

The Media, Informal Learning and Ageism in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

In recent decades, public perceptions of old people have been shifting towards negativity. Stereotypes of ageing may shape behaviours towards the aged, and may complicate the social, nutritional, psychological and health conditions of the elderly. The perception and attitude of people toward the aged cannot be separated from the informal learning outcomes that flowed through or permeated their interactional episodes as well as their encounters and specific events. From the premise of cultivation theory, it is assumed that the stereotypes surrounding beliefs and attitudes about the aged are cultivated from informal, everyday learning through the media. Thus, study examines ageism among young people and the extent to which these beliefs match the ways the elderly are portrayed in the media. Using Nollywood movies as an example of media form to which young people in Nigeria are exposed, the study tests the hypothesis that convergence exists in the extent of ageist beliefs and representations in the media among students of tertiary institution in Ibadan. The result shows that all the dimensions of ageism measured through the modified ageing quiz are represented or enacted in Nollywood movies. While respondents have ageist perceptions of their own, the representations of older persons they encounter in movies are not so different. One effective way to address ageism is to employ the channel through which these stereotypes were constructed in the first place. Through informal learning arrangements, advocacy may be kick-started by exposing the aged and other members of the society to accurate information on what ageing entails.

Keywords: ageism, informal learning, stereotype, media, Nollywood movies

Introduction

One of the most significant realities of population dynamics in the last decade relates to increasing population of the aged, the challenge of ageing and its associated problems (Ajomale, 2007). This question has received considerable research and policy attention in high income countries where population ageing has existed for much longer, and capacity exists to deal with its social, economic, nutritional and physio-psychological demands (Brunner, 2005; Lucchetti, Corsonello & Gattaceca, 2008; Visser, Pluijm, Stel, Bosscher & Deeg, 2002). For low income countries, however, population ageing occupies a marginal space in population studies and policy circle. The consequence of such neglect for the aged people living in African countries is that their

concerns are not being seriously addressed, while other specific wellbeing needs continue to go unmet (National Research Council, 2006).

These problems are further compounded by the vulnerability of the aged to threats of stereotype and ageism. Stereotype threat is defined as a situation in which an individual is at risk of confirming a negative characterization about one's group (Horton, Baker, Pearce & Deakin, 2010). Irrespective of the economy of any country, it is perceived that the aged in the society, even though they are the repository of wisdom from experiences through the years, are weak, frail, incompetent and generally slow (Lockenhorf *et al.*, 2009). Williams (2003) explains that stereotype indicates representations that are misleading, incomplete or negative about a group of people in society and portrays them in a simplistic and derogatory manner. The result is the potential to marginalise such groups which give rise to social prejudices (Williams, 2003), a phenomenon popularly referred to as ageism in the case of the elderly population.

Ageing and the Aged in Nigeria

Nigerian elders, aged 60 and above, constitute 5.3 per cent of the total population size (National Population Commission, 2010). While this proportion is quite small, the absolute number is over 9 million people. Most of them have unmet material and policy needs. They are at a relative disadvantage on significant factors such as adequate nutrition, exercise, access to health care and adequate housing (Akpan & Umobong, 2013; Asiyabola, 2005; Asogwa & Igbokwe, 2010; Fajemilehin, Ayandiran & Salami, 2007; Mudiare, 2013; Okoye & Obikeze, 2005; Olayiwola & Ketiku, 2006).

Socially, older people are in a vulnerable group that is largely excluded from development planning, the most recent example being the Millennium Development Goals. For more than three decades, the wellbeing of elderly deteriorated with the rising level of poverty among the elderly households from 28.8 per cent in 1980 to 52.8 per cent in 2004 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). In a bid to remain alive, most of the older people in Nigeria are still in active labour force. About two-thirds of older people aged 60 and above are active in the labour market which further makes them vulnerable to chronic conditions because of the degenerating state of their body (National Population Commission, 2010). Nutritionally, elderly people are believed to be food vulnerable. A study reported that on the average, 93 per cent of 305 elderly surveyed in a Southwestern state were nutritionally vulnerable (Olayiwola & Ketiku, 2006). While most of the older people in Nigeria are not economically empowered to purchase food, dietary contents of the food eating by most of them are poor in quality and quantity. There is a high intake of carbohydrate and animal fat.

Institutional homes for the elderly are scarce while medical service provision and caregiving to the aged are not affordable (Ajomale, 2007;

Asiyanbola, 2005). Many aged do not have access to qualitative health services, just like some other groups within the general population. For instance, the kind of attention given to the provision of maternal health services is near absent as the case with old people. Cost of healthcare for old people is expensive and ambulatory service is not easily accessible and effective in Nigeria (Fajemilehin *et al.*, 2007; Sijuwade, 2008). Asagba (2005) further observes that the major cause of lack of policy protection is non-sensitization of the law makers on the nature and seriousness of older people's problem.

Ageist Stereotype in Nigeria

Public perceptions of old people in most African countries have shifted towards negativity in recent decades. Commonly held stereotypes against them include their association with ill health, decline in physical appearance, lack of sexuality, mental decline, personality and disposition problems, loneliness and isolation [National Centre for the Protection of Older People (NCPOP, 2009)]. The respectable place of the elderly in African communities, as wise counsellors, exemplar of true knowledge as well as peace-and bridge-builders, has declined drastically due to changes in societal structures, economic transformations and shift in values and practices (Ajomale, 2007; Mba, 2007). Similarly in Nigeria, Ajala (2006) pointed out that old age is now constructed as that stage of life when someone begins to approach the grave or the stage when someone's capacity to work diminishes.

Studies show that aged people in Nigeria are stereotyped by youths and secondary school adolescents (Okoye, 2004; Okoye & Obikeze, 2005). One survey conducted among 120 adolescents found that Nigerian secondary students hold layers of misconceptions about old people, from beliefs that they were senile and feel miserable most of the time, to the perception of disinterest in sexual relations (Okoye, 2004). Students also perceived elders as resistant to learning new things, too weak to work as effectively as younger workers, and that 80 per cent of the elderly are not healthy enough to carry out their normal activities. In a much larger study conducted among 800 youths in urban and rural areas in Anambra state, Okoye and Obikeze (2005) revealed that elderly were perceived as acting like children, sickly, conservative, suspicious and secretive.

Negative perception of institutional care for aged persons also predominates. Rather than view these homes in pragmatic terms, contemporary public discourse on the institutionalization of elderly people is largely shaped by sentiments of *Africaness*, a thinking which claims that African culture frowns upon abandoning one's parents in a home at that phase in life when they needed emotional care the most. For instance, a study conducted among different categories of caregivers in Ilorin, north-central Nigeria, showed that institutional care is still condemned as an abomination and irresponsibility (Abdulraheem & Parakoyi, 2005). Drawing upon this belief, policymakers have continued to maintain and justify policy silence on the establishment elderly homes for old people while at the same time abstaining from

intervening in the operation of privately owned ones (Asagba, 2005). Meanwhile, the general population preferred to think of these homes as confinement centers for aged men and women who they consider to be mentally unstable, disabled, physically challenged witches and wizards (Asogwa & Igbokwe, 2010; Johnson, 2012). For them, to live in an elderly home is to be a sufferer; a worthless, wicked and unworthy of familial care.

In Nigeria, an elderly stereotype that borders on witchcraft is especially disturbing. Old people are often labelled as witch/wizard or other forms of verbal abuse (Ajala, 2006; Asogwa & Igbokwe, 2010; Ola & Olalekan, 2012). Akpan and Umobong (2013) in an assessment of elder abuse and neglect in a state in the Southern part of the country observe that elders were branded witches and wizards within the family and thrown on the street. Climatic, agricultural and general life failures are often attributed to elderly people in the community (Adinkrah, 2004; Stabell, 2010). These stereotypes influence perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of people towards other members of the society (Okoye & Obikeze, 2005). They may also shape old people's perception of themselves. Thus, old people in Africa have gradually become victims of abusive expulsion and murderous rage in different villages across the continent (Adinkrah, 2004; Akpan & Umobong, 2013; Ola & Olalekan, 2012; Stabell, 2010).

The perception and attitude of people toward the aged cannot be separated from the informal learning process that flows through the media. While these stereotypes and perceptions are typically internalized unconsciously, people do exhibit them as behaviours or actions in real interactions, which often have unfavourable consequences for whichever group is caught on the receiving end.

Media, Nollywood and Informal Learning of Ageist Stereotypes

Stereotypical portrayal of elderly people is common in the media, especially in Nollywood (that is, the Nigerian movie industry) movies. The aged are usually presented in negative light as "witches" and "wizards," so much that only the image of an old person is conjured in people's minds when these two words are mentioned (Stabell, 2010). When aged persons are cast in Nigerian movies, rarely are they depicted as holding powers outside of witchery or other forms of mystical or diabolic powers. Even with these powers, elderly characters usually appear underfed and dressed shabbily when compared to other age groups in the movie. Without these powers, however, their conditions are even worse: they suffer abandonment and neglect; aged mothers are abused by daughter-in-laws; underperforming children prosecute aged parents for their troubles; Pastors and Muslim clerics receive revelations that place blame at the feet of old, weak and extremely poor mothers.

These stereotypes and misconceptions are learned over a long period of time. For both the aged themselves and other members of the society who

exhibit ageist behaviours, wrong notions about old people and the negative perceptions and attitudes that accompany them are subtle and hidden from view when acquired, and usually become embedded and taken for granted once internalised (Centre for Confidence and Well-being). In the age of globalisation and information and communication technology (ICT), the media as an informal education tool has been at the forefront of transmitting some of these stereotypes and transferring them across spaces.

It is well known that all forms of education are important in human societies. Formal, informal and non-formal are the three types of education that exists in a society. Usually, informal education is distinguished from formal and non-formal types by extent of formalization, structure of environment of learning, degree of mediation, and period or duration of learning (Eshach, 2007; La Belle, 1982). Whereas formal education takes place within a structured, formalised and controlled environment of the school, informal learning occurs freely and spontaneously within the family or peer-group circle, public events, on the streets and neighbourhoods. Non-formal education, though systematically organized, is normally carried out outside the school environment and mainly designed “to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population” (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974). Scholars have indeed argued that the border between the three types of education is not always clear, and they regularly overlap in reality (Eshach, 2007; Gerber, Marek & Cavallo, 2001; La Belle, 1982).

People learn informally through what they read at leisure times, from what they view or listen to in the media and through various activities they engage in daily (Eshach, 2007; Maier, 2011; Malcolm, Hodgkinson & Colley, 2003; Shimic, 2012). Informal education is a lifelong process that takes place most passively. Almost every member of the society accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from events, daily experiences and exposures to specific imageries and the environment as a whole (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974). In other words, knowledge and attitudes gained through informal learning may be internalized without the learners knowing. Stereotypes surrounding beliefs about the aged are learned through informal, everyday practices of people. Interestingly, self-perception of elderly people is influenced in important ways by how they themselves have learned to perceive “elderly persons” over the years.

Scholars have argued that the relative worth and powers of groups within any given society are deducible from the extent of exposure they receive in the media and by determining whether they are presented in negative or positive light (Harwood, 2007; Singer, 1973). This is buttressed by (Donlon, Ashman & Levy, 2005) in an intervention study that there is a relationship between television exposure and more negative image of ageing. Analysis of a study on stereotype of ageing and representation in mass media revealed that media representation contributes to stereotype and misunderstanding (Mason, Darnell & Prifti, 2010). They also suggest that children and young adults may develop beliefs about ageing based on what they see in the media.

The media, which reflects and shapes the culture of any society (Mason *et al.*, 2010), is consumed by a very large segment of the population. Since the stereotypes surrounding beliefs about the aged are learned through informal, every day practices of people including television programs and radio jingles, the elderly in Nigeria may be perceived as having less worth based on the manner they are represented in the media, which may create stereotype threat.

Theoretical Framework: Cultivation Theory

The study was anchored on cultivation theory developed by George Gerbner and his colleagues. As a theoretical position commonly categorized under “media effect” theories, the strength of cultivation approach in assessing the influence of sustained media exposure in the construction of reality for media consumers lies in its long-term orientation (Laughey, 2007). It has been argued that while everyone in the field of communication do not agree on the validity of its findings, cultivation theory is among the most important contributions yet made to scientific and public understanding of media effects (Shanahan & Morgan, 2003). Cultivation theory conceives the media as an important information and entertainment source that has great capacity to encroach into everyday lives of viewers, albeit gradually (Laughey, 2007). Central to the theoretical position is the claim that sustained exposure to media messages “is likely to reiterate, confirm, and nourish (i.e. cultivate) values and perspectives” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1986: 23-24).

Using the concept of “mainstreaming” and other metaphors suggesting flows and permeation, cultivation theory suggests that the influence of media on people’s conception of reality has the potential to overshadow or override normal, realistic differences in perspectives and behaviours in the society (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986: 31). As put by Laughey (2007: 21), “...mainstreaming effects may cultivate a homogenization of divergent views because the medium is intended to appeal to broad audience interests... [*In other words*] Television provides a guide and offers a ‘television answer’ to the question of how to act and behave in the world outside.” Writing a forward to a publication on television and cultivation research, Gerbner explains that mass-produced stories in television and in other media form serve to achieve three basic functions: to reveal how things work; describe what things are; and to tell us what to do about them (Shanahan & Morgan, 2003). This tri-dimensional functions of television not only seek to explain and describe what obtains in reality and how they operate, but seek to offer normative suggestions on how to behave towards them in our day-to-day encounters. It is worth noting that this normative function is not necessarily performed directly nor intentionally or in any explicit forms – although these are possibilities as well. As Gerbner observes:

You do not have to believe the “facts” of Little Red Riding Hood to grasp the notion that big bad “wolves” victimize old women

and trick little girls – a lesson in gender roles, fear, and power. Stories of this kind build...the fantasy we call reality. I do not suggest that the revelations are false...but that they are synthetic, selective, often mythical, and always socially constructed. (Shanahan & Morgan, 2003: ix)

The theory emphasizes the power of media to define the specific and distinct conception of reality that people hold about things and people in the world, and this so-called reality is primarily those conception of reality flowing from the media (Shanahan & Morgan, 2003). As such, “cultivation is about the implications of stable, repetitive, pervasive and virtually inescapable patterns of images and ideologies that television (especially dramatic, fictional entertainment) provides”(Shanahan & Morgan, 2003: 5). That is, “...the stories television tells can help shape the deeper, invisible, rarely questioned assumptions all of us carry around; they do not “determine” our thoughts and actions so much as they color and help inform the meaning of what we think, say and do” (Shanahan & Morgan, 2003: 22).

Consequently, media output is, like other human institutions, functions as a basic medium through which humans live and learn (Shanahan & Morgan, 2003). In applying this theory in the study, the aim is to ascertain the extent to which the perception of elderly held by the respondents comes close to or approximate the representation of old people in Nollywood movies they have seen. It is worth clarifying, however, that this study does not intend to establish a causal relation between Nollywood movies and respondents’ perception of the elderly (nor vice versa) but rather to demonstrate the capacity of movies’ representation of old people to cultivate certain views about the aged in the society. Put simply, the study attempts to test how much convergence exists in the extent of ageist beliefs among respondents and ageist representations in the media. Even if the way that young people perceive old people and the negative stereotype pictures of elderly in movies are correlated, it may not be conclude from this study that the real source of the negative stereotype is the Nollywood movies. The essence of this theory, as applied in the study, is to explore how the represented images of old people in Nollywood movies align with the young people’s everyday perception of the aged.

Methodology

This study is a non-experimental cross-sectional survey designed to elicit information on media, informal learning and ageism among the students of tertiary institution in Ibadan, Southwestern Nigeria through questionnaire administration. Using stratified sampling technique, a sample of 400 students were drawn from the two most popular tertiary institutions in Ibadan: University of Ibadan and The Polytechnic Ibadan. The sample selection stratification criteria are type of school, level of study and faculty of study.

The research instrument was designed by adopting some questions from Palmore’s *Fact on Ageing: A short Quiz* (Palmore, 1977) and other questions

that are relevant to media presentation of elderly in the study local context. In all, the questionnaire was divided into three sections: background information of the respondents, perception of older people and perceived portrayal of older people in the nollywood movies. The basic indicator for measuring ageism in this study comprises 32 questions. This ageism indicator was further categorized into social (15 questions), cognitive (8 questions), health (5 questions), economic and productivity (2) and victimization (1) dimensions. During the questionnaire administration, the researchers observed ethical concerns of confidentiality and obtained verbal consent from all the respondents.

The analysis for this study was based on the cumulative scores of respondents on the ageism indicators and dimensions. Furthermore, correlation analysis of the ageism indicator on the perception of the respondents and the presentation of older people in the Nollywood movie. This is to measure the likelihood of cultivating ageism behaviour based on the presentations in the movie. The influence of different indicators of ageism on the overall perceived ageism was also examined using linear regression analysis.

Results

Perception of Older People

The perception of older people was examined in this study by modifying Palmore's *Fact on Ageing: A short Quiz*, and adding other questions that are relevant to media presentation of elderly in the study local context. These questions were further categorized into five groups of social, cognitive, health, cultural, economic and productivity as well as victimization. Table 1 presents percentage distribution of those who perceived ageing negatively based on the modified ageing quiz.

Generally, 78% of all respondents perceived ageing negatively across all the indicators measured. Although there are large variations across specific dimensions, negative view of old people was high nonetheless. For instance, more than nine in ten respondents expressed social ageism by perceiving the elderly to be uninterested in social world or sexual relations, often bored, isolated, irritable and miserable. Health-wise, over 83% thinks that older people are more likely to be frail, weak or sickly, while as much 77% of the respondents were of the view that the aged was more likely to be victimised. The least negative ageist perception relates to the economic and productivity dimension of ageism, the view that old people are always in financial problem and contribute little to the society. It is also revealing that more than 70% of the respondents believe that most older people are often diabolic and wicked - witches and wizards.

Table 1: Perceived ageism of the elderly among the respondents

Ageism Indicators	%
Overall Perceived Ageism	78.0
• Social Ageism	91.5
• Health Ageism	83.2
• Victimization Ageism	77.9
• Cultural Ageism	70.2
• Cognitive Ageism	67.2
• Economic and Productivity Ageism	64.1

Further analysis of the perceived presentation of older persons in Nollywood movies is shown in Table 2. As with the scale of ageist views expressed by individual respondents, all dimensions of ageism were common in the Nollywood movies that respondents have seen in the past six months. However, overall ageism in Nollywood movies was higher at 87.4%. Literal comparison of the dimensions of ageism between self-reported ageist perception and ageist views in movies indicated that victimisation (39.2%) and cultural (59.5%) ageism are lower in movies.

Table 2: Ageist representations in Nollywood movies

Ageism Indicators	%
Overall Ageism presented in the movies	87.4
• Presented Social Ageism	94.6
• Presented Health Ageism	89.4
• Presented Victimization Ageism	39.2
• Presented Cultural Ageism	59.5
• Presented Cognitive Ageism	78.6
• Presented Economic and Productivity Ageism	81.4

Respondents were also allowed to freely list words that, in their own views, best summarise how older persons are commonly represented in Nollywood movies. The representational summary words are presented in *word cloud* in Figure 1 where the most common words are bolder and bigger. While the culturally accorded place of the elderly as embodiment of wisdom was maintained in the movies, the belief that older persons are wicked, weak, poor and diabolic seem pervasive. The result is quite revealing despite the fact that representations that describe ageing positively are not hard to find (as suggested by use of words like calm, adviser, caring and even “youngy”), movie representations with negativity about older population appears dominant (as indicated by words such as authoritative, dogmatic, stubborn and irritated).

Table 4: Media ageism indicators on perceived stereotype of the aged

Media ageism indicators	Standard coefficient
• Presented Social Ageism	0.215*
• Presented Health Ageism	0.068
• Presented Victimization Ageism	0.025
• Presented Cultural Ageism	0.011
• Presented Cognitive Ageism	0.139*
• Presented Economic and Productivity Ageism	0.068

* *Regression analysis significant at the 0.05 level*

Discussion

In this study, the high prevalence of ageist perceptions among the respondents is not peculiar since similar findings have been reported in Nigeria by other researchers – although in different settings (Okoye and Obikeze, 2005; Okoye, 2004). However, this study situates the problem of ageism in Nigeria within the context of how ageist views may be cultivated through the forms that older persons are presented in Nollywood movies. As shown by the results, all the dimensions of ageism measured through the modified ageing quiz are represented or enacted in Nollywood movies. While respondents have ageist perceptions of their own, the representations of older persons that they encounter in movies are not so different. The words with which respondents describe the projections of the elderly that they see in Nollywood movies are indicative of this assertion.

As with Stabell's (2010) observation, respondents in the study mentioned that older persons shown in Nollywood movies were projected as wicked witches and wizards with diabolic powers. While not making a deduction of causality, the correlation between respondents' self-reported perceived ageism and their perception of how old people are represented in the movies is indicative of the role of media in the reproduction of negative stereotypes. Minimally, as an informal learning channel, it could be said that Nollywood portrayal of the elderly reinforces stereotypical beliefs about this population, thereby providing social justification for abuses that often follow, both in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa (Adinkrah, 2004; Akpan & Umobong, 2013; Ola & Olalekan, 2012; Stabell, 2010).

All the indicators of ageism that were measured in the study showed that the representations of social and cognitive ageism in Nollywood were the only significant influences on respondents' perception of the elderly. Social ageism misrepresents life world of elderly persons and propagates misconstrued notions of their sexual, relationship and emotional status, needs and aspirations. In the same way, projected cognitive ageism in movies is cast in inculcated imaginations that are not only inaccurate but that also misjudge their cognitive capabilities, including in the areas of decision-making, remembrance, adaptation, learning and independent thought.

One critical question emerges from this study: Is it the case that our social reality is what is imposed on Nollywood movies or it is Nollywood that is imposing its own imaginations on our social world? This question is germane and theoretically fundamental, reminiscent of the philosophical “chicken-egg dilemma.” Depending on the theoretical leaning, validity of response in both directions may be argued convincingly. However, posing such question in the context of this study misses the point since the most critical issue is the “cultivating” capacity of media forms like Nollywood movies. In other words, whereas the origin of media production and its consequent projections of imagination about different segments of the population can provide broader fundamental clarifications on the source(s) of media content, the role of media in the reproduction of stereotypes that may cultivate negative stereotypical thinking over long period of sustained exposure has a unique research merit that made it worthy of separate inquiry. Of course, there are factors outside the explanation pursued in the study that may provide more insight into the issue of ageist perceptions, for instance the influence that experience of living, or growing up in households, with older people may have on ageism, the study clarifies the puzzle a bit by drawing attention to the highly informal means through which the idea of “old people” is being constructed.

A number of avenues may be explored to address the problem of ageism but one effective way to do this will be to employ the channel through which these stereotypes were constructed in the first place. Through informal learning arrangements, advocacy may be kick-started by exposing the aged and other members of the society to accurate information on what ageing entails. Using mass and print media as good example of channels of informal education, some programs have been successful in causing behavioural changes in Nigeria. There are so many examples of jingles and short programs on the television and radio which can be channels of informal education that can change the way people perceived the nursing home for the elders, good nutrition for the elders and health related matters.

Movies, short programmes, documentaries and print media, behavioural changes towards elderly can be improved upon. In the South West Nigeria for instance, media advocacy, in terms of short programmes on radio stations, has been in use to disseminate accurate information on different aspects community living, health and wellbeing. “Abule Olokemeje” is one good example. It is a short drama broadcast in Yoruba and Pidgin English with a goal to educate the public about healthy living and HIV/AIDS in the Southern part of Nigeria. An evaluation study conducted on the effectiveness of this radio theatre “Abule Olokemeje” among rural communities revealed that more than 75% of the respondents felt the series significantly changed their disposition positively toward good healthy living because it was motivating and the coverage, language as well as vocabulary used are within the local context (Sofowora, 2007).

Another significant success story of media intervention story is the Universal Salt Iodization (USI) programme started in 1993 to eliminate Iodine Deficiency Disorder in Nigeria. While there were multi-sectoral cooperation and collaborations on this programme, the report of UNICEF-Nigeria (2005) acknowledged the important role of communication and social marketing through the media in creating awareness and sustaining the use of iodized salt in Nigeria (UNICEF-Nigeria, 2005). Impressively, the report noted that ‘IDD documentary and jingles were produced for constant airing on television and radio...’ and remarkably “IDD was featured on national television and radio prime news, beamed to 30 million Television viewers and 60 million radio listeners” (UNICEF Nigeria, 2005). Other jingles and short programmes exist on television, radio and news media.

Scholars in developed country have suggested the use of multi-approach strategies, through the educational and media campaign, to combat ageism (Ory, Kinney Hoffman, Hawkins, Sanner & Mockenhaupt, 2003). These are viable channels of informal education that can change the way people perceived the nursing home for the elders, good nutrition for the elders and health related matters. The most crucial advantage of the media intervention is that it has the capacity to reach the elderly and those exhibiting stereotypical behaviours at the same time, ultimately resulting to the sort of change that can make aged people more comfortable in the society.

Conclusion

Negative aged perceptions and attitudes can engender behaviours which may complicate the social, nutritional and health condition of old people in Nigeria. Although informal education, especially through the media, has played a critical role in embedding negative attitude towards elderly people, the same channel can equally prove effective in correcting them. It is therefore recommended that informal learning opportunities should be created by designing and disseminating informative programmes that will lead to aged behaviour change in the country.

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