

Chapter 44

Nigeria's Core Values and the Use of Social Media to Promote Cultural Values

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how Nigeria's core values are being redefined in the face of the new media and cultural globalisation era; it identifies Nigeria's core values to include age, greeting, dressing, among others. The questionnaire was used as an instrument to elicit data from the sampled population (Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State). Findings show that the Internet, especially, is changing Nigeria's core values. Based on the findings, the paper concludes that Nigerians, especially the youths no longer have regards for their culture; rather, they value foreign culture. Also, the paper concludes that globalisation and global culture is gradually eroding Nigeria's core values as people no longer have regards for their local culture; rather they value the foreign culture. The paper, among others, recommends that the media in Nigeria should adequately transmit local programmes in order to genuinely reflect indigenous culture. The media no doubt, plays a significant role in projecting and reflecting culture. In doing so, indigenous culture should be adequately reflected through sufficient airing of programmes with local content to prevent dominance of Western values over indigenous values and the local languages be instituted in Nigerian school system and monitored to ensure local dialects are learnt and spoken. In this way, the youths will learn to attach value to their culture right from their formative years.

INTRODUCTION

Communication channels have different influence on culture. McLuhan (1964), cited in Giddens (2010, p.724) corroborates this when he argued that different types of media have different effects on society. According to Baran (2002), culture is socially constructed and maintained through communication. The media of communication generally define our realities and in the process, they shape the way we think, behave, feel and act. Since culture is manufactured and sustained through communication, one can therefore confidently say that cultural power resides in communication, which is reflected through the media of broadcasting.

There is a persistent underplay of the new media, especially the Internet, in moulding social behaviour globally. Commenting on the use of modern technologies, Hirsch (1992,p.6) observes that a never-ending drive for improvement of our lives seems to be an intrinsic part of human nature, especially as it affects the use of the media components. However, the quest for improvement presents a double edged implication for users for two obvious reasons new media technology remains a facilitator of human progress on the one hand and a harbinger of global socio-economic risk on the other hand.

Carey, cited in Jegede (2010) argues that all social change is purchased at a price and there are no free lunches. Securing what one wants always entails giving up something one also wants. Every gain is simultaneously a loss. Nothing is lineal or cumulative. The new media (Internet) has brought significant advancement into the realm of human interactions and one thing that appears certain is that its uses are not without a cost. Fair and Shah (1997, p.25) opine that the existence of the new media not only serves as a purveyor of socio-economic progress and a means of overcoming underdevelopment, but also tends to introduce some elements of underdevelopment. It has proven to be a potent tool for imposing and

conferring superiority on one economic system or culture over another.

Culture is an elusive term to define, perhaps because of its wider scope and broad nature. However, what readily comes to mind when culture is mentioned is the values and norms that people have, which make them live in a particular way. It is a way of living that defines a particular community. Rao (2006,p. 190) opines that culture is the complex whole that consists of all the ways we think and do and everything we have as members of society. He expounded it to be that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. It is, therefore, the sum total of all things that refer to religion, roots of people, symbols, languages, songs, stories, celebrations, clothing and dressing and all expressions of a way of life. Culture encompasses food productions, technology, architecture, kinship, the interpersonal relationships, political and economic systems and all the social relationships these entail.

The Nigerian society is one where family relationships are guided by hierarchy and seniority; a non-individualistic family system with older people respected and revered and a very decent dress pattern with no exposure of body parts. It is observed that only a fraction of this defining value system is left.

Today, the rapid and aggressive spread of market economies and communication technologies under the influence of Western multinationals has brought new impediments to Nigerian cultures and values. Nigerians now cultivate the materialistic and individualistic habits and values previously associated with Western culture. The culture of individualism is fast eroding the values and ideals of the extended family system, which Nigerians are known for (Obioha, 2008). Excessive materialism, for instance, has changed the religious character of the traditional Igbos (Obiora, 1996) and kneeling down to greet an elder has become alien to the young Yoruba girl.

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