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### Abstract

*This paper seeks to examine the discipline of humanities, social sciences and engineering, their components or fields of study. The paper also seek to ascertain the contributions of the humanities, social science and engineering to the subject of mass communication. It further seek to ascertain which discipline i.e. humanities, social sciences and engineering has made the greatest contribution to the mass media and which discipline mass communication should belong to. The paper ask the following questions: what is the place of mass communication in the humanities and social science? What has been the contribution of the humanities to mass communication? What also has been the contributions of the social sciences to mass communication in comparison with the contributions of engineering? Which of these has made the greatest contribution to mass communication and thus should house the subject? This work concludes in part that the Humanities and engineering have made tremendous contributions to mass communication such that in theory and practice, the subject of mass communication owe its existence to them. However, the Humanities has been the greatest contributor to mass communication in the area of theories and guiding principles while engineering should be credited with the technical aspect.. Hence the subject of mass communication should be a field in the humanities and thus be taught in the Faculty of Arts and not the social science.*

**Keywords:** Humanities, Historical Writings, satellite, electromagnetic waves, broadcast equipment, theories.

### Introduction

This paper in an attempt to examine the contributions of the fields humanities, social sciences and engineering to the mass media and the field which should house it. It describes humanities, and humanists and the origin of the study of humanities. The origin is traceable to Greece during the Roman Empire. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, humanities began to be regarded as a subject of study rather than practice. It studies the fieldsof humanities in the digital and middles ages and their contributions to the mass media. These include eyewitness account, writing style, thesis writing andback grounding. Others include definition, facts gathering, processing of facts, objectivity, analysis, ethics etc.The paper further examine social sciences and contributions to the mass media which is mainly in



the area of theories. In engineering, its different aspects such as chemical, aeronautics and aerospace, civil, electrical and electronics etc. are discussed and the aspect that has been the greatest contributor to the mass media.

### **Review of literature**

Elizabeth Weaseling, "Writing History as a Prophet" discussed under modernist experiments, historical novel, historical fiction and the question of objective historical knowledge, innovations of the historical modernist novel, the subjectivities of history and the transcendence of history. According to her, an objectively intelligible reality have certain repercussions with literature and the philosophy of history. The subjectivization of history implies a similar view of history, which expands the subject-matter of literary history and the individual artist, into general history and the individual personality. History may then be conceived as a collection of building blocks for the construction of a profound personality. Charles W. Kegley and Shannon Blanton in "World Politics, Trend and Transformation" argue that in the age of globalization, the meaning of "home" and "abroad" and of "near" and "far" have vanished promoting changes in people's image of community and their own identity. That the increasing ease and volume of international communications is causing "the death of distance and radically altering people's decisions.

Harry Barnes is of the view in "A History of historical Writing", that historical writing began in Italy with revival of interests in classical literature and a renewed appreciation of the broadly human interests and secular outlook of pagan culture. The reaction of Humanism on historical writing was strictly in accordance with the fundamental aspects of the movements as a whole. And when applied to history, it meant a search for classical texts, comparison, criticism and perfection.

### **Mass communication, humanities, engineering and the sciences**

Over the years, there has been the debate over which faculty in the universities the subject or course of mass communication should be taught. While the Humanists claim that it belongs to the Faculty of Arts, the Social Scientists argue that it is a social science subject or course. Consequently, while some universities like the University of Lagos, Nigeria regards it as a social science subject, others like the University of Benin teach the course in the faculty of Arts as a field in the humanities. This work sheds light on this debate by examining the contributions of the humanities, social science and the engineering to mass communication.

Humanities is an academic discipline that study human culture. The word "humanities" is derived from the Renaissance Latin expression *studia humanitatis*, or "study of humanities." It is a classical Latin word which in addition to "humanity" mean "culture, refinement, education" and specifically an "education befitting a cultivated man".<sup>1</sup> In its usage in the early 15th century,

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<sup>1</sup>David Bartholomew, *Inventing the University Composition in Four Keys: Inquiring into the Field*. Mark Wiley, Barbara Gleason and Louise Weatherbee Phelps, (London & Toronto: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1996), pp.460-479.

the studia humanitatis was a course of studies that consisted of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history and moral philosophy that were primarily derived from the study of Latin and Greek classics. The word humanitas also gave rise to the Renaissance Italian neologism umanisti, hence "humanist" or "Renaissance humanism" The humanities use methods that are primarily critical or speculative and have a significant historical element as distinct from the mainly empirical approaches of the natural sciences. The humanities include ancient and modern languages, literature, philosophy, international relations and musicology.

Scholars in the humanities are "humanity scholars" or humanists. The term "humanist" also describes the philosophical position of humanism, which some "anti-humanist" scholars in the humanities rejected. The Renaissance scholars and artists were also called humanists. Some secondary schools offer humanities classes usually consisting of English literature, global studies and art. Human disciplines like history and cultural anthropology study subject matters that the experimental method does not apply using mainly the comparative method and comparative research.<sup>2</sup>

In the West, the study of the humanities is traceable to ancient Greece where it was seen as the basis of a broad education for citizens. During Roman times, the concept of the seven liberal arts evolved to include grammar, rhetoric and logic along with arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. These subjects formed the bulk of medieval education with emphasis being on the humanities as the skills or "ways of doing."<sup>3</sup>

A major shift occurred with the Renaissance humanism of the fifteenth century, when the humanities began to be regarded as subjects to study rather than practice. There was also a corresponding shift away from traditional fields into areas such as literature and history. However, in the 20th century, this view was in turn challenged by the postmodernist movement which sought to redefine the humanities in more egalitarian terms suitable for a democratic society since the Greek and Roman societies in which the humanities originated were not at all democratic.

In the digital age, researchers in the humanities have developed numerous large and small scale digital corpora (body of writings), such as digitalized collections of historical texts, with the digital tools and methods to analyze them. Their aim is both to uncover new knowledge about corpora and to visualize research data in new and revealing ways. Much of this activity occurs in a field called the Digital Humanities.

In the middle Ages, the term contrasted with divinity and referred to what is now called classics, the main area of secular study in universities at the time. Classics, in the Western academic tradition, refer to the studies of the cultures of classical antiquity, namely Ancient Greek and Latin and the Ancient Greek and Roman cultures. Classical studies are considered one of the

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<sup>2</sup>Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia/humanities, pp.1-3  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/historiography>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.4

cornerstones of the humanities though its popularity declined during the 20th century. Nevertheless, the influence of classical ideas on many humanities disciplines such as philosophy and literature, remains strong. Today, the humanities are more frequently contrasted with natural, physical and sometimes social sciences as well as professional training

### **The Fields of Humanities**

The fields of humanities include history, languages, literature, philosophy, media, performing arts, politics, law, music, religion, theatre, dance, philosophy. The humanities also involve geography at various levels. For example, "geo-humanities" explores art, literature and other expressive forms from the perspective of place and space. It also refer to the application of spatiotemporal analysis (relating to space and time) to the digital humanities, using geographic information systems to study traditional topics of the humanities from a novel perspective. Other fields include, Religion, Visual arts, Media include drawing, painting, film, game, mass media, Broadcast media, outdoor media, print media.<sup>4</sup>

### **Contribution to Mass Media**

Prominent among the first contribution in the area of what the mass media inherited from the humanities i.e. history and historical writing or historiography is definition. History is defined as systematic collection of information about the past and present and as a field of study, it refers to the study and interpretation of the record of humans, societies, institutions, and any topic that has changed over time. On its part, Historiography especially western historiography which originated with the ancient Greeks, is the written record of what is known of human lives and societies in the past and how historians have attempted to understand them. Flowing from this, the Mass Media is defined as means of transmitting systematically collected information through what is called news gathering about humans, their activities, societies, institutions, both past and present. What is common in these definitions are, recording and writing of the human, past and present, societies and institutions.<sup>5</sup>

Fact Gathering, in order to collect evidence, historians interrogate sources by reading closely and asking critical questions known as the 5Ws and H. Who produced the source? When was this source created? Where was the sources created? That is, its particular time, place, or context? Why did the author produce this source? For what audience and purpose? Was it intended for public or private use? Is it a work of scholarship, fiction, art, or propaganda? How does this source compare with other sources you have analyzed for the assignment? The mass media inherited this hence it uses the 5Ws and H of news gathering, news writing and reporting or presentation take the form of Who

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<sup>4</sup>Wikipedia humanities

<sup>5</sup>Nancy F. Partner "*History and Historiography*." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008

said it or who was involved, What happened, Where did it happen, Why did it happen, When did it happen and How did it happen.<sup>6</sup>

**Eyewitness Account** – (oral sources in history) This is where historical facts are known through intermediary sources. These include testimony from living witnesses; narrative records, such as previous histories, memoirs, letters, and imaginative literature; the legal and financial records of courts, legislatures, religious institutions, or businesses; and the unwritten information derived from the physical remains of past civilizations, such as architecture, arts and crafts, burial grounds, and cultivated land. All these, and many more, sources of information provide the evidence from which the historian deciphers historical facts. These eyewitness accounts, narrative records are major sources of information for not just the reporter but the mass media as they not only serve as means of authenticating facts by adding authority to the news and articles, but means for background information.<sup>7</sup>

**Processing of Facts**, this is the sifting of evidence for facts or fact finding is very essential to the historian. However, fact-finding is only the foundation for the selection, arrangement, and explanation that constitute what is known as historical interpretation. The process of interpretation informs all aspects of historical inquiry, beginning with the selection of a subject for investigation, because the very choice of a particular event or society or institution is itself an act of judgment that asserts the importance of the subject and create a convincing, intellectually satisfying interpretation. This interpretation is an essential aspect of news writing and article writing and documentaries in the mass media.<sup>8</sup>

**Writing Style** is an important aspects of historical writing inherited by the mass media in areas such as news writing and analysis, features and article writing and documentaries. They include the following:

**Strong Thesis**, Writing is the foremost goal of history and to accomplish that goal, historical writing demands a strong thesis. This thesis is referred to as news report/feature articles, documentaries, features or article in the mass media which must not be weak.<sup>9</sup>

**Back grounding**, Historical writing requires a combination of structural considerations with the finding and assessing of facts. Therefore, it is not sufficient to write well grammatically and stylistically. A writer of history must answer a variety of questions in his or her writing. These questions are not limited solely to what happened but include why and how. The historical writer

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<sup>6</sup>Glen Henkle. The Nature of Historical Writing

<sup>7</sup>Kent Sherman, *Writing History*. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1941). P.7

<sup>8</sup>James West Davidson, and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1982), pp.5 -10

<sup>9</sup>Richard Marius and Melvin Page, *A Short Guide to Writing about History* (Longman, 7th ed. 2010) , 131-149

must also address the background of the event, the principals involved. These again applies to news writers, feature article writers and producers of documentaries in the mass media.

**Processing,** In order to produce an historical work, the writer must master three basic processes: gathering data (news gathering in the media); criticism of that data; and the presentation of his or her facts, interpretations (news writing in the media) and conclusions (only in articles or documentaries in the media), based upon the data, in an accurate and readable form.

**Objectivity** is an essential aspect of historical writing. It requires that the writer should not let his or her biases cloud a paper. Writers avoid placing value judgments upon the events of the past and carefully analyze their conclusions for possible prejudice. There are, however, two nearly unavoidable limits to historical objectivity: documentation and the diversity of the writer's personal experiences. Documentation limits objectivity since a paper is only as unbiased as the documents used to produce it. The writer's personal experiences can affect objectivity through the books that he or she has studied or the places the writer has traveled. Such things can unconsciously cause one to think differently and pursue a different path in writing and research. Objectivity is one of the ethics that guides practitioners in the media such that anyone who runs fowl of it is seen as being guilty of yellow journalism in the journalism profession. Consequently, writers are forbidden from allowing documentation and personal experiences to affect their objectivity. 'You must publish the facts as they are' is the rule.<sup>10</sup>

**Analysis,** There exist no conflict between synthesis and analysis as both are essential in order for writers of history to realize the uniqueness of each historical episode and impart this understanding to the reader. Both synthesis and analysis of the events are required for good historical writing as it is impossible to have one without the other. Analysis is necessary to produce good synthesis, and it should be the primary focus of writing. This is because analysis allows the reader to understand the whole without becoming distracted by the details. In the same vain, the media engages in news synthesis and analysis after the initial reporting or broadcast of the news. This is done to put the event in proper perspective, bring out hidden facts and ensure greater understanding by readers and listeners.<sup>11</sup>

**Peculiar writing Style,** Historical writing should not be dull and uninteresting to the reader. Although the historical writer should try to take a page from the novelist and write in an engaging manner, historical writing and the novel differ in that historical writing is based upon fact, whereas the novel is a work of fiction. The historian's first duty is to the facts, then to the literary style of the paper. The media writer is a combination of the historian and the novelist as he combines the duty of the historian in writing based on facts with the literary style of the novelists but avoid fiction. In addition a good media write up must

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<sup>10</sup>Glen Henkle. The Nature of Historical Writing

<sup>11</sup>Glen Henkle. The Nature of Historical Writing

not be dull and uninteresting but be captivating enough to hold the attention of the reader to the end. It must also meet with what is called the HOUSE STYLE of the medium.<sup>12</sup>

**Obsolete Words,** Historical writing is not merely putting together notes taken from various sources but the finished product should flow well and avoid the use of trite phrases, the passive voice, and clichés. This is one of the rules governing news writing in the media.<sup>13</sup>

**Rules /Ethics** - there exist rules governing historical writing that also govern news writing and feature article writing or documentaries in the media. They include, begin with an outline that build the entire paper around the central ideas and structure your outline to let incidental facts recede as supporting evidence, and to emphasize answers to intelligent questions. Facts and details should always support the main ideas in evident ways, avoid self-conscious discussion of your intended purposes, strategy, sources i.e. draw your reader's attention to the points you are making, not to yourself, covet other writers' ideas but not steal them i.e. plagiarism, strive for clarity by avoiding the use of jargons when common language will serve, nor a high sounding word when a small one will serve, nor a foreign term when an English one will serve, nor an abstract term where a vivid one is possible. Never use more words when you can make the point with fewer (precision). But use technical languages when addressing professionals and keep paragraphs in a significant unity, not fragmented but paragraph that envelop a topical idea.<sup>14</sup>

Others are, write as if the reader is intelligent but totally uninformed on any particular subject. Hence, the need to identify all persons, organizations, etc., write consistently in past tense and in other ways keep thy reader firmly anchored in time. This is called reported speech in the media and proofreading. In the media today, you have staff in the news room referred to as Proof Readers

**Theories** - the study of communication and mass media has led to the formulation of many theories: structural and functional theories that were propounded by philosophers who are humanists. The earliest theories were those propounded by western theorists Siebert, Paterson and Schramm in their book four theories of the press. These were termed "normative theories" by Mcquail in the sense that they "mainly express ideas of how the media ought to or can be expected to operate under a prevailing set of conditions and values."

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup>Homer Carey Hockett, *The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp.14 -20

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

each of the four original or classical theories is based on a particular political theory or economic scenario. The classical theories are, authoritarian theory, libertarianism or free press theory, social responsibility theory, soviet media/communist theory, development communication theory, democratization/democratic participant media theory, magic bullet/hypodermic needle/ stimulus response theory, two step flow theory, one step flow theory and multi-step flow theory among others.<sup>15</sup>

**Social Sciences**, are concerned with the origin and development of human society, and the institutions, relationships, and ideas involved in social life. It is also a major category of academic disciplines that deals with society and the relationships among individuals within a society. It has many branches, each of which is considered a "social science" and they often include anthropology, economics, demography, human geography, political science, psychology, sociology, education, history, law, communication studies and linguistics. Additional applied or interdisciplinary fields related to the social sciences include: Archaeology, Behavioral, Computational social science, Demography, Development studies, Environmental social science, Environmental studies, International relations, and International education, Legal management, Library science, Management, Marketing, Political economy, Public administration<sup>16</sup>

Communication studies deal with processes of human communication which is commonly defined as the sharing of symbols to create meaning. It also examine how messages are interpreted through the political, cultural, economic, and social dimensions of their contexts. The discipline encompasses topics ranging from face-to-face conversation to mass media outlets such radio - television broadcasting. Communication is institutionalized under many different names at different universities, including "communication", "communication studies", "speech communication", "rhetorical studies", "communication science", "media studies", "communication arts", "mass communication", "media ecology," "Media Art" and "communication and media science."

Communication studies integrates aspects of both social sciences and the humanities. As a social science, the discipline often overlaps with sociology, psychology, anthropology, biology, political science, economics, and public policy among others. From a humanities perspective, communication is concerned with rhetoric and persuasion

Theories in the social science are Social theories and social scientists emphasize the subjective nature of research. These writers share social theory perspectives that include critical theory, Dialectical materialism, Feminist theory, Marxist theories, such as revolutionary theory and class theory, Phonetic social science, Post-colonial theory, Postmodernism, Rational choice theory, Social constructionism, Structuralism, Structural functionalism, Intellectual critical-ism and Scientific criticism. As earlier pointed out, the study

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<sup>15</sup>Kalyani, Suresh. *Theories of Communication*, 2003 www.mass communication review of concepts-html retrieved September 19, 2016

<sup>16</sup>Social Sciences." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008



of mass communication and the mass media has led to the formulation of many structural and functional theories that are taught in the social science but were propounded by philosophers who are humanists.<sup>17</sup>

**Science**The word science is derived from the Latin word scire, meaning "to know." It *is the* systematic study of anything that can be examined, tested, and verified. From its early beginnings, science has developed into one of the greatest and most influential fields of human endeavour. Today different branches of science investigate almost everything that can be observed or detected, and science as a whole shapes the way we understand the universe, our planet, ourselves, and other living things. There are five major branches of science: mathematics, physical sciences, earth sciences, life sciences, and social sciences. A sixth branch is technology which rely on discoveries from all areas of science and puts them to practical use. Hence it has contributed greatly to the growth of the mass media (broadcasting and online newspapers and magazines) in terms of Information and Communication Technology and the ICT age and satellite broadcasting. However, each of these branches consists of numerous subdivisions.<sup>18</sup>

**Engineering** on its part is a term applied to the profession in which a knowledge of the mathematical and natural sciences through study. Experience and practice, is applied to the efficient use of the materials and forces of nature. Before the middle of the 18th century, large-scale construction work was usually placed in the hands of military engineers. Military engineering involved such work as the preparation of topographical maps, the location, design, and construction of roads and bridges; and the building of forts and docks. In the 18th century, however, the term civil engineering came into use to describe engineering work that was performed by civilians for nonmilitary purposes. With the increasing use of machinery in the 19th century, mechanical engineering was recognized as a separate branch of engineering. Later mining engineering was similarly recognized.<sup>19</sup>

The technical advances of the 19th century contributed greatly in broadening the field of engineering and introduced a large number of engineering specialties. However, the rapidly changing demands of the socio - economic environment in the 20th century have widened the scope even further. The fields of engineering include, aeronautics and aerospace, chemical, civil, electrical and electronics, geological and mining, industrial or management, mechanical, military, nuclear, safety and sanitation. The field in which

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<sup>17</sup>Ron Ayres, "Schools of Development Thought" in Ron Ayres ed., *Development Studies, an Introduction through Selected Readings*, (Great Britain: Greenwich University Press, 1995), p.98

<sup>18</sup>Burnie, David. "Science." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

<sup>19</sup>Stark, Henry. "Engineering." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

engineering has made great contribution to mass communication or the mass media has been electrical and electronics.<sup>20</sup>

Electrical and Electronics – is the largest and most diverse field of engineering that is concerned with the development and design, application and manufacture of systems and devices that use electric power and signals. Among the most important subjects in the field in the late 1980s are electric power and machinery, electronic circuits, control systems, computer design, superconductors, solid-state electronics, medical imaging systems, robotics, lasers, radar, consumer electronics, and fiber optics. Despite its diversity, electrical engineering can be divided into four main branches: electric power and machinery, electronics, communications and control, and computers.

Electric Power and Machinery is concerned with the design and operation of systems for generating, transmitting, and distributing electric power. Engineers in this field have brought about several important developments since the late 1970s. One of these is the ability to transmit power at extremely high voltages in both the direct current (DC) and alternating current (AC) modes, reducing power losses proportionately. Another is the real-time control of power generation, transmission, and distribution, using computers to analyze the data fed back from the power system to a central station and thereby optimizing the efficiency of the system while it is in operation. A significant advance in the engineering of electric machinery has been the introduction of electronic controls that enable AC motors to run at variable speeds by adjusting the frequency of the current fed into them.<sup>21</sup>

Electronic engineering deals with the research, design, integration, and application of circuits and devices used in the transmission and processing of information. Information is now generated, transmitted, received, and stored electronically on a scale unprecedented in history. Electronic engineers design circuits to perform specific tasks, such as amplifying electronic signals, adding binary numbers and demodulating radio signals to recover the information they carry. Circuits are also used to generate waveforms useful for synchronization and timing, as in television, and for correcting errors in digital information as in telecommunications.

Communications and Control is concerned with all aspects of electrical communications ranging from fundamental questions such as “What is information?” to the highly practical such as design of telephone systems. In designing communication systems, engineers rely heavily on various branches of advanced mathematics such as Fourier analysis, linear systems theory, linear algebra, complex variables, differential equations and probability theory. Engineers have been working to bring about two revolutionary changes in the field of communications and control. These are, digital systems which are replacing analog ones at the same time that fiber optics are superseding copper cables. Digital systems offer far greater immunity to electrical noise. Fiber

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

optics are likewise immune to interference, have tremendous carrying capacity and are extremely light and inexpensive to manufacture.<sup>22</sup>

Computer engineering is now among the most rapidly growing fields. The electronics of computers involve engineers in design and manufacture of memory systems, of central processing units, and of peripheral devices. Foremost among the avenues now being pursued are the design of Very Large Scale Integration (VLSI) and new computer architectures. The field of computer science is closely related to computer engineering; however, the task of making computers more "intelligent" (artificial intelligence), through creation of sophisticated programs or development of higher level machine languages or other means, is generally regarded as being in the realm of computer science

### Conclusion

From the foregoing, there is no doubt that the fields of humanities and engineering have greatly aided the growth and development of the mass media. In the humanities, what it bequeath to the discipline of mass communication or the mass media can be seen in terms of definition, writing style, objectivity, background, facts gathering, analysis and interpretation, the use of eyewitness accounts and fact processing. Others are, ethics, theories etc. The same could be said of engineering which has spearheaded massive revolution in mass media operations. In the print media for example, we can see the impact made by the printing press in speeding up the production processes of newspapers and magazines. In the electronic media, the revolution caused by engineering in the area of producing transmitters and other broadcast equipment, enabling the application of computers, and satellites for satellite broadcasting, analogue broadcasting and now digital broadcasting, electrical power generation and microphones and amplifiers among others are obvious.

Thus, for the question as to which, out of humanities, social sciences and engineering has made the greatest contribution to the mass media, the answer rest with humanities and engineering. Both have made massive contributions to what has made the mass media what it is today. For the humanities it has played what can be termed the foundational role in its emergence and setting standards, while engineering has played the transformatory and revolutionary roles. However, mass communication should be a discipline in the humanities i.e. Faculty of Arts and not engineering due to the fact that mass communication will not fit into any of the branches of engineering.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid

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