ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Impact of Print and Audio Visual Media on Osun Osogbo Festival

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Abstract

The influence of print and audio visual media is that they have direct or indirect impact on the social, cultural, political, economic and religious practices in our contemporary lives. Through dissemination of information, the media control people's decision to be part of an event through a well packaged advertisement. This paper examines the wave of media (print and audio visual) in the celebration of Osun Osogbo festival in Osun State. The method adopted for this paper is the qualitative method of research that allows descriptive analyses using participant-observation and interview methods to arrive at the conclusion. To this end, the theoretical framework focuses on Dennis Mcquail's Normative Theory of Media. The findings show that media involvement in the process of the festival has enabled a large number of tourists to participate in the cultural event. The detailed enlightenment on the various socio-cultural events during the festival equally redirect people's wrong perceptions about the ritual inclination of the festival. The print and audio visual media form an alliance in giving adequate information especially about other events during festival celebration. However, a major drawback observed is the financial restraint experienced by of some of the media outlets in publishing events as they unfold. Consequently, the deployment of print and audio-visual media in the festival of Osun Osogbo has made the media an integral part of the festival celebration. It is therefore recommended that the limited scope of coverage of television and radio stations be increased by involving corporate organizations, government and individuals in the sponsorship of various programmes of the festival. This will circumvent the tendency of media reporters to concentrate only on the grand finale of the festival.

Introduction

All forms of media (electronic and print media) have direct or indirect influence on the social, political, economic, religious and cultural aspect of a society. The media mediates and develops all facets of the society. This is achieved as it gives information on various happenings in the society. The media serve as a bridge between different stages of the society in order to have a unified cultural behaviour in a society. Media production, media texts and media reception are like a series of interlinked circuits. What is produced is influenced by cultural values; how the texts are formed and represented are influenced in the same way; the readings of the texts are also subject to both abstract and particular cultural viewpoints.

The impact of media in the society especially in societal engineering towards a particular social or cultural practice can never be overemphasized. This is because the process promotes the concretisation and mobilization potential of print and audio-visual media in the society. This achievement is usually guaranteed because "the vision of media reaches the remote corners and makes sure everyone is aware of what is going on in the society" (Lakhendra, 2014, p.67). As a result of this, the powers of media in promoting social causes like literary, health management, safety management and even cultural issues like promoting festivals and other social cultural events among many others can be clearly seen. One major way of promoting cultural events is through intensive advertorials in print and audio-visual media. This open opportunity for the general public to be well-informed as necessary facts on a festival are disseminated either through print (magazine stores, newspaper reports, pamphlets and billboard adverts) or audio-visual radio and television media. Because of its general appeal nature, mass media has become a dominant form of access to socio-cultural reality especially in the process of Osun Osogbo festival celebration. It is as a result of this

that the paper examines the impact of print and audio-visual media in the annual celebration of Osun Osogbo cultural festival in Osun State. The paper also reviews how the media has mediated and served as an attractive factor in the process of audience engineering before, during and after the festival celebration in Osogbo, Osun State.

Media as a Tool for Awareness

Media in all its forms and nature is a core institute of the society upon which the society and institutions depend and develop. It has the ability to mediate, stabilize and navigate a developmental course in the progress of a society. Television, newspaper, music, movies, magazines, books, billboards, radio and the Internet are all part of media and they are individually or collectively capable of transforming and influencing the society. Fadirepo (2011, p.102) adds that "media has great influence is natural development through its ability to influence and reflect the dominant culture of a society". Supporting this notion, Lakhendra (2014, p.67), opines that "media is centrally involved in the production of modern culture."

Nevertheless, media primarily can be described as " different technological processes that facilitate communication between (and are in the middle of) the sender of a message and the receiver of that message " (Lakhendra 2014, p.2) .As technological devices for collecting and disseminating of information ,Mcquail (1969, p.2) defines the media as "the entire system within which messages are produced, selected, transmitted, received and responded to" in our environment Majorly ,media , with all its various nomenclature ,can be divided into two categories .Uyo (1983, p.6) lists and explains the categories thus :

1. Print media: Newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, direct mail, curricular, billboard, scripts writing, and any technical devices that carry message to the masses by appealing to their senses of sight.
2. Electronic Media: This is sub-divided into;
   i. radio and audio recordings that appeal to the sense of living
   ii. television and motion picture and video recordings that appeal to both senses of hearing and sight
   iii. Internet, podcasts, faxes and text messages.

The print media is limited to graphic representation of issues in the society and can only be accessible to the literate class of the society. The electronic media, mainly audio-visual, has great ability and potential to stimulate audience understanding of any issues in the society. This is because of its double-faced potential of hearing and sighting. The image movement usually answers the aural perception of media content.

Irrespective of the advantages and dis-advantages of the categories of media, both print and audio-visual media perform what we see as three cardinal roles of media in the society. These are education, information and entertainment, which equally and inadvertently engineer, socialize, influence and conscientise the society. In other words, Findly (1986, p.24) sectionises the function of the media into three. These are "the watchman, decision-maker and the teacher." Extensively, he explains the three functions further:

> The Watchman, the informing functions are well within the capability of the media… adopted in many developing societies…the decisions making functions at the most part , jobs… can be of great help by feeding information into the discussion, by carrying the word of the leadership and by making the issues clear… teaching function is the best used in education when they can be employed in a classroom as part of the total educational experience under guidance of a classroom teacher .

The above portends that the summary, the holistic contribution of all these in the society will have onward development in such society. This makes the media to be indispensable in the day-to-day

activities of man and prompts Lekhandra (2014, p.2) to express that media:

> Define an interaction with other people on a daily basis as a diversion, sources of conflict, or a unifying force. Media have an impact on society, not only through the content of the message but also through the process.

Lakhendra (2014) above sets precedence for Schramm Wilbur (cited in Agun, 1986, pp.30-37) as he clarifies three reasons media must be employed in a society for growth and onward development. According to him;

> People must be provided with information quickly and constantly‥opportunities must be provided with information quickly and constantly .Opportunity must be provided for active and intelligent participation in the decision process and need to teach new skills and competencies necessary for sustaining and maintaining socio-development of a society. (p. 4)

Taking a cue from the foregoing, the media serves as a teacher who inculcates in human beings, socio-cultural behavioral patterns acceptable in different parts of the world. As a means of information, human beings are kept abreast of issues around the world and helped to guide their decision making while entertainment flavour is derived from the manner and ways of presenting media contents. Some issues are naturally designed to elicit a kind of joy in the mind of the audience.

For instance, we can see a way in which print media, as a branch of mass media, "transmits cultural values through history. Past generations talk to us through mass media, mostly books, just as we often, not realising it, talk to future generations" (John, 2001, p. 395). Because of its posterity, ability to outlive years, print materials document practices of a society and transmit them to coming generations. In fact, Nwaolikpe (2013, p. 68) says "print media provide information that improves the lifestyle of the masses and the masses have been influenced greatly by these programmes." The improvement of lives of the people is mostly necessitated by the currency of news and other stories.

Concluding on the role of print media Nwaolikpe (2013, p. 69) says that "the print media carry current information and keep the reader up-to-date with current issues. It has the advantage over others because it is read not heard or viewed. People have opportunity to learn and re-learn from the content of newspaper and magazines by reading it severally. Therefore, adequate print media utilisation especially in the cultural sector can guarantee or build a conversation of the various forms of culture in an attempt to have a sustainable socio-economic cum cultural development.

In the audio visual media, the highlighted roles of media are prominently present. Television and radio are the major channels of this category. Audio-visual media has rapid potential to advance the quality of image of a particular society. For instance Nwaolikpe (2013, p. 64) confirms the developmental and educational rules of audio-visual media. According to her, "television and radio have been doing good work of promoting Nigerian culture; the radio stations programmes provide information and educate the listeners, gearing them towards the protection of public interest."

In his own view, Onabanjo (2005) opines that "the television is still making a lot of impact on the economic, political, social, cultural and educational advancement of the nation. It has the ability to activate, socialize and even adapt people to their own culture." These roles of audio-visual media are highlighted by their ability to stimulate audience attention to see (still or moving) pictures and listen to the aural aspect of the media contents.

As a result of this, both television and radio, according to Emenyeonu (1992) cited in Sambe (2005), "help to promote heterogeneous cultural groups thereby correcting any misconceptions and building a sense of pride in the citizens. In a similar

thought, Akpan cited in Tsebee (2011, p. 31) asserts that "transmission of social heritage from generation to the next involves shaping values, emotions, traditions, custom, etc. and passing them from one generation to generation." This is equally true as television has the ability and not just to tell people how to think, behave and decide, but also advance such social knowledge. Gerber cited in Tsebee (2011, p.32) is of the opinion that "television among other media has acquired such a central piece in the daily life of people that it's dominated symbolic environment."

Meanwhile, radio technology has more outreach than all other components of media. The reason may not be unconnected to its portability and affordability. In fact, the radio has made such a rapid progress and become a fundamental part of daily life. It is at the centre of most political social and economic activity (Gerber cited in Tsebee, 2011, p.39).

Consequently, media participation in the agenda-setting of a society is productive equally in cultural promotion, preservation, projection and globalization. Whether printed or electronic in nature, media "helps in promoting heterogeneous cultural groups, thereby correcting misconceptions (Dennis cited in Sembe (2005, p.16). It is equally significant in exchanging cultural products among societies in globalisation process. This is supported with the Nigerian example by Ayakoroma (2011, p.13) that "the medium gave adequate expression to the cultures of the diverse people of Nigeria. Radio broadcasting popularised Nigerian languages, exposed the music and culture of Nigeria to the international community." Therefore, the role of media in the society is important and essential to the growth of such society in the propagation of its cultural essence.

The Media, Osun Osogbo Festival and Normative Theory

Dennis Mcquail's Normative Theory (1978) is adopted for this paper. To him, the theory is projected on the belief that the complex of social, political, philosophical principles organize ideals about the relationship between media and society. It seeks to locate media structure and performance in the environment in which they operate. The Normative Theory of the media which explains the expected operation of media under political, economic and cultural circumstances also deals with what ought to be. Mcquail explains the basic principles of the Theory as follows that:

- media should accept that which fulfills certain obligations to society
- these obligations are mainly to be met by setting high or professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance
- media will concern all classes of audience rather than focusing on higher classes in the society
- society and the public have a right to accept high standards of performance and intervention from the media.

The basic principles of the theory serve as our guide as they are employed in the submission as we proceed in the discourse. For example, the major fundamental responsibility of the media in Osogbo community through the Osun Osogbo Festival includes impartation of knowledge, provision of cultural information and serving as platform fortourism and entertainment to the people of Osogbo and even the international world.

The Performance Process of the Festival

The documentation from the National Museum and Monument reveals that Osun Osogbo festival started since 1370 AD, when the people of Osogbo began the celebration of the Osun goddess. The festival has survived the test of time despite the conscious effort made by the Europeans to diminish and rubbish this rich cultural heritage in Nigeria.

In an interview with his Royal Majesty, Oba Jimoh Oyetunji Olanipekun Larooye II, the Ataojo of Osogbo land and festival custodian, on October 7, 2018, we were informed that the festival has a two-week programme of events starting with the

traditional cleansing of the town called *Iwopopo*. *Iwopopo* entails the street parade led by the King to *Popo* area in Osogbo town. It is a traditional City cleansing. He submits further that this is followed by the lighting of the 644 years old 16 point lamp three days later called *Ina oloju-merindinlogun*. Some 4 days later comes the assemblage of all the crowns of past rulers with which the current king will bless the town. This is known as *Iboriade*.

Other events that are usually done on different days of the festival include inter-school football matches, stake-holders presentation forum, Osogbo, PMAN performance day, FTAN (Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria) Osun forum, Osun hospitality workshop, traditional games (Ayo Olopon), arts exhibition, golf competition, Osun marathon walk (State government), Susanne Wenger's sacred colloquium in Osogbo and other social awareness organized in the celebrative mood of Osun Osogbo festival .These are highly covered by the media .

The final day is for the Arugba. This is the day Arugba, who is a young "pure" maiden (i.e. a virgin) carries the big calabash containing the ritual element from the palace to the groove. On getting to the groove, she puts the calabash on the river. It is believed that as soon as Osun gets the sacrifice, the king is prompted and he opens his hands to receive a gift from Osun. It is believed that Osun spits into his hands. This spit is put inside a pot in the shrine. The water is used to cure all diseases throughout the year. The king opening his palms to receive the gift is referred to by the people as *Atewogbeja* (one who uses his hands to receive the fish). This, in a shortened form, became the title of the king: *Ataoja* of Osogbo.

Coverage of Print and Audio Visual Media on the Festival and its Impact on the Populace

Apart from the protection of people's cultural life from increasing modern cultural trends that challenge the material and immaterial aspect of people's lives, media in print and audio-visual have become an attractive medium through which people from far and near can be brought together to share cultural knowledge and create cultural forum towards cultural maintenance. These roles of media are traceable in the celebration of the world-class cultural festival of Osun Osogbo in Osun State. Both print and electronic media function at three distinct levels in the process of Osun Osogbo festival. The levels as conceived in this paper are pre-festival, festival celebration and post production of the annual events in Osogbo. Different roles of print (in all nomenclature) and audio visual (television and radio) media are analysed under the identified levels of Media in Osun Osogbo festival celebration.

The visibility of numerous print Media outlets in the course of Osun Osogbo festival celebration can be said to be one major facilitator in the success of Osun Osogbo festival annually. Magazines and other printed materials add value to the festival celebration in terms of the publicity given to events reported as well as the adaptability of the medium to extend goodwill messages to the grand host, the *Ataoja* of Osogbo.

At the pre-festival level, newspapers and magazines intensify the campaign for the festival celebration by creating awareness in the public domain email after press conference. The press conference is annually held at Eko Airport Hotel with the presence of media outlets. The publication of the briefing and press interaction between the *Ataoja* and the Press serves as a signboard to all and sundry as people are informed about the flag-off of the various events in the festival as well as other side attractions. As reported by Busari (2013, p.19) in *Saturday Newswatch*, the Ataoja uses the press briefing to acknowledge the efforts made by the Press in advancing the image of the festival thus: "the Ataoja expressed his pleasure at the turnout of journalists and also appreciated their support in giving the festival wide publicity" as "the media and corporate world left the place with a vow to be part of the grand finale of the 2013 edition of the annual Osun Osogbo festival."

In another report, *City People Magazines* quote Oba Jimoh Oyetunji Olanipekun Larooye II, the Ataojo of Osogbo, as saying that "our desire here

(press briefing) is to showcase and show the festival in the front burner of the media in Nigeria and the world at large." By implication, print media sensitizes the general public on the nature of the events of the festival. This is to repose certain level of confidence in the mind of the people that the celebration is not as fetish as erroneously believed. To authenticate this, youthful programmes and other social events are sponsored by corporate organisations.

Importantly, the inclusion of corporate organisations who are sponsors of one or two events in the two weeks festival aids the spread of publicity as they advertise their brands and products with the media. For instance, "Thisday Newspaper" on Saturday July 20, 2013, reports that "manufacturers of Seaman's Schnapps have expressed their intention to partner with organizers of Osun Osogbo festival which they said was a strong platform to leverage on the growth of their brand." Other constant business organisations are MTN Nigeria, Nigerian Breweries, Micon Gulf Ada and other cultural bodies.

The primary aim of these bodies is to sell their products at different organised events ;hence the print media assists in keeping people of Osogbo and other tourists abreast of the festival celebration while advertising their products . Also , the publication of a list of socio cultural events by UNESCO in conjunction with INFOGEM Limited equally promotes people ś participation in the festival. The 2018 Osun Osogbo festival programme is divided into two categories: pre-festival events and festival Grand Finale presentation.

Coverage of Audio-Visual Media on the Festival

The development of audio-visual or electronic Media in the process of Osun Osogbo festival has helped to bridge a gap of literacy created by the print media. Many people have access to radio sets and few have access to television; only the literate can read the English language medium of news reporting. But with the audio-visual media's involvement, moving pictures and corresponding voice interlay in the advert usually stimulate audience interest in the festival. In order to achieve wide range audience engineering, running of jingle on radio stations in Osun State, Oyo State, Ogun State, Ondo State, Kwara State and other neighbouring states enhance and improve yearly participation of people especially the Yorubas across the federation and beyond.

The dynamics of styles in the audio-visual jingle production is another factor that ensures crowd participation. For instance, 2015 radio and television jingle takes the conventional means of narratives of adverts. New dimension of 2016 sees to the use of Apala musical genre to announce the festival events. Sociologically, all fans of Apala music (old and young) are easily and effectively reached out to. The usual suspects of the jingle shows and reinforces the spiritual benefits of visiting the groove during celebration. The rolling out of daily programmes on audio-visual also is responsible for the pulling of a large crowd to the grand finale.

This is because authenticity of Osun Osogbo advertisement on radio and television are more acceptable. People will see the usual aids of places in the groove, crowd participation in the festival and this will in turn influence their decision to attend the events. When they cannot, live broadcast of the Osun Osogbo grand finale by OSBC (radio and television) usually afford people at home the opportunity to be psychologically part of the festival celebration.

Another area of impact of audio-visual media is ability to show the festival as a social cultural event that does not discriminate ethnic/religious affiliation. Through the audio visual media, people get to know that the ritual import of the festival has been reduced to a bearable level that everybody without being an initiate can participate in some of the events. For example, the Iwopopo day (cleansing of the town) as well as procession from the palace to the groove can be witnessed irrespective of one's spiritual belief.

As a result, people from all walks of life get to be involved more by watching event clips in the advert.

This is one of the advantages of television and radio as they help to bring more people to the festival. Everybody including those in the villages has access to radio sets. This makes them aware of the festival updates. The television on the other hand increases people's urge because it speaks more on the cultural aspect of the people in the areas of costumes, props and other performance art of the people. Through these the proliferation of traditional religion of Ifa is achieved because people get to know the potency of this religion. For instance, the testimony of worshippers in the festivals through the interview of OSBC (2016) correspondents shows that people gain materially and develop spiritually by accepting to worship Osun.

More so, inclusion and coverage of entertaining programmes such as beauty pageant and musical concerts in the two-week events advance the participation of people in the festival. For instance, in 2016, many music artistes featured in the concerts. Some of them are based in the state while artistes like Abbas Obesere, Pasuma and Saheed Osupa are invited to pull crowd to the festival. Without audio-visual adverts in a press conference where Saheed Osupa and other artistes express their readiness to come many people may not believe if they read about the event alone.

Importantly, during the press interactive session at Eko Hotel, Lagos, the audio visual coverage of the event helps to assure intending participants of certain comfort measures that have been taken by the organising committee as well as the Ataoja's readiness to receive people from all over the world. For instance, the former Director of Dunlop rolls out the measure taken to ensure security of lives and properties during the celebration especially at the Groove. According to him, deploying OPC, ODS, and other members of the Nigerian police force was sealed with all concerned authority and media personnel were to monitor the activities of the security operatives so as to ensure freedom of movement. Also, the coverage of the event demonstrates that UNESCO is engaging all the media outside the Country to popularize the outlined event thereby engineering people from far and near.

Generally, audio media of radio proved far more effective in mass communication compared to print media. It does not require transportation of the messages before its contents can get to the public. Its affordability is equally noteworthy as it enables more people's participation directly or indirectly in the celebration of Osun Osogbo festival. The television outlets equally combined verbal and nonverbal audio and visual content to deliver their message. Viewing the events leaves a more lasting cultural imprint in the minds of the people. This is because whatever people see lasts longer in their memory and can easily influence their beliefs.

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

The deployment of prints and audio-visual media in Osun Osogbo festival has contributed to the yearly increasing audience participation in the festival. Involvement of media consultant INFOGEM Limited in the planning of the festival is another factor that has promoted the contesting Media interest in covering the event. All media organisations both public and private exploit the cultural importance of the festival as they engage in one form of advertisement or the other, the covering of press conference, reporting of various activities of the festival, and extensive use of print Media (newspaper magazine pamphlets and billboard). The corporate and individual sponsorship of various programmes in the festival positively reinforce the impact of media and the development of Osun Osogbo festival.

As a world cultural festival, media's role in the selling or in popularizing the festival to the public glare has become an integral part of the festival celebration. Without the holding of press conference and its adequate report in print and audio-visual media, people's perception about the festival as a ritualistic event may not be changed. This will limit people's turn out. But the media has helped to clarify controversial issues and sensitize the people on the spiritual benefits of the festival

observance. This shows that the festival as accommodating and not discriminate; neither does it require initiation of the participants. As a result, the media has redefined and corrected the erroneous perception of the public about the sacredness of Osun Osogbo festival celebration.

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