EFFECTS OF MODERN MEDIA TOWARDS PRESERVATION OF AFRICAN MORAL VALUES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

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Abstract

This paper delved into the effects of modern media on the preservation of traditional African moral values and economic development in Ghana. The paper is purely qualitative and relied mainly on related literature. Content and thematic analyses were employed. It was revealed that radio and television, especially in African contexts, serve as medium for passing down cultural norms, values, and practices. By showcasing traditional music, storytelling, and other cultural elements, media platforms contribute to maintaining a sense of continuity in cultural identity. The ability to convey perceptions, hopes, and dreams unrestricted on these platforms enables Africans to actively participate in shaping their cultural narrative. It was revealed that increased media consumption correlates with a rise in support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and More (LGBTQIA+) rights in Africa. Also, media can be used as a tool for exacerbating hate speech and propaganda. Media literacy programmes and public awareness campaigns can educate citizens about media's influence and encourage critical thinking. Education systems should integrate cultural education highlighting traditional values, history, and practices into the academic curriculum. Academic institutions should invest in research to continuously monitor media's impact on cultural values and economic development.

Keywords: media effects, traditional, moral values, economic development

Introduction

In our modern era of globalisation, the media have become a powerful tool that surpasses physical borders, facilitating the flow of ideas, information, and cultural manifestations around the globe (Appadurai, 1996). The global distribution of media content exposes individuals in African nations to a wide range of cultural norms, values, and practises (Castells, 2010). The global media ecosystem comprises a diverse range of content, spanning from entertainment to news, and frequently presents opportunities to either challenge or reaffirm conventional African values (Obadare, 2016).

The phenomenon of globalisation, characterised by the interconnectedness and exchange of ideas, goods, and services on a worldwide scale, has resulted in the dissemination of cultural norms and value systems. The impact of global media on moral values and cultural practices is notably observable in the dissemination of Western ideology and consumerism, which can potentially conflict with or alter traditional African norms (Udoh, 2011; Makwanya, 2017). The pervasive exposure to foreign cultural norms, often promoted through global media conglomerates, can undermine traditional African values

rooted in communalism, family ties, and collectivism (Nnaemeka, 2004). As media content floods African screens and digital devices, indigenous moral codes may be overshadowed by individualistic and consumer-driven narratives, challenging the preservation of culturally distinctive ethics. According to Pieterse (1995), globalisation, characterized by the flow of information, goods, and ideas across borders, has brought about a collision of cultures and values. This process has the potential to exert an influence on the moral attitudes observed in various African nations (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). The phenomenon of globalisation, in addition to facilitating economic integration, has also brought about external influences that has the potential to pose challenges to established moral frameworks (Nkrumah, 1965). The impact of this on moral ideals can have consequences for social cohesiveness, ethical corporate practices and governance, ultimately affecting economic growth (Llewellyn, 2003).

African communities exhibit a diverse range of cultural elements, which are influenced by historical factors, language diversity, and religious practices (Diawara, 1992). According to Moyo (2011), the influence of contemporary media on cultural landscapes is a constantly evolving and impactful phenomenon. The introduction of various forms of media content, such as films, music, and internet platforms, has resulted in the emergence of novel narratives and worldviews that exist alongside established traditional values and practices (Mwesige, 2015). African youth, who frequently take the lead in media consumption, interact with a wide range of cultural influences that present them with opportunities to navigate and redefine their identities within their respective cultural environments (Okome, 2007).

The impact of modern media on moral ideals and cultural practices in sub-Saharan Africa is subject to variation depending on socio-economic conditions, rates of urbanisation, and levels of technical accessibility (Hamelink, 2004). According to Abdul-Mumin (2017), urban areas exhibit a greater likelihood of being exposed to global media content, which may result in the assimilation of novel values and behaviours. Mbembe's work (2020), focused on the concept of "mediacity" in African urban contexts. He argued that urban spaces are increasingly shaped by media technologies, leading to the blurring of boundaries between physical and digital realities. This transformation impacts cultural interactions, identities, and moral norms. Mbembe's exploration of mediacity provides a lens through which to understand how media-driven changes in urban environments can impact cultural preservation and economic trajectories. The expeditious rate of urbanisation and social transformation has resulted in alterations in societal standards, which may potentially contribute to the gradual decline of conventional moral principles (Mbiti, 1970).

Conversely, rural communities tend to maintain stronger connections to conventional norms. The convergence of global and local factors gives rise to debates over the safeguarding of cultural assets and the conflicts between modernity and traditional practices (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). The decline of moral principles in sub-Saharan Africa can have diverse impacts on different countries, influenced by historical, cultural, and socio-economic variables (Nugent, 2004). Inadequate governance frameworks and instances of corruption, frequently linked to ethical deterioration, have the potential to erode the effectiveness of institutions and impede the progress of economic development (Moss et al., 2006). Furthermore, the erosion of moral principles might potentially result in diminished levels of public engagement, weakened social safety nets, and restricted community collaboration, all of which play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable development (Bazzi & Gaduh, 2014).

African communities exhibit a notable abundance of cultural diversity and legacy, wherein moral principles are frequently intertwined with customary practices and religious convictions (Wiredu, 2002). The degradation of moral values in African nations can be observed through multiple manifestations, including a decrease in social trust, prevalence of corruption, and a weakening of community bonds (Gyekye, 1997). The aforementioned alterations possess the potential to impact economic development through their influence on the investment climate, entrepreneurship, and social capital (Banerjee & Duflo, 2000).

In recent years, the media landscape has undergone a profound transformation, becoming a pervasive force that influences societal norms and values across the globe. The emergence of modern media platforms such as television, radio, and the internet has brought about a significant transformation in the global distribution of information. This evolution has raised concerns in various academic circles, particularly in the context of African cultures, where traditional values and moralities have long been a cornerstone of social cohesion and development. There have been expressed worries over the potential effects of this phenomenon on the maintenance of moral values within African civilizations. African

cultures, encompassing norms, taboos, and belief systems, teach morals and contribute significantly to the shaping of diverse societies and communities. The preservation of these cultural facets is essential, as it safeguards the richness and diversity inherent in these cultural heritages. This preservation is a crucial endeavour aimed at fostering the desired development for future generations. The media, including various forms such as television, radio, film, and digital platforms, plays a crucial role in either aiding or hindering this preservation process (Smith, 2017).

Some scholars argue that the modern media, with its often Western-centric content and value systems, pose a threat to the preservation of African cultural values and moralities, subsequently hindering economic growth and development (Richstand & Anderson, 1981; Uwaezuoke, 2010; Adesina, 2012; Daramola & Oyinade, 2015; Ajakah, 2021). Other scholars also argue that modern media have positive impact on the preservation of morality and economic development of African countries (Moemeka, 1991; Singhal et al., 2004; Egbule et al., 2015; Asamoah & Boamah, 2017; Amofa, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2019).

The relationship between media influence, cultural values, and economic development in African societies is complex. Contemporary media, including television, film, and the internet or social media, has a wide-reaching impact on African cultural values. The prevalence of Western-centric content can potentially challenge traditional norms and moralities. For instance, the portrayal of individualism and consumerism in Western media may clash with the communal values deeply rooted in many African societies. Such cultural dissonance can lead to generational conflicts and a dilution of indigenous cultural practices (Smith, 2017). Modern media content often promotes materialism, individualism, and consumerism as desirable, potentially clashing with the communal and collectivist values that have long been central to African cultures (Nwabueze, 2018). This clash can lead to a gradual erosion of moral frameworks, as exposure to modern media content that contradicts or undermines traditional values can influence individuals' perceptions and attitudes (Adibe, 2017).

What is more, the rapid dissemination of information through media platforms can expose African communities to diverse worldviews, challenging existing beliefs and practices. This can lead to a tension between preserving cultural heritage and embracing new ideas, potentially impacting social cohesion (Oyedemi, 2019). Traditional African societies prioritize communal values, where the collective well-being is emphasized over individual aspirations. However, media narratives often promote individualism, materialism, and personal success. Mudhai and Tettey (2018), note that exposure to such narratives can challenge the communal fabric of African cultures. This shift towards individualism can disrupt social cohesion and potentially hinder collaborative efforts needed for economic growth and development.

The spread of foreign values and ideologies, often propagated by media, can erode the fabric of African societies and disrupt established value systems. The potential erosion of traditional cultural values due to media influence might hinder economic development (Wahab et al., 2012). Social cohesion and shared values are often crucial for fostering trust, cooperation, and stable institutions, which are vital components of sustainable economic progress (Gyekye, 1997). The erosion of cultural values may lead to societal fragmentation or division, hampering collective efforts towards development. The possible ramifications for economic growth and development arise from the degradation of moral values in African countries (Wahab et al., 2012).

However, exposure to diverse perspectives through modern media can stimulate creativity and innovation, potentially driving economic growth. The access to information and knowledge sharing facilitated by media platforms can empower individuals and communities to explore entrepreneurial opportunities and engage in global markets (Chijioke, 2020). The media plays a crucial role in the preservation of culture across the globe by serving as a platform for cultural dissemination, documentation, and exchange (Ginsburg et al., 2002). The media acts as a repository of cultural knowledge, documenting traditions and customs for future generations (Ginsburg et al., 2002). Documentaries, articles, and online platforms dedicated to cultural preservation provide valuable resources for the long-term safeguarding of cultural heritage. These platforms capture the essence of cultures and ensure that their unique practices are not lost over time (Ginsburg et al., 2002).

Through various forms of media, cultural events and practices are broadcasted to a global audience, contributing to the safeguarding of cultural heritage (Hjarvard, 2008). Mudhai and Tettey (2018), emphasize the role of local media in preserving and promoting cultural values. They suggest that African media outlets can counterbalance external influences by producing content that reflects

indigenous perspectives and values. Such efforts contribute to cultural empowerment, which, in turn, can have positive implications for economic development by fostering a sense of identity and community cohesion. Television networks, for instance, broadcast traditional ceremonies and performances, enabling people worldwide to experience and appreciate diverse cultural expressions (Anderson, 1991).

From a cultural preservation perspective, the media serves as a conduit for the transmission of cultural values, traditions, and practices across generations (Hjarvard, 2008). By documenting and disseminating cultural expressions through various platforms, including television, radio, and digital media, the media plays a vital role in ensuring that cultural knowledge and practices are not lost over time (Ginsburg et al., 2002). According to Scolari (2018), media platforms, particularly digital media, can facilitate the preservation and dissemination of cultural practices and traditions. Online platforms allow communities to share their cultural expressions, stories, and customs with a global audience. Appiah (2006), stresses the complex nature of media's impact on cultural values, challenging the notion of a unidirectional erosion of local traditions. Instead, he suggests that media exposure can foster a cosmopolitan worldview, wherein individuals engage with diverse perspectives while retaining core cultural tenets. Applying this insight to Ghana, where traditional values hold significant importance, it becomes apparent that media's influence can entail a dynamic negotiation between external ideals and indigenous norms.

Modern media presents both opportunity for advancement and obstacles in maintaining cultural and moral values. In order to implement policies that promote sustainable development and moral behaviour, it is crucial to possess a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between modern media, moral principles and economic development.

The aim of this paper is to critically analyse the assertion that contemporary media poses a significant challenge to the preservation of moral values within African cultures, specifically exploring the interplay or relationship between modern media, cultural values, and economic development in Ghana.

Research Objectives

Research objectives of the study are to:
1. To assess the impact of modern media on the preservation of cultural values in Ghanaian cultures.
2. To examine the potential correlations between changes in cultural values propagated by modern media and economic growth trends in Ghanaian society.

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspective/ Framework

According to Vithal and Jansen (2019), theoretical framework is a well-developed, coherent explanation of an event/phenomenon. Theories assist in interpreting and understanding events in the world. Similarly, the purpose of a theory is to provide tools for the interpretation of collected data, prevent the fragmentation of knowledge by ordering, giving the inquiry a focus, and providing theoretical explanations and deeper understanding of what is being investigated.

This paper is underpinned on the theory of Cultural Imperialism, Cultural Globalization, Dependency and Social Learning theories to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between media, cultural values, and economic development in African societies.

Cultural Imperialism Theory

The theory of Cultural Imperialism was proposed by Schiller in 1976. This theory helps in understanding how foreign media affects the Third World or African cultural values and identity. The theory posits that humans do not have the free will to choose how they feel, act, think, and live. They react to what they see on television or media because there is nothing else to compare it to besides their own lives, usually portrayed as less than what it should be. The Cultural Imperialism theory posits that dominant Western media content can overshadow local cultural narratives and values, leading to

cultural homogenization. As Schiller (1976), suggests, the media can be used as a tool to spread the cultural values and practices of powerful countries, leading to the erosion of local cultures. According to Daramola and Oyinade (2015), the importation of media contents and programmes to developing nations from Western nations could be seen as cultural imperialism as well as acculturation.

Cultural Globalisation Theory

The theory of Cultural Globalisation proposed by Arjun Appadurai, an Indian-American anthropologist, is outlined in his book, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (1996). Appadurai's theory focuses on the complex interactions between cultural flows, global processes, and local contexts. One of the key aspects of his theory is the role of media in shaping and mediating these processes. Appadurai argues that the media plays a significant role in the contemporary world by facilitating the movement of cultural ideas, images, and symbols across national borders. Appadurai's theory highlights the dynamic interplay between media, culture, and globalisation, emphasizing the role of media in mediating cultural interactions and influencing the ways in which people perceive, consume, and engage with global cultural trends. The globalisation of media has resulted in the increased circulation of foreign media content, particularly in developing countries (Karim, 2018). Cultural globalisation has created unparalleled inequity throughout Africa, affected the behaviour of people in numerous ways, and forced many people to assume a lifestyle of self-interest, selfishness, individualism and made people to develop a psychopathic devotion and appetite for foreign films, foreign goods, foods, foreign way of life, foreign music, attitude and behaviour which has always been foreign to African community (Daramola & Oyinade, 2015).

The theory of globalisation is also important to this paper, as it highlights the blurring of cultural boundaries and the emergence of a new global society. According to Castells (1996-1998), globalization is driven by technological advancements, which have facilitated the spread of global cultural norms, challenging traditional cultural practices.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1986), Social Learning theory posits that, people learn behaviours, emotional reactions, and attitudes from role models whom they wish to emulate. The theory suggests that much learning takes place through observing the behaviour of others. The social learning theory has a general application to socializing effects of media and the adoption of various models of action as it applies to many everyday matters such as clothing, appearance, style of eating and drinking, modes of interaction and personal consumption. This theory is important to this paper, as it highlights the socialisation role of media in society.

Review of Related Literature

African Moral Values/Morality

It is important to establish that morality is perhaps difficult to define because of the religious and cultural dimensions. Nevertheless, the complexity in articulating this concept does not diminish or eliminate its existence. "The fact that there is no obvious way to define ordinary moral terminology in a precise way does not show that there is anything wrong with that terminology" (Harman, 1977, p. 20). The fact that philosophers, academics, and participants in various forums within our societies deem it a topic worthy of discussion underscores its relevance and significance to our societal structure and existence. Nonetheless, it becomes imperative to offer certain operational definitions.

Morality is a cultural perception of what is right and wrong and that which constitutes an absolute reference for character and behaviour (Van der Walt, 2003). The concept of morality is culturally, socially and religiously based. Hence, what is considered moral in one culture could be immoral in another. What is right in one religion could be wrong in another. Morality is subjective. To capture this, Gert and Gert (2017), provide a typology of morality, which they described as four aspects of morality (religious morality, morality and nature, individual morality, and social morality). The religious

morality is described as the moral prescriptions and expectations derived from the relationship of humans with a supernatural being and predicated on religion (Mbiti, 1975). Morality and nature refer to the sense of morality that is predicated on how humans act towards natural elements. Individual morality is a higher sense of right and wrong that an individual imposes on himself outside religious, social and natural expectations. Social morality is described as the sense of right and wrong in behavioural expectations in the relationship between an individual and others in the society. Gert and Gert (2017) further describe social morality as the most important aspect of moral discourse because it covers all of the other aspects of morality and can be found in any social interaction. Generally, moral codes are like the glue that binds a society (Mawere, 2011). Without moral codes and expectations, a society is likely to degenerate into another animal kingdom (Kammer, 1988).

In the African context, morality refers to value systems commonly shared among African cultures. These values are related to the principles of African traditional religion and philosophy (Abimbola, 2001). African morality is rooted in the customary rituals, cultural norms, and religious beliefs of Africans, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Van der Walt (2003), traditional African communities possess a collective set of moral values that played a crucial role in uniting ancient societies. In West African traditions, morality finds its basis in religion, as the philosophical and practical aspects of morality are often intertwined with the religious customs prevalent in the majority of African cultures. Therefore, one can comfortably posit that traditional African religion dictates the moral attitude practiced by individuals in the society. This means that African morality flows out of religion, and through this the conduct of individuals is regulated; any break of the moral code is regarded as evil and punishable (Ogugua & Asike, 2015).

Traditional customs laid down the code of law which established the nature of right-doings and established punishments and restrictions for offenders. Moral sanctions were mainly religious and metaphysical in nature and were truly effective (Van der Walt, 2003). Gyekye (2011), argued that African moral expectations are independent of religion. Gyekye (2011), argues that no traditional African religion has been determined to be a 'revealed religion', in which God directly handed spiritual instructions in an encounter to its founder(s) as obtainable in Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The argument here is that for the revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, moral instructions are taken as divine instructions that cannot be questioned or disobeyed for the fear of divine retribution.

Conversely, for the African society, moral codes and expectations are primarily linked with the people's 'moral insights'. Hence, African morality emerges from a focus on human well-being and interests, rather than being dictated by divine declarations (Gyekye, 2011). However, it is impossible to completely separate African morality from religion. As religious or spiritual personalities—as the case may be—become more respected in the society, they tend to use religion as a greater tool for moral sanctions, seeing that the African societies have become increasingly religious (Okpara, 2019).

In African traditional society, ethical principles are grounded in the belief that individuals are inherently interconnected. African ethics revolves around communal living, where the society is unified as a cohesive entity. African Traditional Societies emphasize on a collective identity, rejecting individualistic. In African Traditional Society, there is no 'me' but 'us' and no 'my' but 'ours". It is within these perspective and context of no 'me' but 'us' and no 'my' but 'ours' that in a given African traditional society that African ethics has been formulated (Mbiti, 1970, p. 25). African moral values are often guided by principles that emphasize respect, harmony, and reciprocity. Respect for elders, ancestors, and community members is a foundational value that reflects the importance of maintaining social cohesion and continuity (Mbiti, 1970). According to Opoku (1978), society is a network of interrelationships where each person plays a role in promoting the well-being and stability of the community. The ethical framework emphasizes contributing positively to communal welfare while avoiding actions that could disrupt or harm the community's harmony. Morality in Africa is seen as synthesis of social values, norms, mores, and their authenticity in community from which they arise (Goodman, 2006). Wiredu (2002), defined African ethics as the observance of rules for the harmonious adjustment of the interest of the individual to those of others in society. It covers the entire range of human behaviour that is evolved with our relationship with oneself, other people and with other worlds as well. Gyekye (1997), outlines that African traditional ethics carries a dual meaning. Firstly, it refers to a set of social rules, values, and norms that guide the way of conduct of the people in a society. Secondly, it refers to the attitude and responses to such norms and rules embedded in the society and aiming at directing the way of life as bad or good in order to live the communal and harmonious life.

The rationale for moral rules is then to ensure the harmonious co-existence of members of the society through the systematic adjustment of their discordant interest (Wiredu, 2002).

The Impact of Media on Ghanaian Culture and Economic Development

African culture is rapidly undergoing a rudimentary phase of cultural revolution. Indeed, this revolution is both positive and negative. The positive aspect emerges from the necessary reconsideration of cultural practices that once held unquestionable significance. These practices were founded on irrational worldviews and outdated customs and practices that constitute a bane to the development of the population in the region and are fast becoming unattractive and actually phasing out. This transformation owes itself to historical encounters with the Western world during colonial eras, the media and ongoing forces of globalisation. This process has, in fact, ushered in a cultural revitalisation (Guanah et al., 2017).

Conversely, the negative aspect of this transformation is the swift erosion of deeply rooted and cherished traditions, leading them towards the brink of extinction. As aptly expressed by Uwaezuoke (2010, p. 5), "If in this so-called global integration (globalisation) we lose what defines us, then we are lost as a people and as a continent. It is already happening and has generated with it a crisis of identity amongst Africans and Nigerians in general".

In the process of international exchanges, there is an interaction of cultures and thus, a borrowing and diffusion of cultures amongst nations. This is in itself not unusual. But unusual and unfortunate is the domination of one culture over the other. This is an evil, an evil of forced acculturation (Ekwuru, 1999). This phenomenon finds relevance in the context of globalization, which has sparked considerable debate due to the emergence of a global culture where Western lifestyles are being embraced as the standard way of living (Uwaezuoke, 2010).

However, in the evaluation of the impact of media on African cultures and economic development, many scholars, researchers, opinion leaders, political analysts, among others, have expressed divergent and dissenting views. While some argue that it is all positive, some believe that it has nothing but negative impacts. Yet others see it as being both positive and negative (Kwame, 2007; Gbambu et al., 2022).

Positive Effects of Media on Ghanaian Cultures and Economic Development

Generally, the role of the mass media is to educate, entertain and enlighten people, this is called 3 Es in the information industry. The mass media are the indispensable means through which citizens of any country learn cultural values. In their watchdog role, the mass media can play an important role in promoting and watching (preserving) African cultural values.

Since culture is learned, there must be an avenue through which the younger generation can get information concerning their culture. Through the media (especially radio and television) music/songs which reflects the way of life of the African people is highly displayed in order to create awareness to the younger generation and even generation unborn about the kind of music that exists in their traditional environment. Also, the mass media through televised and recorded programmes act as a reservoir of cultural heritage from generation to generation. Since culture is taught in schools (formalised classroom setting) the people in the community who are outside the schools must benefit from it. Hence, the need for an alternative agent of socialisation (mass media) becomes imperative (Egbule et al., 2015). Moemeka (1991, p. 12), in shedding light on socialisation as a function of the mass media, states that: "the mass media help to unite society and increase social cohesion by upholding and teaching a broad base of common social norms, values and collective experiences… the mass media help transmit culture and social norms from generation to generation… education comprises intellectual development, acquisition of skills and capabilities and formation of character".

The Role of the Media in Economic Development

The media play a multifaceted role. It acts as an information disseminator, providing valuable knowledge about markets, investment opportunities, and business practices (Hjarvard, 2008). Through

news reports, business programmes, and online platforms, the media facilitate informed decision-making among entrepreneurs and investors, thus contributing to economic progress. The modern media promote economic development by providing economic information to the citizenry and enabling them to make better informed choices on economic matters (Graves, 2007; Tuurosong & Kendie, 2014; Yinimi et al., 2016).

The media's role in cultural preservation and economic growth and development is of global significance, as it contributes to both the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the stimulation of economic progress (Tomlinson, 2015). Media particularly radio and television has a significant impact on shaping cultural values by promoting cultural practices and reinforcing cultural beliefs (Singhal et al., 2004). They are the primary sources of information and entertainment in many parts of the world and, as such, have a considerable influence on the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of people. One way in which radio and television shape cultural values is by promoting cultural practices, as seen in the case of Kenya's Kameme FM, which was established to promote Kikuyu culture (Muendo, 2017). Also, some Ghanaian media have been credited for promoting the country's cultural heritage and values, with some media outlets featuring traditional music, storytelling, and educational programming (Asamoah & Boamah, 2017; Amofa, 2019). For instance, Ghanaian soap operas ("Suncity," "Efie Wura," and "Ultimate Paradise) have been praised for showcasing local culture and values (Amofa, 2019, p. 12).

Some scholars argue that contemporary media can play a positive role in promoting African cultures and values. Digital platforms allow African artists, musicians, and filmmakers to reach a global audience and showcase the rich cultural heritage of the continent. In this digital age, digital media and the internet have significantly amplified the media's impact on culture preservation. Social media platforms, blogs, and online communities enable individuals and communities to actively participate in the preservation and promotion of their cultures (Ginsburg et al., 2002). Also, modern media outlets, especially digital platforms, have played a crucial role in raising awareness about the dangers and negative consequences of bad cultural practices in African cultures such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage, witch hunting, albinism stigmatization, etc. Documentaries, news stories, and social media campaigns have helped shift public opinion and encourage communities to abandon these practices (Smith & Ibrahim, 2018; Asongu, 2015). Media platforms have given marginalised communities within Africa a means to amplify their voices and advocate for change. Social media campaigns, blogs, and podcasts have become tools for grassroots movements and activism. These platforms enable marginalized groups to raise awareness about social injustices, advocate for their rights, and drive positive societal change (Irele, 2020).

The examination of the impact of contemporary media on the preservation of moralities in African cultures and its implications for economic growth and development has been the focus of numerous studies. Television programmes, documentaries, and digital content highlight traditional practices, rituals, languages, music, and art forms, thereby increasing global awareness and appreciation of African cultures (Smith, 2017). Moyo and Moyo (2018), highlight the potential of media platforms in enhancing cultural awareness and pride, thereby bolstering community cohesion, and reinforcing moral values. They argue that the media's capacity to showcase indigenous practices and rituals can attract cultural tourism and stimulate local economic activities. A study by Mwangi and Nwachukwu (2020), demonstrated that through digital media, African cultural products have gained international recognition, leading to increased tourism and revenue for local economies.

Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015), assert that through social media platforms, Africans can convey and express their perceptions, anger, hopes, and dreams because some of these platforms are uncensored. Society can also use either technological equipment or software to sustain their culture or to embrace others culture. Communication and socialisation enable transmission of culture and keeps it alive from generation to generation. Thus, communication is the substratum of any culture as it is also mentioned in the cultural transmission function of the mass media that media creates sustenance of a culture through its coverage, reporting of people and activities of a particular culture (Solo-Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015). Social media have provided African countries with the opportunity to develop their own socio-cultural statements. Social media assist African society to develop, enrich and preserve its own cultural values ensuring that it is conspicuously represented in the emerging global culture (Ohiagu & Okerie, 2014). Digital media have revolutionised the media's impact on both cultural preservation and economic growth. Social media platforms allow individuals and communities to share their cultural experiences, traditions, and stories on a global scale. This interconnectedness fosters cross-cultural understanding

and appreciation while also providing opportunities for cultural preservation (Kraidy, 2005). In the digital age, online platforms and social media provide opportunities for African communities to showcase their cultural heritage, stories, and traditions to a global audience (Amoah, 2019). This visibility can attract interest in tourism, trade, and investment, contributing positively to economic growth (Mlambo, 2012). Media, particularly digital media, has facilitated cross-cultural understanding and exchange. Through documentaries, television shows, and online content, African cultures are introduced to audiences around the globe. These platforms promote cultural diversity and allow for the celebration of unique traditions, fostering a deeper appreciation for the richness of African cultures (Nwoye, 2017). Online platforms and digital archives have become repositories for preserving traditional knowledge. Oral histories, rituals, and indigenous practices find a digital home, ensuring their continuity for future generations. Online resources help bridge generational gaps and maintain the intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage (Okon, 2019).

Nzegwu (2019), delved into the intersection of media, culture, and identity in Africa. Through an analysis of media representations, Nzegwu explored how media narratives influence the construction of cultural identities. Her study emphasised that media portrayals contribute to the reinforcement or reimagining of cultural values, thereby influencing societal norms and individual behaviours. This perspective highlights the role of media in shaping, preserving, and transforming of moralities within African cultures. Media exposure can prompt cultural adaptation and creativity, encouraging societies to reinterpret traditional values in contemporary contexts (Deacon, 2013). This adaptive process can foster innovation and resilience, positively impacting economic development, again the media's ability to disseminate information and raise awareness can contribute to the preservation of moral values in African cultures. It can shed light on issues such as corruption, inequality, and social injustice, fostering a sense of social responsibility and collective action (Chari & Verweijen, 2015).

Media has played a pivotal role in catalysing economic growth through the creative industries. Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, is a prime example. This industry has not only generated significant revenue but has also acted as a platform for telling African stories on a global stage. Media exposure has fuelled interest in African films, contributing to economic development and cultural exchange (Olufunmilayo, 2020).

Role of the Media in Cultural Transmission

According to studies, Community Radio (CR) promote the local cultures of African societies. The lack of media content that reflect traditional cultures, coupled with modernity, contribute to the rapid decreasing interests in traditional storytelling and communal entertainments among African youth. Consequently, CR stations have become welcome tools for reinvigorating these forms of traditional entertainments that held African communities together (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Alumuku, 2006). CR has made a concerted attempt to promote the local language and artistic linguistic expression, for example, in storytelling, the local music, the local dance, the local drama and, in general, the local historical memory in many African countries (White, 2011; Diedong & Naaikuur, 2012; Naaikuur & Diedong, 2014). Naaikuur and Diedong (2014), argue that before the arrival of CR in Ghana, and indeed in most African countries, many tribal and minority groups were unhappy about the fact that their identities were missing from the mainstream media services. CR promote the culture of communities through programmes that can highlight and encourage positive values and also discourage negative cultural practices. For instance, according to Naaikuur and Diedong (2014), in Ghana, all the CR stations have weekly programmes in which elders, who are viewed, as repositories of wisdom, will give advice to the younger generations. The programmes, among other intentions, seek to reinforce traditional moral and community values. On the other hand, the stations have used the programmes to challenge many of the negative customs in the Ghanaian community, denouncing cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), obnoxious widowhood rights, and the abuse of the dowry system.

A study conducted in Ghana suggests that media narratives influence public attitudes towards issues such as corruption, civic engagement, and ethical behaviour. Television dramas, radio programmes, documentaries and social media campaigns have been found to play a role in promoting social awareness and encouraging positive moral values (Asante & Osei-Kofi, 2017).

According to Addo and Boateng (2018), modern media contribute to the dissemination of cultural values and traditions, acting as a bridge between generations. Kim & Kim (2019) argue that foreign media content can have a positive impact on Ghanaian cultural values by promoting cultural exchange and understanding. Exposure to foreign media content can facilitate language learning, cultural education, and the development of intercultural competence, which is important in today's globalized world (Kim & Kim, 2019).

Similar to other African countries, Ghana has utilised mass media as a tool in its developmental initiatives. Following Ghana's independence, radio forums dedicated to rural development programmes proved successful in augmenting farmers' knowledge, fostering civic awareness, and inspiring community improvement efforts (Ansah, 1985). The successful assessment of rural radio forums prompted the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) to initiate comparable initiatives in different regions of the country. These endeavours aimed to educate farmers on innovative approaches to enhance agricultural productivity (Ansah, 1985, as cited in Tuurosong & Kendie, 2014). Also, the media played a crucial role in promoting the 'Year of Return' initiative in Ghana. Through the government of Ghana's positive media publicity as well as interviews with American media concerning their experiences, they created awareness of Ghana and thus promoted the country as a prime tourist and cultural destination (Greenwood & Williams, 2020).

Negative Effects of Media on Ghanaian Culture and Economic Development

Several studies have revealed the negative impact of modern media on the preservation of African moral values and development. Media imperialism leads to the imposition of Western cultures, concepts, and principles onto African nations, disrupting their evolutionary developmental progress (Dennis & Merrill, 1984). This process has solidified as a continuous and unidirectional transfer of ideas, originating from Western nations and submerging African countries. This dominance of Western media has dismantled native cultures and facilitated the control of Western powers over Africa and other developing regions, economic and political dominance (Dennis & Merrill, 1984). Mustapha Masmoudi, Tunisia's representative to UNESCO succinctly summarised the impact of communication imperialism with these words:

"In addition to dominating and manipulating news flow, the developed countries practice other forms of hegemony over communication institutions of the Third World, advertising, magazines and television programmes are today instruments of cultural domination and acculturation, transmitting to the developing countries messages which are harmful to their cultures, contrary to their values, and detrimental to their development aims and efforts" (Richstand & Anderson, 1981, p. 12). Tunstall (1977), observe that indigenous tradition and tribal cultures are being displaced and booted out of existence by Western media products that continue to bombard with commercials, especially from America and exposing people to lifestyles that are not easily attainable through a make belief situation. Uwaezuoke (2010), posits that Africa as a continent is experiencing what he calls 'force acculturation', a situation, in which a highly developed society imposes certain elements of its culture on the other, thereby forcing it to derail from its unique track of cultural civilization, and leads to a situation of cultural disorder. Through heavy and sophisticated technologies expressed, for instance, in communication technologies of the internet pornography and other media advertisement etc. western culture has come heavily on African culture and the latter is ferociously gulping or swallowing everything without caution (Uwaezuoke, 2010).

Jenkins (2006), argues that mainstream media often homogenises and commodifies cultural practices, reducing them to stereotypes or marketable products. This can lead to cultural appropriation, distortion, or loss of authenticity. Moreover, the dominance of global media conglomerates may marginalise local and indigenous cultural expressions, favouring dominant narratives and eroding cultural diversity. According to Daramola and Oyinade (2015), cultural globalisation through the help of media has created unparalleled inequity throughout Africa, affected the behaviour of people in numerous ways, and forced many people to assume a lifestyle of self-interest, selfishness, individualism and made people to develop a psychopathic devotion and appetite for foreign films, foreign goods, foods, foreign way of life, foreign music, attitude and behaviour which has always been foreign to African community. According to Adesina (2012) and Ajakah (2021), Nigerian youth are becoming

'alienated' from their traditional roots. Adesina (2012, p. 195), writes, "Mode of dressing expressed through the exposure of various parts of the body is now a common occurrence among the youth". Ajakah (2021), identifies Western culture's impact on Nigerians' wedding ceremonies, fashion trends, and orientations toward community, where he observes a shift from valuing community as family to distinguishing between core and extended family members. Moreover, Ajakah (2021), recognises the imbalance by suggesting that the West protects their values while encroaching on other nation's values. Such articulations allude to a possible negative correlation between the increasing permeation of Western media systems and products into the culture and African nations' waning national pride. Additionally, Thomas and Nord (2016), demonstrate that foreign media portrayals can impact international perceptions of African nations, potentially negatively affecting tourism and investment decisions.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Afolabi and Olaniyi (2017), investigated the role of media exposure in shaping attitudes towards corruption in Nigeria. Their findings indicated that media consumption significantly influenced individuals' perceptions of corruption, with implications for societal moral values and economic development. This study underscores the far-reaching impact of media on moral outlooks and its potential consequences for a nation's economic well-being.

Ayotunde et al. (2018), conducted a study that examined the relationship between media exposure and moral values in Nigeria. Their findings suggested that prolonged exposure to media, especially television and social media, led to a shift in traditional moral values, especially among the youth. This cultural shift was linked to an increase in risky behaviours and a decline in social cohesion, affecting the overall fabric of African societies. A study by Kamau and Wafula (2019), explored the economic consequences of declining moral values in Kenya. Their research revealed that the erosion of moralities negatively impacted trust levels among citizens and institutions, hindering economic transactions and investments. This loss of trust, they argued, impeded economic growth and development, making a strong case for the interconnectedness of media influence on moral values and its impact on the economic landscape in African nations. A study by Okpara (2019), point to the great disparity between the moral values that are considered acceptable in the Nigerian society and the moral values portrayed in the presentations of the Big Brother Africa (BBA) reality TV show. The study therefore concludes that BBA is not designed to promote moral values and customs that are acceptable in any given society. It recommends that reality TV entertainment in Nigeria should be developed to reflect the social, cultural and religious values that exist in the cultural and social systems in Nigeria and Africa.

A study by Winkler (2019), revealed that increased overall media consumption correlates with a significant increase in support for LGBTQ+ across Africa, especially newspaper, internet, and social media consumption drive this relationship. His study revealed that exposure to LGBTQ+ content on media such as newspapers, internet, and social media influence individuals support for LGBTQ+ across African countries. LGBTQ+ ideology is alien to Africans cultural traditions and morality and it against Africans traditional marriage system of a union between a man and a woman but not a woman and woman or man and man (same sex marriage) which the Westerners are trying to impose on African countries all in the name of human right.

Media has also contributed to a lot of inter-ethnic conflicts in Africa countries (Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Angola, Nigeria, etc.) by serving as a tool for hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation and propaganda mechanism to fuel inter-ethnic tension between conflicting parties or groups. For instance, in Rwanda, the media, especially the radio (controlled by the Hutu government) poisoned contents of information in order to create mass movement and transform ordinary people into militias. The Rwandan media conducted extensive hate propaganda campaigns, amplifying perceived historical distinctions between Tutsi and Hutu and disseminating fears that Hutus might face suppression again if Tutsis were to assume control in Rwanda. The propaganda was 'wholly swallowed' by Hutu peasants, who began to identify themselves not as Rwandans, but Hutus (Guest 2004). Neighbours turned against each other, friends against each other, even relatives against relatives and couples against each other. It is estimated that 130,000 people took actively part in the (over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus) killings (Burnet, 2008). The media such as the newspaper (Kangura), Radio Rwanda and Radio Mille Collines (RTLM), became tools of mass propaganda; portraying extreme ethnic hatred and labeling Tutsis as 'the enemy'. McNulty (1999), described RTLM role as the 'facilitator of genocide'; so much so that, Killers carries transistor radio in one hand and the other - a machete (Power, 2001).

According to Adeyanju (2018), mobile phones were used to create disinformation and hate speech following the 2007 general elections in Kenya. False information circulated outside the mainstream media, created a cycle of ethnic violence that engulfed almost half of the country. Before official announcement of results, messages claiming that then incumbent President Mwai Kibaki was using the electoral body to rig the elections started circulating. Considering the intensity of ethnic-based politics in Kenya, coupled with an online disinformation about falsification of results to favour an ethnic group over another, the eventual results announcement further triggered widespread and systematic violence, resulting in more than 1,000 deaths and displacement of over 500,000 civilians in the country.

The recent agitation by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), led by Nnamdi Kanu, highlights the use of Radio Biafra to propagate hate speech and incite violence for the secession of the Igbo ethnic group from Nigeria. Kanu's inflammatory rhetoric on the radio platform includes derogatory terms for Nigeria Zoo and threats of armed rebellion, creating heightened ethnic tensions. The situation underscores the media's potential role as a catalyst for violent conflicts, posing a significant challenge in Nigeria's delicate and ethnically diverse context (Nagarajan, 2015). The Radio Biafra and other social media platforms had helped the group mobilise demonstrations mainly across the south East of Nigeria: Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, Delta, Cross River and Ebonyi States; some ending in fatality. One of its protests in Onitsha Anambra State, marking Biafra Day led to 30 death and many injured. IPOB claimed over 1,000 of its members have been killed (Okoli et al., 2016).

Also, the weaponisation of media in Ghana's Bawku inter-ethnic conflict has also raised serious security concerns. On October 3, 2022, the National Media Commission issued a warning about the escalating instances of hate speech, disinformation or misinformation, and incitement on radio stations in Bawku and its environs, which is related to the inter-ethnic conflict in the region. This development underscores the urgent need to address the role of media in exacerbating tensions, highlighting the potential impact on the security not only of the Bawku area but also the nation as a whole (Citi Newsroom Report, 2022).

Thus, in situations of conflict, the mass media can evolve into a potent propaganda tool. Its role extends beyond merely advocating for a party's stance or mobilizing support against rival viewpoints. It also works to align the interests of the involved parties with those of the general populace. This strategy is commonly employed by state entities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Historical instances from South Africa (during Apartheid), Zimbabwe (regarding land and white farmers), Nigeria (pertaining to the Biafra movement and civil war), Rwanda (linked to the genocide), and Cameroon (in the context of the French-English regional divide), underscore the prevalence of this practice.

Exposure to social media content can lead to increased individualism and weakened community ties, potentially hindering collective efforts toward economic progress (Okonmah & Ekwoaba, 2019). A study conducted by Gbambu et al. (2022), in Ghana revealed that social media, especially Tiktok and Facebook, has a negative influence on the younger generation in terms of cultural identity. The study found that exposure to foreign media content affects the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the Dagomba community and contributes to the erosion of local cultural traditions among the people. Their study revealed that the younger generation is more influenced by these social media handles, where they are exposed to foreign content and often engage in behaviours that contradict their cultural norms and values. The study further revealed that the younger generation is using these platforms to showcase their sexual activities, which is not in line with the traditional cultural values and beliefs of Dagbamba ethnic group in the Northern Ghanaian society.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a constructivist research philosophy. Constructivism posits that reality is socially constructed through individuals' subjective interpretations and interactions within their cultural context. Given the complex and multifaceted nature of African cultural morality and development, a constructivist approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how media influences these aspects. By acknowledging the diverse perspectives and lived experiences within African societies, this philosophy enabled a nuanced understanding of the dynamic relationship between media, cultural values, and development.

Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was employed in this study to delve deeply into the complexities of the relationship between media and African culture and development. It allowed for in-depth exploration of individuals' perceptions, experiences, and behaviours in relation to media consumption and cultural practices through the analysis of textual data. Through qualitative methods the study uncovered rich, context-specific insights into the complex interplay between media, culture, and development in the African contexts.

Research Design

This study utilised a multi-method research design, incorporating both content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis was employed to systematically examine various literature on the negative and positive influence of modern media on African morality and development. On the other hand, thematic analysis was utilized to identify key themes and patterns within the various literature reviewed on the topic under study.

Data Source

The primary data sources for this study were existing scholarly literature, reports, articles, and publications related to the impact of media on African cultures and development. These sources encompass academic journals, books, government reports, NGO publications, and reputable online platforms. By drawing upon a wide range of secondary data, this research captured the breadth and depth of scholarly discourse on the subject matter.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection in this study primarily involved the systematic review and synthesis of existing literature on the identified content and themes of the positive and negative impacts of media on African cultures and development. The literature review process entailed comprehensive searches of electronic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, JSTOR, and academic publishers' databases. Relevant keywords and search terms related to media, culture, development, Africa, Ghana, and specific thematic areas were utilized to identify pertinent literature.

Data Analysis Methods

Content analysis involved a systematic analysis of existing literature, including academic journals, books, reports, and media sources, to identify key themes, patterns, and trends related to the impact of media on African cultures and development. This method provides a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge and serves as a foundation for the qualitative data collection

Thematic analysis was also employed as one of the methods for data analysis in this study. The thematic analysis involved identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. Through an iterative process of coding and categorisation, themes related to the positive and negative impacts of media on African cultures and development were identified across the reviewed literature. Patterns, similarities, and differences within and between themes were examined to derive meaningful insights and interpretations. The analysis process adhered to established principles of rigor, transparency, and reflexivity to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

This study thoroughly acknowledged and referenced all cited sources in adherence to academic norms and ethical principles in research.

Finding and Discussions

Findings on Positive Impact of Media on Ghanaian Culture and Development

Cultural Transmission

The review of literature revealed the essential role of mass media in transmitting culture from one generation to the next. It has been revealed that radio and television, especially in African contexts, serve as mediums for passing down cultural norms, values, and practices. By showcasing traditional music, storytelling, and other cultural elements, media platforms contribute to maintaining a sense of continuity in cultural identity. For instance, Ghanaian, newspapers, radio and TV stations often cover festival celebrations, showcasing the various activities, performances, and rituals that take place during festivals. Through this, both urban and rural audiences can witness the colourful processions, traditional dances, and other cultural displays that are integral to their cultural festivals. This exposure helps maintain a sense of continuity in cultural identity by allowing people to connect with their heritage.

Another typical instance of how the Ghanaian media actively promote local culture is exemplified by the annual Ghana's Most Beautiful (GMB) beauty pageant, prominently featured on TV3 Ghana. This programme focuses on the diverse cultural values and heritage inherent in the 16 regions of Ghana, with the overarching goal of promoting development through the celebration of culture and fostering unity. During the GMB, contestants from each of the regions showcase traditional attire, assorted cultural symbols, music, dances, ancestral histories, customs, and norms unique to their respective regions. This vibrant display allows participants to effectively present and promote their cultural richness to both the Ghanaian audience and the global community. Through such initiatives, GMB serves as a platform for contestants to share and project their cultural identity, contributing to the preservation and appreciation of Ghana's diverse heritage.

Alternative Agent of Socialisation

The review of literature also highlights media's importance as an alternative agent of socialisation for those who are not exposed to or received formal education. Since culture is learned and shared, the mass media step in to ensure that cultural education reaches a broader audience, beyond the confines of schools. This is particularly crucial in preserving cultural values among communities that may not have access to formal education.

In Ghana, one typical example of the media serving as an alternative agent of socialisation for both the educated and illiterates is through radio and television dramas that promote cultural education and values. Radio is a widely accessible medium in many parts of the country, even in rural areas where formal education might be limited. Radio dramas use storytelling and entertainment to convey cultural knowledge, traditions, and values to a broad audience. One notable example is the "Obra" radio drama series. "Obra," which means "Life" in the Akan language, was a long-running and popular radio drama produced by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). The series had been on the airwaves for decades and had played a significant role in educating and entertaining listeners, particularly those who might not have formal education or access to other forms of media.

The "Obra" radio drama addresses various societal issues, cultural norms, moral dilemmas, and everyday challenges faced by Ghanaians. The characters and storylines in the drama reflect the diversity of Ghanaian culture, and through engaging narratives, listeners learn about traditional customs, values, and ethical considerations.

Social, Media and Cultural Expression

The review of literature revealed that the rise of social media has brought new dimensions to cultural expression and preservation. The ability to convey perceptions, hopes, and dreams unrestricted on these platforms enables Africans to actively participate in shaping their cultural narrative. Social media also play a role in representing African culture globally, contributing to the diversification of the global cultural landscape. In media, particularly Western media, Africa is often portrayed as a place ravaged

by poverty, civil war and disease. Recently, through social media platforms, Africans have attempted to challenge this stereotype by showing that there is more to Africa than what Western media shares. For instance, through "#TheAfricaTheMediaNeverShowsYou" on twitter, people from various African countries share images and stories showcasing the richness of their cultures, the beauty of their landscapes, the accomplishments of their communities, and the everyday lives of Africans. These posts offer a more accurate and multi-faceted representation of the continent, celebrating its traditions, innovations, arts, and achievements.

Community Radio as a Tool for Cultural Preservation and Development

Community radio hold potential for promoting culture, attitude and behaviour change and development. Community radio programmes such as drama, songs, storytelling, documentaries, interviews, among others are effective conduits for transmitting cultural values and promoting positive behaviours. Leveraging community radio can be a powerful tool for promoting development initiatives and cultural expression within communities. In recent times development experts have recognised the importance of leveraging the community media and culture of a particular group of people to promote active participation and a sense of community ownership of development projects and initiatives. For instance, through community radio, development practitioners can incorporate specific cultural groups' language, songs, drama to educate the specific group on the importance of adopting new high yielding seed variety or family planning methods. By incorporating community media and cultural practices, development efforts can be more community-centred and inclusive. The participation and ownership of community members are enhanced when development strategies are aligned with their cultural values.

Also, literature revealed that community radio has contributed immensely to the abolishment of harmful cultural practices such as FGM, widowhood rites and levirate marriage, child marriage, abuse of the dowry system, witch-hunting, among others in Ghana and other African countries through awareness creation of the detrimental and inhumane effects such practices have on the victims.

Promotion of Cultural Tourism and Economic Development

Literature have revealed that media plays a pivotal role in promoting cultural tourism in African countries. Through various channels such as television, radio, print, and digital platforms, the media actively contributed to raising awareness and disseminating information about the cultural tourism site in African countries to the rest of the world and consequently attracting tourists across the globe to the region.

A typical example of this is the 'Year of Return' initiative in Ghana which was introduced in the year 2019 to commemorate 400 years of African-Americans arrival on the American soil. The media served as a powerful tool for creating awareness about the Year of Return, ensuring that the message reached a wide audience both within Ghana and internationally. News reports, interviews, and feature articles highlighted the significance of the initiative, its historical context, and the various events planned throughout the year. Television programmes and documentaries showcased Ghana's rich cultural heritage, historical sites, and tourist attractions, emphasizing the unique experiences that visitors could have during the "Year of Return". Cultural events, festivals, and ceremonies were covered extensively, providing a visual and immersive experience for the audience.

Social media platforms played a crucial role in engaging a younger and more tech-savvy audience. Hashtags related to the Year of Return trended, encouraging social media users to share their experiences and promote the initiative globally. International media outlets also covered the 'Year of Return', expanding its reach to a global audience. This coverage not only attracted tourists but also fostered a sense of connection among the diaspora.

The overall goal of the 'Year of Return' is economic development through world-class tourism while at the same time stabilising the roots, heritage and kinship narrative of Ghanaian diaspora tourism.

Findings on Negative Impact of Media on African Culture and Development

Negative Impact of Media: Media Imperialism and Cultural Disruption

The review of literature revealed that media imperialism, which involves the domination of Western media and ideas, can lead to the imposition of Western values and principles on African nations. This can result in the erosion of native cultures and a shift towards adopting foreign lifestyles, values, and behaviours. This is true looking at how the youth of today have adopted western lifestyles to the detriment of traditional African cultural values and traditions. For instance, todays' African and Ghanaian youth have developed strong taste or appetite for western food such as pizza, burger, cheese, doughnuts, hamburger, western style of dressing (e.g., miniskirt and revealing attires by ladies), western style of speaking or accent, western marriage (emulating foreign cultural practices in African marriages), western music/songs, among others. Today's Ghanaians and Africans do not only eat the western food, wear western clothes, speak western language, but also eat like westerners, dress like westerners, and speak like westerners. The extended family system which was previously cherished and held in high esteem in traditional African communities is gradually dying off as many Africans now prefer the nuclear family system espoused by Westerners.

Moreover, the media in Ghana is increasing becoming less interested in broadcasting Ghanaian cultural content but instead they give prominence to foreign materials. For instance, there used to be lots of Ghanaian movies, comedies and cultural programmes on Ghanaian media airwaves but that is not the case anymore. Many Ghanaian media outlets prefer to show foreign movies popularly known as telenovelas (Kumkum Bhagya, Wild at Heart, La Gata, Second Chance, Rosalinda, La Usurpadora, Passion, Corazon Indomable, Broken Heart, Ysabel, among others) and the showing of such movies have become a competition among media organisations. The constant showing of such movies have instilled in many Ghanaians who intend to live according to such foreign cultures and lifestyle. This continues to erode and corrupt the morals, values and norms of the Ghanaian society. These happenings are largely attributable to the exposure to foreign media content by Ghanaian. The concern here is that this process disrupts the natural evolution of cultural development in Ghanaian and other African societies.

Again, the time wasted in showing these could be have used to discuss important issues that border on national development. This is in line with the Cultural Imperialism Theory.

Modern Media Impact on Cultural Identity

The review of literature also highlights how exposure to foreign media content, especially through platforms like TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook, can negatively influence the younger generation's cultural identity. The ease of access to global content can contribute to a dilution of traditional values and norms, leading to conflicts between the younger generation's behaviours and their cultural heritage. For instance, Ghanaian and African youth of today especially ladies create videos or pictures of themselves by exposing their sexuality or body parts on social media platforms and post it for others to view especially their male counterparts or friends. This practice is against the traditional African and Ghanaian teachings where a woman's nakedness is not supposed to be seen by the public.

Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) rights

Literature review indicate that increased media consumption correlates with a rise in support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and More (LGBTQIA+) rights in Africa. The issue of LGBTQIA+ has become prominent especially in the African continent because of the discussion on the media in the African continent. The argument is that exposure to LGBTQIA+ content through newspapers, internet, and social media may challenge traditional cultural attitudes. The media particularly Western media has played a key role in the spread of the LGBTQIA+ across the world of which Africa is not an exception. Through various media platforms such as films/movies, newspapers and magazines, internet and social media platforms,

Africans are exposed to LGBTQIA+ content which have entice some Africans to accept and support this western ideology to the extent that now they have both physical and online communities across the African continent.

In Ghana, for instance, while the Parliament of Ghana is working to pass a law to criminalise the act and promote Ghanaian family values, some media houses and platforms are granting opportunity to propagators of the act to discuss the issue on air instead of educating the public on how detrimental the issue is to the culture of the people. This reflects a complex interaction between media, globalization, and societal norms.

Inter-Ethnic Conflicts

The review of literature provides instances of how media has been used to fuel inter-ethnic conflicts in Africa, such as the Rwandan genocide and the 2007 Kenyan elections. Historical instances from different African countries have also demonstrated the negative impact of media in African countries. It emphasises how media can be used as a tool for hate speech, misinformation, incitement, and propaganda, exacerbating existing tensions between different ethnic groups.

The media has played a significant role in fuelling ethnic conflict in some African countries. As it has been highlighted from the literature, the media has been used as a medium for misinformation and disinformation, propaganda, incitement and hate speech to fuel tensions between and among different ethnic groups which in turn resulted in serious conflicts and dehumanisation in some African countries. Quite a number of genocides and dehumanisation in Africa were triggered by hate speech, disinformation and incitement on media. This has led to unending conflicts and inter-ethnic wars that have caused external and internal migrations, and social dislocations of human and animal populations on the continent. A very good case in point of such is the April 1994 Rwanda genocide which according to reports, by the end of the 100-day killing spree, around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus had been killed. The incitement to the genocide started on *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) a radio station, and newspapers established by Hutu extremists which circulated hate propaganda, urging people to "weed out the cockroaches" meaning kill the Tutsis. These conflicts have negatively impacted on the overall development of the affected countries in Africa.

Likewise, in Ghana, as evidenced by literature, the media has been a key contributor to the escalation of inter-ethnic conflicts, particularly in Bawku and its surrounding areas. Recent instances of hate speech, incitement, as well as the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation through the media have been identified as significant factors in fuelling tensions in Bawku and its environs. Consequently, the National Media Commission of Ghana took proactive measures by issuing warnings to all media outlets in the region, urging them to desist from engaging in such activities that could further exacerbate the situation as reported by City News Ghana.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper shed light on the impact of media on the economic development and preservation and erosion of local cultural traditions among the people of Ghana. The findings have shown that the media and the showcase of foreign media contents have had both positive and negative effects on the economic development and preservation of Ghanaian and African traditional moral values. On the positive side, the media plays a vital role in preserving and promoting Ghanaian and African cultural values through platforms like radio, television, and social media. It serves as a vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge from one generation to another, fostering a sense of identity and unity. Moreover, media outlets have contributed to raising awareness about harmful cultural practices, thereby aiding social change and development. The media has also acted as a tool for expressing Ghanaians and Africans perceptions, hopes, and dreams, especially through social media platforms. It has also helped in promoting cultural tourism in Ghana and other African countries.

However, alongside these positive aspects, the media has brought about negative consequences as well. Media imperialism has led to the imposition of Western cultural values, which has disrupted native cultures and contributed to the dominance of Western media and control over Ghanaian and African nations. The exposure to foreign media content has at times eroded local cultural values and led to the

adoption of foreign lifestyles, behaviours, and attitudes. This phenomenon has even extended to contentious issues such as LGBTQIA+ rights, creating conflicts with traditional Ghanaian and African values. Furthermore, the media's potential to spread misinformation, hate speech, and propaganda has fuelled inter-ethnic conflicts in various African countries including Ghana, leading to violence and instability.

Therefore, it is crucial for media practitioners, individuals, government and non-governmental organisations, as well as development practitioners, to recognise and understand the symbiotic relationship between media, culture, and development within the Ghanaian and African context. This awareness should guide our collective efforts in pursuing development objectives and promoting positive change in the lives of citizens.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis conducted, the following recommendations have been made to address the challenges posed by contemporary media on the preservation of moralities in Ghanaian cultures and its implications on economic growth and development:

1. **Media education and public awareness campaigns by the media houses and Ministry of Information:** Media literacy programmes and public awareness campaigns can educate citizens about media's influence and encourage critical thinking. Such initiatives can empower individuals to make informed choices about the media content they consume.

2. **Strengthen cultural education:** Ghana Education systems should integrate cultural education that highlights traditional values, history, and practices into the academic curriculum. By instilling pride in African cultural identities, young generations can develop a strong sense of cultural awareness and appreciation.

3. **Collaborate with content creators:** Governments and cultural institutions should collaborate with media content creators, artists, and influencers to promote content that reinforces positive cultural values and narratives. Support for creative projects that celebrate African cultures can lead to a more authentic representation in the media.

4. **Research and data collection:** Governments and academic institutions should invest in research to continuously monitor media's impact on cultural values and economic development. Collecting data on media consumption patterns, moral attitudes, and economic outcomes can inform evidence-based policymaking.

5. **Media ethics and responsible journalism**: Media practitioners and content creators should adhere to ethical guidelines that prioritize accuracy, fairness, and cultural sensitivity. Promoting responsible journalism and content creation can minimize negative influences on cultural values.

6. **Media regulatory frameworks**: The Ministry of Information and Ministry of Culture and Arts should develop and implement policies on regulatory frameworks that ensure media content aligns with cultural values, preserves morality, and adheres to ethical standards. These frameworks should balance freedom of expression with responsible content creation.

7. **Strengthening traditional media:** The Ministry of Education should develop and implement polies that will support traditional media platforms, such as community radio and community media, that often have a closer connection to local cultures and values. These platforms can serve as vehicles for cultural expression and positive storytelling.

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