

Role of Public Libraries and Electronic Information Media in the Promotion of Indigenous Culture: Empirical Evidence from Kwara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The study empirically analyzed the role of public libraries and electronic information media in the promotion of culture in Kwara State, Nigeria. It specifically investigated the nature and challenges of culture-related activities and programmes of selected libraries and electronic media houses in Ilorin metropolis. Two libraries, television stations, and radio stations each were used for the study. Secondary data were collected from available records of the selected organizations, including the internet. Frequencies, percentages, means, and t-test were used to analyze data. It was revealed that while the electronic media aired many culture-relevant programmes that included indigenous languages, traditional health practices, family life, local music, arts, and drama; the libraries also stocked a number of publications on a wide range of culture-relevant themes. Furthermore, significant differences were revealed in the contribution to culture between the organizations. It was recommended that increased public awareness, funding and upgrading of operating facilities are imperative in order to enhance the role of public libraries and electronic information media in the promotion of culture in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of culture in the affairs of all the world's peoples cannot be overlooked. Culture, usually perceived to refer to the total way of life of a people, is an inalienable part of human existence. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2007) defines culture as the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought considered as the expression of particular, class, community or population. It is a complex phenomenon that incorporates a people's custom, knowledge, belief, art, values, practices, morals, and laws (Bahtkin 1981). According to Ekong (2003), culture is the embodiment of psycho-social and physio-social aspects of the environment. The psycho-social aspects of the bio-social environment comprises the inner behaviour, attitudes, ideas, desires, values and norms of human populations, while customs, folkways, mores, external symbols, and language make up the external expression of the psychosocial aspect of culture. Ekong (2003) further observed that the physio-social environment comprises the portions of material culture that are expressed in inorganic elements such as tools. Like everything, culture is also subject to changes, even though it varies from people to people and place to place (O'Neil

2006). Several factors are responsible for the dynamic nature of culture, the least of which is not the growing influence and advancement in communication means among people all over the world.

Particularly since the last four to five decades, the world continues to witness the domineering influence of western culture across the globe. From politics to language, cuisine, dance, arts and fashion, western culture continues to make inroads into cultures in other parts of the world at varying degrees. It is thus imperative for every people to safeguard their culture in order to prevent 'cultural extinction'. Perpetuation of culture in developing countries such as Nigeria is of great socioeconomic importance. Apart from being a source of transfer of culture to future generations, preservation of many aspects of culture serve as means of income to a sizeable number of the labour force in Nigeria.

In order to fulfil the all-important necessity to preserve our cultures, all hands must be on deck. There is a need for concerted effort geared towards the promotion of indigenous cultures. Literacy and communication have played great roles in the dissemination and acceptance of western cultures worldwide. It is unarguable that these veritable means should also be explored by developing countries in the bid to preserve and promote their cultures. Directly linked to literacy

and communication are libraries and information media. The present study focuses on the role of libraries and electronic information media in the promotion of Nigerian culture.

By their nature, libraries are aptly concerned with educating and informing users on a wide variety of human knowledge and endeavours. But their role might not be limited to this. This is because of the fact that individuals, institutions and organizations often have both latent and manifest roles and functions (Merton 1957). The nature and orientation of books stocked by any given library determine, to a reasonable extent, the kind of latent and manifest functions it performs. For instance, a library where most of the books are natural science oriented would not only educate its users on natural science as manifest function, but would also contribute to the appreciation and development of scientific and technological thought as a latent function/role. Public libraries, therefore, serve as cultural centers of communities (Aina 2004). This view was also buttressed by Omoniyi et al. (2009) by observing that public libraries serve the strategic role of promoting the culture of the people through the stocking of relevant books and audiovisual materials.

Electronic information media are becoming increasingly popular worldwide. Radio and Television are the most common public electronic information media in Nigeria. Their major role is to inform, educate and entertain their listeners/viewers. But that they also serve other (latent) purposes, that include civic development, patriotism and cultural awareness among their audiences. Radio, for instance, play a significant role in cultural and community revitalization. In Nigeria, according to Oyedele (2006), radio provides a veritable plank for education and information dissemination among indigenous peoples. Kanayama (2007) also observed that radio helps to connect local communities, construct mutual trust, affirm relationships and discover resources.

Based on the foregoing, the thrust of this paper is to provide empirical data on the role of public libraries and information media in the promotion of culture in Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- (1) Identify the Nigerian culture relevant themes covered by books in the libraries,
- (2) Determine the culture-relevant programmes aired by the electronic media, and
- (3) Analyze the durations of cultural relevant

programmes of the electronic information media.

The research also tests the following hypotheses:

- I. There is no significant difference in weekly duration of culture related programmes of the information media on the basis of ownership (State and Federal Government), and
- II. There is no significant difference in weekly duration of culture related programmes of the information media on the basis of type (Radio and TV).

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ilorin, capital city of Kwara State, north-central Nigeria. The city has two universities, a polytechnic, a nursing college, a teachers' college and scores of secondary schools. Two public libraries, radio and television stations were each selected for the research. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. The secondary data were sourced from available records of the organizations (including internet sources), while a simple questionnaire was used to elicit primary information from the respondents, who were staff directly involved in the culture-relevant themes and programmes in the selected organizations. The two libraries chosen were The National Library, Ilorin and Kwara State Library, Ilorin. The former being operated by the Federal Government, while the latter is owned by the Kwara State Government. Although, records were not immediately available on the visitors to both libraries, informal sources indicated that as much as 50 and 100 users respectively visit the two libraries on a daily basis.

Nigerian Television Authority, NTA, Ilorin (Federal Government-owned) and Kwara Television (Kwara State Government-owned) were the television channels used for the study. Similarly, Radio Kwara and Harmony FM which were owned by Kwara State and Federal governments respectively were used for the study. In collecting primary data, 15 professional library staff and 25 producers/presenters of culture relevant programmes in the selected information media were used for the study.

At the level of the libraries, promotion of culture was determined by the number of culture-relevant books the stocked. The aspects of culture focused in this regard were Nigerian lan-

guages, cuisine, arts and fashion. Similarly, promotion of culture by the information media was determined as number and duration of Nigerian culture-relevant programmes they presented. Descriptive statistics and t-test were used to analyze data collected. Particular attention was paid to Nigerian languages because, according to Mahoney (2003), language is truly the keystone to culture for without it, we could not pass on the collective experience of society and the lessons it teaches for survival. It is the primary way that we pass on our culture from one generation to the next and it also enables the storage of meanings so we don't have to relearn everything with each generation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the finding of the study. Table 1 shows the books in Nigerian languages, according to themes, stocked by the two libraries. The books countenanced during data collection were the ones either written in indigenous languages, or those written in other languages but focusing on indigenous Nigerian cultures. The table revealed that the two libraries stocked books in the three main Nigerian languages namely Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The themes of the books ranged from custom of the people to history, religion, politics, and social life. There were also secondary school books in the languages that incorporated drama, fiction, and grammar. While the National Library stocked books on ten out of the twelve identified themes in all the three major Nigerian languages, the Kwara State Li-

Table 1: Nigerian languages books in the libraries

S. No.	Theme	National Library	State Library
1	Custom	HIYO	HY
2	Drama	HY	HIY
3	History	HIYO	Y
4	Study/Teaching	HIY	HIY
5	Politics/Government	HIY	HY
6	Religion	HIY	HI
7	Social life	HIY	HY
8	Readers	HYI	HY
9	Geography	Y	-
10	Economic/Business	Y	-
11	Dictionary	HY	HY
12	Grammar	HY	HY
13	Fiction/Novel	HIY	HY

Key: H= Books in Hausa, I = Books in Igbo, Y= Books in Yoruba, O=Others

brary showcased books on only two out of the twelve themes in all the three major languages, namely drama and study/teaching books. This perhaps reflects a more 'national' collection of books on the part of the National Library, as it is owned by the Federal Government.

The study also investigated books on other aspects of culture, whether or not they were written in indigenous languages. Table 2 presents the summary of the findings. It was found that while the National Library had books that dealt with Nigerian cuisine, music and traditional religions, and none on dance and arts and crafts, the Kwara State Library had books only Nigerian cuisine and none on the other aspects. Most of the books on Nigerian cuisine focused on preparation of Nigerian traditional dishes, while the ones available on traditional religions focused mainly on Yoruba traditional religion.

Table 2: Other aspects of culture

Culture aspect	National library	Kwara State Library
Cuisine	A	A
Arts and crafts	A	NA
Music	NA	NA
Dance	A	NA
Traditional religions	A	A

Key: A = Available; NA= Not Available

Table 3 presents the summary of the results of the investigation of promotion of culture among the information media. The table reveals that the four electronic media studied, at varying degrees, promoted Nigerian culture through their programmes. Culture-related programmes focusing several themes such as music, drama, documentary, religion, social life, marketing, and so on were run by the selected radio and television channels. Other programmes featured focused health, personality, children, sports, and current affairs. Table 3 shows that while NTA Ilorin aired culture-related programmes focusing on nine out of the thirteen themes, Kwara TV aired eleven.

Similarly, among the radio channels, Radio Kwara broadcast programmes on 12 out of the 13 identified culture-related themes, while Harmony FM aired programmes on nine. The programmes countenanced were those that were produced and presented in local languages and or centered on the culture-related themes. Table 3 reveals that the four electronic media channels broadcast culture-related programmes on seven themes

namely: music, children and youth, documentary, religion, family/social life, health, and news/current affairs. This suggests that these themes perhaps posed less difficulty to produce and or present by the electronic media. On the contrary, table 3 further shows that only Radio Kwara aired programmes that addressed local trade and markets.

Table 3: Culture-relevant programmes by information media

S. No.	Theme	NTA Ilorin	Kwara TV	Radio Kwara	Harmony FM
1	Music	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	Y (ns)
2	Drama	N	Y (s)	Y (s)	N
3	Dance	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	N	N
4	Children/ Youth	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns)
5	Documentary	Y (ns)	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns)
6	Religion	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns; s)
7	Family / Social	Y (ns)	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns; s)	Y (ns; s)
8	Personality	N	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	Y (ns)
9	Marketing	N	N	Y (ns; s)	N
10	Health	Y (s)	Y (s)	Y (ns; s)	Y (s)
11	Arts	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	N
12	Sports	N	N	Y (ns)	Y (ns)
13	News/ Current-affairs	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	Y (ns)	Y (ns)

Key: Y = Yes, N = No; s = sponsored programme, ns = not sponsored programme

Furthermore, data in table 3 also reveal that programmes on some of the culture related themes were sponsored, while others were actually produced and presented without external sponsors by the concerned information media. Some themes witnessed both sponsored and unsponsored programmes. Religious, health and social/family life programmes attracted more sponsors than the programmes on other culture related themes. This suggests the recognition of the centrality of these themes in the lives of the people. Table 3 also shows that the Federal Government-owned electronic media outfit recorded less sponsored culture relevant programmes than their counterparts that were owned by the Kwara State Government. This could be due to a number of factors that include relatively closer affinity between Kwara State Government-owned institutions and the general public.

Table 4 shows the summary of findings regarding the duration of culture-relevant programmes among the electronic information

media. The two TV stations presented about 40 hours of culture-relevant programmes per week, compared to about 82 hours per week by the two radio stations. Table 4 further reveals that, among the four information media, Radio Kwara had the highest weekly and mean daily duration of culture relevant programmes at 44.7 hours and 6.4 hours respectively. It is also noteworthy that the federal government-owned NTA Ilorin spent more time on culture-relevant programmes than the Kwara State Government owned Kwara TV. It is also observable from table 4 that the two Federal Government-owned stations (TV and Radio) aired a combined total of 63.9 hours of culture-relevant programmes per week, while for the two Kwara State Government-owned stations the figure was 57.7 hours. The combined mean daily duration of culture-related programmes on the basis of ownership were 9.2 and 8.3 hours respectively. Furthermore, the two radio stations spent more hours per week on presentation of culture-relevant programmes than the two TV stations (82.2 and 39.4 hours respectively). This implies that the radio stations perhaps encountered fewer encumbrances in presenting culture-relevant programmes to their listeners.

Table 4: Weekly and mean daily duration of culture-relevant programmes by information media

Information media	Weekly total duration (Hours) of culture-relevant programmes	Mean daily duration (Hours) of culture-relevant programmes
NTA Ilorin	26.4	3.8
Kwara TV	13	1.9
Harmony FM	37.5	5.4
Radio Kwara	44.7	6.4

Test of Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were tested. The first hypothesis was that 'there is no significant difference in the mean daily duration of culture-related programmes of the information media on the basis of ownership', that is whether state or federal government-owned. The second hypothesis is that is no significant difference in the mean daily duration of culture related programmes of the information media on the basis of type (Radio and TV). The student's t-test was used to test both hypotheses, and tables 5 and 6 summarize the results.

Data in table 5 reveals that there was no

significant difference in the means of the daily transmission of culture-relevant programmes by the electronic information media on the basis of ownership, since the calculated t-value was less than the critical t-value. This means that the first hypothesis should be rejected. Both federal and state government-owned radio and television stations were similarly and ably committed to transmission of culture-relevant programmes. Both the federal and state government-owned radio and television stations used for the study spent similar number of hours per day on broadcast of Nigerian culture-relevant programmes.

Table 5: t-test results of mean daily duration of culture-relevant programmes of electronic information media on the basis of ownership

<i>Media ownership (Radio + TV)</i>	<i>Mean daily duration of culture- relevant pro- grammes (hrs)</i>	<i>t-value (calculated)</i>	<i>Critical t-value</i>
Federal Government	4.6	1.7	6.3
Kwara State Government	4.2		

On the other hand, data in table 6 reveal that a significant difference existed between the mean daily duration of culture-relevant programmes by the radio stations on one hand and the television stations on the other hand. With mean daily durations of 5.9 and 2.9 hours respectively, calculated t-value 9.5 was greater than the critical t-value 6.3, implying that the second hypothesis should be rejected. The radio stations significantly spent more hours on presentation of Nigerian culture-relevant programmes than the television stations. This could be due to the difference in cost of production and or presentation of such programmes, among other factors.

Table 6: t-test results of mean daily duration of culture-relevant programmes of electronic information media on the basis of type of media

<i>Type of media</i>	<i>Mean daily duration of culture- relevant pro- grammes (hrs)</i>	<i>t-value (calculated)</i>	<i>Critical t-value</i>
Radio	5.9	9.5	6.3
Television	2.9		

CONCLUSION

The paper studied the contributions of public libraries and electronic information media (radio

and TV) to the promotion of Nigerian culture in Kwara State. The findings of the study indicated that the two libraries stocked books on a number of culture-relevant themes including custom, religion, social/family life, music, and drama, of Nigerian ethnic groups. A number of these books were actually written in the major Nigerian languages, mostly Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba. However, there were little or no books on the culture (and in the languages) of other ethnic groups. This suggests the dominance of the major languages. Because of its Federal Government-owned status, the National Library exhibited more national outlook by stocking more books on culture-relevant themes of more ethnic groups than the Kwara State Government-owned Library. The study also revealed that the electronic information media also promoted Nigerian culture by broadcasting a wide array of culture-relevant programmes. However, the radio stations significantly used more hours broadcasting culture-relevant programmes than the radio stations. This indicates that radio is much easier medium for the promotion of than television in the study area. Similarly, the federal-government owned electronic media (radio and TV) significantly spent more time to broadcast culture-relevant programmes than the state government-owned radio and television stations. Also, the study found that religious, health and social/family life programmes attracted more sponsorship than the other themes.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings, the study proffers the following recommendations as policy implications:

There is need to maximize the use of Public Library as a veritable institution for preservation and promotion of cultures, especially among the reading public. Therefore, existing public libraries should be adequately and regularly stocked with more books on culture-relevant subjects. Efforts should also be geared towards establishing more public libraries by both federal and state governments. Non-governmental organizations and institutions should also be encouraged to libraries that would promote culture-relevant subjects.

Individuals and corporate organizations should participate more actively in the sponsorship of culture-relevant activities and programmes of

libraries and electronic media (radio and television). Particularly, book authors and publishers as well as producers of culture relevant films and other artworks should be better encouraged to make their output available for display by public libraries. Such items, particularly the audio-visuals and similar artworks should be classified as reference items and thus not being borrowable by library users.

Local television stations should be encouraged to produce and or present more culture-relevant programmes, especially in indigenous languages. Indigenous cultures stand the risk of being subjugated by the preponderance of foreign culture programmes that are even aired by national televisions.

There is the need for widespread campaigns to sensitize the public, including prospective sponsors and financial supporters, towards greater appreciation and patronization of indigenous, culture-relevant books as well as radio and television programmes. When there is increased demand for indigenous and culture-oriented books and electronic media programmes, there would be, at least a corresponding level of supply and vice versa.

Finally, developing countries such as Nigeria need to adequately imbibe the establishment of community radio in order to benefit from the

immense opportunities for development that it offers, especially in the area of preservation and promotion of indigenous cultural heritage.

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