

Diffusion of Innovation and Globalization of New Media in Third World Countries

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Abstract: New information and communications technologies are among the driving forces of globalization, bringing people together and giving decision-makers unprecedented new tools for development. Through the use of the Internet, webcasting, e-mail, video conferencing, video news release, social media platforms, blogs and other social networking sites, political, cultural and socio-economic messages are built both online and offline and supports that push debates and social movements are reinforced. This paper notes that the newness characteristic of an innovation adoption is related to the knowledge, persuasion, and decision steps of Rogers' diffusion of the innovation theory process. The paper further contends that globalization of media and the increasing use of new media technologies are reconstructing the nature of the relationship that existed between the media and developing countries. The world is becoming digitalized but because of low diffusion and utilization of new media technologies, the developed nations have advanced into technological revolution, leaving the Third World countries to plod along. This paper identifies several challenges distressing the primary diffusion process of new media innovation in developing countries like Nigeria. Nonetheless, it concludes that so long as the new media plays positive roles in the advancement of global media communication, there is hope for media development in Third world countries.

Key Words: Developing countries, New media, Innovation, Globalization, Third world

I. INTRODUCTION

Diffusion of innovations, new technology and new ideas from a socio-economic perspective provokes profound changes in society and the economy. The diffusion of any innovation refers to the spread of the innovation or ideas through diffusion channels to reach new users (Lechman, 2015), and it depends on the effectiveness of communication channels and social attitude. When people learn about an innovation that they think may have important consequences for them or those they serve, uncertainty typically leads to a search for further information, and exploration. Based on Everett Rogers' review, campaigns to spread innovations often target particular messages to the degree of innovativeness (or readiness to change) of potential adopters on the basis of data from evaluations. Innovativeness reflects individual thresholds for change (Dearing & Cox, 2018).

Development in Third world countries and the diffusing new media technologies largely influence the globalization process. It is widely accepted that globalization has opened an unprecedented era in human history. This process of globalization has further increased the role of mass media in

underdeveloped and developing nations. With increase in technology, communication media constantly evolve, and keep expanding from Johanne Gutenberg 1440 mass media invention. Orthodox mass media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines), satellite communication, cable television broadcasting and desktop computers are now regarded as older versions of information and communication technologies and leaders in developing countries also acknowledge the role of new media in development. No nation can deny the positive role of globalized new media in politics, governance and communication (Tsebee & Odorume, 2015).

The relationship between the subjects of discourse stems from the fact that new media innovation and communication globalization alter established socio-political cultures especially in emerging nations and developing economies. The diffusion theory is technologically based and this article aims to examine the role globalization of innovative new media plays in Third World countries, as well as identify the issues that hinder effective diffusion and use of new media towards development in Nigeria. Through new media convergence, global relationship is enhanced by an all-inclusive communication system. Technology has created this system and it has permeated all aspects of human activities in contemporary era.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

(i) Globalization

As a concept, globalization has no uniformly accepted definition but there is a common agreement over certain basic characteristics, one of which is that "globalization represents the congruence of political philosophy, policy implementation and technological innovation" (Hernandez-Truyol & Powell, 2009, p.15). Webster's dictionary defines *globalization* as "the development of an increasingly integrated global economy" (Merriam-Webster, 2008, 276). Globalization refers to a process of integrating economic decision making all across the world; the process of creating a global market place in which nations are compelled to participate. It deals with the increasing breakdown of economic and socio-cultural barriers and integration of world markets and communication (Wosu & Obuzor, 2020).

Globalization, which also has been called global construction, global orientation and global expansion by various schools of thought, has been the catchphrase of the 20th and 21st

centuries. It refers to the growing interdependence of countries resulting from the increasing integration of trade, finance, people, and ideas in one global marketplace. International trade, communication and cross-border investment flows are the main elements of this integration (Oloyede, 1998; Nwagbo, 2016). Olaniran (2004) states that “when we talk of globalization, we are not just talking about multinational corporations; we are talking about progressive interconnectedness of nations and people across geographic boundaries” (p. 147).

Globalization pushes extensions beyond national boundaries. It is the mobilization of labour and technology across international borders, and has a broader reference to cultural, environmental and political activities with worldwide dimensions. Globalization also relates to four dimensions: economic, political, socio-cultural and communicative spheres. As a result of globalization, new communication technologies have been developed, and with the advancement in the media of communication, information and communication technology tools and channels increase the globalization of communication networks outside and within developing and underdeveloped states (Ünalán & Doğan, 2019).

(ii) *New Media*

The dawn of high-speed Internet technology gave birth to a new approach that helps users to better utilize their time and attention to create a rich, personalized and social media environment. This is called new or innovative media. It is interactive digital media, computerized or networked information and communication technologies such as the Internet, as opposed to traditional or orthodox print and broadcast media. New media refers to a wide range of changes in media production, distribution and use which are more than technological changes. They are also textual, conventional and cultural and one of the most important features of the new media is that users control the message they consume and when they want to consume such a message, they have to willingly participate (Akhagba 2014).

New media is often referred to as digital media because the process is done through computer. New Media afford a “many-to-many publishing”, unlike the “single source to audience” system. New media in developing countries take on the responsibility to publicize and disseminate the existing opinions and ideas in the society, form a public opinion and function in order to protect the political order by responding to the inputs from the environment, ensuring political awareness, undertaking the task of criticism and enabling the mass media to remain the “fourth power” after legislative, executive and judicial powers in social balances (Ünalán & Doğan, 2019). Most technologies described as new media are digital, and often have characteristics of being networkable, dense, compressible, interactive and impartial. Consumption,

distribution, information and use are not any longer a monopoly of traditional media broadcasters (Olley, 2009).

(iii) *Third World Countries*

After World War II, the world split into geo-political blocs and spheres of influence with contrary views on government and the politically correct society: The bloc of democratic-industrial countries within the American influence sphere were referred to as the ‘first world’, the eastern bloc of the communist-socialist states, the ‘second world’ and the remaining three-quarters of the world’s population, that is, states not aligned with either bloc, were regarded as the ‘Third World’ countries. Industrialized countries within the Western European and United States sphere of influence, as well as some former British colonies, particularly Australia and New Zealand are within the first world. When the term is used, the nations with the most advanced economy, highest standard of living and the most advanced technology, are “first” as opposed to the poor, under-developed, “uncivilized”, exploited nations of the Third world (Udombana, 2000).

From an economic view point, Third World countries are those with the common characteristics of underdevelopment (Udombana, 2000). The concept serves to identify countries with economic, socio-political and cultural imbalances. These are the developing and technologically less advanced nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Third world nations tend to have economies which are dependent on the developed countries and are generally characterized with poor and unstable governments, high rates of population growth, illiteracy, diseases and very large foreign debts, high infant mortality, low economic development, low innovative aptitudes and capacity, high levels of poverty and low utilization of natural resources (Udombana, 2000).

Nigeria as at 2021 remains a developing country, with a lower-middle- income developing economy (United Nations, 2020, 168). Consequently, in this paper, the concept of Third World is used interchangeably with ‘developing’. Tunisia, Chad, East Africa, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Southern Africa, Mauritius, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Togo, Cambodia, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, etc., were also classified as developing economies. At the lower cadre are least developing countries of Benin, Burkina Faso Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Sudan, Togo, Bangladesh, Nepal, Yemen, Haiti etc., and at the lowest level are heavily indebted poor countries of Burundi, Honduras, Sao Tome and Principe, Chad and Eritrea, amongst others (United Nation, 2020).

III. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This work is anchored on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Diffusion, propounded by Everett Rogers in 1962, is the process by which new products, behaviour or ideas are

communicated among the members of a social system (Rogers, 2003). The term is often differentiated from dissemination, which is taken to be a planned and managed spread of information throughout society. Traditionally, the mass media - both print and broadcast- have been seen as being more effective than interpersonal communication in spreading information and creating awareness about innovations. However, with the widespread adoption of digital or new media, this is no longer the case (Dearing & Cox 2018).

Diffusion research centres on the conditions which increase or decrease the likelihood that a new idea, product or practice will be adopted by members of a given culture. Diffusion of innovation theory predicts that media as well as interpersonal contacts provide information and influence opinion and judgment (Akhagba, 2014; Woods, 2016). Basically, diffusion of innovation theory explains the spread of new ideas and the acceptance of such new ideas into practical situations (Woods, 2016).

IV. THE DIFFUSION PROCESS

The Innovation Diffusion Process

Rogers' innovation diffusion theory states that innovation diffusion is a process that occurs over time through five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation stages. Accordingly, the innovation-decision process is the process through which an individual or any other decision-making unit passes. It includes: knowledge of an innovation; forming an attitude towards the innovation; decision to adopt or reject the innovation; implementation of the new idea, and confirmation of this decision (Rogers, 2003; Olley, 2009; Woods, 2016). The amount of time that it takes an individual or organization to reach its adoption or rejection phase varies based on several factors. This is formally known as the innovation-decision period (Olley 2009; Woods, 2016).

An innovation may have been made a long time ago, but if individuals perceive it as new, then it is an innovation for them. The newness characteristic of an innovation is more related to the first three steps (knowledge, persuasion and decision) of the innovation-decision process. The attributes of the innovation or information being diffused affect its rate of adoption or how quickly the public learns about it (Rogers, 2003). Those innovations that are perceived as having relative advantages over existing practices diffuse much more rapidly than those that are not thought of as being advantageous. These advantages may be economic or social benefits. Simple and observable innovations diffuse more rapidly than complex ones that cannot be directly observed. Also, diffusion is facilitated when one can test the innovation on a trial basis before widespread adoption (Barnett & Vishwanath, 2017).

According to Rogers (2003), including the time dimension in diffusion research illustrates one of its strengths. Fundamentally, the social system and structure being the set of interrelated units engaged in joint problem solving to

accomplish a common goal influences the diffusion of any innovation. The nature of the social system also affects individuals' innovativeness, which is the main criterion for categorizing adopters (Rogers, 2003; Sahin, 2006; Kocak, Kaya & Erol, 2013).

Attributes/Elements of Innovation Diffusion

Rogers' definition of diffusion as the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system, reflects four key components: the innovation, communication channels, time and the social system (Sahin, 2006). Uncertainty is an important obstacle to the adoption of innovations. An "innovation's consequences may create uncertainty" (Rogers, 2003, p 436). Communication occurs through channels between sources. A source originates the message of the innovation and the channel gets the message to the receiver. Rogers states that diffusion is a specific kind of communication and the channel involved in the diffusion process affects the decision period.

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Globalization of New Media in Third World Countries

The expansion of new technologies has played a major role in the intensification of the globalization of communications, with the deployment of sophisticated cable and satellite systems. The former has facilitated the capacity for transmission of electronic information and the latter for long-distance communications, and these have been combined with the increase in the use of digital methods of information

processing. Thus, the digitalization of information and the development of electronic technologies have increased the capacity to store information, permitting the convergence of information and communication technologies (Matos, 2012).

Technological advancement brought changes in the perceived roles and functions of the media (Eijaz & Ahmad, 2011) and the mass media are playing key roles in enhancing globalization, facilitating culture exchange and multiple flows of information and image between countries through international news broadcasts, television programming, new technologies, film and music. It was, however, the evolution of technologies capable of transmitting messages via electromagnetic waves that marked a turning point in advancing the globalization of communications (Matos, 2012).

The increase in the diversity of mass media has facilitated the acquisition of information as it provides the opportunity to receive news and information from many sources. Developments in mass media circles are also reflected in government services (Ünalın & Dođan, 2019), and these advancements have led to new legal measures for admissibility of new media information and Internet communication as evidence in court (Ewelukwa, 2004).

Global communication systems have thus changed the relationship between localities and social circumstances (Matos, 2012). Thus, greater awareness of socio-cultural and religious differences in developing countries is a consequence of accelerated globalized communications, increasing mobility, migration, trade, civil union, investment and politics. Media systems are transcending the barriers of the nation-state, stimulated by globalization.

Globalization of media and the increasing use of new media technologies are reconstructing the nature of the relationship that existed between the media and the state. The world is getting digitalized, and due to low diffusion and utilization of new media technologies, Ewelukwa (2004) argues, it will take less developed countries many decades to adopt systematic, efficient and reliable ICTs to meet up the rest of the world, the developed nations having moved past industrial revolution era into technological revolution.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that new media are impacting on the practice of journalism such that today a wide array of possibilities are emerging in the way journalists investigate, research and write stories as well as produce content on television, radio or the press, over social, economic and political issues in developing and under-developed countries. Normative development media theory calls for government and the media to work jointly. Social responsibility theory also appears at the crossroads of media globalization. Since societies are peculiar and different in historical, cultural, and structural sense; same media contents cannot be suitable for all societies. Consequently, even in the presence of media globalization and new media technologies that close cultural and state barriers, the need for new media to be applied to fit

state differences especially in religious and culturally proactive Third World nations cannot be overemphasized (Eijaz & Ahmad, 2011).

The new information and communications technologies are among the driving forces of globalization. They are bringing people together, and bringing decision-makers unprecedented new tools for development. At the same time, new media in developing countries is widening the gap between information 'haves' and 'have-nots, and there is a real danger that the world's poor will be excluded from the emerging knowledge-based global economy.

The media in developing Third World countries must relate to national developmental goals. With the interconnectedness of globalization and media, human rights circumstances arise. The marriage of telecommunication, computers and the Internet are the material force of consistent technology of communication. Globalization of new media allows a teacher in Ghana or Calcutta to access the same database information as one in London or New York. It allows a man to "log on to his computer in Ibadan and at the other end is a client at Addis Ababa, communicating on the latest marketing strategies or ordering shipment" (Olaniran, 2004, p. 147).

Furthermore, access to healthcare is improved as networks of hospitals and health care professionals in Mozambique and India can pool expertise and knowledge through new media systems. Internet and new media communications produce independent civic value, causing better trained, better informed, and politically participatory citizens in Third World countries. Globalization of new media allows developing nations the opportunity to bring global exposure to their concerns and to unite with other disparate social movements (Ali, 2011; Tsebee & Odorume, 2015). The 2019 Nigerian general elections were characterized by an appreciable use of new media (ICTs) especially in mobile-short message service (SMS) and face book, Twitter and Instagram social media for political advertising, election campaigns, ballot monitoring, vote reporting and violence check.

On the ability of the new media to unite literate citizens, on January 28, 2011, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak took the drastic and unprecedented step of shutting off the Internet for five days across an entire nation. His reason for doing so was simple: to halt the flow of communication and coordinated assembly taking place over social media platforms. Mubarak's step demonstrated the power of new media, his decision taking place after three days of demonstrations by thousands of Egyptians over several issues including state corruption, police brutality, and economic oppression (Ali, 2011).

The violation of citizen's civil and political rights in Sudan including extra-judicial and unlawful killings by the police and security forces, arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life, illegal arrests and detention, unwarranted attacks and threats are made known to the global community through globalized media (Kuyang, 2016). Extrajudicial killings and allegations of widespread abuses by Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)

officers in Nigeria, have been ongoing in Nigeria for years, and in late 2017, citizens began a social media campaign ‘#EndSARS’ to document physical abuses and extortions by SARS officers and demanded that SARS units be disbanded. This campaign culminated in the post Covid-19 lockdown ‘#EndSARS’ October 20, 2020 killings of many youths, and till date, no one has been held accountable for those deaths (Uwazuruike, 2020).

Issues of huge embezzlement of public funds and other vices resulting in the dysfunction of state’s systems and a general breakdown of public service and complete disregard for human rights in Uganda are revealed through globalized new media communication (Owasanoye, Akanle & Samuel, 2014). Venezuela’s organized crime, combined with an enormous number of firearms in civilian hands and impunity, as well as police corruption and brutality, have entrenched violence in the society which the world is made to see through different levels of global media communication networks (Amnesty International, 2021).

The import of the union between governance in Third World countries and globalization of media is that new media enhances sourcing, collection, processing, documentation, retrieval and dissemination of news, data and lots of useful information between and among global citizens (Tsebee & Odorume 2015). Generally, less developed countries have a low level of new media technology penetration (Olley, 2009). Nonetheless, the process of globalization has increased the influence of the media in economic and political fields of national growth. The media hold a unique power over economic, social and political conditions, and affect public sphere not only by agenda setting but also framing of issues (Kocak, Kaya & Erol, 2013).

Globalized new media communication enables inter-governmental, inter-agency, institutional, organizational and group communications as well as advanced and global levels of mass communication. Through the use of the Internet, webcasting, e-mail, video conferencing, video news release, facility visits, social media sites and blogs and other social networks, political, cultural and socio-economic messages are built both online and offline and supports that push debates and social movements are reinforced (Tsebee & Odorume 2015). Yet developing countries like Nigeria are behind in the diffusion and optimum utilization of new media communication in all spheres of life.

Challenges facing effective Diffusion and Use of New Media in Nigeria

It has been noted that innovations that are perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability, and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly than other innovations (Woods, 2016). The innovation-diffusion of new media in Nigeria and the globalized appreciation of its use and benefits have allowed the diffusion process, as well as adopter categories, and rate of adoptions to reflect its consequence. Consequences

are “the changes that occur in an individual or a social system as a result of the adoption or rejection of an innovation” (Rogers, 2003, p. 436). The development of the new media innovation and its diffusion within the Nigerian social system have triggered several reactions, challenges and consequences.

Like many Third World nations, Nigeria struggles with issues of bad governance, population control, unemployment, technology use and exploration, health sector deficiency, institutional maladministration, high level of poverty, illiteracy etc. Government’s communication with the people and with other nations in promoting the security and welfare of Nigerians remains one of the purposes of government. Therefore, political, civil, economic and socio-cultural development cannot be separated from globalized new media communication that challenges past norms. But despite the enormous benefits of new media communication, several barriers prevent effective diffusion, use and growth of digital communication and new media in Nigeria. Generally, these challenges also have to do with the limitations of new media technologies in the context of a developing country. The challenges are not peculiar to Nigeria but cut across many developing and under-developed nations of the world (Kocak, Kaya & Erol, 2013).

With the level of poverty in Nigeria as developing country, the new media and its technologies are an expensive communication medium. Low levels of education; literacy rates and lack of expertise also remain barriers to effective diffusion and utilization of new media innovation. As Rogers (2003) has identified, innovations that are compatible with existing values and attitudes, previously introduced behaviour and ideas and individual or societal needs diffuse more quickly than those that are not compatible. To adopt new media, use, an individual must be able to read and write and many Nigerians do not possess this quality (Olley, 2009).

Also, the stunning growth of the Internet has provided journalists with unprecedented reporting opportunities as well as dangers and citizens have to deal with the problems of the credibility of information and facts accessed on the Internet. This has caused many individuals to dislike and shun information from new media sources, new media communication as well as new media technologies as they are associated with the proliferation of rumours, misinformation and crime on the Internet. The Internet has no gatekeepers; therefore, information on it may be untruthful and harmful (Aja, Chukwu & Odoh, 2019).

Today, computer-mediated information tools have become the fastest and most effective personal means of publishing information around the globe, giving rise to the new media era called ‘Age of Participation’ (Aja, Chukwu & Odoh, 2019, 4). The growing popularity of online journalism, reflected in the proliferation of news portals and consumer news has made traditional local and foreign correspondence obsolete. Traditional publishers are venturing into electronic publishing

in order to remain in business and retain clientele and audience participation. Old media professionals and publishers struggle to meet up the demands of new media diffusion but often face issues of cyber crisis, corruption in administration, high service cost, poor funding of new media department and lack of expertise (Aja, Chukwu & Odoh, 2019).

Additionally, digitization is a technological innovation that has changed the scope of radio and television broadcasting in many developing countries. In Nigeria, in line with the International Telecommunication Union Conference, RRC 2006, for a total switchover of all broadcast channels from analogue to digital, Nigeria set June 17, 2012 as its switchover date for all Uhf channels to go digital. It also set the digitization of all Vhf channels for 2020 (Ihechu & Uche, 2012). Ihechu and Uche (2012) note that whereas digitization has promoted several interests including national interest, viewers' interest, broadcasters' interest, content providers' interest, regulator's interest and other community interests, it is not without challenges. Technical issues, knowledge gap and lack of skilled technical manpower as well as the problem of power supply in Nigeria affect the use of digital new media technologies.

Lagos State, it was reported, would be exiting analogue broadcasting scene in April 2021. From April 29, 2021, broadcast signals were to switch to digital and the nation would have successfully put the right steps to the second phase of the national digital switch over project. What this means is that effective from the date of analogue switch-off, television broadcasting could only be received with the DSO-approved setup boxes. Adequate quantities of these boxes would be made available by the authorized set-up box manufacturers for these locations (Adegboyega, 2021). Yet, the financial and technical issues still affect this process and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) is working around the challenges with help from the Federal Government to drive the project (Osugwu, 2021). But how far with the analogue- to- switch over today?

The phenomenon of global media is composed of internationally connected written, visual and audio mass media. As one of the basic elements of globalization, global media broadcast to the four corners of the world with the logic of market economy and influence societies with their publications. For this reason, the media have become a tool for those who want to have power in their hands. The globalization of the media has further increased its effect and importance as a power tool (Ünalán & Doğan, 2019). But this is affected in Nigeria by the absence of clear-cut policies and Internet/cyber laws, epileptic power supply, government's bureaucratic policies and the general unfriendly investment environment in Nigeria (Olley, 2009).

Political and economic instability also affects technological growth and innovativeness (Zanello, Fu, Mohnen & Ventresca, 2013) in Nigeria. The lack of trust between private

sector and policy makers inhibits a responsive form of new media use. Also, weak interaction between private and public sectors, lack of connection between universities and private sector, poor media entrepreneurship policies are factors that restrict effective new media diffusion and use in Nigeria (Zanello, Fu, Mohnen & Ventresca 2013). Cultural and linguistic distances and consequences also have an impact on the diffusion of new media innovation.

V. THE WAY FORWARD

So far, it has been discovered that new media will continue to complement the existing old media in order for the global-village project to remain a reality. Nigeria as a member of the global village has joined the movement of change in contemporary global broadcasting by gradually adopting and widely encouraging digitalized forms of new media message dissemination, and employing new media in several sectors of its developing state. Media globalization re-enacts debates as media systems continue to evolve with time and diffuse into social systems that perceive the innovation as needed. With the expansion and extension of new media, the debates of impact, effects, barriers and influences of globalization divide the world into centres and peripheries, and the powers and role of new media cannot be underestimated.

Several challenges have been identified as factors that affect the primary diffusion process (knowledge, persuasion and decision) of new media innovation in Nigeria. These factors are not only a construction of the social system but the political, economic and cultural milieu of Nigeria. It results from its status as a 'developing country' which is characterized by evident disadvantages. Nonetheless, so long as the new media plays its role in the advancement of media communication in Third World countries, there is hope that a globalized communication system through digitalized networks and new media will support the growth and development needed in Third World countries.

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