New media versus traditional media in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This study took place across three states in the South West geo-political zone in Nigeria. The study areas were rural, semi-urban and urban communities. Using in-depth interview with the Royal Fathers, the study discovered that new media has greater impact on the old media in the urban towns unlike the semi-urban and rural areas which are just experiencing the Internet. The study arrived at the conclusion that “no newly introduced mode of communication or combination of new modes wholly replace or supplant the new ones.”

OBJECTIVE: The objective of the study is to reveal the impact of new media on the old traditional media of communication in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
• Do the new media constitute a threat to the survival of traditional media of communication in Nigeria?
• Do the old media in Nigeria possess attributes that could withstand the rampaging effect of new media?
• In this era of globalization, what does the future hold for the old media in Nigeria?

Empirical Review/Theoretical Framework
Another transition is taking place in the realm of communication across all the media typologies i.e. print, broadcast and cinematography.
In the context of Dizard, Jr. (1997, p. 4), what is happening across the world at the moment is that “the media industries are going through a transitional period in which old technologies are being adapted to new tastes. The most interesting example of this is the Internet, which relies on old-fashioned telephone circuits and ordinary computer modems.

Assessing the impact of the internet after two decades of its emergence, Wigston (2009, p. 30) says “the emergence of new media technologies over the past 20 years has dramatically changed the media environment that many of us have been familiar with,” adding that “the internet has changed the way in which most of us work and live.”

Mowlana (1997, p. 189) argued that three approaches have dominated communications and development since the 1950s. The first approach is to view communication and development within the context of a cause-effect relationship while the second approach deals primarily with what might be called cost-benefit analysis or utilitarianism. The third approach deals with infrastructural analysis.

McQuail (2010, p.39) however revealed “the expression ‘new media’ has been in use since the 1960s and encompasses an expanding and diversifying set of applied communication technologies”. Burton (2010, p.37), quoting McQuail (2000) identified four main characteristics of ‘new media’, namely: Interpersonal communication media i.e. email, Interactive play media, example is computer games, Information search media, i.e Net search engines, Participatory media, such as Net chat rooms.

Features of the new media such as those listed above in the context of Alexander Hanson (2005, p. 166) points to the fact that the coming on board of new media is a development that instigated a populist political movement where citizens have great access to the political world than ever before.
However, Aldridge (2007, p. 161) says, “local media may lack glamour, but their importance is beyond doubt.” In rural Nigeria, as this study reveals most people, most of the time, had their everyday information needs met by the traditional media.

Strength of the traditional media lies in the fact that they are accessible, reliable, and culturally rooted as there is nothing like negative portrayal of the people.

The study adopted the Uses and Gratification Theory of the media. Severin and Tankard Jr. (2001, p. 293-295) note that the theory was first used in an article anchored by Elihu Katz (1959) where it debunked the claim by Bernard Berelson (1959) that the field of communication research was dead. He observed that most communication research up to that time was geared at probing “What do media do to people? Katz therefore suggested attention should shift to “What do people do with the media?” The uses and gratifications approach therefore shifted focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purposes of the receiver. This approach, according to Blake and Haroldsen (1975, p. 131) contends “the interaction of people with the media can most often be explained by the uses to which they put the media content and/or the gratification which they receive.”

The survival of the traditional media in spite of the glamour of the new media is as a result of its various uses by the broad spectrum of the society. For example, in spite of availability of radio and TV, town criers are still being used to disseminate information, just as folklore wax strong especially at this critical period when youths are being recruited into the dreaded Boko Haram sect.

Popoola (2003, p. 5) earlier observed that Nigeria groped in darkness for four decades as a result of government failure to accord communication any serious priority. He noted however, that things changed in 2001 following government deregulation of the telecommunication sub-sector which paved the way for the entrance of operators of mobile phones otherwise called Global System of Mobile Communication (GSM) in Nigeria.

The GSM, today in Nigeria provides the platform for the easiest, most convenient, cheapest and prompt dissemination of information on minute-by-minute basis either
through the bulk Short Message Service (SMS), text messages, internet browsing besides its main purpose, phone calls.

This updated study was carried out between the month of June and September 2011. The first study was conducted between the months of June-December 2002, barely a year after the operations of the GSM in the country. At that time, only the urban communities covered by this study in Lagos state were enjoying about 40% of the accruable benefits from mobile phones because Blackberry and other smart phones through which people could listen to radio, snap pictures, record conversation, and above all enjoy internet browsing were not available. The semi-urban community of Ode-Remo in Ogun state then enjoyed skeletal services of the GSM while it was not available at Ootunja rural community of Ekiti-state.

Against this background, the 2011 study assessed the situation after 10 years of GSM’s operations in Nigeria. With the three first class Royal Fathers, as interviewees, the study adopted in-depth interview method. According to Wimmer & Dominick (2006, p. 135) “Intensive interviews, or in-depth interviews are essentially a hybrid of the one-on-one interview approach.” The method is the most effective when dealing with a small number of respondents.
## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF NEW MEDIA ON TRADITIONAL MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION IN THE SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA.

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<th>URBAN COMMUNITIES</th>
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<td><strong>I. MOBILE PHONE:</strong> The three communities of Sabe, Egbe and Igando in Lagos state now fully enjoyed mobile phone services including internet browsing, on-line readership of newspapers, radio listenership, receiving bulk SMS from the royal father among others. They however complain about poor connectivity and network. Oba Lasisi Gbadebo Gbadamosi said he uses the medium very effectively to share urgent information with his subjects. The oba uses a combination of Yoruba, English and pidgin English in putting information across to his subjects. Oba Gbadamosi however disagree that the GSM could constitute any threat to traditional media of communication.</td>
<td>At Ode-Remo, a similar finding was discovered. However, Oba Funso Adeolu said he uses Yoruba language more often whenever he has information to put across to his subjects. He, however, said his subjects complained about high tariff charged by the service providers as well as epileptic power supply to regularly charge their handsets. The royal father said the GSM does not pose any threat to the old media of communication.</td>
<td>His Royal Majesty, Oba Joseph Adelola Fagbamila equally alluded to the warm embrace of his people when the GSM arrived. He, however, said it does not constitute any threat to all the exiting traditional media of communication, which existed prior to the arrival of the GSM.</td>
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<td><strong>II. INTERNET:</strong> Dominick (2000, p. 279) observes that the mid-2000s witnessed the The internet services are also being enjoyed fully by residents of Ode-Remo. Oba Adeolu</td>
<td>Residents of Ootunja community lately began to enjoy internet services...</td>
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development of “easy-to-use software programs that made it simple to upload content to the internet.” This in turn encouraged the growth of blogs, social networking sites, as well as video-sharing sites. The youths in Igando, Sabe and Egbe, according to Oba Gbadamosi are enlivened by the emergence of social media, especially, facebook and twitter. The Oba says hardly could there be any youth in his domain that is not on facebook. He says further that the internet also provides jobs for hundreds of people in his domain who operate cyber cafes. In spite of the popularity of social media amongst the youths in the area, the Oba said the internet does not constitute a threat to old media in the community.

confirmed that it provides jobs for some people who operate cyber cafes. He, however, said epileptic power supply has also frustrated many of the cyber café operators. “There may be no power supply for three or four weeks, and petrol is very expensive, beside the fact that many of the cyber café operators cannot afford the prohibitive price of generating plant.” Oba Adeolu also said the internet does not constitute any threat to traditional media in the community.

services due to the collapse of Nigerian Telecommunications Plc (NITEL) in the community, coupled with late arrival of service providers. Oba Fagbamila said even though his subjects are just coming into contacts with the internet, he warned that a recent incident in Nasarawa state University, in which a female undergraduate was dated on the internet through facebook and later killed in Lagos will encourage any royal father to campaign against a wholesome approval of social media.

III FOLKTALE: This is not popular in the three communities. Rather, ‘soap opera’, cartoons Folktales is very popular and generally embraced by the community. It was learnt Deliberate efforts by the community have strengthened the
| IV | TOWNCRIER: Motorize town criers exist in the communities due to their metropolitan nature. Town criers are used to disseminate timely information. | Town criers are still in active use in the community for the same purpose, in spite of availability of radio & TV | Town crier in Ootunja played the role of modern radio announcer. Oba Fagbamila says news from the town crier is more authentic than any story on radio & TV. |
| V  | MASQUERADE: Apart from playing the role of entertainment, Oba Gbadamosi said it is also used in communicating the Obas message to every clan in the communities. Furthermore, it is used to settle rift, curb violence and quarrelling over a piece of land. | Oba Adeolu said the mythology of the masquerades is firmly rooted in the Yoruba culture and this explains why it is seen as part and parcel of the daily life of any Yoruba community. He further says no drama on TV provides more fun, entertainment and relaxation than the masquerades. | Masquerades serve same purpose in this community. An additional role here is that they come out when an old man or woman dies. Oba Fagbamila says “when people see the masquerade, they quickly decode the message that something has happened.” |
RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION: The study evaluated the impact of new media on traditional media of communication in Nigeria. The study discovered that while residents of the surveyed communities had the irresistible impact of the new media, the impact has however not reached the level of eliminating traditional media.

Earlier, the study put forward three research questions: first, we asked if new media constitute a threat to the survival of traditional media of communication. Going by the findings from the study, it was discovered from the urban communities that the answer is in affirmative while in the semi-urban and rural, it’s in the negative.

Second, we also asked if the old media possess attributes that could withstand the rampaging effect of the new media. The answer is also in affirmative. The traditional media are culturally rooted. As such, they are part and parcel of the daily life of the people.

Third, we asked what does the future hold for old media in Nigeria in this era of globalization. The study discovered that unless concerted efforts are made to check the rampaging effect of globalization, what happened in the urban communities in this study concerning folktale could be witnessed in the other communities in future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The various socializing agents in the studied communities should be strengthened in a bid to curb the effects of the new media on traditional media in Nigeria.

- Urgent steps must be taken by government to also curb a new trend in which criminals now use social media to trail people for assassination.
• The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) should also address mobile phones users’ complaint over dubious charges and inter-connectivity problem which rob them of excellent service.

• Government should also compel Power Holding of Nigeria Plc to once and for all find a lasting solution to the problem of erratic power supply.

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REFERENCES


