

Influence of Mass Media on Yoruba Culture: Cultural Theory in Focus

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of mass media on Yoruba culture: cultural theory in focus. The cultural theory provided the theoretical framework for the study. The descriptive research method was adopted, while 100 respondents were selected using a simple random technique. Questionnaire was used to source data. The data collected were presented and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings from the study revealed that majority of respondents 40(24.2%) agree to mass media promoting Yoruba culture; Findings also revealed that majority of respondents 43(44.3%) strongly agree to being able to learn Yoruba culture through mass media programmes and contents; findings also reveal that majority of respondents 40(41.2%) disagree to have never come across contents promoting Yoruba culture from the media.. The study recommended that Nigerian mass media should always showcase Yoruba culture through their contents and more awareness highlighting the importance of showcasing Yoruba culture through mass media should be raised.

KEYWORDS: Mass Media, Culture, Programmes, Contents.

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INTRODUCTION

Culture is the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organisation, thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours. Culture is the complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals and any other capabilities of man as a member of society; it comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values. Culture includes all characteristic activities and interests of the people. (Okoro,2009:116).

It must be understood that culture must be distinct in that certain attributes give it a particular character. These attributes are distinct in themselves, all of which give a particular culture its identity. Also, though none of the definitions specifically mention the mass media as a whole or communication in general, there is clear evidence that the media are captured in them. This is made manifest when social and technical processes, including ideas and habits, are reflected in the definitions, since the media are clearly involved in social and technical processes. The way people communicate reveals much about them. Also, the people's media are clear representations of such people. It is even believed in some quarters that no people can rise above their media. Therefore, both media and culture can be said to be two sides of the same coin since neither can be adequately addressed without reference to the other. Also, a people's media serves both as their window for other people to see them and appreciate their culture, as well as for them to see other people and their culture, too. Inevitably, then, the media serve as agents of international exchange and again as intermediaries between one culture and another. This way, the media make it possible for people to access cultures they could not have come across otherwise. The media most involved in this exchange are the electronic media comprising the conventional media of radio and television, the new media and the print. On the other hand, the movie or film, even though it is not a news medium per se, is, however, one of the greatest media prone to cultural manipulation. Indeed, the film, more than any other medium, is a force to be reckoned with in international cultural exchange.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is no human society without culture and values, Africa inclusive. One distinguishing feature of man that makes him very unique is that he alone has culture and values. The most vividly represented man's cultural inclusiveness or uniqueness when noted, and aptly too, that if there is any single factor explaining man's uniqueness, it is this: he and he alone has culture".

There are indispensable basic values in the Yoruba culture that promote unity, integration and genuine development. Every society has a set of cultural values, covering every aspect of human endeavour. These values are the guiding principles found in any society. This underscores the place of the mass media in bringing the culture of the Yoruba people to a global view and, by extension, boost the people's tourism potential, create employment, reduce social vices, educate and entertains people. Hence, this paper explores the influence of mass media on Yoruba culture with a focus on cultural theory.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine the influence of mass media on Yoruba culture: a cultural theory in focus. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. examine the effect of mass media on Yoruba culture;
- ii. examine the level of exposure to the contents of mass media on Yoruba culture.

Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of mass media on Yoruba culture?
- ii. What is the level of exposure to the contents of mass media on Yoruba culture?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Culture

There is no agreement among scholars as to the exact definition of culture. Scholars have produced all of sorts of definitions, in relation to the perspective in which it is viewed. However, Hornby, A.S. (2010) defined culture as the customs and beliefs, art, ways of life and social organisation of a particular country or group. In this paper, culture is viewed from the social science perspective. To the social scientists, "culture is used to refer to the totality of a man's ways of life, including behaviours, knowledge, beliefs, traditions, customs, religion, music, art and craft, dressing, food, and any other capabilities. Contributing to the conceptual framework of the term "culture", Mmadu (2012) conceptualises culture as the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge which constitute the shared bases of social action.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF YORUBA CULTURE

Language: The Yoruba people speak the Yoruba language, which is a tonal language and one of the most widely spoken African languages. It is also one of the four major languages in Nigeria.

Religion: Yoruba religion is a complex mix of indigenous beliefs and the influence of Christianity and Islam. Many Yoruba people practice a form of traditional religion known as Yoruba religion or Ifa. It involves the worship of numerous deities, known as Orishas, and the use of divination and rituals to communicate with these deities.

Art and Craft: Yoruba culture is known for its rich artistic traditions. Yoruba artists are famous for their intricate beadwork, wood carvings, pottery, and textiles. Yoruba art often features depictions of gods, ancestors, and important cultural figures.

Music and Dance: Yoruba music and dance are integral to their culture. Traditional Yoruba music includes drums, percussion instruments, and vocal performances. Dances are often performed at various ceremonies and festivals, and they often tell stories and convey cultural and religious themes.

Cuisine: Yoruba cuisine is diverse and includes a variety of dishes. Some popular Yoruba dishes include amala (yam flour), ewedu (jute leaf soup), pounded yam, and various stews and soups. Palm oil is a common ingredient in Yoruba cooking.

Clothing: Yoruba traditional clothing is often bright and colourful, reflecting the vibrancy of their culture. Men often wear the agbada, a flowing gown, while women wear the iro and buba, a wrap-around skirt and blouse. Gele, a head tie, is commonly worn by Yoruba women.

Festivals and Ceremonies: Yoruba culture is marked by various festivals and ceremonies that celebrate its history, religion, and community. The Osun Osogbo Festival, Sango Festival, and Ogun Festival are examples of significant Yoruba festivals that draw large crowds and are celebrated with music, dance, and rituals.

Family and Community: Yoruba society places a strong emphasis on family and community. Extended families are common, and family ties are important. Elders are highly respected, and there is a traditional system of leadership with chiefs and kings in many Yoruba communities.

Education and Philosophy: Yoruba culture has a rich oral tradition, and knowledge and wisdom are passed down through storytelling, proverbs, and songs. The Yoruba also have a system of philosophy and ethics known as Ifa, which guides many aspects of life and decision-making.

Architecture: Yoruba architecture includes traditional compounds with courtyard structures and mud walls. Modern urban areas also have Western-style buildings, but traditional Yoruba architecture remains important in many rural communities.

MASS MEDIA

For a medium to be considered “mass” it must be capable of conveying information to the audience, regardless of their location, culture, social, political, economic and educational status. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) define the mass media as any form of communication that simultaneously reaches a large number of people, including, but not limited to, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, the internet, billboards, films recording and books. Contributing to the definition of mass media, Okunna (1999) described the mass media as an intermediate transmitter of information that reaches members of the audience simultaneously. Flowing from the above views, one can conveniently state that mass media connotes any media used to transmit mass communication.

According to Potter (2013), mass media are classified under: print media, electronic media, and new age media. Broadcast media such as radio, recorded music, film and television transmit their information electronically. Print media uses a physical object such as a newspaper, book, pamphlet or comics to distribute information. Outdoor media is a form of mass media that comprises billboards, or placards placed inside and outside of commercial buildings, sports stadia, shops and buses. The new age media or digital media comprises both the internet and mobile mass communication. Internet media provides many mass media services such as e-mail, blogs, websites, and internet-based radio and television.

MASS MEDIA AND CULTURE

Mass Media and culture are interconnected; levels of understanding various cultures influence media content, meanwhile media platforms and contents impact cultural and day-to-day practices” (Dakroury, 2014). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggested that each culture had a different way of classifying the world. These schemes would be reflected, it argued, in the linguistic and semantic structures of different societies.

The media plays an important role in the decision-making framework, which is a behavioural change and in opinion formation, which is observable behaviour. A person closely monitoring the media consumption is not immune to media effects. After comparing various media channels, Danaher and Rossiter (2011) also acknowledged that people perceive different media channels differently. When communicating messages among different cultures, media on the other side also face severe challenges. According to Jenkins (2006), there is a definite paradigm shift in how the content of media is being produced and circulated. Scholars theorising the current trend to participatory culture emphasized user’s strong preference to share knowledge and culture in communities.

The media has given new meaning to cultural sharing and communication. Louis Writh and Talcott Parsons have “emphasised the importance of mass media as instruments of social control.” The media is basically a powerful presence in people’s lives. Afsaneh (2012) concludes that TV channels seek a change in lifestyle among Iranian women, as she finds a significant relationship between the lifestyle portrayed by TV channels and the lifestyle of women in Tehran. The media plays a cardinal role in disseminating our daily life cultural practices. It is said to reflect our cultural norms and values, and it has widened our choices and increased cultural expression with the flow of information at the planetary level. Cultural values also shape mass media messages when producers of media content have vested interests in particular social goals.

It can be asserted that there is a close relationship between mass media and the culture of people. Different mass media channels are interlinked with the culture of the place. Based on the literature, it could be further asserted, as (Dakroury, 2014) states, that “media narratives and discourses are created within different forms of texts and images that are complexly related to the cultural perceptions and practices of both those who produce and consume them.”

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on cultural theory. Cultural theory, in the context of the social sciences and cultural studies, refers to a set of perspectives and analytical frameworks used to understand and interpret the role of culture in society. It examines how culture shapes and is shaped by various social, political, economic, and historical factors. Cultural theory encompasses a wide range of approaches, but one common theme is the recognition that culture is not static but rather dynamic, evolving, and influenced by a multitude of forces. Cultural theory, particularly drawing from the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, suggests that mass media can be used to establish and maintain cultural hegemony. In the case of Yoruba culture, this would mean that the media, often controlled by dominant cultural and political groups, could shape the cultural narratives and values of the Yoruba people. It may promote the values and norms of the dominant culture and potentially erode or marginalise traditional Yoruba cultural elements.

Herbert Schiller argues that mass media from more powerful countries or cultures can overwhelm and replace the cultures of less powerful societies. In the Yoruba context, this might manifest as the influence of Western media (e.g., Hollywood films, Western music, or global advertising), potentially altering or overshadowing traditional Yoruba cultural practices and values. Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity suggests that cultures are not passively dominated or assimilated but can actively adapt and transform

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under the influence of external forces. Yoruba culture can adapt to the presence of mass media, absorbing certain elements while still maintaining its core identity.

Cultural theory also emphasises the role of the audience in interpreting and negotiating the influence of mass media. Yoruba individuals may selectively adopt or resist elements from mass media, choosing what aspects of foreign culture to embrace and what to reject, thus shaping how mass media affects their culture. On a more positive note, Yoruba culture might use mass media as a means of preserving and promoting its heritage. Yoruba language radio stations, TV shows, or online platforms can be used to disseminate traditional stories, music, and values, helping to sustain and pass down cultural practices.

METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted to examine the influence of mass media on Yoruba culture; cultural theory in focus. For this study to be appropriately done, a descriptive survey research design using a quantitative method was used. The population of the study comprises Students of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, in Oyo State. The sample size is 100. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents.

The instrument for the research study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire items were drawn from the research questions formulated for the study. After collection, the data were coded before being analysed. Since the analysed data were categorical in nature and in Likert format. Percentages were used for the descriptive analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS v.20) was used to analyse the data obtained for the study.

Results

Demographic Data Analysis of Respondents

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=97)

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	55	56.7
	Female	42	43.3
Age	18-25yrs	13	13.4
	26-31yrs	28	28.9
	32-37yrs	32	33
	38yrs & above	24	24.7
Religion	Christianity	48	49.5
	Islam	39	40.2
	Others	10	10.3
	Total		100.0

Source: Researcher's Survey(2023)

Table 1 shows that from the 97 copies of questionnaire returned, respondents of 55(56.7%) were male, while 42(43.3%%) were female. Also in the table, respondents with 13(13.4%%) were between the ages of 18-25yrs, 28(28.6%) were between the ages of 26-31yrs, 32(33%) were between the ages 32-37yrs, while the remaining 24(24.7%) were 38years & above. The table further discloses that 48(49.5%) were christians, 39(40.2%) weree islam whereas 10(10.3%) were others.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question One: What is the effect of mass media on Yoruba Culture

Table 2: Effect of Mass Media on Yoruba Culture (N=97)

Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Mass media promotes Yoruba culture	28(28.9)	40(24.2)	16(16.5)	13(13.4)
I'm able to learn Yoruba culture through mass media programmes and contents	43(44.3)	13(13.4)	22(22.7)	19(19.6)

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Mass media displays more of Western culture than Yoruba culture	10(10.3)	27(27.8)	12(12.4)	48(49.5)
People have chosen more of Western culture over the Yoruba because of how it is being portrayed by the mass media	15(15.5)	44(45.4)	12(12.4)	26(26.8)
Nigerian mass media doesn't portray Yoruba culture in a good light	23(23.7)	34(35.1)	16(16.5)	24(24.7)
Most of the content from the media houses displays Western culture	12(12.4)	20(20.6)	48(49.5)	17(17.5)
The mass media have helped to raise more awareness about Yoruba culture	32(33)	19(19.6)	16(16.5)	30(30.9)
I'm able to interact with the culture through mass media	22(22.6)	42(43.3)	15(15.5)	18(18.6)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey(2023)

Analysis in table 2 reveals that 28(28.9%) strongly agree to mass media promoting Yoruba culture, 40(40.4%) agree, 16(16.5%) disagree while 13(13.4%) strongly disagreed. 43(44.3%) strongly agree to being able to learn Yoruba culture through mass media programmes and contents, 13(13.4%) agree, 22(22.7%) disagree, while 19(19.6%) strongly disagreed. 10(10.3%) strongly agree to Mass media displaying more of western culture than Yoruba culture, 27(27.3%) agree, 12(12.4%) disagree while 48(49.5%) strongly disagreed. 15(15.5%) strongly agree to People choosing more of Western culture over the Yoruba because of how it is being portrayed by the mass media, 44 (45.4%) agree, 12(12.4%) disagree while 26(26.8%) strongly disagree. 23(23.7%) strongly agree to Nigerian mass media not portraying Yoruba culture in good light, 34(35.1%) agree, 16(16.5%) disagree while 24(24.7%) strongly disagreed 12(12.4%) strongly agree to most of the contents from the media houses displaying western culture, 20(20.6%) agree, 48(49.5%) disagree while 17(17.5%) strongly disagreed 32(33.0%) strongly agree to mass media has helped to raise more awareness about Yoruba culture, 19(19.6%) agree, 16(16.5%) disagree while 30(30.9%) strongly disagreed 22(22.6%) strongly agree to being able to interact with the culture through mass media, 42(43.3%) agree, 15(15.5%) disagree while 18(18.6%) strongly disagreed.

Research Question Two: What is the level of exposure to the content of mass media on Yoruba Culture

Table 3: Level of exposure to contents of mass media on Yoruba Culture (N=97)

Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
I have never come across contents promoting Yoruba Culture from the media	13(13.4)	33(34.0)	40(41.2)	11(11.3)
I frequently stumble upon content from the media that portrays Yoruba culture	23(23.7)	21(21.6)	14(14.4)	39(40.2)
I occasionally stumble upon content that promotes the Yoruba culture	19(19.6)	44(45.4)	24(24.7)	10(10.3)
I rarely find content that highlights Yoruba culture in the media.	17(17.5)	26(26.8)	12(12.3)	42(43.4)

There is no content showcasing Yoruba culture from the media at all	12(12.4)	18(18.6)	23(23.7)	44(45.4)	
I get to listen, read or watch content that embodies Yoruba culture daily	22(22.7)	20(20.6)	27(27.8)	28(28.9)	
I'm always exposed to mass media content that exhibits Yoruba culture	24(24.7)	14(14.4)	31(32)	28(28.9)	

Source: Researcher's Survey (2023)

Analysis in Table 3 reveals that 13 (13.4%) strongly agree to have never come across contents promoting Yoruba culture from the media, 33 (34.0%) agree, 40 (41.2%) disagree, while 11 (11.3%) strongly disagree. 23 (23.7%) strongly agree to frequently stumbling upon contents from the media that portrays Yoruba culture, 21 (21.6%) agree, 14 (14.4%) disagree while 39 (40.2%) strongly disagreed 19 (19.6%) strongly agree to occasionally stumbling upon contents that promotes the Yoruba culture, 44 (45.4%) agree, 24 (24.7%) disagree while 10 (10.3%) strongly disagreed 17 (17.5%) strongly agree to rarely finding contents that highlights Yoruba culture from the media, 26 (26.84%) agree, 12 (12.3%) disagree while 42 (43.4%) strongly disagreed 12 (12.4%) strongly agree that there are no contents showcasing Yoruba culture from the media at all, 18 (18.6%) agree, 23 (23.7%) disagree while 44 (45.4%) strongly disagreed 22 (22.7%) strongly agree to I get to listen, read or watch contents that embodies Yoruba culture on daily basis, 20 (20.6%) agree, 27(27.8%) disagree while 28 (28.9%) strongly disagreed 24 (24.7%) strongly agree to always exposing to mass media contents that exhibit Yoruba culture, 14 (14.4%) agree, 31 (32.0%) disagree while 28 (28.9%) strongly disagreed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One: What is the effect of mass media on Yoruba Culture

Findings show that the majority of respondents, 40 (24.2%), agree that mass media promotes Yoruba culture. Findings also revealed that the majority of respondents, 43 (44.3%), strongly agree with being able to learn Yoruba culture through mass media programmes and content. Data obtained show that the majority of respondents, 48 (49.5), strongly disagree with mass media displaying more of Western culture than Yoruba culture. It was revealed that the majority of respondents, 44 (45.4), agree to People choosing more of Western culture over the Yoruba culture because of how it is being portrayed by the mass media. Findings also revealed that the majority of respondents, 34(35.1 agree that Nigerian mass media do not portray Yoruba culture in a good light. It was revealed that the majority of respondents, 32 (33), strongly agree that mass media helps to raise more awareness about Yoruba culture. Data also showed that the majority of respondents, 48 (49.5), disagree that most of the content from the media houses displays Western culture. Findings also show that the majority of respondents, 42(43.3), agree to being able to interact with the culture through mass media. Thus, it can be said that mass media is effective in influencing Yoruba culture.

The findings corroborate cultural theory, which opines that mass media from more powerful countries or cultures can overwhelm and replace the cultures of less powerful societies. In the Yoruba context, this might manifest as the influence of Western media (e.g., Hollywood films, Western music, or global advertising), potentially altering or overshadowing traditional Yoruba cultural practices and values. Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity suggests that cultures are not passively dominated or assimilated but can actively adapt and transform under the influence of external forces. Yoruba culture can adapt to the presence of mass media, absorbing certain elements while still maintaining its core identity.

Research Question Two: What is the level of exposure to the contents of mass media on Yoruba Culture

Findings show that the majority of respondents 40(41.2%) disagree to have never come across content promoting Yoruba culture from the media. Findings also revealed that the majority of respondents 39, 40.2) strongly disagree with frequently stumbling upon content from the media that portrays Yoruba culture. Data obtained show that the majority of respondents 44(45.4%)) agree to occasionally stumble upon content that promotes the Yoruba culture. It was revealed that the majority of respondents, 42(43.4%), agree to rarely find content that highlights Yoruba culture in the media. Findings also revealed that the majority of respondents, 44(45.4%), strongly disagree that there are no contents showcasing Yoruba culture from the media at all. It was revealed that the majority of respondents, 28 (28.9%), strongly agree to listening, reading or watching content that embodies Yoruba culture daily. Data also showed that the majority of respondents, 28(28.9%), disagree with always exposed to mass media content that exhibits Yoruba culture. Thus, it can be said that respondents are exposed to the contents of mass media on Yoruba culture.

The findings are in line with the assertions of the cultural theory which suggests that mass media can be used to establish and maintain cultural hegemony. In the case of Yoruba culture, this would mean that the media, often controlled by dominant cultural and political groups, could shape the cultural narratives and values of the Yoruba people. It may promote the values and norms of the dominant culture and potentially erode or marginalise traditional Yoruba cultural elements.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that mass media affects Yoruba culture. It can also be concluded that students of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology are exposed to content showcasing Yoruba culture from the mass media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made;
- Nigerian mass media should always showcase Yoruba culture through their content.
- More awareness highlighting the importance of showcasing Yoruba culture through mass media should be raised.

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