

EVALUATION OF THE WIRE SERVICE AS SYNERGY FOR ORIENTATION OF TELEVISION AUDIENCE AGAINST RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The viewers or consumers of the media are naturally influenced or have their perceptions of social realities shaped by what they watched or listened to on television and other media platforms such as radio, firms, social media and others. But the potentials of the wire service especially in Nigeria have not been well appreciated basically for the fact that most media sectors ignorantly fail to subscribe to their service or that they make use of them negatively to instigate the minds of the audience to unleash violence or religious crisis. In view of this, the research paper tries to examine the problems associated with the wire service, the effects of Cultivation on television audience through some existing theories in order to educate, orientate and disabuse the minds of the television audience against religious crises. This is done through existing literature on the subject matter thereby proffering salient suggestions that can be of help to the problems at hand.

Keywords: Cultivation theory, Wire service, Synergy, Television audience, Religious Violence.

Introduction

It has been estimated that over one hundred thousand Nigerians have lost their lives in ethn0-religious crisis that have engulfed the country since the enthronement of democracy in 1979 Aleyomi (2012). The number of those injured triples the dead, while those displaced are put at millions. It is imperative to know that conflicts have hindered germane national integration more than fifty years after Nigeria independence thus raising serious concerns on the unity of the nation. With these problematic scenario on ground, where the citizenry have not realized that the common good" of the nation has not taken root in the popular consciousness of Nigerians, everyone want to get what they want through violence. The thrust of this paper therefore, is to investigate the recurring decimal of flows in what people watch or listen to from the wire service as news and the television as movies and the likes, because "what you watch or listen to speaks volume it determines the way you behave. For example, a person who watches a lot of criminal activities shown on television will eventually believe that there is a lot of violent crimes in the city in he/she resides and he now tends to take to violence in getting anything he wants. This now brings us to the relevance of cultivation theory to television audience that "watching television doesn't cause a

particular behaviour but instead watching television overtime adds up to our perception of the world around us George. According to Riddke (2009) the primary proposition of cultivation theory states that the more time people spend "living" in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality aligns with reality portrayed on television". The images and ideological messages transmitted through popular television media heavily influence perceptions of the real world the television has been audio and visual potential. According Akindele and Lamidi (2001) Watching television for too long a period stands the risk of developing some behavioural problems in people such as violence, subscription to pornography drug taking, indecent dressing, indecent hairdos, indecent language, among others.

The most unfortunate issue is that the news agency television and cable station have abused their role as pacesetters, peacemakers, intermediary between the society and the world around them by sending junks to the screen or giving fake news to incite people's emotion to cause violence or division among the people. In fact some television stations are used as weapons against the ruling party of the day to cause or unleash violence in the name of religion or fighting for the cause of Allah.

Theoretical Overview

Social scientists have always devised theories in their attempts to explain the nature, causes and effects of events in their societies. To this end therefore, the theoretical overview which is suitable and appropriate to this paper is cultivation theory. The theory provides adequate explanation to show that what people watch or listen to over the years contribute immensely to religious terrorism and conflict in the society and that the wire service as an agent that propagate the gospel of what goes on in the society has a lot of roles to play in giving adequate orientation to the television audience in order to curb religious terrorism.

Conceptual Overview of Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory was propounded by George Gerbner in 1977 and it is, positivistic that is, it assumes the existence of objective reality and value-neutral research. A study conducted by Jennings and Dovina in 2004, which surveyed almost 2,000 articles published in three top mass communication Journals since 1956 found that cultivation theory was the third most frequently Utilized theory showing that it continues to be one of the most popular theories in mass communication research. Cultivation theory suggests that exposure to media over time, subtly "cultivates" viewers perceptions of reality.

Gerbner (1977) asserts that televisions are the medium of the socialization of most people into standardized roles and behaviours. Its function is in a word, “enculturation”. He focuses on television because it is the most common form of massager throughout the world. Though cultivation theory has been shown to encompass many different forms of media such as newspapers, film, electronic and even photography but this can apply anytime to social observation which occurs in any form outside a natural environment. Initial research on the theory establishes that, Concerns regarding the effects of television on audience stem from unprecedented centrality of television in American culture. Gerbner posits that, television as mass medium of communication bound the diverse communities together or cause division among the people depending on the type of message projected.

This implies that much violence occurs due to the violence watched on television. The cultivation theory posts that a continuous force on viewers mind influence the way they see the world. The theory assumes that the more time people spend watching television, the more their world will be like those they are exposed to on television. The theory concentrates on the ending and common consequence of growing up and learning with the media, and individual who is heavy with media product behaves differently from light audience who rely on their factors and influences of reality, Cultivation theory holds on three core assumptions. The first assumption highlights the medium, the second, the audience and the final assumption deals with the function of the medium on audiences and their ability to react to it.

What Is Wire Service?

Wire service or news agency is an amalgamated news chain set up by publisher or government with the sole responsibility of gathering news, photograph and features for sales in newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations across the world. The wire service supplies most of the foreign news and national news reported by the press all over the world. They have their own reporters, sub-editors, news editors, correspondents, foreign correspondents, and etcetera. They process, or copy from reporters for onward transmission to media houses that pay their services on their tele-printer network. The principle behind the establishment of a news agency is its desire to get information from its source and send to client newspaper, magazines, radio or television before anybody else does. In order to achieve this, agencies are funded by the principles of speed, accuracy and impartiality. Agencies have to act fast in disseminating correct and accurate information so that their clients do not have access to information before them. If the news media gets the story before the agency sends it to them, obviously the story is no longer useful to them.

New agencies or wire service is the oldest electronic media, having survived since its establishment in 1835. Some of the world's movement news agencies are Havas in France, followed by A.P in the United States in 1846, Wolff in Germany in 1849, Tuwora in Austria in 1850 and Reuters in the United Kingdom in 1851 (Rantamen and Boyd-Barrett, 2009). The advent of the wire service in the United States of America, according, to Barren (2009), greatly expanded the breadth and scope of coverage a newspaper could offer its readers. It offered greater coverage of distant domestic news. The newspapers were able to reduce expenses and increase profits because they no longer needed to have their own reporters in all locations.

Mass Media

The term mass media according to McQuail (2000) is shortened to describe the means of communication that operate on a larger scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in a society to a greater or lesser degree. Mass media are channels of communication in a modern society, primarily the print and electronic Media. The primary function of media system is to provide information to several millions of people. Each of the mass media is presumed to affect perceptions and behaviour in distinctive ways. They can affect the society positively and vice versa, because of their size and the large number of people they reach, the mass media have tremendous impact on society. Murphy (1997) sums up societal impact of mass media in 3 different ways as oil, glue and dynamite. As Murphy asserts that media of communication keep the world running smoothly by helping individuals adjust to the reality of life. They keep society healthy by suggesting solutions that are socially acceptable. As glue, social cohesion is maintained by communication. It sets agenda for discussion. As dynamites, Murphy states that the media can rip the society apart citing the propaganda campaigns that preceded the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933.

These and some others are the reasons, why this paper also looked at the Development Theory which was put forward as a means of paying for the imbalance in development and information flow of the third world countries as a solution to the technological problems facing them especially in Nigeria. The third world countries are be-deviled by problems that make development of the country and that of the mass media system difficult. Some of these problems are the absence of communication infrastructure, lack of professional skill, not having control over censorship process films being projected on the screen for audience consumption. Consequently, the production and cultural resources are badly affected; instead of the mass media to add value to our cultural heritage but with the advent of new cable stations, the cultural heritage has been devalued with the

importation of western culture.

These are major tenets of Development Theory as enunciated by McQuail in 1987 as guidelines to effective development in the society, the wire service and the media as a whole.

1. Media must accept and carryout positive development tasks in line with naturally established policy.
2. Freedom of the media geared towards the development need of the society.
3. The need for the media to give priority to national culture and languages in their content.
4. The need for the media to give priority in their news and other programmes to link with other developing nations in terms of geographical, cultural or political proximity.
5. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and disseminate on task but not to the detriment of the nation.
6. In the interest of development, the state has a right to intervene or restrict media operations if they are going out of their mandate.

Why Television is fundamentally different from other forms of Mass Media Television by definition is a system for converting visual images with sound into electrical signals transmitted by the radio or other means and displaying them electronically on the screen, It is a device with a screen for receiving information on signal Joyce (2008), The invention was the work of many individuals in late 19th century and early 20th century. Individuals and corporations competed in various parts of the world to deliver a device that superseded previous technology. Many were compelled to capitalized on the invention and make profit while some wanted to change the world through visual and audio communication technology.

The programme being broadcast via television does not only provide information for viewers but influence their perceptions of social realities bordering on matters affecting them. Television can be found in billions of homes around the world today. But hundred years ago, nobody even knew what television was. Infact, as late as 1947 only a few thousand Americans owned television Boyd (1979). How did such a ground breaking technology turn from niche invention to a living room main stay? Television messages or information, even when they are not necessarily considered truthful can still be used in the process of constructing social judgments. Furthermore, some indicated invalid information may still be used in subsequent audience's Judgment and since television is visual and auditory it doesn't require viewers to be literate.

It has potential to be free, aside from the initial cost of obtaining a television, and except for the high monthly fees required for accessing cable stations, television is still ageless in the sense that

anyone from any walk of life can use it, and most importantly, anyone is able to comprehend the content that is broadcast through television. Television programming uses story telling engaging narratives to capture people's attention. Some religious and Educational programmes too has greater influence on social trend, so the television now becomes the central aim of the society where anything goes especially with the advent of different cable stations such as DSTV, Startime, Gotv channels, cartoon network, Mytv and the likes and whereas television cultivates from infancy the very predisposition and preferences that used to be acquired from other primary source. The repetitive pattern or television mass-produced messages and image forms the mainstream of a common Symbolic environment to either influenced positively or negatively. Therefore the television should be able to orientate the society against religious violence which is now reoccurring in Nigeria and which is invariably affecting the peace and development of the country. Television shapes the way individual within the society think and relate to each other. Though, most of the realities created by television are not based on real facts but on speculation. Gerbner observed that television reaches people, on average, more than seven hours a day. Television offers a centralized system of storytelling to call for the attention of its audience. Gerbner asserts that television's major cultural function is to stabilize social patterns and to cultivate resistance to change because we live in terms of the stories we tell and television tells these stories through news, drama and advertising to almost everybody most of the time and since. Cultivation theory doesn't predict what we will do after watching a violent television programme but rather posits a connection between our "sorry and fear about a violence-filled world and exposure to violent programming on television. Therefore, there is the need for individual to know that what we watch should not dictate our action. Paradoxically, television is part of a larger socio-cultural system but some are using it to incite religious unrest in many parts of Nigeria today.

What is Religion?

Religion according to Adeniyi (2004) cited in Aleyomi (2012) is a body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendental being. This implies that religion deals with norms and rules that emanated from God and must be followed by the believers

According to him, religion is man's intuition of the sacred and ultimate reality and his expression of that awareness in concrete life, why then should some people take delight in unleashing war at every nooks and crannies' in the name of fighting for religion or imposing Certain religion on people? Particularly worrisome is the spate of bombing in the northern part of the country since January 2001. violent fundamentalism and extremism, especially, in the name of religion, has

grown in Northern Nigerian, Usman (2003). From the 1980s, after the maitatisne sects unleashed terror on innocent citizen and were eventually subdued by the superior military power of the federal military government. Northern Nigeria has become a fertile ground for a number of radical Islamic sects that have demonstrated their readiness to inflict violence to pursue their agenda. There are several of such armed Islamist groups throughout the North. These sects use guns, bows and arrows and machetes to unleash unimaginable terror on victims over time in some parts of the north.

Religious inspired violence has become more and more vicious and better organized. The instruments of violence have also grown in sophistication, just as intellectual capacity of the leadership of those extremist groups has improved with the recruitment of university graduates, top government officials and important elements from the upper echelon of the society in the north. Such extremist group includes the Hisbah, the Zamfara State Vigilante Service(ZSVS)Al-sumia Waljamma and Boko Haram and others, Alanamu (2004). It is the role of the wire service to educate television audience not to partake in violence nor be lured into activities that will disrupt the peace of the people of the nation. Though which are as follows the wire service agencies are be deviled with so many impediments.

Impediment to Wire Service Role in Media Industry

Baran (2009) states that "A country creates a national media system and this media system in turn modifies that society". But the wire service has some impediments that have militated against its effectiveness in discharging its role in media industry.

Cultural Impediment

Every society has its own norms, taboos, values and unique ways of doing things. Pornographical content in media that is accepted in Amsterdam would outrage the people of Seoul. The issue of violence to some people is seen as a way of life in achieving their aims and objective, whereas to others, it is against the ethics of the land. The cultural barriers to media development are perhaps the most difficult to overcome because the solution often require a change in a nation's attitudes and deep-seated beliefs about religion, society, education and culture.

Economic Impediment

A sophisticated media system/use one cannot thrive in economically impoverished nations. Chad. In Africa, for instance, exists at subsistence level. The country has one television station and only a dozen radio stations. Nations with strong national economies, stable monetary systems and educated workforce tend to be the nations with well-developed media system.

Government Impediment

The media often want to serve as agent of power to maintain and perpetuate the sovereign though sometimes serves as tools in the hand of the government against their opponents but threat to life and limb are serious political barriers the threat to life serious political barrier to wire service development. Also is the self-censorship that often results from these threats. Media self-censorship is psychological in nature; the very real consequences being victimized by political violence are significant barriers to media or wire service development causing some journalists to remain silent at times.

The threats to media freedom come in various form: intimidation, defamation, investigations, licensing, censorship closure, seizure, travel restrictions, jailing, death threats, lack of protection and death.

Technological Impediment

Technology is both an impediment to media development and potential destroyer of a nation technology is a barrier in the world of established mass media because cable systems are expensive to start and distribute, And not only that. the wire service and the media industry in Nigeria have symbiotic roles: Daramolá (2013) as the wire service depends on the media industry to reach the consumers of its product to make a living, so do the media industry through the wire service dishes out varieties of stories from across the world to its likely consuming television audience, but the threat to this relationship looms large because of the current trend in the media and internet. there are now, an ever increasing new source not only at the disposed of the traditional media, but within the react to be the monopoly enjoyed by the news agency of Nigeria and other wire service. Such as Facebook, twitter, YouTube, blog, Skype, and LinkedIn are the palms of the individual in the form of GSM global satellite mobile phone. This signifies a paradigm shift in the vast evolving information age

Causes of Religious Violence from Television Audience

What you watch speak volumes because it determines the way you behave. The current survival state of television audience is decided by what is being displayed on the screen and which is very vital to the lifestyle of the television audience. The Nigerian society, like other modern civilized societies is encumbered with diverse moral and social ills. The moral fabric of the nation has been undermined by corruption, inordinate ambition, promiscuity, drug abuse and violence because of so many junks that are displayed on television. The social structure of the wire service has been bastardized and there are deep rooted misconceptions on some programmes on the screen leading to religious intolerance, especially the Muslims and Christians have demonstrated intolerance attitudes which have resulted to violent outburst that have spilled over the political and economic lives of the

citizens.

Most of the programmes on television are political propaganda. The main objective of the mass media is to inform, entertain and educate the society. But the reverse is the case in Nigeria. Experience has shown that the reports, news analysis and features shown are capable of impacting negative influence on the audience, inciting people to unleash terror on their fellow citizens. What you watch over time becomes your habit or behaviour. The act of watching violent movies over a period of time can cause unbridled actions that will lead to violence in the society. The broadcast stations will continue to lack good and enduring contents, If they do not stop stifling content providers and independent producers who should work hand in hand with them. They roll out exorbitant air rate and at the same time refused to commission local project or programmes that will show case our cultural values.

Instead they prefer to go abroad and buy cheap foreign programmes that have been inciting our children to misbehave. Another bane of the broadcast sectors is lack of creativity which ultimately leads to running of poor and outdated programmes which is at the same time affecting the way people reason and react to issues in the society. It has also been discovered that most of the practitioners have never seen, not to talk, about reading the Nigerian broadcast code before. Oni (2014) most of the media houses are lawless. They even argued that there shouldn't be anything called regulation. Remember the recent African Independent Television Versus Nigerian Broadcast Commission (AIT VS NBC) killing our cultural heritage with that imbroglio. They even refused to but comply with directives from NBC on the percentage of local contents to foreign ones. They look for the easiest way out and fill the air with Junks, albeit play all manner of musical videos.

In American society in the 50s, the family unit used to be the focus of ads and movies, at that time, television programme depict parent as role models having strong moral characters, but now television programme like "Simpsons" portrays parent as dumb. The more children watch television programme like this the more they lose respect for their parents and lose respect for ethical values. This also makes them to take to the street in the name of fashion and maturity. It is an idle hand that the devil gives work to, these children are being recruited by political and religious leaders as political bigots to unleash terror on the society. Put way to Effective Service delivery.

There is no doubt that the society has its own blame; for instant apart from the myriad of socio-political and religious violence; there are no clear-cut cultural policies for the films shown on the new cable station. In view of this, the paper recommends a number of proactive measures to

achieve the proposed revolution: We have to take our destiny in our hands and begin to engage in decent films and features that will boost our values. More importantly is the need for professionals in the field to develop good ideas that will foster good moral and strategize on how the message in the content of what is to be projected will be appropriately passed to individual homes via good networking. There is no gain saying that the availability of good plays is essential for a popular and vibrant society. But beyond this, a television tradition that built on that is good moral values and positive cultured oriented is of utmost importance. To achieve this there must be television business culture that will bring about revolution. In other words, the ideas of television culture must go beyond the show but should be seen as a total package for teaching and preaching peace in the different sectors of the society.

The practitioners behind the screen must be conscious about the nature of the sociological problems on ground, the target audience and should be able to proffer solutions to the dire needs of the society by show casing programmes on religious tolerance and how to live in peace with one another.

There should be establishment of local education television stations mostly for pedagogical purposes, mounted to reflect tolerance in all facets. For example, plays like Mr and Mrs Johnson by Ola-Ola Williams is an educative marital programme which is aimed at marital issues. It indicates that there is no perfect marriage or relationship hence, the need to tolerate forgive and love one another, Peoples Parliament on AIT, the programmes present personalities in the society to trash burning issues. Goge African on AT is a cultural magazine programmes that captures highlights on traditional festival, cultures and events of various parts of Africa. Goge Africa is a well-respected publicist of Africa traditions and Culture. They very many tribes and communities of the Africa continent are celebrated win due attention given to their cultural heritage. Ojuoluwa, alasalatu and many others, with these aforementioned programmes shown continually on television, the television audiences are educated, oriented on the need to cultivate the habit of living with one another's belief, culture and short comings.

In view of the aforementioned facts, there is a need for total integrated and more articulated programmes on conflict resolution and prevention on television which should be on how it will be effectively resolved and how it can prevent the furtherance of religious conflict as the case may be. More importantly, the leader and the led should depoliticize the security challenges and people should not hoard any sensitive information from the wire service/news agencies in the country. If people have been giving information to the wire service in the past, it would have been projected on

television and the current wave of tension in the northern part of Nigeria would not have festered because it would have been nipped in the bud.

At the home front, parents are to keep track of things their children watch on television. They should keep children away from computer games that promote violence and vices. Violence in games is directly related to gun violence in America statistical example. The more they watch or play games on violence, the more they tend to be violent. No T.V. or computers in the bedroom. Kids should not be in the bedroom with screens whether it is for school work or something else. Make family room a place where screen time is allowed, bedrooms should be a place to go to sleep not to socialize with the outside world. There is the need for the NBC to regulate the broadcast sector in Nigeria. As the regulatory body for broadcast media, it needs to review the content of the stations and set new standards. Quality assurance is of utmost importance in the sector.

The government must quickly attend to legitimate and long standing grievances. The real danger lies not in what the terrorist can do but what the government can do to curb the menace of violence. Government should also address the issue of mass poverty, inequality, poor governance and corruption, to also check the activities of the groups who find willing hands among jobless youths. As Ambassador Nana Effah Appenteng Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nation argued that, "the face of terrorism is one blooded by its evil intention; increasing the objectives of today's terrorists is suicidal and apparently, they have no demand to negotiate". We therefore need to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. More importantly, there is the need to identify, understand and address the underlying causes that permit such hatred, however misguided to grow and fester.

Conclusion

We conclude that the bulk of the work in curbing religious violence or terrorism lies with the media/wire service in ensuring that the minds of the television audience is properly educated, sensitized and oriented to conform to good co-habitation with fellow citizens in Nigeria in order to maintain peace and oneness to move the nation to greater heights.

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