ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Digitization and Aesthetics in Television Production: An Analysis of Channels Television Programmes on YouTube and VidMate Platforms

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the key elements of digitization and aesthetics that appear in some selected television programmes of Channels Television Station and how these elements contributed towards redefining the outlook of the television programmes of Channels Television. Content analysis research approach was employed to analyze the content of 20 documented television programmes of Channels Television that were purposively selected on YouTube and VidMate platforms. The study found that the digitization and aesthetics elements such as flexibility programming, animation, framing, screen cuts, sound effects, light effect, etc. have changed the production process and added more value to the programming of Channels Television. At the same time the flexibility programming and digitization equally offer the viewers dual opportunities to either watch the programme online or to save it for future consumption. The study recommends that Channels Television should provide an alternative for making its online programmes available all the time for the audience's consumption. To download the high definition programme contents of Channels Television available on VidMate and YouTube requires more storage capacity. It is also recommended that Channels Television should make the downloading of its quality contents possible using low data and low capacity storage.

Keywords: Digitization, Aesthetics, Diffusion of Innovation, Digital Television

Introduction

Digitization has revolutionized the world of broadcasting. This revolution is manifested by the novel and formidable ways in which information is stored and transmitted in today's television production. According to Endong (2015), television and Radio programmes have for instance developed blogs, Facebook pages and web casting as elongations or complementary forms of classical broadcast exercises. Similarly, music and films which were previously distributed solely on tape or disk and videocassette respectively are now downloaded in bits form (music or film files) on the Internet, bypassing the various recording companies and often violating copyright laws. In the international broadcast industry, this multifaceted revolution has come to be captured by the concept of digitalization which is the transition or shift from the analogue to the digital technology.

Basically, the advantages of the Digital Television (DTV) derive from its high capacity of data transmission. Menezes and Carvalho (2009) posit that digitalization adds more capacity of transmission to terrestrial television, as well as to other television platforms (such as cable and satellite). Such features can be employed in alternative ways; either to transmit more television channels (each one with an individual programming schedule) than in analogue television or to transmit television programming with a high definition resolution. Such facilities leave open the possibility of distinct impacts. Equipment used in high definition content production are more expensive and the additional post-production costs (Menezes & Carvalho, 2009).

The highlight of digitalization of television lies in the connection with aesthetics in its production. This intersection in the use of digitalization and aesthetics to a large extent has created new features that improved programme content. Such features allow offering new TV channels, higher quality image and interactive services, which potentially

would enable new artists participating in the television industry. This is the reason why the introduction of the new technology is seen by many as a window of opportunity to reinforce democratization of communications and plurality of points of view (Galperin, 2003; Bolano & Britto, 2007). Therefore, television producers can take a completed script and imaginatively transform it into exciting sounds and images. Producers creatively organize many facets of production to produce works of art. Hence, this study examines some of the key elements of digitization and aesthetics that appear in some selected television programmes of Channels Television and how these elements contributed towards redefining the outlook of the television programming of Channels Television.

Aims and Objectives

i. To examine the key elements of digitization and aesthetics that appear in some selected television programmes of Channels Television.
ii. To expose how digitization and aesthetics contribute towards redefining the outlook of the television programmes of Channels Television.
iii. To examine the effects of current technological breakthrough on the television production in the Channels Television programming.
iv. To find out whether the digitization and aesthetics elements have changed the compositional principles of the Channels Television production process.

Research Questions

Using content analysis research technique, this study provides answers to the following research questions based on the review of 20 selected video clips of Channels Television station:

i. Do digitization and aesthetics contribute towards redefining the outlook of the television programmes of Channels Television?
ii. In what ways do digitization and aesthetics elements change the compositional principles of Channels Television production process?
iii. To what extent do the digitization and aesthetics contribute towards redefining the outlook of the television programmes of Channels Television?

Review of Concepts:

Digitization

Digitization is a broad term in the media industry. Idachaba (2018) sees digitization as the process of conversion of analog information in any form such as text, photographs, voice, etc. to digital form with suitable electronic devices, such as a scanner or specialized computer chips, so that the information can be processed, stored and transmitted through digital circuits, equipment, and networks. McQuail (2000, p.28) stated that the process of digitization have immense significance to the computing ideals as it allows information of all kinds and in all formats to be carried with the same efficiency and also intermingled. By implication therefore, digitization for the broadcasting media will enhance audio and visual quality. Digitalization is basically altering the old production and distribution of the media content processes. Currently, Internet Protocol (IP) is becoming the standard for television and fast fiber optic networks and 5G that enable the flexibility of mobile consumption of media contents. The digitization initiatives are being joined by new, intelligent recommendation functionalities based on artificial intelligence and analytics to address consumers' needs in a targeted way (Deloitte, n.d).

Aesthetics

Aesthetics or esthetics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of beauty and taste, as well as the philosophy of art (its own area of philosophy that comes out of aesthetics). It examines subjective and sensory-emotional values, or sometimes called judgments of sentiment and taste (Zangwill, 2007). Aesthetics covers both natural and artificial sources of aesthetic experience and judgment. It considers what happens in our minds when we engage with aesthetic objects or environments such as in viewing visual art, listening to music, reading poetry, experiencing a play, exploring nature, and so on. According to Nikos (1999), the study of television aesthetics is the compositional principles pertinent to the television medium in which basic elements of the television picture such as light, colour, framing, space, time, motion, editing, sound, etc. are

examined in relation to the finished product of the television programme. Television production requires more than a mastery of technology and techniques. It is also an artistic process that demands creative thinking and the ability to make sound aesthetic judgments.

Literature Review

Opportunity of Technological Changes in Nigerian Television Industry

The current technological breakthrough of digitalization project in the communication media has been a quantum leap in the production and distribution of mass media messages and its attendant value to the users, viewers and listeners across the globe (Olalere et al., 2013). The traditional media of communication especially television and radio are now becoming more flexible and accessible by the diverse audiences. Krishnan (2013) posits that the advent of the digital technologies has affected not only the production and distribution of tools used by the media but has also benefited audiences or users in particular, as they have become active agents in the communication processes. Olalere et al. (2013) stated that digital technology would enable consumers, especially those in the rural communities, explore the opportunities of quality signals and choice channels numbering up to 100 on their Television sets. Maid (1996) as cited in Oden (2021) asserts that the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized information gathering, processing, storage, retrieval, transmission and making the information available even more widely, rapidly and less expensive than it was before.

Krishnan (2013) states that the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) in partnership with Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) was the first pay television brand in Nigeria to introduce the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) system that relied on terrestrial transmitters, which now upgraded to the latest technology that is called Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB-T2) across the whole country. The technology, which allows subscribers more channels options, up to 70 plus channels, is actually designed to prepare the subscribers in Nigeria for the digitalization era. In addition to providing the subscribers more channel options through this new technology, the product has equally paved a way for other local television stations to join in the digitalization process on its platform. For instance, some of the local stations already on the channel include Galaxy Television, Silverbird, NTA, Channels Television, Lagos Television (LTV), Kwara Television, and EWTN, to mention but a few. The development of the digital television was enabled by the advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Digital data, text, voice and visual contents can be compressed to occupy less storage space and transmission capacity. This vindicated some of the benefits derived from the current digitization, including the capacity of data transmission and relative reduction of operational costs of storage, content-editing and transmission (Olalere et al., 2013). According to Endong (2015) the digitalization adds more capacity of transmission to terrestrial television, as well as to other television platforms like cable and satellite television. Such feature can be employed in alternative ways: either to transmit more television channels with an individual programming schedule as in analogue television or to transmit television programming with a high definition resolution. As such the current technological breakthrough as posited by Mansell (2004) brings different alternative to new products and services that are often mutually exclusive. A consumer now has an alternative to select from different varieties of programmes of his or her choice. This pre-determination is reinforced by the power of digitization process.

Similarly, another advantage offered by the current digitization breakthrough to Nigerian television is an expansion of television programming which resulted from the elimination of technological barriers and emergence of audience fragmentation that started decades ago with a greater supply of television channels provided by cable and satellite platforms (Olalere et al., 2013). Todreas (1999) also asserts that the current digitalization provided availability for new

channels with latest features that intensify faster and gainful transmission activities in the television value chain, especially to the production of content in addition to the expansion in the amount of information being transmitted and makes the convergence of television possible with other communications networks. Currently Channels Television produces a variety of programmes with attractive features and outlook that allow the audiences to choose the desired way of content consumption via the use of the available social media such as facebook, YouTube and Vidmate. With a Smartphone and internet facilities that eliminate boundaries between services and network, an individual can now watch Channel Television programmes available on social media platforms with new artistic features offered by digitization (Preston, 2001).

Digitization and Aesthetics in Television Production

According to Nikos (1999), the field of television aesthetics, like the similar fields of aesthetics in painting, photography, and generally, the arts, emanated from the field of criticism. The description, interpretation and evaluation of television programmes by various television commentators, observers and critics generated the need to examine the critical statements more thoroughly and to relate them to the medium of television.

Digitization and aesthetics in television production entail that the energy of the producer is aimed at melding the voice, music, and sound effects all into a coherent whole matching the meaning of the script. Directing a sound production involves fewer people, less equipment, and, even with digital operations, far less complex operations than a visual production. Musburger and Kindem (2009) posit that using aesthetics a producer may concentrate on a sound production including radio drama, commercial, or documentary as director of a soundtrack for a visual production or as a director of a music recording. In those cases, the duties are similar to those of a visual director. More so, the effort of the director is aimed at improving the voice, music, and sound effects logically to match the meaning of the script. Directing a sound production involves fewer people, less equipment, and, even with digital operations, far less complex operations than a visual production. In some cases, the term "producer" is substituted for "director" in sound productions, as many of the responsibilities of both directing and producing are combined under one person (Musburger & Kindem, 2009).

As with sound, multimedia, interactive, and animation productions, directors often accept multilevel responsibilities in addition to their primary functions as directors. The multichannel nature of these productions requires a different mental ability requiring concentration on more than the one aspect of simultaneous action and movement. Multiple directors in such productions often fulfill the multichannel responsibilities, as is often the case in feature length animated films and complex games.

Theoretical Framework:
Diffusion of Innovations theory

The diffusion of innovations theory was proposed by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet in 1944. This theory traces the process by which the new idea or practice is communicated to the people through certain channels over a period of time. It attempts to explain the variables that influence how and why users adopt a new information medium (Asemah, 2011, p.162). According to Kaye and Medoff (2001, p.340), diffusion of innovation is an area of study which includes evaluating how information about the processes and technologies is communicated, evaluated and adopted (or not adopted). Rogers (1995, p.127) sees the innovation decision as a mental process which an individual, or other unit, making decision, passes, and the process consists of five stages as follows: awareness stage, interest stage, evaluation stage, trial stage and adoption Stage.

i. Awareness: At this stage, people are aware that innovation exists but they do not know much about the inner working of the innovation. They lack proper information about the innovation; therefore they seek information about the innovations.

ii. Interest: Once the individual becomes aware of the innovation he becomes interested in the innovation and seeks more information about it.
iii. Evaluation: An interested individual runs a mental assessment of the benefit that will come from the innovation.
iv. Trial: Here the individual acquires and uses the innovation. Personal experience is important as the individual uses the innovation. This determines whether the individual will recommend it to other potential adopter or discredit it.
v. Adoption: Based on personal experience during the trial, the individual decide whether to accept the innovation and use it continuously. If a negative decision is made, the decision may be reversed at this point.

The main thrust of the diffusion of innovation theory is how the new ideas and discoveries spread to members of a social system. It is a theory that explains how innovations are introduced and adopted by various communities. Diffusion of innovations theory predicts that the media, as well as interpersonal contacts, provide information and influence opinion, and judgment. Opinion leaders exert influence on audience behavior, through their personal contacts, but additional intermediaries called change agents and gate keepers are also included in the process of diffusion. Daramola (2003, p. 86) sees diffusion of innovations theory as a theory that seeks to disseminate information about new discoveries within the social system. The Diffusion of innovation theory as contended by Asemah (2011:p164) suggests that people can decide to watch or listen to different media programme and adapt to new innovation in good time while others will do otherwise.

Methodology

We used content analysis research technique to collect and analyze some documented television programmes of Channel Television Station available on YouTube and VidMate platforms. Content analysis is an approach to quantify qualitative information by systematically sorting and comparing items of that information in order to summarize them. Such information could be from interviews, open-ended survey, documents, video, etc. (GAO, 2013). The population of this study is composed of the Channel Television documented programmes available on YouTube and VidMate. Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.161), as cited in Dango and Umar (2020, p113), emphasize that a topic area and study period are the key factors that determine a decision taken by a researcher in obtaining a manageable and control population size (sample) in the analysis of any media content. Having this proposition in mind, we purposively selected Twenty Channels Television's programmes available on YouTube and VidMate platforms as our study sample. The areas of consideration in our analysis include the basic elements of the television aesthetics and digitization that add more effect and value to a production such as framing, screen cuts, sound effects, lighting effects, visual effect, scene change technique and any other elements that can assist for making digitization and aesthetic judgments. To this end we watched all the 20 selected programmes and coded the above mentioned elements found in our coding sheets.

Data Presentation and Discussion

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected from YouTube and VidMate platforms. A total of 20 programmes of Channel Television were purposively selected and analyzed based on some identified elements of digitization and aesthetics found on the video clips. The results obtained were presented and discussed in tabular form using simple percentage. Below are the data presented and analyzed.

Table 1: Channels Television programmes analyzed in YouTube and VidMate Platforms

	YouTube			VidMate	
S/No	Video clips/programmes	Duration	S/No	Video clips/ programmes	Duration
1	Human Trafficking: News review: 6/08/2021	4:59	1	Sunday Politics: Aug. 08, 2021	51:52
2	Newspaper Review: Nigeria basic challenges: 08/10/2021	18:26	2	On-On-One with Gov. Wike: Aug. 10, 2021	28:29
3	Dateline Abuja: July 31, 2021	24:27	3	Sport this morning: Aug. 12, 2021	49:48
4	Police corporal, other paraded in Ondo…: January 21,2021	7:43	4	Politics Today: Aug. 09, 2021	52:59
5	Tension as Nnamdi Kanu's trial resume in Abuja: July 23	7:29	5	Politics Today: July 22, 2021	53:02
6	Diplomatic Relations: FG to review relationship with Indonesia: Aug. 10, 2021	2:13	6	Sunrise Daily: Aug. 09, 2021	115:46
7	News at 10: Aug. 07, 2021	54:22	7	News Night: Security Challenges: Aug. 09, 2021	47:49
8	Sunday Politics: Aug. 08, 2021	51:53	8	News at 10: Aug. 11, 2021	47:55
9	Politics Today: Armed Herds- men crisis: Febr. 22, 2021	24:52	9	News at 10: Aug. 09, 2021	48:50
10	The Morning Show: South East Insecurity Crisis: June 03, 2021	50:41	10	Politics Today: Imo Politics: May 07, 2021	24:53

Table 2: Types of shots in the 20 selected programmes

Elements	You Tube Programmes	VidMate Programmes	Total	%
Long shots	3	4	7	35%
Medium shots	6	6	12	60%
Close-up shots	1	0	1	5%
Extreme Close-up shots	0	0	0	0%
Total	10	10	20	100%

Table 3: Special effects in the selected programmes

Special Effects	You Tube Programmes	VidMate Programmes	Total	%
Defocus effect	1	0	3	30%
Freeze frame	2	1	1	10%
Zoom in and out	1	1	2	20%
Slow motion	2	2	4	40%
Total	7	4	10	100%

The data in table 2 above indicates that the medium shots dominated all the selected programmes of Channels Television with 60% followed by long shots with 35% and close-up shots with 5%. The data clearly shows that the Channel Television prefers the medium shot than any other shots in their programmes.

Table three above shows that the special effects appeared in some of the Channels Television programmes include slow motion effect with 40%, freeze frame carries 30%, zoom in and out has 20% and defocus effect comes last with 10%. All the special effects used in the selected programmes have added an exceptional beauty to the programmes and made the motion pictures more natural. For instance freeze frames were occasionally used in some Channels Television programmes to create a special effect by stopping the perceived movement of an object or moving image and effectively converting it to still shot for more emphasis. Although a slow motion effect is widely used in motion picture for the dramatic effects, Channels Television uses it occasionally to capture a frame rate of the camera.

Table 4: Visual Framing in the Programmes

Framing	You Tube Programmes	VidMate Programmes	Total	%
Asymmetry direction	0	0	0	0%
Horizontal direction	10	10	20	100%
Vertical direction	0	0	0	0%
Total	10	10	20	100%

Table 5: Scene change/transitions techniques in the selected programmes

Techniques	You Tube Programmes	VidMat Programmes	Total	%
Dissolve	0	0	0	0%
Fade	0	0	0	0%
Wipe	1	0	1	5%
Cut	9	10	19	95%
Total	10	10	20	100%

Table four (4) shows that the horizontal directional frames dominated the visual framing at the beginning of all the 20 selected video clips representing 100%. All the selected programmes of Channels Television carry a simple and beautiful layout including news tickers that often run horizontally on the television screen.

The data in table five (5) above show that, the cut transition technique is widely used in the majority of Channels Television programs. The data indicate that 'cut transitions' dominated the 20 selected programmes with 95% while wipe transition has only 5%, as it appeared only once at the end of the first scene of news at 10 (Vidmate 11/08/2021). This is a clear indication that Channels Television employs the use of simple cut technique to show the transition from one scene to another.

Summary of Findings

This study examined the elements of digitization and aesthetics found in some selected television programmes of Channels Television Station. The findings of the study answered these research questions: in what ways do the digitization and aesthetics elements change the compositional principles of Channels Television production process and how do digitization and aesthetics contribute towards redefining the outlook of the programmes of Channels Television? The study found that elements of digitization and aesthetics contributed towards redefining the outlook of the television programmes of Channels Television. The study's findings indicate that the Channels Television prefers the medium shot than any other shots to tell a story; the programmes of Channels

Television also carry a simple and beautiful layout including news tickers that often run horizontally on the television screen. The findings equally show that Channels Television employs the use of simple cut technique to show the transition from one scene to another. The result also shows that the special effects that appeared in some of the Channels Television programmes include slow motion effect, freeze frame, zoom in and out and defocus effect. All the special effects used in the selected programmes have added an exceptional beauty to the programmes and made the motion pictures more natural and attractive.

Conclusion

The digitization and aesthetics elements offer the television producers of various programmes opportunities to decide what types of pictures should be used to tell the story already scripted by considering the choices available at their disposal. Channels Television used digitization and aesthetics in the production of various programmes to visualize their programmes and to make them lively and attractive. The visualization process as indicated in the findings encompasses the manipulation and control of special and visual effects. The special effects that appeared in some of Channels Television programmes include slow motion effect, freeze frame, zoom in and out and defocus effect. The visual effect also has to do with understanding of specific types of shots, camera-to-subject distance, camera angle, camera movement and shot duration. All these special and visual effects make the television programmes more attractive.

Recommendations

1. Channels Television should make their live programmes available online for the audience's consumption.
2. Channels television should make the downloading of its quality contents possible using low capacity storage.
3. Channels Television should also provide a platform attached to their online programming that will enable viewers to instantly send a feedback directly to them. This no doubt would go a long way in enhancing a two-way communication between Channels Television and its online audience.
4. Broadcasting Stations in Nigeria should incorporate digitisation and aesthetics in their broadcast programmes and production to enhance content quality and station's rating.

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