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International Digital Organization for Scientific Research

ISSN: 2550-7974

IDOSR JOURNAL OF ARTS AND MANAGEMENT 2(2): 33-46, 2017.

An Evaluative Study of Plateau Radio Television (PRTV) Jos as a Medium for the Promotion of Indigenous Culture and Propagation of Traditional Values

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ABSTRACT

Culture is referred to as the entire art, beliefs, science, manner or even attitude of a group of people such as tribe, religious body or society. It is also seen as the totality of the way of life of a people which include dances, language, festivals, norms and values etc. Television presenters should be encouraged to brace-up in propagating our rich cultural heritage by dressing in their traditional, indigenous ethnic ways while on their assignments. Our cultural values should be showcased and promoted in television programmes to enlighten the youths on the dangers of watching programmes that teach indecent ways of life. In the area of informing and entertaining, stakeholders should foster initiatives that will emphasize less about television violence and teach more of rich indigenous culture. Television programmes play great role in shaping and moulding the character of our youths. If they are not monitored, it could lead to erosion of our culture, but if well monitored, it can promote our highly valued culture and traditional heritage.

Keywords: Plateau, radio, television, Jos, promotion, indigenous, culture, propagation traditional and values.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a nation in Africa blessed with diverse groups of people from different tribes, religion, clans and cultures. Each and every single one of these groups have their unique cultural practices inherited from generation to generation. Their traditional means of communication include dressing, speaking, greetings, farming and festivals or ceremonies; activities which are all done in accordance with the moral practices of the culture to which a group belongs.

Tom, A. M., (2012) [1] agrees that culture today is viewed as the entire art, beliefs, science, manner or even attitudes that are embodied in the lives of a group of people. It is what determines the way people communicate, dress, speak, farm, eat, build or design their houses and do other things. It is through these cultural practices that we find a way of impacting our values to the upcoming generations using our traditional indigenous means of communication and trainings.

Miachi, T.A (1979) [2] asserts that Nigeria, as a multi-tribal nation, has two most effective means of developing its cultural heritage these include; 'verbal and non-verbal forms of communication', right from time immemorial and before the coming of the colonial masters. The verbal forms include: town crying, the way we train our younger ones to respect, the way we sing, tell stories and folks. It also includes the way we drum, flute, dance, record historical events and the way we buy and sell in the market, among others. As such, the non-verbal forms, go hand in hand with verbal forms, which are basically recognized via demonstrations. They involve our way of clothing, weaving, plaiting of hair, walking, building and sometimes, the food we eat.

It is the components of these that determine the kind of culture we practice; one finds himself or herself in; though over half a century the country has been under other media of communication, known as modern mass media. These include television, radio, newspapers and magazines. The roles of the above media have been elevated beyond the traditional role of informing, educating and entertaining the public. The media, especially television, are -powerful tools in raising awareness and shaping public opinion. The mass media have the potentials of enhancing and developing our cultural value and world views.

The role of the media in reviving and maintaining the level of Nigeria cultures beyond the shores of the country can hardly be over emphasized. Unarguably, the media permeate all aspects of life and development and therefore, need to be treated with utmost care.

This can, however, be done by reporting from their extreme capability to both national and international consumers on our indigenous traditions that involve our farming system, mode of dressing, musical activities, our marketing and our traditional building among others. This could serve as tourism attractions. Festivities like Calabar funfair, Etalo festival in Kogi State, Argungu fishing festival, and a lot more are good examples of such cultures. By so doing, the mass media could be the best vehicle for developing, improving and preserving our cultural practices [3].

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Today, it is a well-known fact that the mass media and television in particular, is the most effective media of communication. Television has become a tool for transmitting and injecting alien cultures into our country. Of course, this is proved to be true in the way youths excite themselves watching foreign programmes, thereby imitating sheepishly knowingly and unknowingly adopting attitudes and behaviours portrayed in those programmes. According to McQuail (2010) [4] television has some potentials of weakening the hold of our indigenous traditional and cultural values, especially through over exposure to their contents.

The kinds of programmes or movies our youths watch on television do not encourage them to imbibe the knowledge of their own cultures, instead, it entices them into adopting the lifestyles and attitudes portrayed by exogenous programmes which also tend to compete with our indigenous cultures. However, with caution and monitoring, television programmes can encourage youths to imbibe new attitudes of dressing; for the women to learn to dress properly, for men and youths to learn some new languages. To this point, one should understand that the gap between what the media are doing and what they should do to our culture, that is (improving, reviving and maintaining our culture) is widening. Otherwise, it has the potential for cultural development which is rather presently affecting our society and future generation.

In this research, we pre-occupy ourselves with finding out what role the media play to boost our indigenous cultural values. To identify or suggest how the media, especially television, can best be used for Nigerian cultural identity and promotion at home and abroad. The work is relevant in pin-pointing to producers of mass media programmes to design them in such a manner that informs the grass-roots, conscientize and sensitize the public about the importance of indigenous culture. It is also hoped it will help students of journalism and mass communication to have access to relevant literature and information that will add to the existing ones.

The study is also done to identify and suggest some possible tips for other institutions than mass media that could help to improve and develop the cultural practices of our people. This study, in addition, it will also help Nigerian society in general to understand the importance of our culture and its values to the development of future generations in order to improve our sense of patriotism to our dear country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How can the media be used to promote our culture?
2. What are other agents that the media can use to revive our indigenous culture?
3. How best do we execute such project?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework used in this work is the cultural theory. The basic assumption of this theory is that the mass media (television) as an institution is empowered to define cultural norms through the facilitation of opinion change and reinforcement, creation of new values and modifications of present attitudes which stimulate and affect change (positive) on the audience. Therefore, the mass media establish a new shared connection and values. This theory emphasizes the mass media's place as the "custodians of culture".

Agnes, D. (2008) [5], sees media consumption as a cultural activity. Ebo (1996) [6] regards the mass media as “an integral part of the attempt to build national culture.” The media, therefore, cannot be overlooked in the propagation of cultural values.

The theory serves as a guide in relation to the kind of cultural programmes offered by television in the country. Indigenous cultural programmes are needed to salvage the present situation of cultural decay. Cultural programmes springing from our indigenous cultures should be developed and often aired on television stations particularly the PRTV programmes for cultural integration.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF TELEVISION AS A TOOL OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Ebo (1996)[6] defines television as “the branch of mass communication media concerned with the dissemination of messages by electronic techniques from a few sources to large heterogeneous and anonymous audience.” Through its stereoscopic vision, overwhelming reach-out of the broadcasting media of both radio and television all over the world, there is today the popular comment made by Marshal McLuhan that “the world has been reduced to a global village.” This is as a result of its traditional nature and power of attracting collectively the massive attention of its audience all over the world at a time, instantaneously.

Schartz cited in Lawal, et al. (2009)[7] describe the electronic media as “the second God which man has created.” He also argues that radio and television are everywhere and they are always with us intrusively, transmitting information to us. Transmission of information is useful and helpful in everyday life. The process of people relying on mass media to perform surveillance function leads to status conferral. “The audience evidently believes that if you really matter, you will be at the focus of mass media attention and if you are at the focus of mass media attention, then you really matter.” Thus, credibility is ascribed to the mass media, especially television. Nobody doubts the appetizing sight of television as seeing is believing. Dominick (2008) [8] is of this View:

The mass media institution is able to join together by interpersonal channel, different elements of society that are not directly connected.....Another type of linkage occurs when geographically separated groups that share common interest are easily linked by the media.....It is entirely possible that the media can create totally new social group by linking members of society who have not previously recognised that others have similar interest.

Some writers call this function “the public making” ability of the mass media. Dominick (2008)[8] describes the transmission of value (beside the functions of entertainment) as a subtle but nonetheless important function of the media. It is also called the socialization function, as it refers to the ways in which individuals come to adopt the behaviours and values of other groups. He states that:

The mass media also teaches us about people; they show us how they act and what is expected of them....The media present us with role models that we may observe and perhaps initiate....At one level, value transmission via the media will aid the ability of society....On the other hand, the kind of value and cultural information that are included in mass media contents, are selected by large organizations that may select values and behaviour which can encourage the status quo.

Of all the modern mass media today, it is probably television that has the greatest potential for the socialization of young children and the youths, Lawal et al. (2009)[7] says using the instrument of surveillance, the media through television should transmit information about the different cultural values the country possesses, which is useful and will improve its cultural development in the society and the world at large.

So, besides the gate keeping role of the electronic media, there is the ability to relay, limit, expand and reinterpret messages. Okpoko (2005)[9] states that the media have not only filtered into our experience of external realities, they have entered into our very experience of our own selves. They have provided us with new identities, new heroes and villains, and new aspirations of what we would like to be and what we should like to appear to be.

The main emphasis throughout the various approaches to the media from this point is a shift away from examining media effects as specific to the cultural life of an individual, to an emphasis on the role of the media in providing the framework which directly or otherwise influence the cultural construction and maintenance of a particular world view. Hence, "at a point in human evolution or development, the dominant European or Western cultural convention saw culture principally from the stand point of civilization and in fact to them, culture and civilization were interchangeable, interrelated or even synonymous," Nasidi (1998) [10]. They saw westernisation as civilization which other societies should pursue."

THE ROLE OF TELEVISION IN PROMOTING CULTURE

Ben A. Cited in Lawal *et al.* (2009)[7] defines television as "a medium of mass communication. A major carrier of culture, serving to promote certain attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns, necessary for keeping in constant touch and yet dynamic."

Campbell (1998)[11] viewed "through television, all our strands of affinities and the need to re-integrate the discordant part of life into a form of national identity can be realized." However, 'television medium among others (radio and newspaper/magazines) is used in uniting our indigenous cultural identities. It generates new attitudes within our indigenous traditions from especially the foreign programmes we watch. This mass medium possesses these potentialities because it includes the qualities of all other means of mass communication (radio, picture and writing), the stereoscopic vision of education as well as westernisation. Television, therefore, can help in promoting our

cultural heritage by producing programmes that portray our way of life in favourable light and minimising, if not eradicating, the impact of negative alien influence.

All these are braided in movies or films, stimulating to a high degree the content of indigenous aesthetics which catapult the virile indigenous culture. The movies pinpoint ways to eliminate the negative and strengthen the positive cultures and conditions that will establish Nigerian culture anywhere in the world [12].

The outcome of this research conducted on television and promotion of indigenous culture shows that both males and females alike participate actively in exhibition of norms, characters and activities that promote culture. Furthermore, the work also proved that television programmes often and dominantly influence decision of viewers (both youth and adults) no matter their culture. This is especially in the use of language, mode of dressing, ceremonial/ festival activities and behavioural patterns, entertainment and information aired on television.

It was also pointed out that the norms and values portrayed on Nigerian television programmes are more of western culture and as a result the kind of attitude common among Nigerian youths today is predominantly western in orientation.

These can be changed:

- a. First, by introducing indigenous programmes that tell us about history culture and the importance of respecting our origin. The importance of where we come from, our root and where we are going becomes very important.
- b. By using our indigenous languages in marketing media and even the food we eat, the programmes will go a long way to promote our culture.
- c. Finally, by regularly showing and demonstrating the beauty or efficiency of our various cultural heritages, as well as our indigenous way of dressing, celebrating (marriages, naming ceremonies, festivities) architectural designs etc. The programmes will help in cultural promotion.

- d. By manipulating these programmes in an educative manner, thereby promoting the standard of Nigeria's image both within and outside the country.

Youths practice what they see or watch on television, thereby consciously or unconsciously imbibing the ways of life, hence indigenous ways of life can be showcased. Television is a viable tool in the task of teaching and inspiring the youths. Although for now, television programmes are mostly foreign in Nigeria, the youths can still learn how to handle some situations of life: family issues, relationship with people, etc. This means that media institutions though have negative influence, can also be a driving force in development through its daily transmission (s), by changing the mindset of the society and the country at large.

Television medium becomes a mirror through which we view the world as we see ourselves. This is achieved through its diversified contents and functions like informing, educating and entertaining its viewers.

Experts say and it has also been proved that television is one of the most effective media of mass communication that easily and rapidly generates new attitude among its massive consumers. This is primarily as a result of its ability to visualize movable pictures, in their natural or traditional voices as well as written pattern. All these allow television programmes to be lucid enough in often playing negative role of eroding our rich cultural values, thereby replacing them with western practices which are gradually displacing our indigenous ones. This means that these attitudes are developed from what we watch on television and by being exposed to foreign media and programmes, which we find easy to put into practice even if they do not suit our interests.

RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

The research employs survey research. It is carried out through interview and questionnaire distribution.

The population consist of Jos residents. The population include people from different ethnic groups Birom Anagas, Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, among others in the area.

It is instructive to note that the sample size of the questionnaire is 200. The questionnaire both closed ended and open-ended questions.

Table 1: Ownership of Television set (TV set)

Do you own TV Set?

Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	145	72.5
No	55	27.5
Total	200	100 %

The table above shows that 72.5% (145) of the respondents own TV set, while 27.5% (55) of the respondents do not own TV set. This implies that the majority of the respondents own TV set.

Table 2: Do you watch PRTV Programmes?

Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	45	22.5
Often	75	37.5
Once in a while	40	20
Rarely	33	16.5
Never	20	10
No response	7	3.5
Total	200	100 %

From table 2 above, 22,5% (45) respondents very often watch PRTV programmes, 37. 5% (75) of the respondents often watch PRTV programmes, 20% (40) of the respondents once in the while watch PRTV programmes, 16.5% (33) of the respondents rarely watch PRTV programmes, 10% (20) of the respondents never watch PRTV programmes, while 3.5% (7) shows no response. This implies that majority of the respondents watch PRTV programmes.

Table 3: Do you think TV programmes could be used to revive or promote our culture?

Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	180	90
No	11	5.5
No response	9	4.5
Total	200	100 %

Majority of the respondents that is 90% (180) believed Television medium can be used to promote, develop and maintain our indigenous culture. This could be as a of TV massive influence over other media of communication, its stereoscopic visions and nature.

Table 4: Do TV programmes influence your action?

Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	40	20
Often	82	41
Once in a while	45	22.5
Rarely	30	15
Never	15	7.5
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100 %

The table shows that, 40% (20) respondents very often feel that TV programmes influence their action, 41% (82) of the respondents often feel TV programmes influence their action, 22.5% (45) of the respondents once in the while feel TV programmes influence their action, 15% (30) of the respondents rarely feel TV programmes influence their action, 7.5% (15) of the respondents never feel TV programmes influence their action, while 2.5% (5) shows no response. This implies that majority of the respondents which are about 41% feel TV programmes influence their action.

Table 5: What do you think or feel is dominant in TV screen?

Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Entertainment/information	101	50.5
Sex	19	9.5
Violence	9	4.5
Education	22	11
Development programme	49	24.5
Total	200	100 %

The table indicate that 50.5% (101) of the respondents feel that entertainment and information is the dominant programme of television, 9.5% (19) of the respondents feel that sex is the dominant programme of television, 4.5% (9) of the respondents feel that violent is the dominant programme of television, 11% (22) of the respondents think or feel that education is the dominant programme of television, while 24.5% (49) of the respondents feel that development programme is the dominant programme of television. This signified that majority of the respondents, 50.5% (101) feel that entertainment and information is the dominant programme of television

CONCLUSION

It is hereby concluded that most broadcasting stations especially television, should know how to endeavour to ensure that our cultural values form core of their transmitted programmes. Their reporters, presenters and newscasters should also be encourage to brace-up with sustaining our rich cultural heritage by dressing in their traditional, indigenous ethic ways while on their assignments. Our cultural values should be show-cased and promoted in television programmes, thereby enlightening the youth on the dangers of watching programmes that are not helpful and rather be exposed to those which teach decent morals.

In the process of informing and entertaining, stakeholders should foster initiatives that emphasis less about television violence and teach them more of television literacy. Government through regulatory agencies should set up monitoring mechanisms that will be responsible for evaluating media policies and programmes to determine whether they address issues of cultural propagation, cultural promotion and public education instead of television violence. The Ministry of information and Culture in their present efforts of rebranding Nigeria should give some level of attention to sponsoring and fostering research and development of programmes such as dramas or films, documentaries, historical traditions and folk songs that celebrate our culture.

Media literacy skills can also be helpful and useful in assisting youths decipher television messages as to know which ones to watch; the youth should also learn

alternative to media messages. Teachers and lecturers in higher institutions should play role models by dressing according to their ethnic origin and giving to the students' word that will energize cultural enthusiasm. Parental training and inculcation on their children should also involve mode of dressing, use of indigenous languages as and when due and respect for elders, among others. Religious and traditional leaders should preach and offer advice to parents. This will go a long way to assisting them in updating their children about the importance of their origins and root, and by implication need for national integration, cohesion and unity.

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) that is responsible for regulating broadcasting organizations in Nigeria, should wake-up to their responsibility of controlling, regulating and limiting the types of programmes transmitted by those stations to ensure discipline and sanity in the broadcasting industry.

There is denying the fact the television has a great role to play in shaping and moulding the character of our youths and promoting our rich cultural heritage. And if television programmes are not monitored, they may rather lead to the extinction and eventual replacement of our rich cultural values with foreign cultures. But if well monitored and managed, they are potentials for fostering national identity and promoting our highly valued culture and tradition.

Because of these, therefore, there is need for the media and television in particular, to dully perform their functions of surveillance, correlation, education and entertainment, and cultural transfer from generation to generation. There is also no doubt that the above recommendations will go a long way to meeting up with the aspirations and yearnings of the people.

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