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Assessing Academics' Perception on the Prospects and Challenges of Mass Communication Unbundling Policy in Nigerian Polytechnics

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Abstract
This study assesses academics' perceptions of the prospects and challenges of the mass communication unbundling policy in the Nigerian polytechnic system, focusing on polytechnic lecturers in Kwara State. Underpinned by Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation Theory, the study examines the policy's potential to enhance specialisation and industry alignment, identifies implementation challenges, and assesses lecturers' readiness to teach under the unbundled departments. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 58 respondents through structured questionnaires administered to the academic staff of the Mass Communication Department across three polytechnics: Federal Polytechnic Offa, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin and Lens Polytechnic Offa. Findings show that while the policy promises benefits such as improved professional development and industry alignment, challenges like inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and limited capacity building for lecturers remain significant barriers. The study concludes that addressing these challenges through increased funding, training, and collaboration between institutions and industry stakeholders is critical for the policy's success. Recommendations include enhanced funding, infrastructure upgrades, and training programmes to ensure the effective implementation of the unbundling policy.

Keywords: Mass Communication, unbundling, polytechnics, Journalism, specialisation.

Introduction
Mass Communication is indispensable for the survival of humans and their continued existence on planet Earth. Every society depends on communication to enable its members to live together, maintain and modify working arrangements regarding the social order and

social regulation, and cope with the environment. Thus, through Mass Communication, the acquisition of knowledge and participation in public affairs establishes a person as a social being and as a functioning member of society (Okunna & Omenugha, 2012; Uche, 2023; Hanson & Maxcy, 1996).

Mass Communication as a degree program is offered in many Nigerian Universities, polytechnics, and other institutions of higher learning across the world. Many institutions brand the course with such appellations as Media Studies, Information, and Communication Studies, as well as Language and Communication Arts (Olomojobi et al., 2021). According to Akurega et al. (2024,) regardless of the nomenclature assigned to Mass Communication as a course by any institution, the program entails the study of many areas, including journalism, publishing, radio and television broadcasting, digital media, public relations and advertising each of which holds a variety of career opportunities for students after their study.

In Nigeria, journalism training, according to Amenaghawon (2010), was championed by the missionaries. Admittedly, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, innovated journalism education in 1961 at the Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree position; nonetheless, the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, started a UNESCO-backed Institute of Mass Communication in 1967. For the polytechnics, the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) in Enugu State pioneered when it started lectures in the Mass Communication Department in 1978.

The study of mass communication across polytechnics in Nigeria is geared towards equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to excel in communication and the media industry. The programme focuses on both theoretical and practical aspects of Mass Communication. Broadly speaking, the polytechnic education is more concerned with the technical and vocational education and training, technology transfer as well as skills development to enhance the socio-economic development of a country (Udofia & Akinola, 2022).

Polytechnics in Nigeria offer studies in many arts and sciences at the diploma level: National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND). Polytechnic education plays a very important role in preparing students to be productive, enterprising, and self-reliant through the acquisition of technical skills. Polytechnic education contributes to economic development. The abundance and use of polytechnic products in educational, industrial, manufacturing, agricultural, and construction sectors have led to the economic development of the country.

Regrettably, studies point out that an increase in the number of tertiary institutions offering Mass Communication courses does not translate to quality products and programmes (Nelson-Ogbaeja et al. 2024). Likewise, the proliferation of Journalism-Institutions without the accompanying human and fiscal capital as prerequisites, poor funding, important nonsupervisory bodies, proper delegation marks, and enforcement of many being legal fabrics – incapability for the journalists to police their species, abandonment of journalistic integrity, left-footed professional, ethical canons and their enforcement among others, have negatively affected good and enduring professional norms and standards (Akinfeleye, 2009).

Another scholar, Oso (2012), included that it was necessary to note that journalism education in Nigeria, having existed for over fifty years, was still, to a large extent, anchored

on the alien journalistic philosophies borrowed from Western countries while the peculiar terrain of the Nigerian media education remains relegated to the background. Odunlami (2014) also avers that models, key concepts, and theories that determine proper journalistic practice and education in Africa have been guided by Westernisation since the 1960s to date.

Mass Communication has been unbundled into nine different university degrees by the National Universities Commission (NUC). In contrast, at the polytechnic level, the course has been unbundled into three different departments by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). This was done following a series of workshops held, especially the one at the Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State, with participants from 18 institutions, the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Consequently, the three new programs (Departments), Strategic Communication and Media Studies, Journalism and Media Studies, and Film and Multimedia Production, align with what NUC streamlines the nine degrees into. Therefore, students seeking admission into the HND programme in Mass Communication must choose from any of the three new departments.

The Unbundling of Mass Communication means Higher National Diploma (HND) certificates will no longer be awarded to graduates since the programme ceases to exist at that level. This decision recognizes the constraints posed by an intertwined class that expects trainees to master a different array of disciplines (Ajayi, 2024).

The objective stated in the curricula pointed out that communication and Media Studies training should develop the students' understanding of communicative problems at the various levels of Nigerian and global society and develop in the student the ability for objective and critical judgment and to observe, understand, analyses and synthesize socioeconomic, political and environmental problems using communication and media studies methods and techniques (Okeke, 2022).

Ahmed (2024) reveals that during a meeting of Hods of Polytechnics with UNICEF and NBTE in Kano State, they decided to start the unbundling with two departments, namely, Journalism and Media Studies and Strategic Communication and Media Studies, because the third department, film and multimedia studies is capitally expensive, both the equipment and personnel. Meanwhile, the career prospects in Journalism and Media Studies are Print media, Broadcast media and Digital media, while under Strategic Communication and Media Studies are Public Relations, Advertising, and Development Communication. According to Ahmed (2024), the plan is to start the unbundling in the 2023/2024 academic session. Since then, some polytechnics like Yabatech, Federal Polytechnic Offa, and Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin have adhered to the policy by unbundling the department. Still, the number of institutions that have complied with the policy in polytechnics is relatively low. Some institutions have been foot-dragging concerning the policy, thus necessitating a study of this nature.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the potential benefits of the unbundling policy, its implementation has raised stakeholder concerns. Moreover, the policy by the NBTE came with an ultimatum that institutions should implement the policy in the 2024/2025 academic session, and this has

brought about a lot of challenges and consideration for possible prospects if they adhere to starting the programs before the expiration of the ultimatum. It is on this basis that the researchers have decided to look into what is likely to be the possible challenges and prospects of most polytechnics adhering to that ultimatum. This is why the researchers want to sample the opinion of most lecturers who oversee running the programs in most polytechnics to determine the likely challenges and prospects that would be encountered in their effort to implement the policy. The idea is to bring out some of these possible challenges and prospects for the stakeholders in the educational sector to be able to have a better understanding of what is going on concerning the unbundling program, the challenges those schools are facing, and what the possible prospects are, this will go a long way to correct or confirm some of the fears associated to these unbundling program in the minds of so many people.

Objectives of the study
This study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the prospects of the Mass Communication unbundling policy in Nigerian polytechnics.

2. To identify the challenges facing the implementation of the unbundling policy.

3. To assess lecturers' preparedness to teach courses under the unbundled departments

4. To determine the measures to be taken to overcome the challenges and ensure the successful implementation of the unbundling policy

Research Questions
The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the prospects of the Mass Communication unbundling policy in Nigerian polytechnics?

2. What are the challenges facing the implementation of the unbundling policy?

3. What is the level of lecturers' preparedness to teach courses under the unbundled departments?

4. What measures can be taken to overcome the challenges and ensure successful implementation of the unbundling policy?

Literature Review

Polytechnic Education in Nigeria
In Nigeria, a polytechnic is an educational institution that runs courses in arts and science at the diploma level. It plays a special role in preparing its candidates to be productive, enterprising, and self-reliant by acquiring the necessary technical skills. This enables their products to contribute greatly to the country's economic growth and development (Udofia, 2022). According to Otache (2019), polytechnics are more practically oriented than other categories of institutions. Their mandate is to produce high-quality technical manpower for technological development and self-reliance. He further states that polytechnics have an

industrial orientation, as most of the practicals conducted in polytechnics have industrial applications.

Through the creation of skilled labour, increased industrial productivity, and improved quality of life, polytechnic education makes a substantial contribution to the nation's human resources development (Garba in Uche et al., 2021). Polytechnic education focuses on applied technology. In other words, its educational leaning is practice as against theory. Admittedly, theory is incorporated, but the focus is more on practical learning. The blending of theory and practice is geared towards solving real-life problems for the good of society. Polytechnics are higher education institutions that produce tech-manpower for technological growth and development of any nation. (Mercy & Ponticell, 2012; Ebele, 2014; Otache, 2019).

Jahun (2017) posits that the purpose of establishing Polytechnics in Nigeria is to produce technicians, technologists, and individuals with management skills that are relevant to the developmental needs and aspirations of Nigeria, with the hope that such skills and training acquired would transform the nation's economy, thereby leading to industrial development. Polytechnic education is concerned with the production of middle manpower, especially in the fields of science and technology, thereby refocusing their products towards self-employment rather than seeking vacant positions in government or public offices (Uche et al., 2021).

Jahun (2017) identified the challenges confronting polytechnic education in Nigeria to include a lack of constant curriculum review, a lack of competent and qualified staff (as most of the academic staff had no polytechnic background), inadequate equipment, paucity of funds, among others.

In a similar development, Garba in Uche et al. (2021) identified the following challenges:

(a)   Lack of courses in newly emerging fields

(b)   Inadequate infrastructural facilities and obsolete equipment.

(c)   The system is unable to attract quality teachers.

(d)   Inadequate financial resources.

(e)   Lack of adequate industrial institute participation.

(f)   Antiquated curriculum.

Furthermore, there is the challenge of negative perceptions about polytechnic education as opposed to the university system. Inadequacy of training facilities, seeing that Polytechnic education requires the development of skills, and without the equipment to do practicals, the essence of curriculum delivery would be defeated.

Empirical Review
In a 2020 editorial of BusinessDay Newspaper captioned, "Unbundling Mass Communication, Tough but Surmountable," the newspaper discusses the National Universities Commission's (NUC) decision to unbundle the Mass Communication programme into seven courses: Journalism & Media Studies, Public Relations, Advertising,

Broadcasting, Film & Multi-Media Studies, Development Communication Studies, and Information & Media Studies. This unbundling aims to contemporize media education in response to technological advancements and the changing demands of the communication industry. It's a significant move, following recommendations from a commission of 78 scholars, and aims to give scholars further focused and applicable training in the field of communication.

Still, the composition highlights several challenges in enforcing this reform. One major issue is the deficit of good professionals to educate the new technical courses, as the NUC favours PhD holders over industry experts. Also, numerous universities warrant the necessary installations, such as broadcasting workrooms and high-end computers, to equip scholars in these fields. The composition also stresses the fiscal burden of streamlining structure to meet delegation conditions, noting that one sweat to fund similar changes that have frequently been made on alumni donations, which may not be sustainable in the long term.

Despite these hurdles, the composition acknowledges that the unbundling is a bold step towards perfecting communication studies in Nigeria. While it draws comparisons to analogous changes in other disciplines, it remains conservative, suggesting that the success of this reform will depend on universities specialising in areas where they've strengths and coffers. Eventually, the NUC and government must rally substantial support to ensure the new courses are effectively enforced, offering scholars the training and chops demanded for the evolving media geography.

The study by Nelson-Ogbaeja et al. (2024) probes undergraduate comprehension of the unbundling of the Mass Communication program in Nigerian universities, focusing on Ebonyi State University. This action, led by the National Universities Commission (NUC), splits the traditional Mass Communication class into technical fields like Strategic Communication and media studies, Journalism and media studies, and Film and Multimedia studies. Employing a descriptive survey design, the study sampled 253 scholars using structured questionnaires. Results revealed that while scholars were generally informed about the unbundling, some were under-informed or indifferent. The study emphasised the need for targeted mindfulness juggernauts to ensure stakeholders grasp the objectives of this educational reform.

The exploration stressed the explanation behind the unbundling, aligning it with global stylish practices and the need for technical professional training in response to assiduity demands. Scholars viewed the change as a step towards reducing academic workload and promoting career-concentrated literacy. Still, challenges persist, including shy installations, outdated classes, and inadequate professional training opportunities. Past literature corroborates these findings, as scholars like Seelig (2010) and Odunlami (2014) emphasise the significance of class updates and acclimatised pedagogy to meet ultramodern media requirements.

Overall, the unbundling action is projected to have significant repercussions for the future of media education in Nigeria. It promises to produce experts in colourful media fields and foster job specialisation, thereby advancing the country's media geography. Still, the study concluded with a call for cooperation among preceptors, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to address systemic challenges and ensure the reform's success. This aligns with broader debates on aligning education with practical assiduity conditions in Nigeria (Oso, 2012).

In a study conducted by Akurega et al. (2024) on Bingham University scholars' perception of the unbundling of communication studies in Nigerian universities. Using a check design, 400 respondents from the Department of Mass Communication were tested, with data collected through structured questionnaires. The findings revealed that scholars held a high position of mindfulness about the unbundling process, primarily picked from believable sources similar to their speakers and professors. The unbundling was perceived as a visionary and timely move by the National Universities Commission (NUC), aimed at contemporizing media education in Nigeria. The repliers described the action as a positive development that aligns with global stylish practices.

The study stressed significant benefits arising from the unbundling, including specialisation in crucial areas such as journalism, public relations, and broadcasting. It also emphasised the reform's eventuality to give graduates deeper knowledge, better career prospects, and a class acclimatised to the industry's demands. These findings align with those of Nelson-Ogbaeja et al. (2024), who explored analogous comprehensions among Ebonyi State University scholars. Both studies emphasise the significance of unbundling in addressing longstanding challenges in media education, such as overloaded classes and shy practical training.

Interestingly, both studies agree on the positive event of unbundling among scholars and their pledge to professionalise media education. Furthermore, Akurega et al. (2024) provided a fresh perspective on the sustainability of the reform, with the maturity of repliers affirming its viability in Nigerian universities. They also emphasised the need for universities to invest in facilities and structures to ensure the success of the new programs. This complements the call by Nelson-Ogbaeja et al. (2024) for targeted mindfulness juggernauts to ground gaps in understanding the reform's pretensions.

Ogoshi and Alemoh (2020) conducted a study on the unbundling of Mass Communication education in Nigeria, and it is analogous to the former studies reviewed. It mentions the stakeholders' involvement in drafting the class change, which was approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The focus is on the benefits of this development, including job creation, enhanced specialisation, and better training in the field. It also highlights the challenges, such as a lack of installations, the need to retrain preceptors, and inadequate executive support from the university operations. The paper proposes a cooperative approach among the government, universities, and assiduity stakeholders to address these challenges.

This study is largely in line with the former reviews done on the unbundling of Mass Communication, especially regarding the identification of benefits and challenges. Both emphasise job creation, better specialisation, and the need for a better structure to support the new programs. Still, the study adds a more specific recommendation for a triplex community among government, universities, and assiduity players, which aligns with the call for collaboration mentioned in the other studies. There's no contradiction between this and the former review; rather, it complements the ongoing conversations about the unbundling's eventuality and the necessary way for successful perpetration. Overall, the paper's focus on collaboration between colourful stakeholders aligns with the earlier recommendations for enhanced resource rallying and institutional support to ensure the success of the unbundling process in Nigerian universities.

Some of the gaps discovered in all the reviewed literature are that opinions and perspectives of the crucial stakeholders that will impact the policy have not been substantiated while the scholars only at the entering ends are more focused upon, also the NBTE has unbundled Mass communication class in line with their NUC counterpart but there is yet to be any study on scholars opinion but this exploration study seeks to know the opinion of the crucial stakeholders on the challenges and possible prospect of the unbundling in the polytechnic sector.

Theoretical framework

This study adopts Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) as its theoretical framework. DOI builds upon rational conceptions of organisational life drawn from communications theory, management, and sociology. It develops predictive accounts of the diffusion phenomenon that supposedly helps technology implementers advance the dissemination of selected technologies.

According to Rogers (2003, p. 5), diffusion is "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system." Therefore, diffusion is seen as a special type of communication in which participants create and share information to reach a mutual understanding. The unique character of diffusion lies in the level of uncertainty inherent in the newness of the idea in the message. Rogers (2003, p. 9) defines uncertainty as "the degree to which several alternatives are perceived with respect to the occurrence of an event and the relative probabilities of these alternatives." He described the DOI as "an uncertainty reduction process" (p. 232) and proposed attributes of innovations that help to decrease uncertainty by obtaining more information.

The Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory provides a framework for understanding how the unbundling policy for Mass Communication in Nigerian polytechnics is adopted by lecturers. This theory looks at the gradual dissemination of changes inside a social system, such as the new curriculum policy. The unbundling policy, which introduces specialised programs like Strategic Communication and media studies, Journalism and media studies, and Film and Multimedia production, represents an innovation aimed at addressing the dynamic needs of the communication industry and improving educational outcomes.

DOI theory also identifies factors that influence the adoption of an innovation. These include relative advantage (the perceived benefits of the unbundling policy), compatibility (its alignment with lecturers' skills and institutional structures), complexity (ease of understanding and implementation), trialability (opportunities to test the new curriculum), and observability (visible benefits in practice). This theory helps this study provide insights into the prospects and challenges of the unbundling policy. It reveals the barriers to adoption, such as insufficient training or lack of resources, and proposes strategies to improve communication and implementation. Ultimately, the theory offers a systematic way to analyse how innovations like the unbundling policy are embraced within academic environments.

Methodology

This study is quantitative; it adopts the survey design approach to study Mass Communication lecturers across three purposively selected polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria, out of the seven polytechnics offering Mass Communication in Kwara State. The Federal Polytechnic Offa, the Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin, and the Lens Polytechnic Offa

were chosen to represent various ownerships: federal, state, and private, respectively. According to information from the various institutions, the Mass Communication Department at the Federal Polytechnic Offa has thirty-six academic staff, Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin has sixteen, and Lens Polytechnic has fifteen academic staff. This gives a total population of sixty-seven academic staff. A structured questionnaire was administered to every Mass Communication lecturer in the three institutions. However, of the 67questionnaire administered, only 58 were properly filled and returned. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The results are presented in tables, both in figures and percentages, in accordance with the set-out objectives of the study and their corresponding research questions.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Demographic Category	Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Gender	Male	42	72.41
	Female	16	27.59
Age Distribution	20-30	11	19.00
	31-40	26	44.80
	41-50	16	27.60
	50 and above	5	8.60
Academic Qualification	HND	4	6.80
	BSc	15	27.00
	MSc	30	51.70
	PhD	9	15.60
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than five years	17	29.31
	5-10 years	25	43.10
	11-15 years	10	17.24
	Above 15 years	6	10.35
Current Academic Rank	Assistant Lecturer	16	27.59
	Lecturer II	11	18.97
	Lecturer I	17	29.30
	Senior Lecturer	7	12.07
	Chief Lecturer	7	12.07
Total		58	100

Demographic data indicate that 42 respondents, which represent 72.41% were males while 16 respondents which represent 27.59% were females. 11 respondents which represent 19% were between the ages of 20-30 years, 26 respondents which represent 44.8 percent were between the ages of 30-40 years, 16 respondents which represent 27.6 percent were

of age 41-50 years while 5 respondents which represent 8.6 percent were of age 50 and above.

On academic qualification, 4 respondents, which represent 6.8%, had a Higher National Diploma Certificate; 15 respondents, representing 27% percent, had a Bachelor of Science Degree; 30 respondents, representing 51.7% percent, had a Master's Degree, while 9 respondents which represent 15.6 percent had Doctor of Philosophy. 17 respondents, representing 29.31 percent, had spent less than 5 years in the teaching service; 25 respondents, representing 43.10 percent, used between 5-10 years in the teaching profession; 10 respondents which represent 17.24 percent, had used between 11-15 years in service, while 6 respondents which represent 10.35 percent had spent more than 15 years in the teaching profession. The current academic rank of the respondents indicates that 16 respondents, representing 27.59 percent, are currently Assistant lecturers, and 11 respondents, representing 18.97 percent, currently hold the rank of Lecturer II. Furthermore, 17 respondents, representing 29.3 percent, are Lecturer I, while both Senior lecturer and Chief lecturer had 7 respondents representing 12.07 percent each.

Analysis of Research Questions

RQ 1. What are the prospects of the Mass Communication unbundling policy in Nigerian polytechnics?

Table 2: Prospects of the Mass Communication unbundling policy in polytechnics

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Enhanced specialisation among lecturers	8	13.79
Improved curriculum quality	7	12.07
Increase the employability of graduates	7	12.07
Better industry alignment	10	17.24
All of the above	26	44.83
Total	58	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 2 shows that 8 respondents, representing 13.79 percent, noted that the implementation of the policy would enhance specialization among lecturers, 7 respondents, representing 12.07 percent, indicated that the benefit of the policy implementation would improve curriculum quality, 7 respondents representing 12.07 percent agreed that the policy would increase the employability of graduates when implemented, 10 respondents representing 17. 24 percent agreed that there would be better industry alignment when the

policy is implemented, while 26 respondents, representing 44.83 percent, agreed to all the options analysed.

Table 3: Extent to which the policy can promote professional development in the Mass Communication discipline

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Very high	22	37.93
High	24	41.37
Moderate	6	10.35
Low	6	10.35
Total	58	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that 22 respondents, representing 37.93 percent agreed that the extent to which the policy will promote professional development in Mass communication discipline is very high, 24 respondents representing 41.37 agreed that the extent to which the policy will promote professional development in Mass communication discipline is high, while 6 respondents representing 10.35 percent agreed that the extent to which the policy will promote professional development in Mass communication discipline is both moderate and low.

RQ 2: What are the challenges facing the implementation of the unbundling policy?

Table 4: Major challenges facing policy implementation

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Inadequate funding	25	43.10
Lack of qualified lecturers	7	12.07
Poor infrastructure	19	32.76
Resistance from stakeholders	0	0
Insufficient policy awareness	7	12.07
Total	58	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4 shows that 25 lecturers, representing 43.10 percent, agreed that inadequate funding is the major challenges that impede the implementation of the policy, 7 lecturers, representing 12.07 percent, agreed that lack of qualified lecturers will be the major

challenge that will impede the implementation of the policy, 19 lecturers representing 32.76 percent agreed that poor infrastructure will be the major challenges, while 7 lecturers representing 12.07 percent agreed that insufficient policy awareness will the major challenges the policy will face during implementation.

RQ 3: What is the level of lecturers' preparedness to teach courses under the unbundled departments?

Table 5: Level of lecturers' preparedness and capacity to teach courses under the unbundled departments

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly Prepared	33	56.9
Prepared	25	43.1
Not really Prepared	0	0
Total	58	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 5 shows that 33 lecturers, representing 56.9 percent, are strongly prepared to teach courses under the unbundled departments, while 25 respondents, representing 43.10 percent, are prepared.

RQ 4: What measures can be taken by the government and polytechnic system to overcome the challenges and ensure successful implementation of the unbundling policy?

Table 6: Measures to be taken by the government for successful implementation of the policy

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Increase funding for polytechnics	23	39.66
Provide specialised training for lecturers	11	18.97
Upgrade facilities and infrastructure	17	29 3
Enhance industry collaborations	7	12.07
Total	58	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 6 shows that 23 lecturers, representing 39.66 percent, suggest that the government should increase funding for polytechnic to ensure successful implementation /of the policy, 11 lecturers representing 18.97 percent, suggest that the government should provide specialized training for lecturers to ensure successful implementation of the policy, 17 lecturers representing 29.3 percent suggest that the government should upgrade facilities and infrastructure, while 7 lecturers representing 12.07 percent suggest that the government should enhance industry collaboration to ensure successful implementation of the policy.

Table 7: Measures to be taken by polytechnics to overcome the challenges of unbundling policy

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Encourage staff capacity building	35	60.35
Improve internal policies	10	17.24
Seek a partnership with private organisations	13	22.41
Total	58	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 7 shows that 35 lecturers representing 60.35 percent suggest that polytechnics can encourage staff capacity building as a measure to overcome challenges of unbundling, 10 lecturers representing 17.24 percent suggest that polytechnics can improve internal policies to overcome challenges of unbundling, while 13 lecturers representing 22.41 percent suggest that polytechnics should seek partnership with private organization as a measure to adopt to overcome challenges of unbundling.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study, as presented in Table 2, reveal that a significant proportion of respondents (44.83%) perceive the Mass Communication unbundling policy in Nigerian polytechnics as having multiple benefits, including enhanced specialisation among lecturers, improved curriculum quality, increased employability of graduates, and better alignment with industry needs. This aligns with the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003), which posits that innovations with clear relative advantages are more likely to be adopted. The policy's potential to foster specialisation and industry alignment is seen as a step toward addressing the long-standing issue of outdated curricula and lack of practical training in Nigerian polytechnic education, as noted by scholars like Nelson-Ogbaeja et al. (2024) and Akurega et al. (2024). Furthermore, Table 3 indicates that 79.3% of respondents believe the policy will significantly promote professional development in the Mass Communication discipline, reinforcing its perceived value in enhancing lecturers' expertise and students' career prospects.

However, the study identifies significant barriers to the policy's implementation, as shown in Table 4. Inadequate funding (43.10%) and poor infrastructure (32.76%) were cited as

the primary challenges, corroborating earlier studies by Jahun (2017) and Garba in Uche et al. (2021), which highlighted resource constraints in Nigerian polytechnics. These findings reflect the complexity and compatibility factors of the DOI theory, as the policy's successful adoption requires alignment with institutional resources and infrastructure, which are currently lacking. The absence of resistance from stakeholders (0%) is a positive indicator, suggesting a willingness to embrace the innovation, provided resource-related barriers are addressed. Additionally, insufficient policy awareness (12.07%) underscores the need for effective communication channels, a key component of diffusion as per Rogers (2003), to ensure stakeholders fully understand the policy's objectives and requirements.

Table 5 indicates a high level of lecturers' preparedness, with 56.9% feeling strongly prepared and 43.1% prepared to teach under the unbundled departments. This suggests a high degree of compatibility between the lecturers' skills and the new curriculum, supporting the trialability aspect of DOI theory, where stakeholders are more likely to adopt innovations they feel capable of implementing. However, the lack of respondents reporting unpreparedness may indicate a response bias or overconfidence, which could mask underlying gaps in specialised training, particularly for emerging fields like Film and Multimedia Production, which Ahmed (2024) noted as capital-intensive.

The measures proposed in Tables 6 and 7 align with the DOI theory's emphasis on reducing uncertainty through resource provision and stakeholder engagement. Respondents emphasised increased funding (39.66%) and infrastructure upgrades (29.3%) as critical government interventions, while polytechnics were urged to prioritise staff capacity building (60.35%) and partnerships with private organisations (22.41%). These suggestions echo the collaborative approaches advocated by Ogoshi and Alemoh (2020), highlighting the need for a triplex community among government, polytechnics, and industry stakeholders to ensure the policy's sustainability.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the Mass Communication unbundling policy in Nigerian polytechnics holds significant promise for enhancing specialisation, improving curriculum quality, and aligning educational outcomes with industry demands. The high level of lecturers' preparedness suggests a strong foundation for implementing the new departments of Strategic Communication and Media Studies, Journalism and Media Studies, and Film and Multimedia Production. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and limited policy awareness pose substantial barriers to successful adoption. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on aligning polytechnic education with global best practices and industry needs, as emphasised by Akurega et al. (2024) and Nelson-Ogbaeja et al. (2024). Despite the identified limitations, the policy represents a bold step toward modernising media education in Nigeria, provided systemic challenges are addressed through targeted interventions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure the successful implementation of the Mass Communication unbundling policy in Nigerian polytechnics:

1. The government should allocate dedicated funds to support the establishment of new departments, particularly for capital-intensive programs like Film and

Multimedia Production, to address the resource constraints identified by 43.10% of respondents.

2. Polytechnics should prioritise upgrading facilities, such as broadcasting studios and digital media labs, to support practical training, as emphasised by 29.3% of respondents.

3. Targeted capacity-building programs should be implemented to equip lecturers with skills for teaching specialised courses, addressing the 18.97% of respondents who highlighted this need.

4. Polytechnics should seek partnerships with media organisations and private entities to provide resources, internships, and practical training opportunities, as suggested by 22.41% of respondents.

5. The NBTE and polytechnics should launch targeted campaigns to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the unbundling policy, addressing the 12.07% who noted insufficient awareness.

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