

1 **ASSESSING THE RELEVANCE OF MEDIA STUDIES INTEGRATION INTO THE**
2 **GENERAL STUDIES CURRICULUM OF NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION.**

3 **Abstract**

4 *The increasing penetration of media technologies into all aspects of social, political, economic,*
5 *and educational life has made media literacy an essential competence for citizens in the 21st*
6 *century. In Nigeria, Colleges of Education are tasked with training teachers who will, in turn,*
7 *shape the intellectual and civic capacities of future generations. The General Studies Education*
8 *(GSE) programme is designed to provide students with broad-based knowledge and transferable*
9 *skills beyond their areas of specialization. However, despite the growing influence of traditional*
10 *and digital media, Media Studies has not been fully institutionalized within the GSE curriculum*
11 *of many Nigerian Colleges of Education. This paper examines the relevance of introducing*
12 *Media Studies into the General Studies curriculum of Nigerian Colleges of Education. Drawing*
13 *on theoretical perspectives of media literacy, democratic participation, and critical pedagogy,*
14 *the paper reviews relevant literature, analyzes the Nigerian educational context, and discusses*
15 *the potential academic, social, and professional benefits of Media Studies integration. The study*
16 *adopts a qualitative desk-based approach, relying on policy documents, scholarly literature, and*
17 *empirical studies. The paper argues that integrating Media Studies into GSE would enhance*
18 *students' critical thinking, digital literacy, civic awareness, and employability, while also*
19 *aligning teacher education with global best practices. The paper concludes with*
20 *recommendations for curriculum development, policy implementation, and future research.*

21 **Keywords:** Media Studies, General Studies Education, Colleges of Education, Media Literacy,
22 Curriculum Development, Nigeria

25 **Introduction**

26 Education systems globally are undergoing rapid transformation due to technological
27 advancements and the pervasive influence of media in contemporary society. Media, in its
28 various forms—print, broadcast, digital, and social—has become a dominant source of
29 information, socialization, and cultural transmission. As a result, the ability to critically access,
30 analyze, evaluate, and create media messages, commonly referred to as media literacy, has
31 emerged as a core competence for modern learners (Hobbs, 2020). In many countries, Media
32 Studies has been introduced at different levels of education to equip learners with these essential
33 skills.

34 In Nigeria, Colleges of Education occupy a strategic position in the educational landscape, as
35 they are responsible for training teachers for the basic education sector. The General Studies
36 Education (GSE) programme, which is compulsory for all students in these institutions, is
37 intended to foster holistic development by exposing students to interdisciplinary knowledge,
38 civic education, communication skills, and moral values (National Commission for Colleges of
39 Education [NCCE], 2020). Despite these objectives, the current GSE curriculum pays limited
40 attention to structured Media Studies, even though Nigerian society is increasingly shaped by
41 media content, misinformation, digital activism, and online learning platforms.

42 The absence or marginalization of Media Studies within the GSE curriculum raises concerns
43 about the preparedness of future teachers to navigate and teach in a media-saturated environment.
44 Teachers who lack media literacy skills may struggle to guide learners in critically engaging with
45 media content, identifying misinformation, and using digital tools responsibly. This paper,
46 therefore, seeks to assess the relevance of introducing Media Studies into the General Studies

47 curriculum of Nigerian Colleges of Education. Specifically, it examines the conceptual
48 foundations of Media Studies, reviews existing literature, analyzes the Nigerian context, and
49 highlights the potential benefits and challenges of such integration.

50 **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

51 **Media Studies and Media Literacy**

52 Media Studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the production, distribution, content,
53 and effects of media in society. It draws from disciplines such as communication studies,
54 sociology, cultural studies, education, and political science (Silverblatt, 2018). Media literacy, a
55 central component of Media Studies, refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create
56 media messages in a variety of forms (Hobbs, 2020).

57 In the educational context, Media Studies goes beyond technical skills to include critical
58 understanding of media ownership, representation, ideology, and power relations. It encourages
59 learners to question whose voices are represented in media, whose interests are served, and how
60 media shapes perceptions of reality. These competencies are particularly relevant in multicultural
61 and democratic societies such as Nigeria, where media plays a significant role in political
62 mobilization, social cohesion, and conflict.

63 **Theoretical Perspectives**

64 This paper is anchored on three major theoretical perspectives: Critical Pedagogy, Media
65 Ecology Theory, and Democratic Participation Theory.

66 Critical Pedagogy, as advanced by Freire (1970), emphasizes education as a tool for
67 empowerment and social transformation. From this perspective, Media Studies enables learners
68 to critically interrogate dominant media narratives and resist manipulation. It also enables them
69 to appropriate the power of the media to assert their rights in the society.

70 Media Ecology theory, associated with McLuhan (1964), views media as environments that
71 shape human perception, cognition, and social organization. The relevance of the theory is
72 underscored by the fact that the society would be better off. once the power of emancipation
73 inherent in education, is juxtaposed with that of the media. Integrating Media Studies into GSE
74 acknowledges the media environment as a powerful educational force that must be understood
75 and managed.

76 Democratic Participation theory highlights the role of informed citizens in sustaining democracy.
77 Media literacy equips learners with the skills needed to participate meaningfully in public
78 discourse and democratic processes (Kellner & Share, 2019). Thus media literacy would provide
79 an enabling environment by equipping the learner with necessary skills to appropriate media
80 tools for effective democratic participation.

81 **Overview of General Studies Education in Nigerian Colleges of Education**

82 General Studies Education was introduced in Nigerian tertiary institutions to provide students
83 with broad knowledge and skills that complement their specialized training. In Colleges of
84 Education, GSE typically includes courses in Use of English, Nigerian peoples and culture,
85 philosophy, entrepreneurship, ICT, and civic education (NCCE, 2020). The programme aims to

86 produce well-rounded teachers who are intellectually competent, morally upright, and socially
87 responsible.

88 Despite the inclusion of ICT-related courses, GSE has been criticized for being overly theoretical
89 and insufficiently responsive to contemporary societal challenges (Adeyemi & Uko-Aviomoh,
90 2021). Many courses focus on basic computer appreciation without addressing critical media
91 engagement, digital citizenship, or media ethics. As Nigerian students increasingly consume
92 information through social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp,
93 and TikTok, the lack of formal Media Studies education becomes more pronounced.

94 **Literature Review**

95 **Global Perspectives on Media Studies in Teacher Education**

96 Internationally, Media Studies and media literacy education have gained recognition as essential
97 components of teacher education. Studies in Europe and North America indicate that teachers
98 trained in media literacy are better equipped to integrate digital tools into teaching and to foster
99 critical thinking among learners (Hobbs & Coiro, 2019). UNESCO (2021) has consistently
100 advocated for Media and Information Literacy (MIL) as a key pillar of education for sustainable
101 development and global citizenship.

102 Research shows that integrating Media Studies into general education curricula enhances
103 students' analytical skills, civic engagement, and awareness of media influence (Bulger &
104 Davison, 2018). Teacher education programmes that include Media Studies also report increased
105 confidence among trainee teachers in addressing misinformation and promoting responsible
106 media use in classrooms (Tiede et al., 2020).

107 **Media Studies and Education in Nigeria**

108 In Nigeria, scholarly attention to Media Studies has largely focused on mass communication
109 programmes in universities, with limited emphasis on teacher education. Studies by Okunna
110 (2019) and Ojebuyi and Salawu (2020) highlight the growing impact of digital media on
111 Nigerian youth, including issues of fake news, hate speech, and cyberbullying. These studies
112 underscore the need for media literacy education at all levels of schooling.

113 Empirical studies suggest that Nigerian teachers often lack adequate training in media literacy,
114 which affects their ability to guide students in critical media consumption (Akinwale & Ojebode,
115 2022). Adebola and Alabi (2023) argue that incorporating Media Studies into general education
116 programmes would help bridge this skills gap and align Nigerian education with global standards.

117 **Rationale for Introducing Media Studies into GSE**

118 • **Enhancing Critical Thinking and Information Literacy**

119 One of the strongest arguments for integrating Media Studies into GSE is its potential to enhance
120 critical thinking and information literacy. In an era characterized by information overload and
121 misinformation, students must learn how to evaluate sources, verify information, and recognize
122 bias. Media Studies provides structured frameworks for analyzing media texts and understanding
123 persuasive techniques (Hobbs, 2020).

124 • **Promoting Civic and Democratic Engagement**

125 Media plays a central role in shaping political opinions and civic participation in Nigeria. Social
126 media platforms have been used for political mobilization, activism, and advocacy, as seen

127 during movements such as #EndSARS. Media Studies can help students understand the ethical
128 and civic implications of media use and encourage responsible participation in democratic
129 processes (Kellner & Share, 2019).

130 • **Improving Teacher Professional Competence**

131 As future teachers, students in Colleges of Education must be prepared to teach learners who are
132 already immersed in digital media. Integrating Media Studies into GSE would equip trainee
133 teachers with pedagogical strategies for incorporating media into teaching and addressing media-
134 related challenges in schools. This aligns with the competency-based approach advocated by the
135 NCCE (2020).

136 • **Enhancing Employability and Lifelong Learning**

137 Media literacy skills are increasingly valued in the labour market, particularly in fields related to
138 education, communication, and digital content creation. By introducing Media Studies into GSE,
139 Colleges of Education can enhance graduates' employability and adaptability in a rapidly
140 changing job market (Adebola & Alabi, 2023).

141 **Methodology**

142 This paper adopts a qualitative desk-based research approach. Data were drawn from secondary
143 sources, including academic journal articles, books, policy documents, and reports from
144 international organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
145 Organization, UNESCO. Relevant literature published between 2018 and 2024 was prioritized to
146 ensure currency. Thematic analysis was used to identify key issues related to Media Studies,
147 GSE, and teacher education in Nigeria.

148 **Discussion**

149 The analysis indicates that integrating Media Studies into the General Studies curriculum of
150 Nigerian Colleges of Education is both timely and necessary. The current GSE curriculum
151 addresses some aspects of ICT and communication skills but falls short of providing
152 comprehensive media literacy education. Media Studies would complement existing courses by
153 focusing on critical engagement rather than mere technical competence.

154 However, challenges to implementation include curriculum overload, lack of trained personnel,
155 and inadequate infrastructural facilities. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning,
156 capacity building, and policy support from regulatory bodies such as the NCCE. Pilot
157 programmes and phased implementation could help mitigate potential obstacles.

158 **Recommendations**

159 1. The NCCE should review the GSE curriculum to formally increase the credit load of Media
160 and Information Literacy, to cater for practical aspect of the course.

161 2. Colleges of Education should invest in training and retraining lecturers in media literacy and
162 Media Studies pedagogy.

163 3. Government and institutional stakeholders should improve media and ICT infrastructure to
164 support effective teaching and learning.

165 4. Further empirical research should be conducted to assess students' and lecturers' perceptions
166 of Media Studies integration and its impact on learning outcomes.

167 **Conclusion**

168 This paper has examined the relevance of introducing Media Studies into the General Studies
169 Education curriculum of Nigerian Colleges of Education. It argues that Media Studies is essential
170 for developing critical, informed, and responsible teachers capable of navigating a media-
171 saturated society. Integrating Media Studies into GSE would enhance critical thinking, civic
172 engagement, professional competence, and employability among students, while aligning teacher
173 education in Nigeria with global best practices.

174 **Ethics Declaration**

175 **Ethic Approval**

176 This study is a desk-based research using secondary sources. No human participants or primary
177 data were involved, hence ethical approval wasn't required.

178 **Consent for Publication**

179 Not applicable. The study used publically available secondary data.

180 **Competing Interests**

181 Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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