

Mobilizing People's Support for Development: An Analysis of Public Enlightenment Campaigns in Africa

by Ikechukwu E. Nwosu*

Abstract

This paper directs its attention on information campaign effectiveness. It examines some theoretical and practical considerations that should be taken into account in planning and executing public enlightenment campaigns in Nigeria and other developing countries and offers a multi-media model for more effective information campaigns in these areas. According to the model, well prepared and packaged information campaign messages should flow from the information campaign headquarters to the mass media and the interpersonal and group communication channels, and through these channels to the target audiences with continual monitoring and evaluation by campaign officials. The suggested model is diagrammatically provided.

Re'sume'

Cet article se penche sur la question de l'efficacité des campagnes de sensibilisation. Il examine certains aspects théoriques et pratiques qui devraient être pris en considération en matière de planification ou d'exécution des campagnes de sensibilisation au Nigéria ou dans d'autres pays en voie de développement et suggère un modèle multimédia pour plus d'efficacité des campagnes d'information dans ces régions.

Selon ce modèle, des messages bien préparés et bien élaborés doivent circuler des quartiers généraux de la direction de la campagne aux mass média, aux canaux interpersonnels et aux groupes spécifiques et de là être convoyés vers les publics visés étant entendu que les responsables de la campagne guideront et évalueront continuellement celle-ci. Un diagramme du modèle proposé accompagne l'article.

*Ikechukwu Nwosu is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication, Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria.

The mobilization of mass support for national development through the use of the mass media and other communication modes has become an important instrument of modern government, especially in the developing countries. For instance, Nigeria has witnessed national development information campaigns that include road safety information campaign, green revolution or agricultural campaign, pre-voting public enlightenment, literacy campaigns and the on-going War-Against-Indiscipline (W.A.I.) campaigns. All these are indicative of the increasing confidence which Nigerians seem to be placing on the findings and conclusions of communication experts on the gainful role which the mass and other media of communication can have on national development.¹

A common problem confronting experts, governments and the campaign planners and implementers everywhere, is finding out how the effectiveness of the various information and public enlightenment campaigns can be improved or even assured. This problem has persisted in spite of the various degrees of successes recorded by some of the past campaigns.² This is an indication that we still have to do much work in this area.

This paper contributes to this continuing effort to find a solution or solutions to the problem of information campaign effectiveness. It will examine some theoretical and practical considerations that should be taken into account in planning and executing future public enlightenment campaigns in Nigeria and, by extension, other developing countries. We shall also use materials from existing relevant communication theories and research, as well as other related areas to construct and recommend a multi-media model or approach for more effective information campaigns in Nigeria and other developing countries.

Basic Assumptions:

The following are the fundamental working assumptions that run through this paper:-

1. That an effective publicity or information campaign is *sine qua non* to effective execution of various government policies and programmes
2. That people will be better informed if the organisers of any public information campaign are familiar with and can apply the recognised theories and practices on the pattern of information flow in a developing country like Nigeria.

3. That people will be better informed if the information campaign messages are couched and presented as messages that mostly emphasise things to be gained by them, both as individuals and members of groups.
4. That the mass media can set the agenda for the public about the issues or events involved in any information campaign by lending greater salience to certain issues or events than others, through emphasis, repetition and other media activities.
5. That in a developing country like Nigeria, information flow from the mass media to the masses is largely indirect, resulting in the need for effective combination of a "multi-mass media mix" with various interpersonal, traditional and other communication means for a more effective information campaign.

Theoretical Framework

Media Effects in General:

The focus of this paper falls within the broad realm of media or press influence, impact or effects, an area which has for many years attracted the attention of researchers and scholars in Mass Communication and Politics.³ Some comments must be made right away, therefore, on the state of research and scholarly thinking in the area. Part of the reason for doing this will be to further indicate this paper's scope and explain why the scope is restricted to a particular level of analysis.

Thinkings and research on media influence in general and political influence of the media have fluctuated among three major levels of abstractions or positions:

- (1) The Strictly Powerful Effect position
- (2) The Little or No effect position, and
- (3) The Modified Powerful Effect position.

The Strictly Powerful Effect position saw the mass media as definitely having powerful influence on human beings at all levels. It saw the mass media as almighty mass movers that have the ability to inform people, change their attitudes, beliefs and opinions, and move them to desired, expected or prescribed actions. It has its origin in the period following World War I when people were assessing the powerful effects of Hitler's media propaganda and those of the Allied Forces. This position was soon abandoned because it was not generally based on scientific data and did not take into account the simultaneous influence of other societal and psychological variables. The so-called Stimulus-Response (S-R),

Hypodermic Needle and Bullet theories of mass communication are related to this school of thought about media influence and are no longer regarded as useful analytical tools.

The second position, the Little-or-No-Effect position, is held by those who see the mass media as having a minimal effect and those who claim they may even have No Effect at all, with those in the minimal effect school dominating. Media scholar, Noelle-Neuman, for example, reviewed media effect studies over a 40 year period and concluded that "the effects of the mass media appear to be negligible."⁴ Another researcher, W.J. McGuire, in his study of media role in changing attitudes, concluded that "The measured impact of the mass media as regards persuasiveness appear quite slight and embarrassing."⁵ He found little evidence in support of media change of attitudes, much less in gross behaviour change. Researcher Berelson summarised the minimalist viewpoint masterly when he wrote that, "Some kinds of communication, on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people, under some kinds of conditions, have some kinds of effects."⁶ Note the much qualified, reserved and conditional tone of his conclusion.

But there now seems to be a more recent return to the idea of powerful media effect thinking; but this time in a modified and restricted manner. Those who share the thinking of this third Modified Powerful Effect position have the one major agreement that the mass media definitely have powerful influence at the information or learning level, but may not have much influence at the attitude/opinion or behaviour change levels, if at all. They agree that at these later levels of decision and action, the media collectively serve as contributors or reinforcers alongside with a nexus of other communication and non-communication variables.

Researchers Tichenor, Olien and Donohue of the Knowledge Gap Hypothesis⁷, maintain, for instance, that the "mass media represent sub-systems which cut across other sub-systems and transmit information among and between them."⁸

They point out that researchers who assess media effect along these lines usually find considerable effects, at least at the learning or information level. Still other researchers, Kline and Clarke have observed that most studies that report null media effects were biased and had "Sterile research designs and poor definition of key variables."⁹ According to them, people learn and obtain information from the media; that should be seen as a rewarding media effect by itself and research emphasis should be in this area.

It is thus in line with this more current and modified powerful media effect position that the present paper's focus and scope is restricted to the

informational level of media influence. In this paper, therefore, the mass media are seen as powerful instruments of politics and information that have to be adequately utilized during public enlightenment campaigns in Nigeria. The three Mass Communication theories, quasi-theories or hypotheses¹⁰ that will be critically reviewed and applied in this study -- the Two-Step Flow Theory and its variants, the Uses and Gratification Theory and the Agenda-Setting Hypothesis, -- hang mainly on this modified media effect position that emphasises the informational learning influence of the mass media. Let us now critically review and apply these three "theories" in some details, starting with the Two-Step Flow theory.

The Two-Step Flow Theory and Its Variants: Theory and Application

The Two-Step Flow theory grew serendipitously from the now famous Erie County studies in the U.S.A. by researchers Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet. But it has been successfully and contextually applied in many studies of information in developing countries that include Nigeria, India and Middle East countries. Simply put, the theory states that in any mass communication effort (such as in an information campaign) messages usually flow from the mass media to opinion leaders, who then pass them on to others whom they unavoidably influence in doing this.¹¹ In other words, media information influence is indirect and usually takes place in a cross-fire of interpersonal connections or communications. Lazarsfeld and his associates, in presenting this theory, also highlighted the fact that families, friends, co-workers, churches and similar social institutions while helping to play the media information influence role, can and do also have their own independent influences. Furthermore, like the individual differences and social categories theories,¹² the Two-Step Flow theory holds that the media do not influence people informationally in the same way.

The Two-Step Flow theory has been subjected to many tests, reviews and replications. While there have been some differential findings rising from situational or contextual differences, some significant modifications and some null findings about the theory, it has not been totally debunked. In fact, many recent studies, such as the diffusion of innovation studies¹³ have continued to demonstrate the usefulness of this theory in understanding mass communication. This is why more than fourteen years after their original Erie Country Study, Lazarsfeld could in another study he did with Elihu Katz reaffirm that, Ideas often seem to flow from radio and print to opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of the population."¹⁴

The major changes that have been brought to bear on the original submissions of the Two-Step Flow theory appear in the form of variants or modifications. Hence we now have the Multi-Step Flow theory and the N-Step Flow theory (where N represents any number of steps or stages in the information diffusion process). These variants do not, however, change the original idea of interpersonal mediation in the flow of information from the mass media to the masses (according to the Two-Step Flow theory) or the opinion leadership and personal influence idea. They will not therefore, be dwelt upon in this paper.

Applying the Two-Step Flow Theory

Our major purpose for reviewing any of the three selected theories in this paper is to explore its practical utility and application, how we can gainfully employ it in the planning and execution of public information campaigns such as the ethical reorientation and agricultural information campaigns in Nigeria. The major thing we learnt from the Two-Step Flow theory is that information flow from the mass media to individuals is indirect; passing from the media to more politically aware and active opinion leaders and then to the less active masses. The Multi-Step Flow and the N-Step flow variants of the theory suggests to us that in addition to the opinion leaders, many other individuals participate or help in the media information transfer or flow process, depending on the communication situation.

What all this means is that in launching future information campaigns, the campaign officials should see the planting of information in the mass media as just an important first step that should be followed by other even more important steps which mainly involve the assurance that this mass mediated information flows smoothly through the web of interpersonal relationships in families and other social institutions that will ultimately ensure the achievement of the campaign goals.

The fact that Nigeria is a developing country makes this even most important and significant. Many Nigerians do not have access to mass media information and even many of those who have access may not be literate enough to participate fully in the media communication process. Except radio which has recorded an admirable degree of ability to considerably scale language and literacy barriers, other arms of the media, such as the newspaper, have not done much to overcome this handicap. This is in spite of the existence of local language newspapers, such as the *Udoka* Igbo language newspaper published by Concord Press of Nigeria

Limited. Television cannot do very much in this issue because the majority of Nigerians still do not own televisions or have regular access to them.

The foregoing reasoning can be supported with the empirical data supplied by a recent study of the 1978 prevailing registration publicity campaign in Nigeria by a one-time visiting professor in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Department of Mass Communication, Sharon M. Murphy. This researcher conducted a 21-question interview survey of a cluster sample of 497 people in 11 villages in Nsukka Local Government Area, plus Nsukka town itself. This area had a potential eligible voting population of 116,958 persons 18 years of age and above in 1978, according to the Nsukka Local Government office which did not divide this figure by sex differences.

Her major findings were that 37% learnt about the registration exercise from the radio (direct information influence), only 4% from newspapers and television combined (direct information influence); while interpersonal and other indirect means -- councillors and village associations -- accounted for 23% and 36% respectively (i.e. 59%) of the information they got about the registration campaign. Among those who eventually registered, 30% cited radio as a major influence on their decision to vote, 23% cited the councillors and 25% cited the village associations. The remaining 22% was distributed among other factors that included friends, church sermons, newspapers and intrinsic interest in politics.¹⁵

These findings are interesting and go to strengthen one of this paper's earlier assumptions that in a developing country such as Nigeria, media information flow is largely indirect. As noted earlier, those who plan and execute information or public enlightenment campaigns in Nigeria should observe these facts if they wish to be effective or successful. To this end, they would in addition have to make better or more effective use of social institutions such as the churches, town criers, village meetings and the like. They should do this realising that apart from helping to disseminate mass mediated information, they also have independent influences of their own.

The Uses and Gratification Theory: Theory and Application

The Uses and Gratification theory or approach to the research, analysis, understanding and practice of mass and other types of communication has its origin in the early audience studies of radio serials in the 1920s. But studies in this area actually became empirical in the 1940s when Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1949)¹⁶, Berelson (1949)¹⁷ and others started empirical research in this area. There is currently an increased interest in the empirical, analytical and applicatory values of this theory as demonstrated

in the studies contained in the book-length review and assessment of this theory by J.G. Blumler and Elihu Katz (1974)¹⁸.

The basic conclusion or message of the Uses and Gratification theory is that in any communication situation the individual audience member or message receiver (e.g. a farmer or potential voter) usually has specific information needs and consciously exposes himself to communication mainly to satisfy or gratify those needs. In this way then, according to this theory, an individual's communication behaviour is seriously affected, determined or shaped by his needs (basic and higher order needs). Those needs and the ability of a message to satisfy them will, it is assumed, determine whether he exposes himself at all to the message and how he uses the message.

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch summarised this Uses and Gratification theory very masterly in one of their studies when they stated that the social and psychological origins of individuals' needs generate or lead to certain expectations from communication sources, media or channels of communication, and that these in turn lead to differential patterns of media exposure which results in different need gratification and other consequences.¹⁹

As can be seen from the above statements of the theory, it views audience members in any communication situation or venture as deliberate and active users of communication contents, rather than being mere passive participants in the communication experience. In a manner of speech, these individual audience members have certain needs, come to the communication market with these needs and actively "shop" for messages and information that will satisfy or gratify these needs; rejecting or refusing to expose themselves to or buy information that does not serve any of their needs. Related to these ideas of the Uses and Gratification theory are the older communication concepts of selective exposure and selective perception which also present members of the audience as actively involved in selection or rejection of media information according to their psychological, physical, social and other backgrounds.

A major development in recent times is the attempt by some researchers to replace the "need" component in the Uses and Gratification theory with the concept of "purpose".²⁰ Among the reasons offered by those who advocate this change are that every audience member generally has the same needs, that social and psychological needs are difficult to measure and that it is difficult and hazardous to attempt to say that a particular need is the reason (direct causality) why an individual uses a medium. It is necessary to point out, however, that even when the shift is made from "need" to "purpose", the original message of the Uses and Gratification theory is not changed.

Applying the Uses and Gratification Theory:

For our purpose in this paper, the essential applicatory message of the Uses and Gratification theory are that different individuals have different needs or purposes which shape their communication behaviour; and that members of the communication audience are usually deliberate, active, and selective, rather than passive, in the response to information from the mass media and other sources.

What this means in effect is that in organising and executing publicity and public enlightenment campaigns, those concerned should realise that individual Nigerians will respond more (quantitatively and qualitatively) to information that mostly emphasize the different gains to be derived by them by doing what is required. The realisation should then guide their overall communication strategy and specific actions or tactics. For instance, it is not enough to merely emphasize the fact that the electorate will have chance to elect politicians or governments that will satisfy their needs, as many of the campaign messages dished out by FEDECO in the 1978 and 1982 registration and voting information campaigns seemed to have so emphasized. In trying to apply the teachings of the uses and gratification theory, we need to go beyond this general or blanket type of gratification or satisfaction of needs or purpose and include details of specific needs of the voters that would be satisfied if they elected the right government or people to rule them. In fact, the rest of the registration information such as where to go and register should rest on these need-satisfying information that help to make the audience member more willing to expose himself to and perceive communicated messages.

The first task of any communicator or official who wishes to apply this theory then is to identify the various needs or purposes of the individuals and communities that he wishes to inform and influence in any communication exercise. According to this theory these needs or purposes are bound to vary from one individual to another, and by extension, from one community or group to the other. The situation therefore calls for careful audience segmentation as part of the information exercise. Knowledge of the target audiences or communities would, for sure, be very useful to such a communication campaign in trying to decipher their differential needs or purposes. But even this does not remove the need for some fact-finding or basic audience research efforts before launching the information campaign. Such a basic pre-campaign research effort will help to answer specific questions like: What could be their purposes for preferring or using one medium or channel or communication instead of the other, for selectively exposing themselves to some types of information

and leaving out others, for responding positively or in the desired direction to certain types of information or communication content and negatively to some others? It will also help to uncover some political, economic, social and other needs of the members of the audience that can be gainfully incorporated in the communication strategy.

When these needs or purposes are uncovered or identified, they should then be the dominant forces in carrying out the information campaign; *not merely* the narrow specific information the government wishes to sell to the masses. For example, if the priority needs of individuals in a particular community were found to be water-supply, electricity, good roads and schools, the information campaign should emphasise specifically and clearly that doing what is recommended in the campaign will help the government to provide these amenities for them.

This is not to say that those specific official information goals for a particular campaign should be forgotten. What is required or recommended is that they be kept in the background or de-emphasized as much as possible in line with the Uses and Gratification theory; while the specific needs of the people are made explicit and dominant. If the information is presented otherwise, the result is likely to be that the members of the communication audience, who the Uses and Gratification theory has told us are largely active and deliberate in their response to communicated messages, will not expose themselves to or perceive these public enlightenment information. This will render the whole campaign ineffective as was reported to be the case in many areas during the 1978 and 1982 voters registration information campaigns.

The Agenda-Setting Hypothesis: Theory and Application

We shall now consider the third and last of the "theories" we are working with in this paper. This third one is known as the Agenda-Setting hypothesis. This hypothesis is known to be most popular among many planners of political and other information campaigns and political commentators, even though it is still largely known as a hypothesis.

The ideas of media agenda-setting can actually be traced back to the early 1920s when that well-known political and communication analyst, Walter Lippmann suggested a relationship between "the world outside and the pictures in our head."²¹ His works further suggest that the mass media or press paint a picture of the world outside for us and arrange the events covered in an order of importance that can be called an agenda. Another significant scholarly thinking that probably got empirically-oriented

scholars to carry out systematic studies on the media agenda-setting idea was the one made in 1963 by Political Scientist Bernard Cohen. He contended in a study he did that the media may not be particularly successful in telling people what to think "but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."²²

It was not until the 1970s, however, that serious research efforts on media agenda-setting started. Two researchers whose names have been closely associated with the seminal efforts in this area are Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw who stated the hypothesis thus: "That media emphasis on an event influences the audience also to see the event as important."²³ These researchers tested their hypothesis in the 1968 American Presidential election and found a strong positive correlation between the issues the voters deemed important and those emphasized by the news media. McCombs and Shaw have continued to test and retest this hypothesis with many other researchers in developed and developing countries. In their 1977 study, for instance, they concluded among others, that, "There is a progressive increase in the use of mass communications during a presidential election. In fact, the major political role of the mass media may be to raise the salience of politics among..... the electorate"²⁴

Among other researchers who have tested this media agenda-setting hypothesis and found some validity in its claims are Jack McLeod and his two associates. The three researchers ended up restating the hypothesis thus: "An Audience member exposed to a given medium agenda will adjust his or her perception of the importance of issues in the direction corresponding to the amount of attention devoted to those issues in the medium used."²⁵ What all these means is that public's agenda of issues and events tend to match the media's agenda on those issues and events because, according to the hypothesis, the media lend importance or salience to certain issues and not others. Put in another way, the press or mass media construct a hierarchy of social and political realities for the audience by arranging the social and political issues/events they present in order of importance.

There are many ways in which the press or media lend salience to issues or event. They include the technique of repetition mainly employed by radio and television. In addition to this technique, newspapers, magazines and other print media can lend salience to socio-political issues and events through placement (front page vs. inside page), space allocation (large vs. small space), headlines differences (bold face Vs. light face) and story slanting. Also the mere act of editors and reporters deciding what is newsworthy enough to be included in the bulletin or newspaper is also a way of setting agenda by lending salience to the stories they select and no

salience to those they reject (the gate-keeping process). The radio and television stations can also create agenda by the way they arrange stories in the bulletin; with stories they consider as more important being placed first while the ones they consider less important come last.

Even though researchers are still engaged in testing various aspects of this hypothesis, it has continued to gain wide acceptance, especially among scholars interested in understanding the role of the mass media in politics and information campaigns. The major reason for its present popularity is that apart from the common criticisms against it like inconsistencies in findings from study to study and the possibility of other explanations like whether people set the agenda for the media instead, no major debunking of the hypothesis has emerged.

Applying the Agenda-Setting Hypothesis

For our present discussion, there are, no doubt, several lessons of practical application that can be learnt from the above summary review of the Agenda-Setting Hypothesis. For one thing, it should go to further strengthen the faith of government officials and others involved in planning information campaigns in the ability of the mass media or the press to influence people; at least at the information or learning level. It should also alert them to the various manipulations which the initial information they send to the media can undergo in the hands of the editors and reporters; manipulations that can make their target audiences see their message as important or worth their attention or not.

It is when they are so alerted that they will come to realise that their information campaign messages are competing with other news items in the minds and eyes of the media practitioners and that their decision to play it up or lend salience to them will depend on how well they present the messages in the first place to make them sell. This calls for maximum use of professional communicators on a consultancy or permanent basis in the planning and execution of various activities connected with the publicity campaigns -- activities that may include organising regular press conferences, issuing effective press releases, backgrounders and similar media relations activities.

The most practical use of the Agenda-Setting hypothesis still lies, however, in the fact that the importance which audience members or potential voters attach to the issues and events involved in any public enlightenment exercise tends to depend largely on the amount of attention the mass media devote to those issues and events and how much salience they lend to those issues and events through repetition, bold or "shouting"

headlining, adequate space allocation, strategic placement and favourable slanting.

This further implies, for practical purposes, that the officials involved in information campaigns should not only give pieces of information about those campaigns to media practitioners and fold their hands after that. They should follow these up with other activities aimed at ensuring that their handling is done in such a manner that could be said to be reasonably in line with the contents of the Agenda-Setting hypothesis. They should do this realising that people are more likely to consider it important for them to respond positively to the campaign messages, if they consider them important in the first place, and that the mass media help people to determine this importance.

In trying to achieve this practical purpose, lobbying of the editors and reporters, in the cleanest sense of the word, may not be ruled out. But in addition, the publicity officials should be ready to spend more time and money in public service and other types of advertising than was the case in previous publicity campaigns.

Integration, Summary and Conclusion

The preceding sections of this paper have among other things attempted to summarily review and discuss the practical applications of three major "theories" of communication in publicity and public enlightenment campaigns in Nigeria. Since the three theories and their applications were deliberately treated independently, it seems necessary to tie them up or perform a brief integration exercise that will highlight the key applicatory messages of each theory and the relationships among the three theories.

In a general sense, we learnt that the mass media or press influence individuals mainly more at the awareness, information or learning level than at the opinion change, attitude change, decision and actual behaviour or action level. It was also clear from the earlier sections of this paper that beyond this awareness or information level and even within that level, a combination of the different arms of the mass media and other communication channels is very essential, especially in a developing country like Nigeria.

Based on this knowledge we can go ahead and recommend that in planning and executing publicity and public enlightenment campaigns in Nigeria, a more effective multi-media or multi-communication channels approach be adopted. It is only when we adopt this approach that we can effectively and jointly utilize interpersonal channels of communication, mass media channels and other institutional or traditional channels like

churches, schools, age grade forums, different village and city associations or clubs and the village town crier or gongman. This balanced multi-media or Multi-Communication Channel approach will also ensure effective use of other channels of information dissemination like personal visits, public meetings, direct mails, exhibits, bill boards, posters, hand bills and various indigenous channels of communication.

The three specific theories discussed in this paper help us to go beyond this general approach in order to grasp fully how we can benefit most from or how best we can utilise the various units or channels that constitute the recommended multi-media or multi-communication channel approach. The Two-Step Flow theory and its variants instruct, for instance, that in dealing with publicity and public enlightenment campaigns, those responsible should place less emphasis on direct media influence on isolated individuals and more emphasis on indirect media influence on individuals as members of social groups involved in a continual web of interpersonal relationships. They should also not fail to establish informed public opinion leadership that is very vital to information dissemination and diffusion in a developing country like Nigeria. As Margaret Piel has observed in a booklength study of Nigerian politics, middle men, councillors and other opinion leaders play a key role of helping to transmit a great deal of the political information by "word of mouth."²⁶

The Uses and Gratification theory goes beyond information flow to instruct that public enlightenment and publicity campaign strategies should be also guided by the knowledge that human beings or audience members are usually active (not passive) participants in the communication or information process. Audience members, it holds, usually selectively and deliberately use or not use, respond or refuse to respond to information content, depending on whether it does or does not satisfy specific needs for them. This then means that mass media, interpersonal or other messages should be delivered or couched in a manner that emphasizes specific need gratifications for the audience members concerned in order to receive favourable or any attention at all. Information campaign strategists and executives will do well to apply this knowledge in their work.

Finally, the Agenda-Setting hypothesis alerts publicity campaign planners to the fact that the mass media are very effective in structuring and restructuring the information environment and setting a hierarchy of agenda of issues and social events by lending more salience to some and not to other events or issues. They should, therefore, work hard to ensure that the mass media lend salience or importance to their campaign information through repetition, selection, favourable slanting, large space allocation, strategic placement and similar media manipulations. They should do this realising that it is only when members of the public consider their

information as important that they can pay attention enough to it to discuss it in interpersonal or social levels (according to the two-step flow theory), be able to discover its contents that gratify their specific needs (according to the Uses and Gratification theory) and probably be moved to perform the expected action.

All in all then it seems right to conclude that effective publicity or information campaign is very necessary for successful execution of various government policies and programmes in Nigeria, that people will be best informed and persuaded if the information campaign planners adopt a more effective multi-media approach or strategy that effectively combines mass and interpersonal means of communication, realises that the pattern of information flow is mostly two-step or multi-step and indirect, emphasises aspects of the information packages that have to do with the satisfaction or gratification of people's specific needs, and realises that the mass media possess the power to set the agenda for the people by lending salience to certain issues and not others.

It would seem from our discussions throughout this paper that if future pre-voting registration publicity and other similar campaigns in Nigeria adopt the above strategy, the many mistakes of past public enlightenment and publicity exercises will be significantly reduced, if not completely removed. Our discussions in this paper seem also to serve as a reasonable demonstration of the close affinity between theory and practice and should help to disabuse the minds of some information campaign planners of the erroneous idea that there is a wide gap between the theory of Mass Communication and the practice of this vocation. Theory and practice are largely inter-complementary and two sides of the same coin.

Applying the relevant theories contained in this paper's recommended effective multi-media approach will help to make their campaigns more systematic and not haphazard. It will help them to do even better what they did right in the past and to add new armour to their information campaign arsenal, thereby achieving better results.

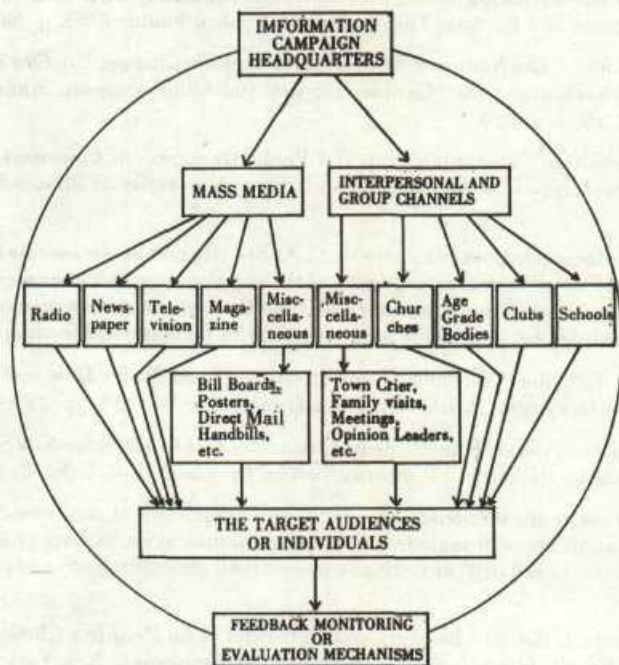
The multi-media model constructed from our earlier discussions and analyses in this paper is described by the schema below.

As the model shows, well-prepared and packaged information campaign messages should flow from the information campaign headquarters to the mass media and the interpersonal and group communication channels. Then, through the complex nexus of the various communication channels contained within these two broad channels (Mass media and Interpersonal/Group) channels, the information should get to the individual audience members with the continual supervision of the information campaign officials. Finally, the campaign officials at the headquarters should use various evaluation, feedback or monitoring research mechanisms to assess

the effectiveness of their campaign efforts. Such evaluations should be done not only at the end of the campaign but also as it is in progress. This will ensure continual adjustments whenever this is necessary. These continual adjustment, we know, helps to ensure greater effectiveness and better results in information campaign exercises.

Figure 1

The Recommended Multi-Media Model for Effective Information Campaigns



REFERENCES

1. The key works in the area of mass media and national development include:- Everett Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (1962). Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*; (1958). Wilbur Schramm, *Mass Media and National Development*, (1964); Karl Deutsch *Nationalism and Social Communications*, (1953); and Lucien Pye (ed), *Communication and Political Development*, (1963).

2. For instance, even though some successes were recorded during the 1978 and 1982 voter registration information campaigns in Nigeria, many individuals, organisations, states and mass media still charged the FEDECO officials involved in that campaign of indolence, carelessness, corruption, irregularities and inadequate planning - - evidence that everything was not alright. See, for example, *Daily Times*, February 22, 1978, p.24; and *Daily Times*, September 29, 1982, p. 22.
3. The pioneering works of Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and others were frequently about elections, mass media and politics in general. An example is the famous 1940 Erie County Study in the U.S. by Berelson and others that gave birth to the Two Step Flow Theory discussed in this paper.
4. Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media," in *Studies of Broadcasting: An International Annual of Broadcasting Science*, eds. H. Eguchi and K. Sata, Tokyo: Nippon Kyokai, March 1973, p. 88.
5. W.J. McGuire, "The Nature of Attitudes and Attitude Change," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, eds. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, Addison Wesley Publishers, 1969, p. 229.
6. Bernard Berelson, "Communication and Public Opinion," in *Communications in Modern Society*, ed. Wilbur Schramm, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1948, p. 172.
7. The knowledge gap hypothesis states that "As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status tend to acquire this at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tend to increase rather than decrease."
8. See Philip Tichenor, G. Donohue and C. Olien, "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, No. 134, pp. 159 - 170.
9. Peter Klarke and Gerald Kline, "Media Effects Reconsidered: Some New Strategies for Communication Research", *Communication Research*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1974, p. 225.
10. In using these terms it should be borne in mind that some of the "theories" in mass communication are still regarded by many communication experts as being at best hypotheses that need further testing to ensure their generalizability and predictability potentials.
11. Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and H. Guadet, *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in Presidential Campaign*, New York: Duell Sloan and Pearce, 1944.
12. See Melvin L. Defleur, *Theories of Mass Communication*, New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1966, pp. 199-128.
13. See for instance, the significant work by Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964. See also, O.O. Hunponu - Wusu, "Communicating Family Planning to Rural Communities in Nigeria: Some suggestions," *UNILAG Communication Review*, Vol. 1, Nos. 2 and 3, April/December, 1977.
14. Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by the People in the Flow of Mass Communication*, Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955.

15. Sharon M. Murphy, "Voter Registration Drive in Nigeria: Patterns of Communication Influence", Paper Presented to the International Communication Division, Association for Education in Journalism Convention, Houston, Texas, August, 1979.
16. P.F. Lazarsfeld and F.N. Stanton (eds), *Radio Communication Research*. New York: Harper and Row, 1949.
17. Bernard Berelson, "What 'Missing the Newspaper' Means," in P.F. Lazarsfeld and F.N. Stanton (eds), *Ibid*, 1949.
18. J.G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, (eds), *The Uses of Mass Communication*, Vol. III, Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1974.
19. See their research report "Utilization of Mass Communication by Individuals" in Blumler and Katz (eds), *Ibid*.
20. This trend is summarised in I.E. Nwosu, J. Pavlik and D. Gonzalez-Ethel's, "Towards Effective Employee Communication in a large Commercial Organisation in the U.S.A. (Honey Well Inc.), 1980. See also Leo Jeffres, "Functions of Media Behaviours", *Communication Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1975.
21. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, New York: Macmillan, 1922, pp. 1 - 19.
22. Bernard C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 13.
23. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, "A Report on Agenda-Setting Research, Association for Education in Journalism, Theory and Methodology Division, San Diego, California, August 18 - 21, 1974, pp. 10 - 11.
24. Donald L. Shaw and Maxwell E. McCombs, *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Functions of the Press*, St. Paul: West Publishers, 1977, p. 153.
25. Jack M. McLeod, Lee B. Becker and James E. Byrnes, "Another Look at the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press," *Communication Research*, No. 1, April 1974, p. 137.
26. Margaret Piel, *Nigerian Politics: The People's View*, London: Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1976.