Use of Digital Media in Communication and Media Studies in Nigeria`s Universities: A Study of Lecturers in South-East, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Educational institutions all over the world now adopt the use of digital media in teaching and learning. This is due to the numerous opportunities and advantages which these media forms have over the traditional forms. Computer-based instructions (CBI) are, currently, the in-thing in most institutions globally. Most university examinations are also administered using computer, and not pen and paper anymore. Nigeria is not an exception. Most Nigerian tertiary institutions have embraced digital media forms in teaching and learning. What is not known is how lecturers in these institutions view, or perceive the use of digital media forms. The major objective of this study was, therefore, to ascertain how lecturers in the field of communication and media studies perceive the use of digital media forms in teaching and learning. Technology Determinism Theory (TDT) served as the theoretical framework for this study. Mass Communication lecturers from universities in five South Eastern States of Nigeria made up the population of the study. It was a census study, since the population was manageable. In-depth interview was used for data collection, while the Explanation Building Technique (EBT) was used to analyse the data. Results obtained from the study revealed an impressive buy-in in the use of digital media for communication and digital studies by Nigerian universities. Results also revealed that digital media are effective, and have comparative advantages over mass media in communication, learning and teaching. The paper recommended consistent capacity building on ICTs for lecturers, and massive investment on ICTs by Nigeria universities.

Keywords: *Communication, Computer-Based Instruction, Digital Media, Learning, Teaching, Media Studies.*

Introduction

The Canadian-born communication scholar/theorist Marshall McLuhan predicted the real influence of technology on learning, teaching, and information transmission when he coined the concept of "the global village" (Aliede, 2020). His 1962 and 1964 publications, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man,* and *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man,* introduced the concept, which remains important today.

According to Chadwick (2017), McLuhan coined the term "global village" after noting that computer-based electronic media was rapidly connecting people globally and shrinking the world into a village. With this remark, McLuhan projected that humanity will soon forsake the spoken and written world and embrace a society of greater personal interaction where everyone has the same information due to technology. Thus, pervasive technological advances that allow instant sharing of culture, surveillance, and

correlations will make our traditional rural villages interconnected parts of a larger community where knowledge, culture, languages, and lifestyles have merged.

Thus, global village illustrates how media technologies have made the world more interconnected. Robert Kahn and Vinton Cert's 1983 invention of the modern Internet, which improved on ARPANET's 1969 design, fulfilled the "global village" prediction, and globalised the world. Mass media, communication, education, and learning advanced greatly due to this growth.

People in modern global culture utilise technology to join a digital community they are mentally connected to. The 1990s-developed Internet and World Wide Web (www) have generated social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, twitter, Whatsapp, BlogSpot, Skype, YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok, Flickr, etc.) that serve as digital homes for individuals. Based on this development, several communication researchers (Okunna, 2013; Omenugha, 2017; Aliede, 2020) argue that media ecology and new media have increased the number of people who can make and watch media texts. After Johannes Gutenberg invented the "movable type" printing press in 1450, book and newspaper publication began (McDermott, 2015, pp. 25-26). This helps explain the current state of media ecology and new media.

The printing press ushered in radio (1890s) and television (1920s), each with technological innovations that improved communication. Interestingly, the 21st-century media revolution has been widespread. The 21st media revolution has delivered digital media, which has increased communication speed and broken down physical distance constraints, making the world a global village. McLuhan (1964, p. 5, as cited in Traub & Hendricks, 2018) states that "the enhanced electronic speed in bringing all social and political functions together, in a sudden implosion has heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree."

Digitisation has had a major impact on communication and media studies. Due to the speed of communication and the ability of people to read, spread, and react to global news quickly, people can now become more involved with people from different social groups and countries. Universities and higher education institutions worldwide have used digital media to better their services and expand their clientele and operations. Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State; University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State; University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State; University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State; and University of Lagos, Lagos, Lagos State have distinguished themselves as among the best universities for journalism and digital media studies in Nigeria (EduRank, 2022).

An independent metric-based rating of 14,131 universities from 183 countries showed high digital media buy-in for communication and media studies. Thus, it is important to analyse mass communication university lecturers' views on digital media for communication and media studies.

Statement of the Problem
Learning and teaching require communication and media. Communication comes from the Latin term "communicare" (Nwosu, 2000), which means to share ideas, opinions, views, and impressions.

If we juxtapose the meaning of communication with the function of media (surveillance of the environment, correlating members of the environment into responding to society, and cultural transmission), we will realise that education cannot exist without communication and the media. Hence, Guanah, Uzoechina, and Obi (2018) agree that "there exists a nexus between education and the mass media that can go a long way to help sustain the standard of education in Nigeria if well explored" (p.24). Thus, communication channels assist teaching and learning by disseminating information and sharing ideas, opinions, and viewpoints. The Marshall McLuhan idea of "the medium is the message," as stated in *Understanding media: The Extension of Man* (1964), supports this logic.

In subsequent media revolutions, learning and teaching have improved significantly. Nigerian universities have used technology to improve and expand media studies. Nevertheless, it is not yet known to these researchers how lecturers in the selected institutions perceive the use of digital media forms, hence this study.

Objectives of the Study
The general objective of this paper was to assess the use of digital media in communication and media studies in Nigerian universities. The specific objectives of the study were:
1. To ascertain if digital media have been utilised by Nigerian universities in communication and media studies.
2. To find out how effective digital media have been in communication and media studies.
3. To find out the views and perceptions of mass communication lecturers on the use of digital media for communicable and media studies.

Literature Review
Theoretical Underpinning
Technological Determination Theory underpinned this study. Marshal McLuhan was said to have postulated this theory in communication studies in 1964 (McQuail, 2020) in his book, *"Understanding Media: The Extension of Man,"* arguing that "the medium is the message" (Forgeard, 2022). Traditional technology determinism was laid outs by McLuhan (Baran & Davis, 2017).

McLuhan believed that media content cannot be separated from its technology. This means that media content's efficacy depends on how well it reaches and affects the intended audience, which is decided by media technology. Technological determinism theory rests on the dramatic change caused by New Communication Technologies (NCTs) that established an information society. As speed, dispersion, reach, adaptability, and influence expand, communication technology has become essential to society.

The chronology of innovation (Stone Age, writing, beginning of printing, telecommunications, mainframe computer, and Internet) and use of communication technologies induces societal revolution. Communication Technology Determinism theory is broadly linked to the communication revolution, which helped define this era as an information society. The hypothesis is widely used in communication studies. The notion supports universal literacy and education, making it suitable for this paper.

Conceptualising Digital Media
Digital media refers to the digitalisation of traditional media platforms. The concept of "old media," which refers to

newspapers, magazines, books, radio, and television, and "new media," which extend and change the entire spectrum of social technological possibilities for communication, has arisen. Thus, digital media and new media are used interchangeably to refer to different communication technologies that are made possible by digitalisation and widely available for personal use (Bertolotli, 2015, p. 151). Digital and new media are viewed as part of a revolution in mass media from one-way, one-directional, and undifferentiated flow to an undifferentiated mass. The technologies behind this paradigm shift have had both positive and negative effects on society.

McQuail (2020) states that from the 1960s, "new media" have encompassed a growing and diverse range of communication technologies. After recognising the difficulty of defining the new media, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2002, as cited in Kaler, Verma & Sagar, 2020) define them as a composite of information communication technologies (ICTs) and their social contexts, bringing together their elements: technological artefacts and devices; activities, practices, and uses; and social arrangements and organizations that form around them.

McQuail (2020) notes that while "old media" have a similar description, their artefacts and uses are different. McQuail (2020) lists the major characteristics of "new media" as interconnection, accessibility to users as renders and/or receivers, interactivity, plurality of use and open-endedness, and ubiquity and delocatedness.

When comparing the new and old media, the communication revolution seems to have led to a revolt against mass communication, which may have rendered it obsolete. This assumption has a long history in critical theory (Lad, 2017), yet satellite communication and computer use are driving change. As a communication machine, computers' tremendous potential resides in digitalisation, which allows all types and formats of information to be transmitted efficiently. Media might be merged into one computerised network and reception centre, eliminating the necessity for them.

According to Boutzoukas, Akimboya, Wong, Benjam, and Zimmerman (2021), the most generally noticed possible consequence of the computer for the media institution is the convergence of all media forms in organisation, distribution, reception, and regulation. The Internet and World Wide Web (www), which have been called media due to their widespread use, enable this convergence.

The Internet contains several variants, none of which is dominant. Since computer/Internet is post-modern, its interactivity and innovativeness are made possible by new information technologies. According to Boulianne (2020), Twitter (now X), BlogSpot, Instagram, Skype, YouTube, Facebook, Whatsapp, Flicker, Linkedin, etc. have increased equality of access as sender, receiver, spectator, or participant in some exchange or network. Information flows no longer have a dominant direction or slant (as with press and television news and opinion), but the degree of openness accessible to new channels is still far off.

The big question for integration and identity is whether new media split or unite society. Internet configuration and use suggest fragmenting social impacts (Kaur, Bir, Chandran, & Delpak, 2021). New media enable numerous vicarious relationships and networks that may be more binding. Rasmussen (2000, as cited in Ansari & Khan, 2020), uses modernisation theories to argue that

digital media affect social integration in modern network society differently.

Their main contribution to this effect is to bridge the growing gap between the private and public realms, lives and systems and organisations. Unlike television, new media can directly impact life projects (Ansari & Khan, 2020). Furthermore, digital media can influence society. It is important to distinguish between mass media that can be systematically applied to planned development goals by mass information and persuasions and new technology's open-ended, non-purposive uses. Sender loss of direction and control over material seems critical.

Digital media may be superior at causing change because they are more engaging, versatile, and informative. This fits with enhanced change models. Not all digital media outlets depend on infrastructure. The problem is tangible impediments to access, not technology. New media may still need development before deployment, just as old media needed an audience to work.

Digital media's capacity to traverse location and time gives it an edge over traditional mass media. Traditional media channels were faster than physical travel and conveyance, but their capacity was restricted and transmission technologies required fixed plant and high costs to overcome distance. Sending and receiving communications were physical (in factories, offices, residences, etc.).

New technology has freed humanity from these limits, yet social and cultural factors keep much communication in one place. Despite its lack of borders, the Internet is nonetheless structured by territory, especially national and linguistic barriers (Chadwick, 2017). The diversity and constant change of "digital media" limit thinking regarding their effects. Technology is increasing but frequently fleeting. McQuail (2020) identifies four broad categories of the digital media that share some channels, but differ in applications, content, and contexts. The classifications are:

Interpersonal Communication Media

This covers the Global System Telecommunication (GSM), phones, and emails. Content is private and perishable, therefore building and maintaining relationships may be more vital than knowledge.

Interactive Play Media

These are mostly video and computer games and VR equipment. Interactivity and possibly "process" and "use" gratifications are the main innovations.

Information Search Media

The Internet/www is the most notable example of this category, a library and data source of unprecedented extent, actuality, and accessibility. Mobile phones, broadcast telex, and radio data services are increasingly used for information retrieval, together with the Internet.

Collective Participatory Media

Internet use for sharing knowledge, ideas, and experience and active personal relationships is included.

Digital Media, Communication and Media Studies

The Internet's inception and spread have given digital media options. Digital media have greatly increased education, learning,

and skill acquisition. Thus, media digitalisation affects student learning, user engagement, and daily life in the same way as the web (Siregar, 2021).

Dawadi, Giri, and Simkhada (2020) say studying through the media initially appears like a dystopian fiction and odd, but they use technology to find a solution. Digital studies provided this solution, and Kaur et al. (2021) argue that online learning and lectures are better than traditional lectures. Bloom's 1984 study (as cited in Sharma & Gupta, 2021) found that regular classrooms were the least effective approach to instruct students.

In contrast, Strasser (2011, as cited in Ansari & Khan, 2020) found that digital learning has exposed students to a wide range of superficial information while ignoring the core learning that students encounter during learning breakdowns. Guanah, Njemanze, and Isa Derefaka (2023) opine that students will perform better academically if they spend most of their social media (digital media) time on academic pursuits. People claim social media use affects students' academic performance favourably and badly.

In their study, Akimboyo, Wong, Benjamin, and Zimmerman (2021) state that digital learning permanently alters learners' intelligence. Another benefit of digital learning is equal access to education. Thus, digital media is becoming increasingly important in education and training. Nigerian universities that teach Journalism, Mass Communication, Communications Arts, Communication, and Media Studies are adopting digital media to improve service delivery and expand coverage to meet rising clientele. The following empirical evidence supports digital media use in communication and media studies.

Empirical Review

Many empirical studies by communication, humanities, and liberal arts scholars have examined the influences, uses, impacts, and imperatives of digital media in communication and media studies. For instance, Bhavana and Minu (2019) studied "The Impact of Digital Media on Education," to determine if digital media's pervasiveness affects education and training. The study is based on the idea that the Internet has expanded media to the point that digital media is now essential to human survival.

Survey research was used to choose 100 pupils and youth from a Sri Lankan Mumbai neighbourhood. The paper collected data via questionnaire. The statistical analysis showed that respondents chose digital media platforms for learning due to search convenience. Results also showed that digital media could replace textbooks due to their efficacy in learning. The report found that digital media offer unavoidable comparative learning benefits and opportunities.

The major gap in the foregoing review, which is bridged by this present research work is that the former is student-based while the latter is lecturer-based. Again, the reviewed study focused on education generally while the thrust of this present study is on communication and media studies. This identified gap was filled by the present study.

In their work "Impact of Digital Media on Students' Engagement via E-learning: A critical literature Review Using Bibliographic Analysis," Sharma and Gupta (2021) suggest that digital media has transformed student learning and engagement. This paper tracked students' e-learning engagement and digital media progress.

The paper critically reviewed 300 pieces of relevant literature from the past decade using keywords. Digital media affects student e-learning practices, according to this report. . Finding also is accommodating in comprehending the students in putting the knowledge gained through digital media to optimal use. This empirical paper lacks a correlation between digital communication and investigations. The present study fills this gap.

In their study, "Exploring the Role of Social Media in collaborative Learning: the new domain of Learning," Ansari and Khan (2020) examined how social media and mobile devices can help higher education institutions share resources and interact with academics across boundaries. Empirical study of 360 students at a university in Eastern India examines how social media and mobile devices affect collaborative learning, peer and teacher interaction, and academic success.

Online social media utilised for collaborative learning had a substantial impact on peer, teacher, and online knowledge-sharing behaviour, according to a latent-based structural equation model approach to measurement and instrument validation. The study indicated that contact with teachers, peers, and online knowledge sharing behaviour significantly impacts student engagement and academic success.

Based on these data, the report claimed that collaborative learning using online social media makes students more creative, dynamic, and research-oriented. This impact-assessment research targets students. This paper, "Use of digital media in communication and media studies," addresses this major gap.

Being one of the rapidly evolving areas of study in today's media driven world, communication and media studies provide students with practical training in communication and digital media skills, alongside essential theoretical knowledge. In this qualitative paper therefore, perceptions of lecturers in communication were sought on the uses of digital media in communication and media studies.

Methodology

This paper adopted a qualitative survey approach because the context of the paper involves opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs on a given phenomenon. The area of the study is South Eastern Nigeria, and the population was a census of the lecturers in the five (5) Federal universities and five (5) State universities in the South Eastern States. Below are the States and the universities:

Table 1: Distribution of Universities across the States

S/N	STATE	FEDERAL	STATE
1.	Abia	M.I. Okpara Federal University of Agriculture, Umudika	Abia State University, Ututu
2.	Anambra	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli
3.	Ebonyi	Alex Ekwueme University, Ndufo	Ebonyi State University, Abakali
4.	Enugu	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Enugu State University of Science and

			Technology, Enugu
5.	Imo	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	Imo State University, Owerri
	TOTAL	**5**	**5**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

A sample of ten (10) lecturers, one from each of the ten universities, was purposively selected for the study. Purposive sampling strategy was considered useful so as to ensure that respondents who were not conversant with the theme of this study were not included in the sample. The instrument for data collection was an interview guide while the Explanation Building Technique (EBT) was the method for data presentation and analyses.

Data Presentation and Analyses

How has Technological Advances impacted media industries?
Technology has a major impact on media sectors, according to all respondents. One respondent said technology has expanded media sectors and created various interactive media-audience routes. The respondents also believed technological changes had improved media service delivery.

However, several noted negative effects like credibility issues and increased access to filthy literature. Despite this, all respondents praised technology's good impact on media. The respondents listed ICTs' benefits to the media sectors as expanded access, wide reach, speed, inclusiveness, and engagement/interactivity.

What are your views about the application of Digital media in communication and media studies?
All respondents agreed that digital media have improved communication, and can be used for learning, teaching, and information sharing. Digital media have improved communication, according to one respondent. He defined effective communication as eliciting expected response from the listener and argued that digital media's instant feedback mechanism gives them an edge over traditional media.

Based on these potentials, all respondents see digital media as communication education and digital studies platforms. The respondents named western universities that used digital media for distance learning. They said lecturers can use YouTube and Instagram to teach students from home or work. They added that digital graphics and art were better understood and appreciated.

What generalisation can you offer for digital media with regard to communication and digital studies?
Participants stated digital media had arrived and Nigerian universties are increasingly adopting it for learning and teaching. They also warned that universities that don't meet information age standards may go away.

Discussion of Results

This study found many uses for digital media in communication and digital studies. The survey found that Nigerian universities and institution of higher learning have used digital media to teach and share information. The result is more literacy and learning possibilities. This supports the Technological Determinism Theory (TDT), which realised the "global village" ideology.

This study again found that digital media improve teaching, learning, and communication. All respondents agreed that digital media are omnipresent, accessible, and engaging, facilitating results. This study aligns with Bhavama and Minu (2019) and Sharma and Gupta (2021) studies on digital media's impact on education and student involvement in e-learning.

Overall, education is acquiring and sharing knowledge. Modern education goes beyond textbooks and classrooms. Digital media provide electronic learning and teaching, expanding education. It also made learning and teaching easier by creating a learning-friendly environment.

This study found that university lecturers welcomed the use of digital media for communication and media study due to globalisation. Respondents believe digital media for communication and media studies is fulfilling Marshall McLuhan's global village prophecy. They claim that digital media can expand communication and media studies beyond analogue methods.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The aforementioned study shows that digital media affect communication and media studies. Modern culture has made teachers and students rely on digital media for all aspects of teaching and learning. Interactive online platforms motivate students and lecturers to study and teach. Media instructors and communicators should approach this new development pragmatically.

Massive investment in providing ICTs in schools and lecturers offices is recommended, so as to present significant opportunities that will facilitate the process. It is further recommended that media educators and communicators should be consistently engaged in capacity building programmes on ICTs so as to adapt to this tangential learning and teaching method.

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