

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN THE NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

It becomes expedient to measure the viability of newspaper as an instrument of diffusing innovations through the dint of mass communication in this era of mediamorphosis, when technological inventions are reshaping the instrumentality of communication to suit various wants of media users. Informed media buyers understand the dynamisms of the targets or publics or media users, and always keep themselves apprise of their peculiar variables in making choices of what media to use to best reach them efficiently.

Newspaper as a medium of mass communication is challenged by the new media technologies. The new media are handy in various multimedia phablets, tablets, phones and other gadgets that are conduits of social media networks now. Despite the challenge that has cut down, the more, patronage for the medium, newspaper still serves as a serious medium to facilitate development through its reportage.

The thrust of this research is to establish the credence given to the reportage on technology and innovation by Nigerian newspapers by examining the holistic editorial contents that focus on the variables of the research topic – technology and innovations. The researchers deign to establish the credence based on form and frequency of reports on technology and innovations.

Three national dailies in Nigeria were selected for this study; i.e. Punch, The Nation, Daily Trust. An issue of each of the papers is selected per week. It was found that Punch reports more

Key words: innovations, technology, diffusion

INTRODUCTION

A tome has been written on technology and innovation in the domain of academics in Nigeria; lecturers and professionals present papers at conferences to contribute to the reservoir of knowledge that will spur desirable changes in all spheres of human life. Yearly, research inputs are gathered and published in academic journals.

There are also breakthroughs in fabrications and modeling of machines in academic institutions that often serve as a criterion for periodic accreditation of courses of studies, especially, in polytechnics in Nigeria. For instance, The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, often showcase to the press various fabrications at her annual convocation ceremonies. Cassava peeling machine, electronic voting machine, Ofada rice milling machine, Gari seiver, Gari fryer etc are few of the laudable feats of the students of the institution the management proudly displayed during the last convocation ceremony held on 16th October, 2018.

Although, there abounds a deluge of actionable fabrications and thesis in various academic journals still lying fallow, bringing them to fruition is a concern for all in order to bring about the desired development. And if this must be achieved, the templates must be pushed beyond the borders of academics, i.e., they have to find their ways into the mainstream media to garner the necessary interests for their survival, on which sustainable development of Nigeria is dependent.

Nigerian print media had assumed virility to drive necessary social change long before Nigeria's independence. The then fledgling print medium was the lone weapon employed by the nationalists to wrestle rein of power from the colonialists. Thus, Nigeria's history is not holistic without ample mentioning of the valiancy of the primal press men who used the medium to mobilize supports for indigenous governance in Nigeria, which Herbert Macaulay hallmarked.

The press in Nigeria has evolved out of slug character casting that made printing process a monotonous and inflexible endeavor into today's atomized, sophisticated and seamless direct imaging. Stanley J. Baran opined that "as it is impossible to overstate the importance of writing, so too it is impossible to overstate the significance of Johann Gutenberg's development of the movable metal type". It was the stride that revolutionized the terrain of printing press, which later birthed newspaper production.

In Nigeria, Iwe Irohin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba established in 1859, had as its core vision to inculcate the habit of reading in its targets. So the paper majorly published primers and church announcements. The cynosure of the paper, which was to grow the literacy number of the people, later created virile ground for subsequent papers that emerged after its demise. The paper also served as the training ground for the first generation of printers who dominated the printing press in succession after its extinction.

The earliest newspapers could best be described as periodicals because of their spaced issues. Today, dailies like The Punch, Vanguard, Nigerian Tribune, Daily Trust, to mention a few, have

standardized the status of a newspaper in Nigeria. The sector has been given a fillip courtesy of the permeative technological inventions that are adding more values to human endeavors.

Though, newspapers are wont to be of general interest featured on tabloid newsprint, they can be categorized according to the language, location and frequency of issue. Categorization based on location recognizes various newspapers published with cognizance to geographies; categorization by language considers tone and diction which confers elitist status on certain newspapers with high technical language, and on others, general interest with exoteric language.

Notwithstanding the purviews of the categorization, all newspapers are structured with similar features that make up their editorial contents. These are:

- News
- Features
- Advertisement
- Picture and Illustrations
- Caricature
- Editorial
- Opinions

Technology and innovation are parts of our daily life that are newsworthy and could be reported in any of the above listed forms. Some newspapers even dedicate certain pages to pure technologies and innovations with varying inputs from techno savvy columnists. Whatever the tempo of reportage on technology and innovation, the end result is to acquaint the readers with the trends in the global technological inventions around the world. No doubt, newspapers are a fine medium for socializing the populace about new ideas.

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Innovation

A “new idea, device, or method”. It is also the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market needs. (**Wikipedia.org**)

“All breakthroughs in business come from innovation, from offering something better, cheaper, faster, newer, or more efficient in the current marketplace.” **Brian Tracy**

Technology

Technology, simply put, is “science of craft” It is the (**Wikipedia.org**)

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF NEWSPAPERS

- Permanence: The permanent nature of the medium makes it sharable as and referenced between and among folks.
- Indepth: Unlike the crisp and short broadcast messages, newspapers gives details using picturesque descriptions and illustrations to pass the ideas across to the readers, since there is ample space to fit in the contents in order of their priorities.
- Truth: A lot more truthfulness is ascribed to newspapers compared to the new media. Newspapers are somewhat a legal tender because of serious contents they publish, such as change of names, coupons, Public Service Announcements, etc.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the study are:

- To enunciate the scope of reportage on technologies and innovations in Nigerian newspapers
- To stress the usefulness of newspaper as a medium or otherwise in diffusing innovations and technologies
- To identify and categorize various forms of innovations and technologies that newspaper as a medium carries
- To compare the frequencies of coverage of innovations and technologies between and among the three dailies.
- To illustrate the presentation manners of innovation and technology reportage in Nigerian newspapers
- To determine developmental scope of Nigerian newspapers in relation to technology and innovations

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

DEVELOPMENT MEDIA THEORY

The duty of the press to facilitate development is entrenched in Denis Mcquail's Development Media Theory. Anaeto, S. et al 2010 pg.23 opines that "The theory is of the view that the Media in developing countries should attend to their most pressing needs, which is development. It believes that the mass media have a positive role to play in stimulating social and economic development"

The core principles of Development Media Theory can be summed up thus:

- The media must facilitate desirable developments in tandem with the established national policies;
- The media should optimize its freedom to facilitate socio economic developments of the state;
- Media should give priority in their content to the national culture and language
- Media should give coverage to other developing countries that are proximate geographically and politically;
- Media practitioners have freedom and responsibilities
- In the interest of developments ends, the state s the last arbiter

In essence, development can be sustained only if it relates directly to the existing social structures and constructs of the people. The culture and language of the people should not be a deterrent to development. It should serve as frame of reference for development policies. As a result, the first step for sustainable development is local content development to propagate and build on the extant structures and constructs.

There are two approaches to this: viz

1. Researching into the peculiar agricultural, economical, environmental, sociological, medical and technological needs of Nigeria, and developing suitable local oriented solutions;
2. Propagating the achievements and charting a better course for local content through the communication mechanism, i.e. the mass media, even, beyond the shores of the Nation to neighboring countries with similar needs.

It is the responsibility of the media to facilitate development through their coverage. As the fourth estate of the realm, the media must act in synergy with the constituted governmental tiers to sensitize the populace about developmental policies of the government, and also act as windows to the yonder worlds for the purpose of *glocalization*- which simply connotes “think globally, act locally”.

Lai Oso PhD. Et al, in *Book Publishing, a Practical Guide*, 2009, pg. 23 averred that “if our traditional innovations had been published, most of them would have been scientifically assessed and standardized. For instance, the concept of 3G mobile phone...had been with African for centuries.” Even if we cannot so much embrace the crude technology of traditional craft, academically inspired fabrications should be encouraged and should serve as the blue-print for novelties that will spur industrial developments, most especially in the areas Nigeria has comparative advantages i.e. agriculture.

DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM

Emmanuel Odozi, PhD, 2014, cited Rampal (1984 in Thusu, 1996, p.13) espousing the essence of development journalism states that “development journalism, as is all journalism, is information, analysis, comment and interpretation. But it also includes motivation- motivating people and motivating policy towards what people want and need. Exposing and publicizing successes and failures, and reasons for them, part of development journalism”.

According to Anaeto S. et al 2010 pg. 24, “Development journalism is concerned with disseminating development oriented information in order to accelerate development in a country. The press in any society and at all times needs to be focused. And for developing countries, their media have to focus on how to transform their nations from developing to developed countries.”

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology adopted for this study is content analysis. The rationale is to analyze the manifest contents on technology and innovation in the three of the major national newspapers in Nigeria in a bid to explain their disposition towards facilitating technological and innovative development through their coverage of such.

The newspaper sample includes:

1. The Nation newspaper
2. Daily Trust newspaper
3. The Punch newspaper

The papers are selected because of their nationalistic status in terms of circulation and content, conferred on them over the years through diligence and consistency.

The period of study covers fifty two weeks (52 weeks) from 17th April, 2017 to 30th March, 2018. An issue of each newspaper is arbitrarily selected per week for the study, excluding the weekend issues. So, in all, 52 multiplied by 3 gives us a total number of 156 issues of the three newspapers.

Editorial contents bordering on any form of innovations and technologies, activities of new media entities, industrial adoption of innovations, and activities of NCC and allied agencies form the focus of analysis.

Unit of Analysis includes news pages in selected newspapers in Nigeria which were examined in relation to reportage bordering on innovations and technologies. The manifest contents take three forms; i.e. News format, Advert/Advertorial, and Feature format. Advertorial is scored 1; News is scored 2, while a Feature on innovation and or technology is scored 3. Adverts are sponsored messages by the identifiable sponsor to facilitate sales for products, services or ideas; they are mostly creative pieces, containing pictures and words to sell the issue. News are responsibilities of the

newspapers to the public to know about newsworthy happenings that relate directly or indirectly with them. Features are more researched news with broader scope of treatment for an event or happenings. For accurate categorization along the three headers – Adverts, News, and Features, the researchers were directly involved in the coding.

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1: REPORTAGE OF INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY IN PUNCH NEWSPAPER

Categories	Number of Issues	Innovation & Technology	%
News	52	833	56.9%
Adverts	52	364	24.9%
Features	52	267	18.2%
TOTAL		1464	100%

Table 2: REPORTAGE OF INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY IN THE NATION NEWSPAPER

Categories	Number of Issues	Innovation & Technology	%
News	52	147	54%
Adverts	52	87	32%
Features	52	38	14%
TOTAL		272	100%

Table 3: REPORTAGE OF INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY IN DAILY TRUST NEWSPAPER

Categories	Number of Issues	Innovation & Technology	%
News	52	108	62%
Adverts	52	37	21.3%
Features	52	29	16.7
TOTAL		174	100%

Table 4: AGGREGATES OF THE THREE NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers	News	Advert	Feature	Aggregate	%
The Punch	833	364	267	1464	76.7%
The Nation	147	87	38	272	14.2%
Daily Trust	108	37	29	174	9.1%
TOTAL	1088	488	334	1910	100%

Table 5: PERCENTAGE BY FORMATS

FORMATS		%
News	1088	57%
Adverts	488	26%
Feature	334	18%
TOTAL	1910	100%

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present distributions of editorial contents relating to innovation and technology in forms of news, advert or feature, in the three sampled national dailies. Fifty two (52) copies of each of the dailies were analyzed, making a total of one hundred and fifty six (156). All of the gleaned editorial contents relating to innovation and technology were found inside the bellies of the newspapers. Adverts, features and straight news hardly make it to the front pages of newspapers in Nigeria. However, it was found out that there were sections that were dedicated to editorial contents revolving around innovations and technologies, apart from the adverts that were sometimes planted at the centre spread.

Apparent in table 4, which illustrates the aggregates of the three papers, news format type of reports dominated the reportage on innovations and technologies with 57%; followed by Adverts with 26%; and then, Feature had the least, with 18%.

Most of the news revolved around activities of NCC and allied organizations. Adverts of foreign technologies in form of innovations in technologies topped the format, while features were mostly on agro related technology, with the least attention – 18%.

CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

There is still low coverage of general technology and innovation in Nigerian newspapers, especially in the ones that have regional orientation like Daily Trust, is more Northern in scope; and much of the reports dwell on foreign technologies that Nigeria has no capacity to replicate yet.

Since Nigeria has comparative advantage in agriculture, fabrications and actionable research works should be given more coverage by the newspapers to garner the deserved attentions from public and private sectors needed for their fruition and proper development.

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