

Impact of Western Media on Learning of Indigenous Cultures in Nigerian Universities: Igbo Language Perspective

By

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Abstract


This study examined the impact of western media on learning of indigenous cultures in Nigerian universities with reference to Igbo culture. One research question guided the study. A survey research design was used for the purpose of the study. The sample of the study was 80 Igbo language and culture students in federal universities in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, selected using purposive stratified random sampling technique. A 13-item statements/questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was validated by two experts in Igbo language and culture and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instrument yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.93 using Cronbach Alpha method. The results were analyzed using mean scores. The result shows that the impact

of western media on learning of Igbo cultures in federal universities in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria fall into different forms ranging from misinformation, cultural imperialism, immodesty to poor socialization on Igbo culture, as Igbo students perceive Igbo language as archaic and language for the uncivilized, traditional Igbo dance, music and drama to mean old practices, students prefer the use of English language in communication, and show a relatively low interest in consuming local production, Igbo students appreciate immorality life style and western dressing code, Igbo students abandoned Igbo cultural events and the likes. It was recommended among others that the media must change orientation for protecting Igbo cultural image and aspiration for strengthening self-determination, enhancing Igbo students' potentialities and promoting Igbo culture.

Key words: Western media, indigenous culture, Igbo culture, learning of Igbo culture, Nigerian universities.


Introduction

Western media is the *mass media* of the *western world* which has gradually expanded into *developing countries* aimed at crusading the ideas of ideologies such as freedom, democracy and human rights for *world equality*. However, media generally is referred to any agency, modern or traditional that functions for the articulation and dissemination of ideas and information, entertainment or general people-oriented messages in order to influence an audience or institutions (Baron, 2014). The media therefore is meant to serve as vital means of communication and the major instrument for learning and for the growth and propagation of culture in any society. Nigeria as a diverse nation, peoples and



cultures has various mass media, which are described as 'traditional, local or 'native' mass media, used for public and group information dissemination, reception, which also aids in acquiring traditional knowledge and skills (Ajala, 1991). These traditional media includes drums, gongs, clappers, whistles, artifacts, horns, stones tablets, scrolls and calabash. Ajala further noted that the traditional mass media encourage and ginger people to achieve the aims or goals of the society; however it is limited within a particular society. In support of the above, Robison(2015) asserts that these goals are promoted by the media, which then stimulate and foster the aspirations and activities of individuals and communities thereby promoting their indigenous culture. Indigenous culture is the distinct and unique way people are identified with. Oyowole (2015) opines that indigenousculture refers to practices of peopleswho have rights as distinct cultural groups or nations with a common identity, based on different histories, environments, and creative spirits. This culture is seen in their language; believe system, tradition and indigenous practices.Traditional mass media played a major role in accomplishing these goals until western media came with colonialism/westernization/globalization.

The western media are different technological processes that facilitate communication between the sender of a message and the receiver and it includes newspaper articles, radio or television programmes and the likes. The objective of the current global communication system referred to as western mediais to maintain social, political, and economic relationships among groups who differentiate themselves with their culture, language, religion, state, region and other groupings (Isa, 2015). Isa adds that western media also play several other vital functions, which ranges from persuasion, education, news, information interpretation, selling to entertainment. This shows that western media is a means that




are supposed to make the learning of these indigenous cultures easier and faster especially to the young ones who are fun of these media. It is supposed to be seen as a growing necessity in response to the need for understanding of an increasingly multicultural and technologically-connected global environment.

However, Alisa (2010) argued that immersion in western media produces a "mainstreaming" effect whereby differences based on cultural, social, and political characteristics are muted in consumers of media content. This raises a question on the impact of western media on learning of indigenous cultures in Nigerian universities. Egbo (2016) argued that the rise of the western media is the central cause of decline in cultural preservation. Egbo posit that the western media in developing countries have altered and transformed the way people think and learn about their indigenous culture, thus perpetuation of cultural imperialism. Its role in the lives of people and especially young people cannot be overemphasized. This is supported by Iorza (2014) who stated that youths are the most vulnerable victims of cultural imperialism. Socialization and culture are two sides of the same coin and therefore, they remain inextricably linked. However, the present researcher tends to find out how this relates to learning of Igbo culture in Nigerian universities.

Statement of problem

The proliferation of Western media in Nigerian and its attendant consequences is posing a challenge to our long cherished moral values. These media have contributed a lot to the way our youths tend to do, behave or learn indigenous culture irrespective of our all-time African traditions, thereby making it difficult for indigenous culture to survive and persist. The western media in developing countries encourages the




transmission of western values and perpetuation of cultural imperialism. It is observed that foreign programmes that have little or no redeeming values as far as our culture is concerned consistently feature on the media channels and the university students who are the youth cherish it most. Also some of the broadcasting stations, many newspapers and magazines and cinema houses feature foreign cultures more prominently and more consistently. Sadly enough, the western media in Africa have become tools of advancing the subjugation of the black race. Therefore, the current worrisome state of our indigenous cultures is majorly because the media, that are suppose to duly rouse the students to their cultures and generally effect the transformation of these cultures, have simply abandoned their right roles in doing so for the otherwise. Rather, they have resorted to attrition and westernisation, dabbling them variously. Therefore, this study tends to find out, how western media affect the learning of Igbo cultural practices in Nigerian universities.

Research question

1. In what forms do western media influence learning of Igbo cultures in federal universities in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria?


Western media

Western media are different technological processes that facilitate communication, of which its objective is to maintain social, political, and economic relationships among groups who differentiate themselves with their culture, language, religion, state, region and other groupings. Achalonu (2009) opines that western media is seen as an agency, modern or traditional that operates for the articulation and dissemination of ideas, and information generally with intent to




influence or control an audience or institutions that constitute power and authority. In support of the above, Ella(2017) asserts that western media are those channels or vehicles through which information, education, entertainment or general people- oriented messages are conveyed to the masses. Ella added thatthese western media include newspaper articles, radio or television programmes, designed to achieve one aim or the other, since it is possible for a message to perform more than one or two functions at a time. These western media play several vital functions, starting from persuasion, education, news, information interpretation, selling to entertainment. To this end, western media supposed to be a growing necessity in response to the need for understanding and promoting peoples culture in a global environment (Remi, 2017). The media should greatly and constantly assist in providing the medium for transmitting knowledge and education of our culture to the populace. While functioning as an agent of mobilisation, the media should set an agenda for priorities within our culture, which translate into consciousness for popular participation and indeed a proper democratic culture. They should ensure a deep sense of objectivity, ethics, truth and respect for our culture(s) in their news and programmes. It is fundamental that they must be mindful of what they receive from foreign media and spread about and to us. According to Willy (2017), in every culture, there are certain characteristics or traits which no matter how the culture changes, still remain very important. It is the role of the media to identify these aspects of the culture like languages, arts, dressing, kinship, marriage, festivals, and indigenous activities and emphasize them to the people, to preserve, maintain and uphold. The media should be a tool for promotion of our culture. However, the present researcher tends to find out the impact of this western media in learning Igbo culture in Nigerian universities.

Indigenous Culture and Western media




Indigenous culture is a way fashioned by people in their collective endeavour to live and come to terms with their total environment. It is the sum of their art, their science and all the social institutions including their systems of belief and rituals. According to Chikaan (2013), indigenous culture cannot be defined without making reference to indigenous language. In support of the above, Egbo(2016) stated that indigenous language and indigenous culture are inseparable, as it all refers to an indelible mark of a people's identity. Indigenous language is a language that is native to a particular region and spoken by the people of the region. Nigeria is a multilingual and multi-cultural nation with about 400 indigenous languages which are very diverse linguistically, unequal in size and status, and are at different stages or levels of development, thus the major indigenous languages in Nigeria are Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. Indigenous languages are indispensable cultural legacies without which all forms of human interactions can be carried out. In support of the above, Willy (2017) stated that each indigenous group is unique, and we have thousands of different indigenous languages, traditions which are also diverse as our lands. However, there are basic principles that all indigenous communities share and it is because of them that our economies and our societies are equitable, balanced, and sustainable. These principles are the foundation of all indigenous practices, and these constitute indigenous culture.

Based on the above explanations, indigenous cultures are man-made designs, prescriptions and responses which are deliberately fashioned to guide all aspects of a people's life from the same descendants. Willy (2017) define indigenous culture as the whole body of knowledge, beliefs, arts, law, norms, moral, customs, values, habits and all other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. Each indigenous culture is distinct and unique. While many people may express



similar worldviews and a common indigenous identity, their cultures are nonetheless based on different histories, environments, and creative spirits. Ella (2017) asserts that indigenous culture is the totality of a people's ways of life who shared the same sense of identity. Indigenous culture refers to the whole gamut of knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions and skills of people who belong to the same heritage, that are available as members of a society. Willy sees indigenous culture as the particular systems of art, thought and custom of a society.


Igbo culture as one of the indigenous culture is a powerful weapon or instrument for Igbo child upbringing. Through precepts, rules of speaking, the use of body language, socio linguistic etiquette, the children are initiated into Igbo speech community. Through Igbo songs, folktales, stories, proverbs, adages, literature, children learn old age wisdom, adult conversational skills, moral lessons, Igbo arts and skills, Igbo indigenous knowledge, how to engage in dialogue and constructive criticism which are major aspect of culture (Remi ,2017). Igbo culture is the whole way of life of Igbo people, their social heritage that Igbo students supposed to acquire as a member of his group in order to functional in the society. It is the entire attitude, perception and specific traits of civilization that confer to Igbo people and its place in the universe. These traits are Igbo speech norms, their etiquette, ideologies, ethics, stereotypes, artifacts, technologies, intellectual production, indigenous knowledge and the likes. These Igbo cultures are expected to be seen as milk the students'/youth must drink in order to develop a healthy soul in a healthy body, thus the need for it to be imparted to them especially at higher institutions via western media as learning cannot only take place in the classroom.



According to Isa (2015), the concepts ‘culture’ and ‘the media’ are interrelated. As culture is sustained through the media, so the latter needs cultural atmosphere to fruitfully operate. Isa adds that the love of one’s race and culture (patriotism) considered in itself, is good and necessary for the survival of both race and its culture. Nigeria is a country with different tribes and cultures, especially as it concerns the three major tribes Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. Following Western media, Nigerian indigenous socio-cultural norms and values as well as cultures especially that of the Igbo seems to have barely little or no place in the contemporary globalized society, having been westernized and incessantly craving to be westernized by Western imitators and Western masters rhetoricians. This emerging near general trend is a product of poor cultural orientation, confidence and consciousness, misinformation, neo-colonialism and poor socialization (Egbo, 2016). By the foregoing, Isa’s view reflects the relationship between Nigerian media and cultures and points to the need for cultural patriotism by the media, which can widely spread to the entire Nigerian masses, their audience, who often tend to or are very willing to absorb anything given maximum attention by the media. Egbo thus submits that as such, for there to be any meaningful development in any society, both the electronic and print media must play fundamental roles in promoting culture.

Learning of Igbo Culture in Nigerian Universities


Igbo is one of the indigenous Nigeria languages recognized and studied at all levels of education ranging from primary to university level. One of the key components that make up Igbo inheritance is the culture. Igbo language therefore, is the supreme expression of the cultural heritage of the people of the South East Nigeria. Without the language, it would be difficult to talk about cultural revival, research, teaching and learning of culture in schools or in the world



(Willy, 2017). Since the system of education in a given society is aimed at making her entire citizens to be functional and responsible member of the society, learning Igbo culture in the University, entails students receiving the basic knowledge, skills, right values and attitude in Igbo language and culture to ensure permanent change in their behaviour. Ella (2017) observed that for an individual to be a functional member of the society, his/her learning must be rooted from the culture which controls ones activities of which precisely, includes their belief, rules of behaviour, language, art, and technology, craft, indigenous knowledge, religion, political and economic systems and the like. Ella further posits that at university level, learning is not only confined in classroom setting, and as such western media which every youth is fun of is in a position to play a major role in inculcating these culture to them. Therefore, western medium is an easy and steady avenue expected to be used in imparting these culture to students of Igbo in Nigerian Universities as it does not only make the individual competent in Igbo language and culture as course of study but, plays no small role in strengthening self-determination and enhancing the potentialities of the youths into productive venture for self-sufficiency. This local capacity-building is a crucial aspect of sustainable development in Nigeria. However, the western media seem to affect the thought and practice of the people in the multi-verse. Thus, the researcher tends to find out how western media relate to learning of Igbo culture in Nigerian universities.

Theoretical Overview

This study is based on cultural Imperialism propounded by Herbert Schiller in 1973. The theory postulates that Western nations dominate the media around the world which in turn have powerful effects on the third world cultures by imposing on them western values and thereby destroying




their native cultures. Humans react to what they see on television because there is nothing else to compare it to besides their own lives, usually portrayed as less than what it should be. This shows that the theory is value-neutral and objective. It does not matter what beliefs the people of the third world like Nigeria may already hold, the western media will communicate the same message and affect them in the same way. This theory is relevant to this study because it explains why and how Africans consume mass media messages from the Western Nations.

Dependency theory of Ball Roacheach and De Fleur, postulated in 1976 also finds expression in this study. The theory stipulates that people depend on the media to achieve certain goals. Further more people do not depend on all media equally. Two factors influence the degree of media dependence, which is either that people become more dependent on the media that meet a number of their needs than the media that provides just a few or that the more a person is dependent on the media, the more that media will be important to the person. Since the medium is important to the person; it will have influence over the person. This explains the penchant most people have for anything foreign, be it information, fashion, entertainment and so on. This theory is related to this work as foreign culture is imbibed faster in Igbo land.

Empirical Studies

Acholonu (2009) carried out a research on mass media and cultural imperialism with reference to African experience. One research question guided the study. 65 respondents selected using proportionate stratified sampling was used for the study. Survey design was adopted for this work. A 15 items questionnaire was used for data collection while data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. Result reveals that the mass media in developing countries have been described as




Trojan horses for the transmission of western values and for the perpetuation of cultural imperialism. The paper recommends among others that African news agencies and mass media should adopt communication policies to favour cooperation among all African mass media and channel development according to African values, needs, aspirations and ideology.

Oberiri and Kwase (2017) carried out a study on situations surrounding the relationship between Western Television Programmes and indigenous TV programmes on the youth in Taraba State University. One research question guided the study. 78 respondents were selected using proportionate stratified sampling used for the study. Survey design was adopted for this work. A 21 items questionnaire was used for data collection while data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. Result reveals that Sokoto Youth prefers viewing Western Television Programmes to indigenous TV programmes and this exerts great influence on their cultural values. The study recommends that in salvaging the undue influence vented on the cultural values of youth by Western Television Programmes, there is the need for a constant review of the schooling content of the Nigerian education system, such that its culture would be lucidly pronounced.

Method

The research design employed for the study was descriptive survey which involves obtaining information from respondents based on the responses from a section of respondents which represent the entire population used for the study. According to Nworgu (2006) when a survey centers on describing some variables in relation of a given population, the descriptive survey research design is the most appropriate. The area of the study was all the Federal Universities in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria as they are offering Igbo language and culture as a course of study. The population of the study



was all the Igbo language and culture students in Federal University in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The sample of the study consisted of 80 Igbo language and culture students, drawn through purposive proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A 13-item questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was structured on a 4-points likert type scale on which the respondents reacted to. The items in the questionnaire were weighted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA)-4 points, Agree (A)- 3 points, Disagree (D) -2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) -1point.

The instrument was face validated by two senior lectures in Igbo language and culture, one in measurement and evaluation, and all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The Cronbach Alpha, Co-efficient method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. It yielded a co-efficient of 0.93. A total of 150 copies of the instrument were administered and retrieved. The data was analyzed using mean scores. Any item statement with mean rating of 2.50 and above was accepted value while item statement with a mean rating less than 2.50 was rejected.

Results

Research question

1. In what forms do western media influence learning of Igbo cultures in federal universities in South East geo-political zone of Nigerian?

Table 1: Mean responses of students on the forms western media influence learning of Igbo cultures in federal universities in South East geo-political zone of Nigerian.

S/N	Items statement	Mean	St.D	Decision
	Forms western media influence learning of Igbo cultures in Nigerian universities.			
	Misinformation			
1	Students perceive Igbo language as archaic and language for the uncivilized.	3.22	.79	Accepted
2	Igbo arts are regarded as museum pieces/pagan display.	2.55	.61	Accepted
3	Students perceive Igbo traditional religion as barbaric culture	2.91	.68	Accepted
4	Students perceive traditional Igbo dance, music and drama to mean old practices.	3.25	.50	Accepted
5	Visitation to historical places in Igbo land and cultural Centre is viewed as idol visit.	2.83	.51	Accepted
	Cultural Imperialism			

6	Igbo students prefer the use of English language in communication.	3.56	.88	Accepted
7	Students show a relatively low interest in consuming local production due to unabashed appetites for everything foreign.	2.59	.76	Accepted
8	Artificial beauty and fashion contest rules on the Igbo students' continent now.	2.71	.55	Accepted
9	Western dress code is more appreciated and valued by Igbo students.	3.42	.76	Accepted
	Immodesty			Accepted
10	Premarital sex, prostitution, lesbianism, homosexuals and promiscuity is seen as an advanced life to Igbo students.	3.00	.75	Accepted
11	Corruption of all kinds is appreciated by Igbo students instead of agriculture, Igbo arts and craft which is the base of every nation's wealth economy.	2.54	.51	Accepted
	Poor socialization			
12	Igbo students value attending western parties to Igbo cultural events.	3.77	.42	Accepted


13	Igbo students appreciate slogans to acquiring Igbo artistic expression like Igbo proverbs/idioms/adage for adequate communication.	3.31	.69	Accepted
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Grand Mean = 3.25

Research question 1 identified forms western media influence learning of Igbo cultures in in federal universities in South East geo-political zone of Nigerian. Table 1 indicates that items 1-13 had high mean scores with a grand mean of 3.25 which were all above the criterion level of 2.50 and this shows that they are the forms western media influence learning of Igbo cultures in federal universities in South East geo-political zone of Nigerian.

Discussion / Challenges

The findings of this study revealed that the impact of western media in learning of Igbo cultures in federal universities in geo-political zone of Nigerian fall into different forms which include misinformation, cultural imperialism, immodesty and poor socialization on Igbo culture. Misinformation takes place as students perceive Igbo language as archaic and language for the uncivilized, Igbo art is regarded as museum pieces/pagan display, students perceive Igbo traditional religion as barbaric culture as well as students perceives traditional Igbo dance, music and drama to mean old practices. Cultural imperialism occurs as Igbo students prefer the use of English language in communication, students show a relatively low interest in consuming local production due to unabashed appetites for everything foreign, artificial beauty and fashion contest rules on the Igbo students' continent now, and western dress code is more appreciated and valued by Igbo students. Immodesty form occur as premarital sex, prostitution,




lesbianism, homosexuals and promiscuity is seen as an advanced life to Igbo students as well as corruption of all kinds is appreciated by students instead of agriculture, Igbo arts and craft which are the bases of every nation's wealth economy. Poor socialization on Igbo culture occurs as Igbo students value attending western parties to Igbo cultural events and appreciate slogans to acquiring Igbo artistic expression like Igbo proverbs/idioms/adage for communication.

The above findings are in line of the observation made by Acholonu (2029) who observed that mass media in developing countries have been described as Trojan horses for the transmission of western values and for the perpetuation of cultural imperialism, as foreign programmes dominate television screens. Also it is in line with Oberiri and Kwase (2017) who observed that Nigerian youths prefer watching foreign content to local content. The findings of the study show that the way forward in salvaging the undue influence vented on the cultural values of youth by Western Television Programmes, is that there is the need for a constant review of the schooling content of the Nigerian education system, such that its culture would be lucidly pronounced.

Findings and Conclusions

The journey of the western media in Nigeria indigenous cultures precisely Igbo culture is currently nothing to write home about. Instead of serving as an avenue in imparting Igbo culture to students in federal universities in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria for strengthening self-determination, enhancing their potentialities and promoting Igbo culture, it enhances gross negligence for a digression from Igbo cultures. Western media aid in misinformation, as Igbo students see their culture starting from language as old-school, barbaric, archaic and local. It has led to cultural imperialism, and poor socialization in Igbo culture. This is very pathetic and



unfortunate. Although the cultural policy for Nigeria advocates ‘effective use of the press, radio, television and film for protecting Nigeria’s cultural image and aspiration’, the reverse is unfortunately the case especially, as little or nothing is yet reckoned with from the press in promoting Igbo cultural image, aspiration and development, thereby, heading towards wiping Igbo cultures.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

1. The orientation of the media must change, thus the need for at least a minimum standard of integrity and decency both on the part of the press, the government and the citizenry.
2. Cultural journalists should always examine foreign cultural media contents, to ensure portraying our good cultural values and societal norms to our children especially through relevant art, music, dance, drama and sports.
3. The family system, as the core of any nation and most effective instrument of public education, should play the role of social mobiliser, championing the cause of development and the promotion of societal values and norms.
4. Cultural journalism, should champion the culture of tolerance and accommodations of our tradition.
5. All other agents of socialization, particularly the family (parents), the school, peer and religious groups must actively rise to the challenge, towards checking media excesses.

6. On the socialization role of the mass media, the mass media will help to unify society and increase social cohesion by holding and teaching a broad base of common social norms, values, and collective experience, thereby transmitting culture from generation to generation.
7. We must borrow from foreign cultures, however we cannot swallow without discrimination whatever foreign cultures have to offer, rather, there should be culture-blending, reformation and transformation.
8. The mass media should help in motivating and mobilising people to attain their goals politically, socially and economically as individuals and collective members of the society, which they do with some consideration of certain vital elements for sustainable national development .

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