

USING APPLIED COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TO INTERROGATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

ONIGBINDE, Christianah Opeyemi
chrisyemong@gmail.com
Department of Mass Communication
Redeemer's University Ede, Osun State

IFEDUBA, Emmanuel
ifedubae@run.edu.ng
Department of Mass Communication
Redeemer's University Ede, Osun State

ABSTRACT

Effective communication is crucial in any society as it has the power to promote development and improve the quality of life of individuals. This comprehensive overview investigates how applied communication research can be used to examine socioeconomic challenges such as education, politics, economy, society, and health in Nigeria. With a focus on how communication might be utilized as a tool for addressing these difficulties, the review explores the themes, theories, periods of publication, and methodologies used in several articles, research papers, and journals written on different socio-economic challenges individually. In addition to shedding light on the efficacy of various communication tactics, the review emphasizes the value of practical communication research in recognizing and addressing socioeconomic difficulties and the logical conclusion of research work on this topic. The assessment concludes with recommendations for further study in the area, highlighting the necessity of more investigation into the connection between communication and socioeconomic difficulties. Overall, this systematic analysis gives a thorough overview of the function of communication in analyzing socioeconomic problems and offers insightful advice for academics and professionals working in the area of communication and development.

Keywords: Applied communication, research, socio-economic, systematic review

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is crucial in any society as it has the power to promote development and improve the quality of life of individuals. Applied communication refers to the practical use of communication strategies, techniques, and media to achieve specific objectives. In Nigeria, communication has been employed in various sectors, including education, politics, economy, society, and health, to address critical challenges and promote development. Socio-economic issues are common in today's society and present substantial barriers to advancement and development. To solve these issues, communication, as a vehicle for promoting understanding and social change, is essential. The investigation of these issues and the creation of workable solutions can be accomplished through applied communication research. To examine socio-economic difficulties, applied communication research has used a variety of themes, theories, and methodologies.

Education is one of the most critical sectors in any country, and Nigeria is not an exception. Applied communication has been utilized in Nigeria to address various challenges in education, such as improving access to education, promoting gender equality, enhancing the quality of education, and addressing health-related issues (Adesoji&Adesoji, 2021; Ogboghodo&Iyamu, 2017). Communication has also been used to address issues of political instability in Nigeria, such as

electoral violence, corruption, and social unrest (Oloruntoba & Okonjo-Iweala, 2020).

In the economy, applied communication has played a significant role in promoting economic growth and development in Nigeria. For instance, communication has been utilized to promote entrepreneurship, microfinance, financial literacy, and health-related issues among Nigerians (Oyelere & Debayo, 2020; Uzoma & Gaya, 2019). Communication has also been used to promote social change and development in Nigeria by addressing issues such as gender inequality, poverty, health-related issues, and human rights violations (Okigbo, 2019).

Despite the critical role of applied communication in promoting development in Nigeria, there is still a need for a systematic review of the literature to determine the impact and influence of applied communication on education, politics, the economy, society, and health. Such a review will help identify gaps in the literature and areas where more research is needed. Therefore, this study aims to use applied communication research to interrogate socioeconomic challenges and conduct a systematic review of themes, theories, and methods.

The review will involve a comprehensive search of online databases such as PubMed, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, using relevant keywords such as "applied communication," "research," "socio-economic," and "systematic review." The inclusion criteria for the literature review are articles written in English, peer-reviewed and validated, focused on the impact or influence of applied communication, and published within the past 10 years. 100 articles that fit the above criteria were earmarked to be reviewed systematically.

The findings of this study will be useful to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in the fields of communication, and socio-economic challenges. By identifying the gaps in the literature and areas where more research is needed, the study will also serve as a foundation for future research on the topic.

METHODOLOGY

The method of review used in this dissertation is a systematic literature review. A systematic literature review is a methodical and comprehensive approach to synthesizing and analyzing existing literature on a specific topic. It involves a rigorous and transparent process of searching, selecting, and appraising relevant literature to answer a research question or address a specific problem (Khan et al., 2003).

Systematic literature reviews are commonly used in social sciences research to identify gaps in the existing body of knowledge and provide a critical assessment of the available evidence. The use of this method ensures that the research is based on a comprehensive and transparent review of existing literature, thus enhancing the credibility and reliability of the findings.

The study selection process involved a comprehensive search of online databases such as PubMed, JSTOR, Academia, Research Gate, Google Scholar, Library Sources, Journal of Digital Media and Policy, Review of Communication and Media Studies, New Media and Mass Communication, International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Review as well as Journal of Communication Studies, using a combination of keywords related to the topic of applied communication and its impact on education, politics, economy, society and health in Nigeria. The keywords used included "applied communication," "research," "socio-economic," and "systematic review." The search was limited to articles that were published in English between 2010 and 2023 and were peer-reviewed.

After the initial search, duplicates were removed, and the remaining articles were screened based on their relevance to the topic. The screening process involved reading the titles and abstracts of the articles and excluding those that were not related to the topic or did not meet the inclusion criteria. The full texts of the remaining articles were then read to determine their suitability for inclusion in the review.

A total of 100 articles were included in the review, covering various aspects of the impact and influence of applied communication on education, politics, economy, society, and health in Nigeria. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the topic, the quality of the research, and the depth of the analysis. The articles were drawn from a range of disciplines, including communication studies, political science, economics, and sociology, among others.

Overall, the study selection process was rigorous and comprehensive, and the selected articles provide a broad and detailed overview of the interrogation of socio-economic challenges such as education, politics, economy, society, and health in Nigeria.

Eligibility criteria: The eligibility criteria used for the systematic review on the impact and influence of applied communication on education, politics, economy, society, and health in Nigeria were carefully chosen to ensure that the articles included in the review were relevant, of high quality, and contributed to the understanding of the topic. The eligibility criteria were as follows:

Language: Articles written in English were included in the review to ensure that the findings could be understood by a wider audience.

Geographic location: Only articles that focused on Nigeria were included in the review. This ensured that the findings were relevant to the specific context of Nigeria.

Time period: Articles published between 2010 and 2022 were included in the review. This ensured that the review was based on recent and up-to-date research.

Focus: Only articles that focused on the impact or influence of applied communication on education, politics, the economy, society, and health in Nigeria were included in the review. This ensured that the articles were directly relevant to the research question.

Peer review: Only articles that had undergone a peer-review process were included in the review. This ensured that the articles were of high quality and had been evaluated by experts in the field.

By using these eligibility criteria, the review ensured that the articles included were relevant, recent, high quality, and contributed to the understanding of the impact and influence of applied communication on education, politics, economy, society, and health in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication is essential in every aspect of life, and its effectiveness determines the level of success in achieving set goals. Applied communication involves the use of communication theories, tools, and strategies to address specific issues and solve problems in various fields, including education, politics, economy, society, and health. In Nigeria, applied communication has become increasingly important in promoting development, improving access to education and healthcare, enhancing democracy, and achieving economic growth. This literature review aims to systematically examine the impact and influence of applied communication on education, politics, economy, society, and health in Nigeria.

Applied Communication and Education: Effective communication is crucial for improving the quality of education in Nigeria. According to Adebowale (2019), the application of communication strategies, such as storytelling, group discussions, and role-playing, can enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes. Furthermore, Oyewole, Oluwaseun, and Oyewumi (2018) observed that the use of technology in education, such as social media, can improve access to information and enhance communication between teachers and students. The study also found that the integration of technology in education can improve students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Applied Communication and Politics: In the political sphere, applied communication plays a significant role in enhancing democracy and promoting good governance. Akpojivi (2021) noted that effective communication strategies, such as public relations, can improve the image of political candidates and parties and enhance their chances of winning elections. Furthermore, Adepoju and Adepoju (2019) observed that the use of social media by political actors can improve citizens' engagement and participation in the political process. The study also found that social media can be used to hold political leaders accountable and promote transparency in government.

Applied communication has a significant impact on political processes in Nigeria. Communication strategies such as political advertising, and social media in Nigeria. Additionally, communication plays a crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability in government, as it enables citizens to access information about government policies and decisions.

Applied Communication and Economy: Applied communication has a significant impact on the Nigerian economy, it is critical in promoting economic growth and development in Nigeria. Nwachukwu, Kuzhinjal, and Nwankwo (2019) observed that effective communication strategies, such as advertising and public relations, can enhance brand awareness and improve sales. The study also found that the use of social media and mobile marketing can increase customer engagement and loyalty. Furthermore, Oyebamiji, Adeoye, and Adeoye (2020) noted that effective communication between businesses and customers can improve customer satisfaction and retention, leading to increased revenue and profitability. Effective communication strategies can help to promote business activities, increase consumer awareness, and facilitate trade and investment. Furthermore, communication can also improve financial literacy and promote entrepreneurship, which can contribute to economic growth and development.

Applied Communication and Society: Applied communication has a significant impact on society in Nigeria. Communication strategies can be used to address social issues such as poverty, inequality, and injustice, and promote social change. Additionally, communication can help to promote cultural understanding and diversity, as well as foster social cohesion and unity. In Nigerian society, applied communication has been instrumental in addressing social issues and promoting social change. Olorunnisola (2019) noted that effective communication strategies, such as advocacy and public awareness campaigns, can promote social justice and human rights. Furthermore, Ololade, Idowu, and Oyebamiji (2018) observed that communication can be used to address issues such as gender inequality and sexual violence and promote gender equality and women's rights.

Applied Communication and Health: Applied communication also plays a critical role in promoting health outcomes in Nigeria. Effective communication strategies can improve health literacy, promote healthy behaviors, and increase access to healthcare services. According to Adeleke and Adeleke (2020), communication strategies such as health education and community outreach programs can improve awareness and knowledge about health issues, reduce health disparities, and promote healthy behaviors. Additionally, effective communication between healthcare providers and patients can improve patient outcomes and satisfaction, as well as promote trust and confidence in the healthcare system. Therefore, applied communication is a crucial tool for promoting and improving health outcomes in Nigeria.

In addition to education, politics, economy, and society, applied communication also plays a vital role in improving healthcare in Nigeria. According to Uchenna, Ogbu, and Aguwa (2018), effective communication between healthcare providers and patients can enhance patients' satisfaction, understanding of their health conditions, and compliance with treatment regimes. The study also found that the use of mobile health technologies, such as text messaging and mobile apps, can improve communication and health outcomes. Additionally, Onyebuchi and Nwagbo (2019) observed that communication can be used to address health disparities and promote health equity among different social groups, such as women and vulnerable populations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1

Which area of research has more focus from researchers on the applied communication and socio-economic sectors in Nigeria?

RESULT

S/N	THEMES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1.	Applied Communication and Education	56	56%
2.	Applied Communication and Politics	11	11%
3.	Applied Communication and Economy	7	7%
4.	Applied Communication and Society	6	6%
5.	Applied Communication and Health	20	20%
	TOTAL	100	100%

Based on the one hundred annotated bibliography gathered by the author, findings show that researchers focus more on research that relates to applied communication, education, politics, economy, society, and health. Out of a 100%, 56% percent of the articles reviewed were relating to education. The next area that received attention is applied communication and health which garnered 20% out of 100%. Next is applied communication and politics which got 11%. The remaining areas shared the remaining 13%.

Research Question 2

Which period did researchers focus more on researching applied communication and socio-economic sectors in Nigeria?

S/N	PERIOD OF PUBLICATION	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1.	2000-2005	1	1%
2.	2006-2011	1	1%
3.	2012-2017	41	41%
4.	2018-2023	57	57%
	TOTAL	100	100

Based on the findings of this study, it is revealed that 57% percent of the articles reviewed were published between 2018-2023. After this, from 2012-2017 the articles garnered 41% coverage. Comparatively, from 2018-2023 more articles were published compared to 2012-2017.

Research Question 3

Which methodology did researchers focus more on researching applied communication?

RESULT

S/N	THEMES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1.	Applied Communication and Education	56	56%
2.	Applied Communication and Politics	11	11%
3.	Applied Communication and Economy	7	7%
4.	Applied Communication and Society	6	6%
5.	Applied Communication and Health	20	20%
	TOTAL	100	100%
S/N	METHOD	TOTAL	
	QUANTITATIVE METHOD		
1.	Experiment	5	
2.	Survey	15	
3.	Content Analysis	20	
	QUALITATIVE METHOD		
1.	In-depth interview	7	
2.	Descriptive approach	2	
3.	Participatory action research	1	
	MIXED METHOD		
1.	Survey and In-depth interview	3	
2.	Survey and Content Analysis	16	
3.	Observation and in-depth interview	2	
	POSITION PAPER/CONCEPTUAL PAPER	29	
	TOTAL	100	

Based on the findings of this study, it is revealed that researchers in Nigeria adopt the quantitative survey research method more than any other type of research method. Position paper/ conceptual paper followed by 29 articles adopting this method. The research methods that are not employed by researchers when researching applied communication in Nigeria include focus group discussion, qualitative content analysis, and so on.

Research Question 4

Which theories were used more by researchers to research issues that related to Applied Communication?

RESULT

S/N	THEORIES USED BY RESEARCHERS UNDER REVIEW	TOTAL
1.	None	59
2.	The Diffusion of Innovation Theory	4
3.	Modernization Theory	1
4.	Dependency Theory	1
5.	Social Cognitive Theory	3
6.	Social Identity Theory	2
7.	Uses and Gratification Theory	15
8.	Social Learning Theory	1
9.	Framing Theory	4
10.	Media Effects Theory	2
11.	Health Belief Model Theory	1
12.	Agenda Setting Theory	5
13.	Theory of Reasoning Action	1
14.	Theory of Strategic Communication	1
	TOTAL	100

Based on the findings of the study, 41 theories were used in 100 articles on applied communication in Nigeria while 59 out of the 100 articles that were reviewed did not have a theoretical background to the study. Furthermore, out of all the communication theories employed by researchers, this study found that the Uses and Gratification theory is used more by researchers than any other communication theory. Also, this study found out that, researchers in the mass communication field, specifically relating to applied communication, borrow theories from different fields of study to back up their study.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this systematic review shows that applied communication plays a significant role in shaping socio-economic factors such as education, politics, economy, society, and health in Nigeria. The study found that applied communication has the highest impact on education, followed by politics, society, and the economy. However, there are still gaps in the existing literature, particularly in the areas of the economy and society. The limited impact of applied communication on the economy may be due to factors such as the dominance of traditional economic sectors and the limited reach of communication channels to remote areas. On the other hand, the limited impact on society may be due to cultural and traditional factors that resist change and modernization. Further studies are needed to explore the role of applied communication in these areas, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving communication technologies and changing socio-political landscapes.

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