

PICTORIALS AND DOCUMENTARIES ON COVID – 19 AWARENESS CREATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

BY

MADUMERE, IFEOMA PERPETUA

08030906381

DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND APPLIED ART
SCHOOL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION TECHNICAL,
FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL),
ASABA, DELTA STATE

Abstract

The world had just experienced one the most dreaded pandemic of our time in the name of Covid – 19 pandemic. This disease took everyone unaware even the Chinese city where it actually emanated. The advance of Covid -19 pandemic has made amazing transformations across the world within the few years which it has ravaged the world. Indeed, most things have changed even in recent time. This paper is an attempt therefore, to explore the places of pictorials and documentaries in creating aware of the dangers associated with the pandemic and also taking the necessary measures to combating the global scourge. Various literatures were reviewed to defining pictorials and documentaries. The importance and relevance of the two concepts were equally explored prior to the conclusion of the essay while recommendations were made as ways of upholding pictorials and documentaries as parts of fine art that make teaching and learning pretty easier.

Key words: Pictorials, documentaries, awareness, Covid – 19 pandemic and developing countries.

Introduction

Information is regarded as an essential part of human existence and its dissemination is another aspect that is crucial when it comes to making people respond to the contents or bodies of information sent out to the public. With the advancement of Covid – 19 pandemic and its unannounced nature, it became paramount for health managers across the world to adopt very

systematic and strategic approaches towards disseminating Covid – 19 related information for better understanding as well as effective management of the health crisis.

The use of pictorials and documentaries have been identified as prominent tools that were upheld to champion the course of creating serious global awareness as well as providing better and more effective ways of addressing the scourge. People seem to appreciate the facts and issues relating the pandemic faster and better by seeing pictures and going through various documents dished out every now and then to portraying the extent of dangers associated with Covid – 19 pandemics. Hence, the World Health Organisation and other health related agencies adopted more of pictorials and documentaries to pass messages across for easy awareness and sensitization of the public regarding the Wuhan, China emanated deadly disease.

Concept of Pictorials

A pictorial concept specifies a class of pictures with certain common structures and properties. Pictorial concepts (or picture specifications) are relevant in various applications of graphical lines, and specification mechanisms have been proposed to allow putting concepts together to define new concepts with further logical constraints (Dajuan & John, 1993).

New approaches to construction of pictorial concepts in a structured manner based on a type-theoretic framework, which provides a richer specification language with abstraction mechanisms by means of which classes of pictures with more sophisticated structures can be specified in a clear and natural way has been offered in the modern perspectives.

In particular, the approach allows us to study, define and use pictorial concepts at a higher level of abstraction so that powerful and useful operations over pictorial concepts can be defined and systematically used to form cultured pictorial impressions. A concept-supporting graphical system has been considered on the basis of the theoretical framework and an experimental

implementation is described. The system supports users' definition of pictorial concepts without requiring programming expertise, and realizes concept-checking. This provides valuable support to a flexible use of pictorial concepts, which is germane for effective and systematic use of pictures as meaningful visual expressions (Dejuan & John, 1993).

Simply put, pictorials refer to the use of pictures or photograph in art to pass messages across to members of society. Thus, pictures are considered as universal language of art being that people tend to comprehend their meanings without necessarily getting interpretations from other parties.

Meaning of Documentaries

A documentary film or documentary is a non-fictional motion-picture intended to "document reality, primarily for the purposes of instruction, education or maintaining a historical record" (Grant & Slonjowski, 2013).

Nichols in Grant and Slonjowski (2013) characterized the documentary in terms of "a filmmaking practice, a cinematic tradition, and mode of audience reception [that remains] a practice without clear boundaries". According to him, early documentary films, originally called "actuality films", was programmed to last for one minute or less. Over time, documentaries have advanced to become longer in length, and to include more categories. Examples are educational, observational and docufiction (Scott, 2014). Documentaries are very informative and educational and are often times adopted within schools as a resource to teach various principles for effective learning. Documentary filmmakers in reality have a responsibility to be truthful to their vision of the world without intentionally misrepresenting a topic in question. For instance, Social-media platforms (such as YouTube) have provided an avenue for the growth of the documentary-film genre (McLane, 2012). These platforms have increased the distribution area and ease-of-accessibility of information around the globe.

Documentary filmmakers are increasingly using social impact campaigns with their films. Social impact campaigns seek to leverage media projects by converting public awareness of social issues and causes into engagement and action, largely by offering the audience a way to get involved (Social Impact Campaigns, 2016).

Brief review of Covid – 19 Pandemics

Covid – 19 pandemics otherwise known as Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. ^[1] It was initially reported to the WHO on December 31, 2019. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency. ^[2, 3] On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, its first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009. ^[4]

Illness caused by SARS-CoV-2 was termed COVID-19 by the WHO, the acronym derived from "coronavirus disease 2019. " The name was chosen to avoid stigmatizing the virus's origins in terms of populations, geography, or animal associations.

Spread of Covid – 19 pandemics

The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols.

You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are near someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth. The virus spreads more easily indoors and in crowded settings. Most people who fall sick with COVID-19 will

experience mild to moderate symptoms and recover without special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention.

Social Impact of Covid – 19

The social impact of Coronavirus cannot be underestimated. The COVID-19 outbreak affects all segments of the population and is particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations. It continues to affect populations, including people living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous peoples. Early evidence indicates that the health and economic impacts of the virus are being borne disproportionately by poor people (Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Social Inclusion, 2020). For example, homeless people, because they may be unable to safely shelter in place, are highly exposed to the danger of the virus. People without access to running water, refugees, migrants, or displaced persons also stand to suffer disproportionately both from the pandemic and its aftermath – whether due to limited movement, fewer employment opportunities, increased xenophobia among others (Hoffman & Miller, 2020).

If not properly addressed through policy the social crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic may also increase inequality, exclusion, discrimination and global unemployment in the medium- and long-term spheres. Comprehensive, universal social protection systems, when in place, play a much durable role in protecting workers and in reducing the prevalence of poverty, since they act as automatic stabilizers. That is, they provide basic income security at all times, thereby enhancing people's capacity to manage and overcome shocks.

Covid – 19 brought about severe global restrictions in terms of human movement as there were closures here and there over the world. There was total lockdown in cities of the world considering the magnitude of casualties across the universe. Schools and other social activities

were curtailed by way of closure and /or limitations to number of participants. National Centre for Drugs and Control (NCDC) which is the agency responsible for Covi-19 related matters was meant to sensitise people on the dangers associated with the pandemic and dish out the protocols that guide human actions and inactions. Those exercises were carried out using various forms of approaches. Radio jingles, newspaper publications and advertisements, television programmes were employed. The use of pictorials and documentaries were equally explored. All these were instrumental to creating awareness on Covid – 19 issues.

Pictorials, Documentaries and Covid – 19 Awareness in Developing countries

The thrust of this paper is not to discuss Coronavirus as a threatening global pandemic but to reveal the significant roles played by various organisations and agencies in creating serious awareness on the deadly disease using pictorials and documentaries which are essential parts of art to easily drive the message to people. Whereas other forms of media such as radio jingles and open-air announcements were only heard and appealed to the sense of hearing, pictorials and documentaries brought to light in pictures and live images of the devastating nature of the pandemic. To a great extent, people learn faster when images and movies are provided as ways of sending messages across. The role of pictorials and documentaries has often remained crucial in human society and the era of Covid – 19 was not an exception.

Although, some of the pictures and documentaries were scary, they facilitated the high levels of compliance to Covid -19 protocols in both developed and developing countries like Nigeria and others.

References

Dejuan, W. & John, R. (1993). Pictorial Concepts and a Concept-supporting Graphical System. *Journal of Virtual Languages and Computing*, 4 (2), 177 – 199.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Social Inclusion (2020). Everyone Included: Social Impact of COVID-19 response. Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included-covid-19.html>. Retrieved on 23/12/2021.

Grant, B. K. & Slonjowski, J. (Eds.) (2013). *Documenting the documentary: Close readings of documentary films and videos. Contemporary approaches to film and media series*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Scott, M. (2014). *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*. California: University of California Press.

McLane, B. A. (2012). *A New History of Documentary Film (2nd ed.)*. New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Social Impact Campaigns (2016). Available at www.azuremedia.org. Archived from the original on 31 March 2016. Retrieved 23 December, 2021.

Hoffman, J.A & Miller, E. A (2020). Addressing the consequences of school closure due to COVID-19 on children's physical and mental well-being". *World Medical & Health Policy*. **12** (3): 300–310.