INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ON MEDIA PRACTICE IN AFRICA (A STUDY OF NIGERIA EASTERN REGION)

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Influence of Culture on communication practice in Africa, with Nigeria as a study Area. The objectives of the study, include to find out really if culture influences Communication practice, which of the genders are mostly influenced by culture in their profession in Enugu State and whether culture influences people's communication patter. Survey research method was used, after extensive consultation of literature that related to the topic. Findings revealed that in Nigeria, more male are engaged in media practices than female and that culture influence very often on people's communication life, and by extension influences practitioners of public relations profession particularly. The study concluded that culture as people's way of life influence on people's communication practice and particularly on the professionals of media practices. It suggested some recommendations such as constant enlightenment and education of some obnoxious culture that obstruct effective media practice, and ways to modernise them or outright removal of those culture. Again, the study recommended constant in-house training for media practitioners in a bid to teach them practical approaches and model to avoid conflict of cultural clash with their professional practices.

Introduction

A discussion on culture and communication practice, whether news gathering and reporting, advertising or public relations is a totality of human communication which started after creation of humanity. From time immemorial, in every clime, tribe, ethnicity or religion or race communication had played significant role in cultural life of the people. In spoken, written or demonstrative communication (verbal and non-verbal) practice, culture has overbearing influence because people's behaviour, including communication patterns reflects much on the culture prevalent in the practitioner's society. This is because, according to Nwabueze (2013.p 236) culture is the identity of a people since it consists of values, beliefs, attitude, lifestyle, dominant dress code or patterns, language and dialect among other variables which make a group of people distinct from others in the same or other societies.

Therefore, one's life existence depends on one's cultural heritage. This is because everyone is born into an existing cultural community, urban or rural, natural or artificial (emergency) or the like. Culture encompasses the totality of human bahaviour, lifestyle, beliefs, customs, values and value system that shape any society. Nwala (2010.p. 116) observes that as a result of culture, the group or community (defined people of one blood) is held prior to the individual and, hence the individual within the context of the community belief system. According to him, Igbo traditional world view reflects a unified social order in which blood relationship is the bond and the group was the embodiment of the ancestor from whose bosom everyone issues. It means in Igboland, where Enugu state is a part, the body of beliefs we have is omenala, which expresses our traditional world-view. Although, despite its authoritarian nature, the belief system was a flexible one, which allows independent and individual initiative and change thought. Igbo traditional thought does not allow people especially men to depend on others irrespective of class, status, or position to think for another person.

Again, Igbo traditional culture does not permit women to contribute to some sensitive cultural loaded issues because some married women from outside the community or society may not be grounded in the cultural knowledge of their husbands, therefore, cannot be allowed to openly engage in such discussions. Nwagbara (2012.p.252) recognises this when he observes that one major factor that could affect information dissemination and influence meaning attribution in communication situations are personal or group biases and prejudices resulting from stereotypes derived from the influence of culture. Based on his observation, the author cited Person, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter (2003) who defined culture as "all of the socially transmitted behaviour patterns, beliefs, attitudes and values of a particular period, class, community or population. So, culture involves symbolic communication. Most of its symbols are learnt and perpetuated through the process of interaction and meaning sharing between and among members of that culture. People learn these symbols over time, and so, they generally accepted them as a way of life for the people without their having to question or think about them.

Ochonogor (2013.p.321) people grow up within their culture, they tend to unconsciously see the world around them through the lens of their own norms, tradition, customs and culture, such shape their judgment of issues before them. For example , in the practice of public relations, Clemente and Higgins (2005) cited by Ochnogor (2013.p.319) explain culture and communication in the context of language learning that requires the representation of two co-existing domains of socio-cultural activities and practices. According to them, these domains are in levels. In the social/cognitive level, or language learning where individuals carry out actual activities and practices of language learning, and second level discussing overall cultural context of these social locations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, socio-class, age, among others. These two domains engender each other to produce and reproduce the particularities of learning cultures. Some communication experts observe that rural dwellers have their own communication channels and that these communication avenues must be properly understood and utilized by communication practitioners including public relations practitioners to enhance communication compliance. One of those communication scholars, Lull (2000, p.210) culture is regarded as the totality of the way of life of the people.

Statement of the Research Problem

Since after the creation of man, culture which man made for himself has been guiding him, his conduct and behaviour over the years and generations. From

generation to generation, culture remains a system for representing the symbolic, intuitive and behavioural worlds that people have constructed, lived in and act upon. Therefore, it consists of the beliefs, behavuours, objects or other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Generation after generation, people grow with their culture or modify such, but can hardly abolished totally what guides the people's behaviour for the purposes of ensuring security of the society.

So, various studies on culture, cultural heritages, culture and development, especially rural or community development, culture and communication, point to the fact, that people cherish their culture and can hardly do away with it. People are born into a culture that teaches them what to wear, eat, speak, worship, play; how to communicate, make friendship, relate and so on. Culture sets standard for acceptable behaviour in a society, and by extension, communication.

The fact remains, that no matter how highly learned or educated, one cannot totally drop one's culture in Africa. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the level of efficiency in media practice in Nigeria centred cultural area of Africa.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is:

(a)   To investigate the influence of culture on media practice in Nigeria.

Other objectives are:

(b)   To find out the dominant gender that engage in media practice in Nigeria.
(c)   To examine the role culture generally play in people's communication in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward to guide the direction of the study:

(a)   How does culture influence media practice in Nigeria?
(b)   Who are the dominant gender that engage in media practice in Nigeria?
(c)   What role does culture generally play in people's communication in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Culture is ambiguous, persuasive, universal, learnt and complex, such that the concept is somewhat difficult to define. Culture results from learnt attributes known as nature. It is particular to every human group. People are born into a culture that teaches them what to wear eat, speak, play and worship. It sets standards for acceptable behaviour in a society. Lusting and Onwe, C.E. (2019, p.9) put it "Humans are not born with the genetic imprint of a particular culture, instead, people learn about their culture through integrations with parents, others family members, friends and even strangers who are part of the culture.

Culture is seen as an integrated pattern of human knowledge beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, work of arts rituals, ceremonies and other related components, its developments depend on man's ability or capacity to learn and to transmit knowledge to succeeding generations. Nwagbara (2012,p.194), cited by Ochnogor (2013,p.123) says "culture shared learned behaviour which is transmitted from one generation to another for the purpose of promoting individual and social survival, adaptation growth and development." They further stated that culture has two representations as expressed in terms of values, norms belief, attitude, patterns, cognitions, consciousness and epistemologies, the external representations are evident in artifacts, roles and institutions.

To Clemente & Higgins (2005) cited in Obasi and Omeje (2023; P. 149) "culture is a system for representing the symbolic, initial and behavioural worlds that people have constructed, the in and act upon". They stress that people mediate these systems through the use of cultural tools of interpretation, through the construction of meaning and through the development of strategies for problems solving. They also claim that specificity of particular culture is a historical process framed by the material and social context of the actors. The reproduction of specific cultural systems involves the integrated interactions of its members in mapping previous depositions. Known as "habitus" onto the social context of everybody life.

According to Okafor & Emeka, (2002, p.219) Culture is the sum total of the ways man has adopted in the achievements or forms of creativity and as the patters of life of the people performs some function in the society, these functions includes: -

i.   Culture provides explanations on the nature of the world and serves as a basis or

instrument for action and for the changing world.

ii. It gives aesthic values to society living particularly when people express pride and satisfaction, their mode of dressing, the food they eat, the language they speak etc.

iii. Culture aids the stability of any group; it is through cultural complexes that negative sanctions are built for non-conformist whose behaviours may threaten social integration.

iv. Group members can only service where there is culture. This is obvious because the material components of culture provides necessary equipment for food, shelter clothing.

v.   All these above show that culture has to do with behavioural pattern of a particular group this behavioural pattern can be seen in the mode of dressing of the people. The kind of food they eat, funeral and marriage rites etc. ultimately culture embodied the attitudes and values of the society.

Aig-Imoukhuede (1975, p. 98) Opines that culture is made up of some basic components they are Rules and norms which govern human behaviour as well as regulated and controlled interaction in the society. The idea and philosophies developed by the society i.e the idea of a society inform their rules and norms also facilitate the production of materials for existence. The concrete creation of production in the society and then artifacts, and may come inform of cultural communication. Culture has some characteristic that makes it culture Nwabueze (2022, p. 79) and they are:-

i.   Culture is universal: - This shows that every society no mater how big or small has its given culture, no wonder McBride in Ukonu et al stated "thus culture is the sum total of the way man has adopted in the achievements of all forms of creativity. He further added that culture by a particular people ideology, philosophy or world view.

ii. Culture is unique and peculiar to each society: - This means that every society, this at that has His own way of doing things which are peculiar to them, for instance the Yoruba marriage system differs from the way the Igbo's marry traditionally.

iii. Culture is supper-organic: - This means that culture does not die as people die or things fade away. People come and go in the society but culture remains.

iv. Culture is stable as well as dynamic. Stability have shows that culture is steady just as stated above, it does not die with man but it moves form one generation to another while the dynamic nature of culture signifies that culture changes overtime.

Okafor & Emeka (2002, p.87) cited Good (1959) in his dictionary of education sees culture as the aggregate of the social, ethical, intellectual, artisan, governmental and industrial attainments characteristic of a group, state or nation, and by which it can be distinguished from and compared with other group or nation. It includes ideas, concepts, usages, institutions, associations and material objects. Therefore, it can also affect how a particular ethnic group, especially in Nigeria, communicate and practice public relations profession. Culture determines and sets the standards of rights and wrong, the authoritative channels of distribution of power, governance, economy, communication systems and group responses to issues/matters. Culture is at the core of identity and collective responsibility (Pate, Nwabueze &Idiong, 2013. P. 210).

Culture and Communication

The representation of two co-existing domains of socio-cultural activities and practices is culture. First, the social cognitive domain of language learning, that is, the actual activities and practice of language learning. Secondly, the overall cultural context of the social locations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity social class, age among others. These two domains engender each other to produce and reproduce the particularities of learning culture. Embedded in the people's active are the traditional practices which find expression in their pattern of communication developed and used over him by the people, especially rural dwellers.

Communication experts Samover& Parter (2017, p. 210) say that rural dwellers have their own communication channels and that the communication avenues must be properly understood and utilized by development facilitators to enhance rural development. They are for the opinions that, since face to face communication is the most efficient mode of communication in a country where the majority is either illiterate or semi-illiterate, it should properly organized and exploited to ensure that development orientation

messages get to the rural dwellers to elicit their participation. The rural man is initially a traditional person whose entire life is framed and directed by ancient loves. The pattern of the traditional society finds expression in the people's socio-political organizational structures through which the affairs of the people are managed Embedded in the socio-political structures the communication models, through which the people relate with one another at every stage of society.

Cultural communication is a self-sustaining and imperative for the maintenance of survival of rural culture and contributes significantly to rural advancement by the way of spreading information about new ideas.

Oral communication was gradually confronted by a grate different form of communication bowed on print and generally in a foreign language. If an African language was used, it was a language not necessarily employed in traditional oral communication. Thus, the introduction of the new print media marked the beginning of a break with the past. It is instructive to note that traditional communication media have gone through modifications and adjusted into the modern age. Communication scholars observes that traditional communication has survived form the earliest of times and has made adjusted traction into the electronic age. The authors explained that following the fusion of tradition and modernity, some conventional communication media have continued to adjust in the form of instrument addition, replacement, sound amplification and change in miles. Thus, modern mass media are vehicles of disseminating culture bound messages one of the principal function of the mass media as identified by Laswell in (1946) as cited by Lull (2002, p. 26) in the transmission of culture, from one generation to another. Invariable, the mass media have the responsibility of ensuring the survival of cultures through their reportage, commentaries and interpretations. It was for this reason that Nnachikwu (2023) said that news media report and interprets information about the society itself, chronicle its history as a social unit.

It is argued that elements of African culture survival in their various languages, performing and other arts, religious, oration and literature which depict the strength of African culture. These elements also underscored African resistance to amihilations and cultural destruction. During the fight for independence, African theatre and cultural forms became elements of resistance and the struggle of independence creators. When these messages are imported into other countries, they bring with them value that are incautious with the local environment and are imposed on the people. The implication of this is that the youths, with impassionate minds and in their bid to catch up with what is vouge, abandon their culture for the fashionable western style and values.

Nigeria the Study Area

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa with up to three hundred and seventy one (371) ethnic groups, the largest of which are the house/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, among other major ethnic group. According to Wikipedia, Hausa/Fulani has about 29% of ethnic nation a lities, followed by Yoruba with 21%, Igbo 18%, Ijaw 10% and Kanuri 4%, and others 350ethnic with less percentages. Nigeria with over 350 ethnic groups, and with over 500 different dialects, numbers the tenth position in Africa continent in countries with large ethnic groups and cultural heritage.

According to Ekpo, Njoku an Aewole, (2022, p. 213) the most culturally diverse countries in Africa are Republic of Chad, followed by Uganda, Liberia, Madagascar, Dr Congo, Togo, South Africa, Kenya, Mali and Nigeria. Guinea Bissau closely follows Nigeria with over 20 African ethnicities, number over 300 sub-groups.

In a world of over twenty thousand ethnic or cultural groups and Africa parading a good number of such groups, the tendency is that cultural heritage should have great influence on the peoples communication practices.

Theoretical Framework

The study sought to strike a balance in selecting appropriate theory that can match the investigation in culture and mass media. In doing that, the researchers considered competing theories in culture and mass media, and struck a balance on two cultural Theory of Communication floated by Lev Vygolsky, Russian Psychologist, who after reviewing the impact of World Wars, globally and nationally began to look at the development of a child, concluded that culture, powered by Mass Communication, plays significant role in child's learning mechanism. According to the theory, it has the belief that people (with varying cultural backgrounds) communicate through a different set of rules, norms and languages patterns. These sets of rules, norms and languages are part of people's culture.

In fact, the theory was derived from the belief that through different experiences and lifestyles, interpersonal communication is much different in terms of gender, race, ethnic groups, societies and other similar inter- and intra groupings of human existence. The theory originally and even after completion for use, subsequently throws up a whole lot of studies to support or disagree in its contents, context and application.

Many cultural-media scholars began t apply the theory in explanation and arguments, gender-stereotype, cultural identity, family upbringing, mentorship, work efficiency and media-cultural environment. Looking at the relationship between mass media and culture, one influences the other for example, because of efficacy of mass media campaigns, mass media influences trends in popular culture, teaching and learning how people eat, think, listen, drink, dress, work and even relate.

Many notable psychologists including Bandura (1977), Chen and Harland-Jones (2000) Andersn and Busman (2001), Galvo and Avero (2002) and Adanus and Kleck (2005) showed rapt attention to the media roles in the society. They, among many unmentioned great scholars in media culture, summed up to agree that Mass Communication influences both the society and culture, explaining how communication set up by law influences how society works and culture modified. This theory matches the study very appropriately.

The Research Design

Nworgu (1991) cited in Uzoagulu (1999, p. 61) a research design is a plan or blue print which specifies how data relating to a given identified problem should be collected and analysed. There are several designs (methods) available for researchers to chose from in executing their studies in social or management sciences. This researcher chose survey research design (method) which she thought would afford her the opportunity to simply from her study population. According to Obasi (2013, p. 41) is a research method in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analysing data very necessary and considered to be representative of the entire group. Therefore, survey is the research design for the study.

Population of the Study

The population is the target of the study. The study is essentially carried out in order to investigate some pertinent characteristics of the population relevant to any study. It is expected that the members of the population (Enugu state people) have identical characteristics needed for the investigation. From the target population of the 4,690,100 people in Enugu state as at 2022, the researcher would look for accessible population, which is the population that can possibly be reached.

Sample size and Sampling Technique

Sample size is the representative proportion of data or information derived from this group of the population (sample size) truly reflect the entire (target) population. On the other hand, sampling technique, according to Uzoagulu (1999, p. 68) refers to the statistical and research means used to arrive at the sample size. In order to arrive at representative sample, the researcher employed non-random sampling technique that affords everyone in the population if given equal chance of being selected. Simple non-random sampling technique was used, which is the easiest and simplest probability sampling technique in terms of concentration and application. To arrive at sample size for this study, the researcher used purposive sampling technique, and got 380, from the accessible population. (1876,000) of Enugu Urban, Comprising of Trans-Ekulu, Uwani, Coal Camp, Achara Layout, New Haven, Obiagu and Independent Layout.

Hypotheses Testing

Two hypotheses considered a very pertinent for this study were tested in order to bequeath statistical proof in the final result. The three hypotheses are:

HI: Culture influences Public Relations practice

H2:   Culture generally play role in peoples communication pattern in Nigeria.

The researcher used chi-square (x^2) goodness of fit test, to test the selected hypotheses. The Chi-Square (X^2) formula, thus:

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(O-E)}{E}$$

Where

X^2 = Calculated Chi-square Value

O = Observed Frequency

E = Expected Frequency

$\sum$ = Summation Sign

H1: Culture influence Mass Media practice

Using tabular format to calculate X^2:

Response Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E)²	(O-E)²/E
Very often	180	185	-90	8,100	45
Often	180	185	0	0	0
No idea	40	185	-140	19,600	108.9
Not often	36	185	-144	20,736	115.2
Not very often	24	185	-156	24,336	135.3
Total	370				404.3

$X^2 = 404.3$, $P = 0.05$, df = 4, $X^2_\mu = 9.488$

Where

$X^2 =$ Calculated Chi-Square value

P = Level of significance

df = No of categories (k-1) or degree of freedom

$X^2_\mu =$ Probability Table value

Decision Rule

Since the calculated chi-square value (404.3) is greater than the table value of (9.488), we accept the statistical hypotheses (H1) which states that culture frequently influences Public Relations practitioner official duties (H0>H1).

H2: Culture generally play role in peoples communication pattern in Nigeria

The hypothesis was tested using questionnaire item number nine, thus:

Media Practitioners/Professionals often adhere to culture in their professional practices

Response Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E)²	(O-E)²/E
Very often	84	185	-101	10,201	55.1
Often	151	185	-34	1,156	6.3

Seldomly	120	185	-65	4,225	22.8
Not at all	15	185	-170	29,070	157.1
Total	370				241.3

$X^2 = 241.3$, P = 0.05, df = 3, $X^2\mu = 7.815$

Where X^2=   Calculated Chi-Square value

P=   Level of significance (0.05)

df =   No of categories (k-1) or degree of freedom

$X^2\mu$ =   Probability Table value

Decision Rule

Since the result of the calculated Chi-square value (241.3) is greater than the probability table value (7.815), we accept the statistical hypothesis which states that culture generally pays role in people's (Professionals) Communication pattern in Nigeria. (H0>H1)

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study revealed some starting information that needed to be discussed.

Looking at the influence of culture on mass media practice, the study revealed that many respondents were of the opinion that culture often intervenes in professionals that practice the profession. Because culture often interferes with both civil and public servants' Yoruba tribe closely followed by the Hausas, then Igbos, are frequently influenced by their culture while they perform their official functions. This study further revealed that in Enugu State, male Public Relations practitioners out number their female counter parts.

On how to counter the much influence of culture on the public relations practitioners, the study suggested consistent in-house training for the practitioners believing that constant updating their knowledge on tending events around them.

Two hypotheses were tested to the findings of the study. Alternative hypotheses were chosen for testing because alternative hypothesis is a relationship hypothesis, so the researchers chose to either accept or reject them, based on their propositions.

H1: proposes that culture influences Mass Media practice. It was tested using Chi-Square (X^2), and result showed that calculated Chi-Square value (404.3) was more than the probability table value (9.488) i.e $X^2 > X^2\mu$. We accepted the hypothesis

stated that culture has influence in the media practitioners in Nigeria.

H2: culture generally plays role in peoples communication pattern in Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square goodness of fit test instrument. The result of the statistical test affirms that Nigerians are affected by their different tribal cultural heritage while communicating. The result of that statistical test showed that every Nigerian is often influenced by his or her tribal culture by the way the person communicates.

Conclusion

The study concludes that culture, as a way of life, has much influence on the ways people communicate and carry out other communication practices like Mass Media practices. It further confirms media practitioners resect their culture and tradition in the course of discharging their professions, like advertising, public relations, news writing and reporting, and even in broadcast news processing and programming and production.

Recommendations

The study recommends as follows:

That education and enlightenment should be intensified on how to balance culture and professional practices. This is to achieve true professionalism in communication delivery.

The study recommends that practitioners association monitoring committee should from time to time move into the field in order to finish out quacks and punish them accordingly. Emphasis

must be placed on educational qualification before one goes into media practices in any office.

Employers of labour, especially those who would engage the services of public relations personnel should be warned of the negative implications of employing unqualified persons as public relation officers.

The study strongly recommends constant in-house training for Media practitioners in order to embrace modern tend that is devoid of culture-driven. Practitioners should be educated to draw line between culture and professional practice.

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