.c) -See (Ali, 1989). Again, there exist an uncertainty of nomenclature; as it can be easily observed, while the University of Lagos and Anambara State University offer journalism/mass communication courses at degree level as Bachelor of Science, the University of Maiduguri and Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria offer journalism/mass communication courses at degree level as Bachelor of Arts; following the trail of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Till date University of Nigeria, Nsukka offers the degree under the faculty of Arts, which seems contrary to the recommendations of the Nigerian Universities Commission.

Also interesting, and certainly another good sign of uncertainty of nomenclature in media, journalism and communications education is the fact that the University of Ibadan is not mentioned by Ali (1989). Perhaps, this is because the University of Ibadan offers Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication and Language Arts.

A casual usage of the situation of media, journalism and communications education at University of Ibadan as a case study may serve to support a few points mentioned earlier. Oyewo (2009) considers the work of Ogundimu, Oyewo and Adegoke (2007) where a practical internship programme was required for all undergraduates in the third of four-year programme; and students for the Masters Degree in Communication Arts (MCA) are required to serve a 3-6 months internship with a professional media organization; and says the situation underscores the dual nomenclature of the department. While such an arrangement is sure of some advantages, there seems to be an ongoing argument about the professional nature of such courses in the realm of media, journalism and communication education; and indeed research and practice. The argument persist that despite its location in the Faculty of Arts, the Department of Communication and Language Arts is the flagship of communication/ journalism training in Nigeria.

Despite noticeable landmarks, there are some constraints/ challenges in teaching journalism in the Department of Communication and Language Arts, University of Ibadan. As they may not be limited to the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, such challenges according to Oyewo (2009) include the ambivalent description; improper definition of curriculum; staff and staffing situation which may have some relationship with the training and titles of respective

qualification; difficulty of appropriateness of facilities; development, strategy/funding; as well as links and recognition.

The foregoing factors are reflective of problems associated with nomenclature. When there is an ambivalent description of the department where media, journalism and communication education courses are thought, it is often difficult to properly understand objectives/purpose; as well as the benchmark/criterion to adopt for accreditation. This is usually because everyone would claim something that is often too peculiar to either understand or agree. Such a situation also makes it tough to understand, appreciate and design curriculum. Staff and staffing too become difficult since the names of the courses offered may retain some unique form; there may be “unique teachers and teaching” which in the usual/ideal sense may also not be acceptable.

Furthermore, facilities and needed equipment may also become a matter of disagreement since “peculiar names” make referencing difficult. As such, development, strategic progress and funding may become very challenging. Quite attributive to the issue of names and naming in media and communication studies, Akinfeley (2009) asks that: what should be the ideal ratio of journalism courses to Humanities and other Social Science courses in journalism education? In other words, is Media, “Multi-Media,” or Journalism/Communications education, an Arts, Management Sciences, Social Sciences or Humanities course? Is it actually a course or a field? Should it be operated as school/college or as a department; and under which nomenclature?

Chibita (2009) documents that, in the light of the change in the industry, the Department of Mass Communication, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, have since agreed to change its name to “Department of Journalism and Communication.” According to Chibita (2009), as soon as Senate of the University approves the change of name, the new name would reflect a broader and more relevant scope as well as pave the way for a variety of separate, more focused awards such as Bachelor of Journalism and Media Studies, Bachelor of Communication (covering Public Relations and Advertising) as well as Development Support Communication/Communication for Development.

Interestingly and comparatively, the University of Ibadan, as far as media journalism/communications education is concerned, was delayed accreditation because the institution “offers the course” as Communication and Language Arts instead of Mass Communication. Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda on the other hand has agreed to change its own name from Department of Mass Communication to Department of Journalism and Communication. Therefore there is certainly an uncertainty of nomenclature, and it needs to be addressed.

Theoretically, this research is anchored on the Descriptive Theory of Names. This theory fits properly into the postulations of this paper. The theory is a view on the nature of the meaning and reference of proper names; and is generally attributed to Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell. The theory consist essentially in the idea that the meaning (semantic contents) of

names are identical to the descriptions associated with them by speakers; while their referents are determined to be the objects that satisfy these descriptions.

Gottlob Frege was a German, 20th century philosopher, whose main interest was mathematical logic and philosophy of language; and is known for logicism, sense and reference. Frege influenced Bertrand Russell, an English analytic philosopher, who also won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950 and was also concerned with the philosophy of language; among other interest. A simple Descriptivist Theory of Names can be thought of as follows: for every proper name P, there is some collection of descriptions D, associated with P that constitutes the meaning of P. (Wikipedia org, 2012).

This theory is relevant to this paper despite its criticism; especially by Saul Kirpke in his book Naming and Necessity. However, Saul Kirpke only succeeded to set out what he believes to be the tenets of the descriptive theory; explaining the theory in terms of reference rather than the sense of meaning (Wikipedia.Org, 2012). Nevertheless, Kirpke himself rounded-up by saying that criticizing the descriptive theory of names too much is deeply counterintuitive; hence, Saul Kirpke concluded that names are “rigid designators.” (Wikipedia.Org. 2012). The descriptive theory of names is relevant to this paper because at least it shows the relevance of names towards references, descriptions, standards, appreciation and understanding in every sphere of human existence.

Methodology

The researchers adopted case study design. The contents of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), under the aegis Unified Tertiary Matriculations Examination Brochure, 2011/2012 Academic Session was considered for this study. The contents also served conceptual support for this paper. JAMB is the officially recognized body regulating tertiary education in Nigeria. Journalism, Media, and Mass Communication studies are no exception.

The approach towards this study may be considered as a case study. According to Roland and Olaf (2002, p.9), notes that the case study approach is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary problem within its real-life context; as such dealing with the problem and its solution requires integrating a myriad of mutually dependent variables or pieces of evidence that are likely to be gathered at least partially by personal observation.

As relates to this study, the single case study design was adopted via the used of the Unified Tertiary Matriculations Examination Brochure, for the 2011/2012 Academic Session [proximate to the time and timing of the 1st Media Educator Conference at Babcock University in Nigeria]. Such research approach is acceptable and can be due to several reasons.

Analogous to Newton's *Experimentum Crucis*, Roland and Olaf (2002, p.11) strongly corroborates that a single case study could be considered if such a case is unique, prototypical, salient, or revelatory to the understanding of a phenomenon or problem; it may even be the critical case in testing a well-formulated theory; noting that though "...there is no common understanding of how to integrate separate single-case studies into a joint multiple-case design, it is most important to note that the synthesis process between the single cases does not follow a statistical sampling rationale.

Findings

There are a minimum of 402 officially recognized tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is apart from State Government owned Schools/Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery. These include 25 Federal Universities; 3 Federal Universities of Agriculture; 6 Federal Universities of Technology; 29 State Universities; 5 State Universities of Technology; 7 Degree Awarding Institutions (not including 52 affiliated Degree Awarding Institutions); 40 Private Universities; 23 Federal Polytechnics; 40 State Polytechnics; - 8 of whom offer National Certificate of Education (NCE) courses as well; 50 Innovation Enterprises; 18 Private Polytechnics; 22 Federal Monotechnics; 17 State Monotechnics; 2 Private Monotechnics; 8 Federal Colleges of Education Special; 47 State Colleges of Education; 6 Colleges of Health Sciences; and 12 Federal Colleges of Education.

Out of the 402 officially recognized tertiary institutions in Nigeria, 115 (28.6%) are Universities and Degree Awarding Institutions; out of the 115, at least, 60 (52.2%) offer media, journalism and communications education courses under different nomenclatures. Under the Faculty of Administration; 9 universities offer media/communication courses under the Faculty of Arts, 17 universities offer media, journalism and communication courses as mass communication; while the University of Ibadan offer it as Communication and Language Art. Under the Faculty of Social Sciences, 37 universities offer it as Mass Communication. Lead City University, Ibadan offers it as Mass Communication and media Technology.

Furthermore, Western-Delta offers it as Film and Video Studies (Joint Admission and Matriculations Board, 2011). Lagos State University and American University of Nigerian; and later on Bayero University, Kano are the leading universities tilting the broader academic sense of communication and media studies. These universities had Colleges/Faculties of Communications [and other associate nomenclatures]. This is quite plausible because various areas of specialization like Public Relations, Advertising, Print Journalism, Broadcast Journalism Management Information Systems, Multimedia Design, Telecommunications; and Television and Film are offered as Bachelor of Science degrees.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is actually an uncertainty of nomenclature in the design and outline of media communications/journalism education in Nigeria and even beyond. The National University Commission have already worked in harmony with media, journalism and communications education experts and researchers to come up with a standard nomenclature that will serve various purposes as well as satisfy respective references.

The various nomenclatures under which media, journalism, and Communication education courses are offered in Nigeria include Mass Communication, Media and Communication studies, Communication and Language Arts, Film and Video Studies; Public Relations, as well as Advertising; Mass Communication and Media Technology, Communication and Media Studies; as well as Communication and Multimedia. This situation is worrisome. However, the recent unbundling of media and communication studies in Nigerian universities imply a big step in the right direction. The new process marks a chapter towards better specialised knowledge and relative depth

Nevertheless, there should be a readymade standard nomenclature across the various sub-disciplines making up conventional communication studies. Such a disposition would help stem possible nomenclature ambiguities. The proposed relative nomenclatures in communication and media studies-as put forward by Nigeria's National Universities Commission (NUC) in the case of Nigeria, and being adopted by universities-depend on their various capacities, is expected to ease the attendant challenges and provide a general benchmark for accreditation of courses. Such standards will also help to alleviate concerns for respective regard and referencing for employment, certifications, as well as ease of post-graduate qualifications.

Other problems associated with uncertainty of nomenclature in media, journalism and communications education the difficulties relating to what can constitute curricula designs, equipment/facilities requirements; entry qualifications; duration of studies; carrying capacity of schools; staff and staffing standards; specialization areas; whether there is even any need for specialization of courses, and at what levels of studies; faculty requirements. Stakeholders in the media, journalism and communications education should objectively endeavour to act to resolve these situations.

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communiqué. It is good news that Nigeria's National Universities Commission has deemed it fit and approved the unbundling of mass communication. It is hoped that this efforts may find sense and essence towards the progress and development to the journalism, media, and communications studies in Nigeria, and perhaps beyond.

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