



## MASS MEDIA MANDATE AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN AN ERA OF DIGITAL ECONOMY IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the extent to which the mass media have been employed by select organizations to promote and improve human capacity development in an era of digital economy in Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to ascertain media use and predominant media for human capacity development among the select organizations. Premised on the Uses and Gratification Media Theory, the researcher surveyed 25 representatives of various organizations cooperating institutions and small- and large-scale businesses using well-constructed 4 points Likert scales as instrument through purposive sampling method. Findings from the study shows that organizations make use of the mass media for developing their human capacity. Findings from the study revealed that the social media are the predominant mass media platform through which organizations in Nigeria engaged in human capital development. This is as it also shows that information dissemination, online training, orientation of new staff, employees' education and guidance are some of the ways the organizations used the mass media especially the social media for human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded among others that the social media play a vital role in human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria. The researcher therefore recommended among other things that organisations in Nigeria should fully integrate the digital media platforms in all their activities in order to achieve success in the digital economy.

**Keywords:** Mass Media, Mandate, Human Capital Development, Digital Economy, Nigeria.

### Introduction

The mass media as we have it today have evolved through various stages. These stages have been improved through technologies and innovations. The mass media are divided into three categories – print media, the electronic media and the digital/new media. Whether print, electronic or digital media, the role of the mass media in any society is well determined. Ndolo (2006) drawing extensively from the works of Lasswell (1948), Wright (1960) and McQuail (1987) divided the functions of the mass media into two major categories – functions of the mass media for society and for individuals.

While information (surveillance), correlation, cultural transmission, entertainment and mobilization are the major roles which the mass media perform for the society, the function of the mass media for the individuals as captured by Ndolo (2006) includes information dissemination, personal identity, integration and social interaction, transmission of cultural heritage, entertainment and education.

Apart from these roles, scholars have also observed that the mass media perform negative functions such as fear arousal, cultivation of violence tendencies, stimulation of immoral activities among others (Ekerikevwe, 2014). The mass media role in the promotion of goods and services and ideas through advertising is also well determined. The media serve as a vehicle through which information about products as well as services are passed to potential consumers by identified sponsors. The media is therefore an indispensable tool of economic development in any society.

With the advent of digitalization through information communication technologies (ICT) which has reduce the world to global kindred, the role of the mass media has slightly differed and improved especially in the area of influence, participation, and operations. This is moreso in an era of digital economy

occasioned by virtual space. The advent of digital economy has made organizations round the world to also go digital, taking good advantage of the digital space to reach out to millions of people across the world to sell their goods and services. Some experts have stressed that the mass media have a role to play in human capital especially in the era of digital economy.

Onyeji (2021) reported experts in the health sector as saying that the media role in human capital development is crucial through proper, accurate and balance reporting of critical issues. This means that the mass media role in human capital development in the health sector is critical. However, Onyeji (2021) did not identify the role of the mass media. The emphasis is on the need to balance and reports accurate health issues for proper understanding of media content consumers.

There is therefore dearth of literature on ways the mass media can contribute to human capital development especially in an era of digital economy in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that the study explores the extent to which the mass media have been employed by selected organizations in Nigeria to improve and develop human resources especially in the era of digital economy.

### **Statement of the Problem and Objectives of the Study**

The role of the mass media in any society is well determined. These roles range from information dissemination, education, entertainment, transmission of cultural heritage, sensitization, advocacy to mobilization. However, with the advent of digitalization occasioned by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) these roles may slightly be redefined.

This is moreso in the era of digital economy. There is no doubt that in this era of digital media organizations have explored the various digital media to reach out to their target audience. This is especially in the area of advertising of their goods, services or ideas. There are dearth of literature on the extent that the mass media could serve as a platform for human capital development apart from generally passage of information and education about generally information driven interaction. The need to examined the mass media to determine their roles in human capital development as important.

The questions are: what is the extent to which organizations employed the mass media in human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria?, what is the extent of mass media use in the era of digital economy for human capital development by organizations in Nigeria?, what are the ways organizations use mass media for human capital development in an era of digital economy in Nigeria?, what are the predominant media that organizations use for human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria? And what are the challenges confronting organizations in mass media use for human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria? These are the thrust of the study.

The general objective of the study is to ascertain the extent to which the mass media have been used by selected organizations to promote human capital development in Nigeria. The study is aimed at achieving the following specific objectives.

1. To determine the extent mass media are use in an era of digital economy for human capital development by organizations in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain ways mass media are used in human capital development by organizations in Nigeria
3. To find out the predominant category the media that is used by organization in human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria.
4. To reveal the challenges which organizations faced in mass media use for human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria.

### **Scope, Significance and Limitation of the Study**

The digital economy therefore can be described as an economy which focuses on technologies. Social media has some notable examples of the digital economy's evolution. However, some African countries have not fully embraced and integrate into the digital world. This study therefore sets to evaluate the extent to which

organisations in Nigeria have fully become digital and fully integrated into the digital economy. This study is necessary because according to the world bank, (2023) the digital economy initiative for Africa (DEHA) aims to ensure that every individual, business and government in Africa will be digitally enabled by 2030 in support of the African Union “Digital transformation strategy for Africa”.

According to Yasar& Prate (2023), the digital economy differs from the traditional economy because it relies on digital technologies, online transactions and the transformation on the traditional industries. While they stressed that digital innovations such as the internet of things (IOT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), virtual reality, blockchain all play a part in creating a digital economy, they maintain that COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital economic growth and development through online shopping, telemedicine and digital entertainment.

They identify inception of digital trade and e – commerce, increased remote work adoption, Omni channel approach to sales, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation, digital payments and cryptocurrencies, digital entertainment, telemedicine, sharing economy and Human capital as posits by Kenton (2024) is the economic voice of a worker’s experience and skills. It includes assets like education, training, intelligence, skills, health and other things employers value such as loyalty.

The study is limited to mass media use for human capital development in an era of digital economy in Nigeria. The study is restricted to only twenty-five (25) selected organizations in Nigeria. The study is significant because it will enable policy-makers to ascertain the usefulness of mass media in the daily operations of organizational activities especially in the area of human capital development.

Importantly, the study will add to the body of knowledge through literature. The study will also provide a roadmap for other researchers who want to investigate mass media and human capital in various organisations. The study was limited by adequate time to effectively carry out the research. This limitation affected the choice of number of selected organizations to only twenty-five (25).

This is a huge limitation due to the small number of organizations. Perhaps, more reliable findings from huge number of organizations would have been possible for generalization. Another limitation is the unwillingness of organizations’ resource managers to respond to the researcher’s demand for data for the study. This made the researcher to opt to either an assistant in the personnel department of these organizations or someone who work in the organizations. Another limitation of the study is lack of relevant literatures on the relationship between the mass media and the human capital development. This poses a challenge and one of the reasons that informed the study.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Concept of the Mass Media**

The mass media as we have it today is made up of all channels of mass communication through which messages are transmitted to a heterogeneous, scattered, diversified, anonymous and stratified audience. The media of mass communication are the channels or vehicles that carry information from the source(s) to the receiver (s). The mass media according to Ekerikevwe (2021) is an institution of culture and practice that provides the framework for effective interaction with member of society through effective dissemination of information. The mass media could be classified into print, electronic and digital or social media (Rodman, 2005, Nworgu, 2010; Husan, 2016 & Asemah, 2011).

The function/roles of the mass media are wide and all embracing. The roles of the mass media could be functional and dysfunctional (Asemah, 2011) as well as its functions to the individual and the society (Ndolo, 2006). Various scholars such as Ndolo, (2006), Okunna & Omenugha (2012), and Asemah (2011) have identified various roles which the mass media perform to the individuals and society.

These roles ranges from information dissemination, education, socialization, agenda setting, gate-keeping, status conferral, advertising, motivation/mobilization of citizens, entertainment function, integration and employment function. While the mass media have become a veritable avenue for the provision of employment to individual, it may have also served as a veritable avenue for human capital

development. There is however dearth of literature on the extent to when the mass media have contributed to the development between the mass media and human capital development that the study has become necessary.

### **Human Capital Development and Mass Media**

Human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate through their lives that enable them to realize their potential as productive members of the society. According to Oshinfowokan (2024, p.79-80) Human capital development emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to stress the importance of investing in people's education, skills and health for economic and social progress.

It recognizes individuals as valuable assets and shows the positive returns which investing time and money for their development. Pioneered by economists such as Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz, human capital development evolves beyond social and economic considerations and development, it encompasses broader perspectives and dimensions such as adaptability and creativity (Oshinfowokan, 2024). It is no longer news that in today's world, organizations and governments lay emphasis on policies that foster good health care, education, learning, skilled and healthy workforce in achieving sustainable goals of industries, governments and organizations.

Human capital development transcends training and re –training of staff. It involves training and empowerment of staff. Although there are literatures on the role of mass media in national development, there is dearth of literature on the role of the mass media in human.

There is dearth of literature on the role of the mass media in human capital development. However, literature exist on the role of the mass media in national development. Thus, there is gap in knowledge in the area of providing information about the role of the mass media in human capital development especially in developing countries of Africa.

### **The Concept of Digital Economy**

Digital economy focuses on digital technologies. Tapscott (1995) in his book *The Digital Economy; Promise and Peril in the Age of Networked Intelligence* was the first to use the term digital economy. Yasar& Pratt (2023) posit that the digital economy is the economic activities that emerge from connecting individuals, businesses, devices, data and operations through digital technology.

This means that it encompasses all online interactions and transactions as well as connections that take place across different sectors of the economy through technologies such as mobile phones, internet, big data, artificial intelligence etc. warned about how the internet and digitalized information could change business in the future and true to his prediction, the warning has come to pass.

Digital economy refers to the use of information technology to create or adapt, market or consumer goods and services (Santander, 2022). The digital economy uses smartphone etc. connected to the internet to access global environment, anytime and anywhere. The three things that distinguish the digital economy from the regular economy according to Mesenbourg, (2022) are infrastructure, E-business and E-commerce.

### **Empirical Review**

There is dearth of literature on empirical studies by scholars on the role of the mass media in human capital development. This study therefore would provide a framework for scholars and researchers on the role of the mass media in human capital development.

However, Onyeji (2021) reported experts' reasons on why media should support human capital development is crucial through proper, accurate and balance reporting of critical issues. There are therefore

dearth's of literature on ways the media mass can contribute to human capital development especially in an era of digital economy in Nigeria.

### Theoretical Framework

The study is hinged on the Uses and Gratification Theory propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. The theory perceived the audience as active and focuses on the assumption that they are goal-oriented and attempt to achieve their goals through the media source.

This implies that the mass media are used by media consumers to achieved their specific need. The theory is applicable to the study because it will ascertain the extent to which the mass media our put to use in human capital development. This is more relevant from the studies carried out by Perse and Dunn (1995) as reported by Anaeto et al., (2008) in which they carried out studies on the use of home computers along with other media in meeting a variety of needs in which they established that media computer mediated devices are used to satisfy varieties of need such as learning, relaxation etc.

Similarly, Chang (1998) studies showed that respondents used computer mediated media for many needs such as information needs etc. thus, the advent of media convergence occasioned by information communication technologies, the Uses and Gratification theory is relevant to ascertaining mass media mandate in human capital development in an era of digital economy in Nigeria.

### Methodology

The researcher adopted the survey research method for the study. The survey research method is considered appropriate for the study because it is not only descriptive but reveals respondents' opinion, attitudes, perception and other psychological and interactive variables, Okwechime (2016) and Asemah et al (2022) assert that the survey research method reveals elements, feelings and characteristics of a given phenomenon. Thus, the survey method enables the researcher to gauge the feeling and perception of human resources managers in the selected organizations on mass media use in human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria.

The population of the study consists of twenty-five (25) human resources managers that are selected from twenty-five (25) human resource organizations in Nigeria. The sample size is made up of all the twenty-five (25) human managers. The choice of the entire population as sample size stems from the fact that the population is small and findings from all the population would be more reliable for conclusion and recommendations.

While the sampling technique is purposive, the researcher used the 4-point Likert scale questionnaire of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) as instrument for data collection. The researcher adopted the 2.5 mean score as an acceptable mean for the study. The content validation approach with the instrument given to three researchers in the Department of Mass communication, University of Benin, Nigeria, was adopted. The reliability of instrument was ascertained through pilot-testing of ten (10), while the instrument was administered through the use of mobile telephone.

The analysis of data is done by compilation of large statements, administering the scale to a selected sample, coding the response consistently so that the high scores indicate stronger agreements with the perception in the statement and then analyzing the response and selecting for the final scale those statements that most clearly differentiate the highest from the lowest scale. The researcher used the following formula for the analysis.

$$\bar{X} = \frac{FX}{N} \text{ where, } \bar{X} = \text{sample mean}$$

F = frequency

X = allotted value

N = Total number of scores

All data were presented in a table so as to give vivid pictorial representation of the information in a simple and easy to understand way.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

Data collected from the twenty – five (25) resource managers in Nigeria is presented as follows: A total of twenty-five (25) questionnaires was administered and all retrieved.

**Table 1: Showing the extent mass media is used for human capital development in Nigeria.**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
	4	3	2	1			
Mass media are used for human capital development to a very high extent	10 40% 40	08 32% 24	04 16% 08	03 12% 3	25 100% 75/25	3	Accepted
Mass media are used for human capital development to a high extent	22 88% 88	2 8% 6	1 4% 2	- - -	25 100% 96/25	3.8	Accepted
Mass media are used for human capital development to a low extent	- - -	- - -	23 92% 46	2 8% 2	25 100% 48/25	1.9	Rejected
Mass media are not used for human capital development	- - -	- - -	21 84% 42	4 16% 4	25 100% 46/25	1.8	Rejected
Mass media are hardly used for human capital development sparingly	- - -	- - -	22 88% 44	3 12% 3	25 100% 47/25	1.9	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2024

**Grand mean = 3.1**

Data collected and analysed shows that the various organizations use the mass media for human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria. For instance, at a grand mean of 3.1, data collected showed that the extent mass media is used for human capital development in Nigeria is high. By implication, it means the respondents agreed that to a large extent the mass media are being used for human capital development in Nigeria.

**Table 2: Showing ways organizations use mass media for human capital development in Nigeria**

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
	4	3	2	1			
Training of human resources	23	2	-	-	25	3.9	Accepted
	92%	8%	-	-	100%		
	92	6	-	-	98/25		
Recruitment processes	15	8	2	-	25	3.5	Accepted
	60%	32%	8%	-	100%		
	60	24	4	-	88/25		
Orientation of staff	18	5	2	-	25	3.6	Accepted
	72%	20%	8%	-	100%		
	72	15	04	-	91/25		
Advertising for resource persons	22	2	2	01	25	3.6	Accepted
	80%	8%	8%	4%	100%		
	80	6	4	1	91/25		
Development performance appraisal (DPA)	-	22	2	1	250	2.8	Accepted
	-	88%	8%	4%	100%		
	-	66	4	1	71/25		
Effective/participatory communication	20	2	2	1	25	3.6	Accepted
	80%	8%	8%	4%	100%		
	80	6	04	1	91/25		
Information dissemination	20	2	1	2	25	3.6	Accepted
	80%	8%	4%	8%	100%		
	80	6	2	2	90/25		
Selection/idea sharing by management	21	2	-	2	25	3.7	Accepted
	84%	8%	-	8%	100%		
	84	6	-	2	92/25		

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024**Grand mean = 7.1**

Data collected and presented as shown in the table above reveals that the mass media are used by organization for eight major purposes. With a grand mean of 7.1, data collected shows the extent to which organizations in Nigeria use the mass media for recruitment processes, training of human resources, orientation of staff, advertising for resource persons, effective and participatory communication, information dissemination as well as selecting/idea sharing by management is high

**Table 3: Showing the predominant media that are used for human capital development by organizations in Nigeria.**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
	4	3	2	1			
Print media are predominantly used for human capital development in your organization	4 16% 16	13 52% 39	4 16% 8	4 16% 4	25 100% 67/25	2.7	Accepted
Broadcast media are mainly used for human capital development by your organization	- - -	5 20% 15	15 60% 30	5 20% 5	25 100% 50/25	2.0	Rejected
Social/digital media are predominantly used for human capital development by your organization	20 80% 80	2 8% 16	3 12% 6	- - -	25 100% 92/25	3.7	Accepted

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024**Grand mean = 2.1**

Organizations in Nigeria predominantly use the print media, social/digital media for human capital development. This is because the print media and the social/digital media have mean scores of 2.7 and 3.7 respectively. This is above the acceptable mean score of 2.5 required for any of the variables that are tested. However, using the grand mean of 2.1, it is safe to say that organization use all the channels of mass communication for human capital development.

**Table 4: Showing the challenges of organizations in mass media use human capital development.**

Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
	4	3	2	1			
Lack of Data	- - -	1 4% 3	3 12% 6	21 84% 21	25 100% 30/25	1.2	Rejected
Lack of employees' technologies compliance	- - -	1 4% 3	4 16% 8	20 80% 20	25 100% 31/25	1.2	Rejected
Lack of regular power supply	- - -	10 40% 30	7 28% 14	8 32% 8	25 100% 52/25	2.1	Rejected
Lack of encouragement by managerial staff	- - -	2 8% 6	5 20% 10	18 72% 18	25 100% 34/25	1.4	Rejected



Poor network by providers	17	3	2	3	250	3.4	Accepted
	68%	12%	8%	12%	100%		
	68	9	4	3	84/25		
Lack of effective participation by employees and stakeholders	-	4	5	16	250	1.5	Rejected
	-	16%	2%	64%	100%		
	-	12	10	16	30/25		
Inadequate accessibility and interaction during sessions	15	3	4	3	25	3.2	Accepted
	60%	12%	16%	12%	100%		
	60	9	8	3	80/25		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Grand mean = 3.5

The two major challenges identified by organizations which militate against effective mass media use for human capital development are poor network occasioned by poor service provided by telecommunication companies. This results to inadequate and lack of qualitative interaction that often occur as a result of poor network platforms and technical hitches which mar effective communication processes and endeavours.

With the grand mean of 3.5, data collected shows that lack of data, lack of employee technologies compliance, lack of regular power supply, lack of encouragement by management staff, poor network by telecommunication providers, lack of effective participation by employees and stakeholders as well as inadequate accessibility and interaction during sessions are the major challenges which organization faced in mass media use for human capital development in Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

From the study, mass media use in the era of digital economy for human capital development among organizations in Nigeria is very high and appreciable. This implies that organizations in Nigeria use the mass media for human capital development. These findings support the Uses and Gratification Theory propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumber and Michael Gurevitch in 1974 (Anaeto et al., 2008) and as well as Uses and Gratification studies as it relates to the computers with other media as carried out by Perse and Dunn (1995).

The study also shows that the print and social/digital media are the predominant media used by organizations in Nigeria. Further findings shows that organizations in Nigeria use the mass media for human capital development through recruitment processes, ideas sharing, information dissemination, orientation exercises, training and re-training of staff, effective and participatory communication during organizational meetings, advertising for human resource and work enhancement. These finding shows that the mass media effectively play their social responsibility roles in the society.

The researcher also finds out that challenges abound in mass media use for human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria. These challenges though varies from organization to organization are poor network occasioned by either technical hitches by telecommunication service providers or individual mobile phones and digital appliances. Another challenge is inadequate accessibility and effective interaction caused by technical hitches during meeting sessions and the digital media usage.

## Conclusion

Arising from findings of the study, the researcher believed that the mass media is an effective tool for human capital development in the digital economy. This is because organisation's use the social media mainly in information sharing and dissemination, education, mobilization, sensitization, recruitment processes, training and re-training of staff and job enhancer in the digital era in Nigeria.

The researchers also concludes that there are score of challenges confronting mass media use among organizations in Nigeria. This is as it has been established that the print and social/digital media are the predominant media used for human capital development by organizations in Nigeria.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the researcher recommends as follows:

1. Organizations should identify more areas that mass media could be a viable asset in the development of human resources in Nigeria.
2. Telecommunication and service providers should ensure continuous servicing of their equipment and machine to enable smooth use of digital media facilities for effective interaction and communication in the digital economy.
3. To be successful in the digital economy, organizations should embrace digital media for their day-to-day activities.
4. Based on the challenges identified in the study, there is need for telecommunication industries to improve their services. This will ensure effective network delivery for organizations to effectively utilize the media as vehicle for human capital development in the era of digital economy in Nigeria.

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