



Mass Media as Catalyst for Business Development in Rural Settlements: A Study of Ogun State, Nigeria

DOKUNMU. Oluwaseun Olasunmbo¹, OGUNSANWO. Abayomi, O² & AYO-BALOGUN. Atinuke, O³

¹Department of Mass Communication, ²Department of Business Administration,

³Department of Business Administration

^{1,2,3}The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State

Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The Mass Media as Catalyst for Business Development in Rural Settlement is a research study that is focused on identifying different challenges faced by rural settlers. Mass media has transformed and will continue to transform our world as it creates avenues to develop businesses at local and international levels. The knowledge of how to manage the mass media process to develop business in rural areas has grown in depth. The aim and objectives of this study is to examine the roles played by mass media in business development of rural settlements, to study the rate at which business development in the rural settlements are aided by mass media, to study peoples' reaction to messages from the mass media on business development and to achieve these objectives, survey research design was adopted. The study used Media Effects and Cultivation Theories to back its findings while simple random sampling techniques and purposive approach were employed to select six hundred respondents from six different local governments in Ogun State. A well-structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Data collected was analyzed with regression analysis. Part of the result is identifying the roles played by Radio and Television which have been identified as significant contributors to business development of rural settlements, ascertaining the high rate at which business development in the rural settlements are aided by mass media among other findings.

KEYWORDS: Catalyst for Business Development, Rural Areas, Mass Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

The gap between rural and urban areas is becoming more and more pronounced; the government is finding it extremely difficult to develop rural communities, and the mass media is being used to bridge this gap and open up new channels for addressing the needs and goals of rural residents in the context of development that is being showcased to a wider audience.

Rural areas are regions located outside of urban cities and towns. They are mostly low in population density, of scattered settlements, they have limited access to social amenities and services, their economic activities are majorly focused on agriculture, forestry and natural resources. In rural areas, communities are categorized based on three key factors: population density, distribution, and quality. According to Newman (2023), these consist of dispersed settlements, compact settlements, and semi-compact communities.

The information needs of rural dwellers in Nigeria are largely concerned with agricultural, medical and health matters, education development, religion, culture and business among others. The population of rural communities is often homogenous and older in average age, also, the population tends to be decreasing because of rural-urban migration. Though the cost of goods and living tends to be less in rural areas, households tend to make less money and poverty rates are high (Newman, 2023)

Instead of addressing the requirements of rural populations holistically, studies on information systems servicing them have concentrated on certain industries, such as agriculture or health. Communication is more important than ever for a firm to survive and thrive (Goodman & Hirsch, 2022). Rural communities and local content are essential components of rural information systems (Schramm, 1971). Delivering agricultural and economic messages to rural settlements has been a crucial responsibility of traditional media, and rural radio in particular, in order to successfully engage with them. Different forms of mass media, such as print, video, television, films, slides, photographs, theater, dance, folklore, group debates, meetings, exhibitions, and demonstrations, have also been used to accelerate the flow of information which are considered necessary as one of the instruments for rural area's development.

Mass media refers to the various channels or platforms through which information, entertainment and news are disseminated to a large audience. The channels of mass media include, print media, broadcast media, digital media, outdoor media. Mass media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion, influencing culture and providing entertainment and information to the general people with some characteristics as it have wide reach that can reach a large audience simultaneously, it is accessible to the public and its contents are for public consumption, it is received through a medium or channel and mass media content is often produced on a large scale.

However, while the benefits of mass media are there for us to see in urban areas, the positive impact in rural areas are yet to manifest in the rural areas while also taking note of how they are coping with the challenges and the roles mass media, especially traditional media which plays an influencing role in people's decision to establish business development oriented agencies in rural areas as ways of further developing the areas, as well as how the rural settlers make use of the media to solve some challenges that has to do with provision of infrastructure and providing the needed exposure for businesses to thrive in rural areas. This is the pivotal moment in the history of mass media where ideas on how mass media should be directed to profound changes in the rural areas are brought to lime light.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The information revolution is an attempt to make sure that the people who need it most have access to knowledge and information about crucial technology, procedures, and practices. Basic components of food security, knowledge and information are also necessary to promote rural development and social and economic transformation. The goal of rural development is "to improve the standard of living of the rural population in multi-sectoral dimensions including agriculture, industry, and social facilities, according to Albert Waterson, cited by Cohen in 1987. In addition, rural communities need information on the availability of new technology, early warning systems for diseases, pests, and drought, credit availability, and market prices, all of which are not as readily available as they once would have been.

Information has been widely disseminated to rural populations through both new and traditional ICTs, both of which have enormous potential. However, there is a need to link rural communities with research and extension networks, as well as to give them access to much-needed services, technology, and expertise. The people and their constitutions have acknowledged mass media as a major catalyst for national development since the era of nationalist media in Nigeria, according to a 2011 paper titled *The Mass Media and National Development in Nigeria: The Journey So Far* by Alikor, W. and Anele, R. Due to the mass media's immense power, it is their responsibility to hold the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government of the day accountable, transparent, and free from corruption. They can accomplish this by playing the watchdog and muckraking roles, which set the standard for media practice. Another work by Pandey, Pandey, & Pandey (2012) is titled *Mass Communication and Rural Development*. An analysis of Jharkhand State's Palamau Commissionery. It was discovered that using traditional media—especially rural radio—to disseminate agricultural messages in underdeveloped countries has shown to be highly successful. It has been the practice to use print, video, television, films, slides, photographs, theater, dance, folklore, meetings, exhibitions, group discussions, and demonstrations to speed up the public's access to information about government and stakeholder interests.

However, information communication and technologies have the ability to work in tandem with conventional media to provide rural populations with a tremendous amount of information in a more timely, comprehensive, and economical manner.

This study intends to find out the extent at which rural dwellers depend on mass media to provide information and educate them on ways through which they can take some decisions that will make life more bearable and worth living. This study will also discover ways through which business develops and thrives in rural areas in Nigeria under stringent conditions.

Ogun State was established in 1976 in southwest Nigeria by the military regime of Olusegun Obasanjo. The state's name was inspired by the Ogun River, which flows across it from north to south. The State has 20 local administrations, 16,432 square kilometers of land, and a population of roughly 5 million. (Ogun Diary, 2015)

The largest subgroups in Ogun State are the Egba, Ijebu, Yewa, Remo, and Awori. Yoruba, Egun, Ijebu, and English are the most often used languages, and the majority of people are traders and farmers. The state has three senatorial districts namely: Ogun Central Senatorial District for people of Abeokuta and environs, Ogun West Senatorial District for people of Yewa and environs and Ogun East Senatorial District for Ijebu and Remo people. Additionally, on May 29, 1960, Prince Adedapo Oluwaseun Abiodun—the sixth elected governor of Ogun State—was born in Iperu-Remo. He is from the eastern part of the state, near Remo.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the effectiveness of radio on business development in rural areas
2. To explore the impact of social media on business development in rural areas
3. To know the influence of television on business development
4. To examine the preferred types of mass media by rural settlers/dwellers

3.1 Research Questions

1. What are the roles played by radio in business development of rural settlements?
2. What are the rates at which business development in the rural settlements are aided by social media?
3. What are the influences of television on business development?
4. What are the preferred types of mass media by rural settlers/dwellers?

4. THEORETICAL REVIEW

4.1 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is one instance of how media can have cumulative effects. When George Gerbner first proposed it in 1969, it was the most robust media effects model since the magic bullet theory. According to the notion, people start to see the world as similar to what they see on television when they are exposed to it frequently and intensely. A heavy television viewer will believe that there is more violence in the world than there actually is because many shows focus a strong emphasis on crime and violence. The outcome is the media reality becoming socially legitimate. It has been demonstrated that cultivation theory has an impact on people's behaviour even if its main consequences are seen as cognitive (aligning the TV world with the actual world) and emotive (fear, hostility). Two mechanisms are identified by Gerbner and colleagues as the main drivers of media cultivation. The first step, known as mainstreaming, is the disappearance of group distinctions brought about by comparable messaging in the media. Resonance, the second process, is the similarity between an individual's actual surroundings and the media event that is being portrayed. The cultivation theory has faced criticism over time, but because it assumes long-term effects, it has proven difficult to confirm or refute using techniques that do not need self-reporting. The agenda-setting idea serves as an illustration of the media's cumulative impact. Designed by Donald Shaw, Maxwell McCombs, and Bernard Cohen, it addresses how the news media might draw attention to certain problems. Cohen's observation that the media has considerable influence over what people think about, even though they do not

directly control what people think, encapsulated the essence of the agenda-setting impact. The premise that the media agenda truly comes before the public agenda underlies the agenda-setting effect. The media would also need to be trustworthy, impartial, and free from special interests. Research on framing is inextricably tied to agenda shaping since the events chosen for the media's agenda are shaped by popular perceptions of the world. In addition, the recipient's frame of reference for a news occurrence is probably shaped by media agendas.

The relevance of the theory to this study is that mass media is regarded as the channel through which information is passed to the general audience who in this case are the rural dwellers and it is believed that these set of people need information which is needed in order to develop their businesses in such a way that it would be profitable to them and beneficial to the society. It is the media that will identify the ills of the society that may hinder development of businesses as well as highlight areas and resources that can be tapped into to make businesses develop. Furthermore, it is the media that provides a pedestal on which information on business is made available to all interested stakeholders. The theory focused intensely on individuality which became a mean of research to ascertain the kind of satisfaction audiences derive from media use. There are three periods in the theory, they are:

1. Direct effects models - which contend mainly the use of the hypodermic needle theory or magic bullet theory.
2. Limited effects models – when there was shift in the perception of powerful effects of media to one in which the media were seen as having only minimal influences on the audience.
3. Cumulative effects model which is all about repeated, heavy exposure to media, thereby having influences on people's behavior.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Study Area:

About six Local Government areas of Ogun state were covered in the study. The Local Government areas were equally spread throughout the three Senatorial Districts of the State with two Local Government areas chosen from each of the Senatorial Districts. They are Yewa South, Yewa North, Abeokuta south, Odeda, Ikenne and Odogbolu Local Government areas.

4.2.2 Research Design:

A structured questionnaire was employed in this study to collect data using both descriptive and inferential research design techniques from experimental subjects, or respondents. Because of the design, the researchers were able to gather data without changing any of the study's important factors. The surveys were divided into two sections: Section B included questions about the factors being studied, and Section A collected the personal data of the respondents. The questions were designed to extract the necessary data for the investigation.

4.2.3 Research Population:

Six hundred heterogeneous population consisting of men and women from 18 to 60 years who are engaged in business activities were chosen randomly from each of the aforementioned Local Government areas and used for this study.

4.2.4 Sample size and Sampling Technique:

Sample size of 600 respondents consisting of business men and women were selected through the use of purposive sampling technique. The respondents were selected with the simple random sampling technique

4.2.5 Statistical Analysis:

The SPSS (2011) and Microsoft Excel programmes would be used for statistical analysis of the data gathered from the redesigned surveys. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

5. ANALYSIS

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.862	24

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
BUD	20.8611	2.59029	547
RAD	19.1426	3.33174	547
SOM	20.9360	2.42044	547
TEL	20.8318	2.27042	547

Correlations

		BUD	RAD	SOM	TEL
Pearson Correlation	BUD	1.000	.361	.876	.831
	RAD	.361	1.000	.402	.339
	SOM	.876	.402	1.000	.825
	TEL	.831	.339	.825	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	BUD	.	.000	.000	.000
	RAD	.000	.	.000	.000
	SOM	.000	.000	.	.000
	TEL	.000	.000	.000	.
N	BUD	547	547	547	547
	RAD	547	547	547	547
	SOM	547	547	547	547
	TEL	547	547	547	547

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.897 ^a	.804	.803	1.15073	.804	741.187	3	543	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), TEL, RAD, SOM

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2944.408	3	981.469	741.187	.000 ^b
	Residual	719.033	543	1.324		
	Total	3663.441	546			

a. Dependent Variable: BUD

b. Predictors: (Constant), TEL, RAD, SOM

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.600	.479		-1.253	.211
	RAD	.006	.016	.007	.358	.721
	SOM	.633	.037	.592	17.140	.000
	TEL	.388	.038	.340	10.129	.000

a. Dependent Variable: BUD

5.1 Social Media (SOM)

According to the null hypothesis, social media has no impact on the growth of businesses in rural areas. Since the null hypothesis cannot be ruled out because the p-value (0.721) is higher than 0.05. Therefore, social media has little effect on the growth of businesses in rural areas. For social media, the unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.006, the significance level (Sig) is 0.721, and the t-value is 0.358. Due to the high p-value, it appears that social media has little statistically meaningful effect on the growth of rural businesses.

5.2 Radio (RAD)

According to the null hypothesis, radio does not significantly contribute to the growth of businesses in rural communities. Since the p-value (0.000) is smaller than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Radio thus plays a major role in the growth of rural settlement businesses. Radio's unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.633, its significance level (Sig) is 0.000, and its t-value is 17.140. This suggests that radio has a powerful, advantageous, and statistically significant effect on business development.

Television (TEL):

According to the null hypothesis, television messages have little to no impact on the growth of businesses in rural communities. As the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, advertising on television has a big impact on how businesses grow in rural communities. With a significance level (Sig) of 0.000 and a t-value of 10.129, the unstandardized coefficient (B) for television is 0.388. This demonstrates that television has a major positive impact on the growth of businesses in remote communities.

5.3 Discussion of Results

The results indicate that mass media play a critical role in business development in rural settlements of Ogun State, Nigeria. Radio and television have been identified as significant contributors to business growth in these areas. This might be due to their wide reach and accessibility even in remote locations. On the other hand, social media, despite its growing popularity, does not show a statistically significant impact in this context. This could be attributed to factors such as limited internet access and lower digital literacy among rural dwellers.

5. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the impact of mass media on business development in rural settlements of Ogun State, Nigeria, focusing on social media, radio, and television. The findings revealed that mass media, specifically radio and television, play significant roles in business development. Social media, although impactful, does not have as strong an influence as the other media forms.

The high reliability of the measurement instrument (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.862) and the substantial explanatory power of the regression model ($R^2 = 0.804$) underscored the importance of these media in promoting business activities. Radio and television showed strong positive correlations with business development, highlighting their potentials as

effective tools for economic growth in rural areas. The weaker, yet significant, correlation of social media suggested it still plays a valuable role, albeit to a lesser extent.

These results underscore the need for a multifaceted approach in leveraging mass media to boost business development in rural settlements. Each type of media offers unique advantages that, when combined, can create a comprehensive strategy for economic empowerment.

Findings of this study corroborated with the theories used in this study which stated that people tend to listen to, watch and believe messages received from radio and television and that these media have powerful influence on people. Moreover, people are motivated and purposive in their communication behavior, people actively select and use media to satisfy felt needs or wants and they are greatly influenced by social and psychological factors when selecting the type of mass media they watch or listen to.

5.1 Recommendations

By implementing these recommendations, the significant roles of mass media in business development can be further optimized, leading to sustained economic growth and improved livelihoods in rural settlements.

Enhancing Radio Programs: To leverage the moderate influence of radio, it is recommended to improve the quality and reach of radio programs focused on business education and information dissemination. This could involve partnerships with local businesses and development agencies to create content that addresses the specific needs of rural entrepreneurs.

Promoting Television Usage: Given its significant impact, efforts should be made to enhance the reach and content of television programs related to business development. This includes broadcasting educational programs, success stories of local entrepreneurs, and practical business tips.

Improving Internet Infrastructure: To maximize the potential of social media, there is a need to enhance internet connectivity in rural areas. This would facilitate greater access to social media platforms, enabling rural entrepreneurs to tap into wider markets and access valuable information and networks.

Digital Literacy Programs: Complementing the improved internet infrastructure, digital literacy programs should be introduced to educate rural dwellers on effectively using social media for business. Training should cover areas such as online marketing, customer engagement, and leveraging digital tools for business growth.

Integrated Media Strategy: An integrated approach that combines the strengths of radio, television, and social media should be developed. This strategy should ensure that consistent and comprehensive information is provided across all media platforms, thereby reaching a broader audience and enhancing the overall impact on business development.

REFERENCES

- Alikor, W. & Anele, R. (2011). *The Mass Media & National Development in Nigeria: the journey so far*. Project Submitted to the Department of Mass Communication, Rivers State College of Arts and Science, Rumuola, Port Harcourt.
- Asemah, E. S. 2020. *Mass Media in Contemporary Society*, Jos University Press, Jos, Nigeria
- Cohen, J. M. (1987). *Integrated Rural Development: The Ethiopian Experience and The Debate*. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden.
- Dokunmu, O. O. & Ayoola, M. J. (2020). *Role of Social Media Platforms in Economic Empowerment of Women in Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria*. Journal of Women in Technical Education and Employment, (IJOWITED) 1(1), 39 – 46
- Goodman, M. B., & Hirsch, P. B. (2022). *Media and Communication: Business Communication & Presentation*. Francisco: Peter Lang International Publishers, Littlejohn, S & Foss, K. Ed. (2009). *Encyclopaedia of Communication Theory*, Sage Publications, London.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). *Uses and Gratifications Research*. Public

Opinion Quarterly, 37, 509–523.

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). *The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media*. Public Opinion Quarterly, 36, 176–187.

McLeod, J. M., & Reeves, B. (1980). *On The Nature of Media Effects*. In S. B. Withey & R. P. Abeles (Eds.), *Television and social behavior: Beyond Violence and Children* (pp. 17–54). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Newman, N. (2023). *Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions*. New York: New York Times

Noelle-Neumann, E. (1974). *The Spiral of Silence: A Theory of Public Opinion*. Journal of Communication, 24, 43–51.

Pandey, A. K., Pandey, G. P., & Pandey, K. M. (2012). *Mass Communication and Rural Development: A study of Palamau Commissionery of Jharkhand State*. International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Academic Research, VOL. 1(2), 1-12.

Schramm, W.C (1971). *Mass Media & National Development*. University Press, Stanford, California.

Sparks, G. G. (2002). *Media Effects Research: A Basic Overview*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.