



Effectiveness of Mass Media in Preserving Indigenous Cultures in Select Rural Communities in Upper West Region, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Background: The preservation of indigenous cultures in rural Ghana face significant challenges due to the impacts of globalisation and the growing dominance of mass media. This study examines the role of mass media (radio, television, and newspapers) in preserving and promoting indigenous cultures in rural communities, with a specific focus on five communities in the Upper West Region: Takpo, Charia, Kaluri, Piisi, and Kunfaabiala communities.

Objective: This study assessed the effectiveness of mass media in preserving and promoting indigenous cultures in these rural communities in Ghana.

Method: A sample of 75 participants was selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, questionnaire, and focus group discussions. The study aimed to explore the level of exposure to various mass media platforms and their impact on cultural preservation in these communities.

Results: The findings show that radio is the most influential medium in disseminating cultural content, primarily due to its accessibility and ability to broadcast in local languages. While radio, television, and newspapers play vital roles in the cultural preservation process, the study also reveals that local cultures continue to face erosion despite these media efforts. The research highlights the limited effectiveness of these mass media platforms in fully preserving indigenous cultures, especially as younger generations increasingly engage with digital platforms.

Conclusion: Despite the contributions of radio, television, and newspapers, indigenous cultures in the Upper West Region are at risk of fading. The study concludes that a more integrated approach combining traditional mass media with digital platforms is necessary to engage the younger population. Additionally, the study calls for the Ghana Education Service to make the study and use of local languages compulsory in schools to further support the preservation of indigenous cultures.

Unique Contribution: This study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of modern mass media in cultural preservation, offering recommendations for integrating digital media and educational policies to safeguard indigenous cultural practices.

Key Recommendation: To enhance the preservation of indigenous cultures, it is recommended that mass media be integrated with digital platforms, and that local language education be made compulsory in basic and secondary schools to better preserve cultural heritage.

Keywords: Modern media, Traditional media, Cultural preservation, Indigenous cultures, Rural Ghana.



INTRODUCTION

Human ethnic groups or communities are usually distinguished by their unique cultural traits, which include language, art, rituals, and social norms. These cultural traits serve as important identifiers and can be either reinforced or diluted by media portrayals. Media plays a significant role in shaping how these cultural markers are perceived and can influence public attitudes, either by celebrating diversity or perpetuating stereotypes. According to Behm-Morawitz (2020) and Nwafor et al., (2013), while media has the power to define and distinguish different groups within society, it can also contribute to social segregation, particularly when cultural differences are highlighted in a divisive manner. The portrayal of these cultural markers, through both the presence and absence of certain racial or ethnic groups, significantly impacts the development of racial and ethnic identities and can either foster understanding or deepen societal divisions, Behm-Morawitz (2020) asserts.

Despite the influx of multiple media outlets, mass media, namely radio, television, and newspapers, is still perhaps one of the most widely used platforms for disseminating news worldwide (Nwafor et al., 2024). The spread of radio stations across Ghana and their functions in information production and dissemination highlights the influence of conventional mass media (Boateng, 2018). The ease of access and language friendliness make these platforms the first point of news production and dissemination despite the influx of digital platforms into the communication space.

With an integrated multimedia platform, television surged to the top with the ability to combine text, audio, pictures, and videos on one platform (Egbo & Nwafor 2024). A study by Karikari (2015) cited the multimedia platform employed by television as the reason behind its popularity among many consumers. The reach of these news-sharing platforms has increased, particularly in urban areas, due to the explicit nature of the front-page captions and the rise of internet portals for newspapers. However, in rural Ghana, internet penetration remains relatively low, limiting the access to and consumption of news via online platforms, according to a study from Nyarko (2014). In these regions, traditional media such as radio and television continue to be the primary sources of information dissemination.

From the local level to the national interest, these platforms offer rich environments for communication, education, and entertainment with the power to shape social norms and values (McQuail, 2010). The growing popularity of ‘edutainment’ as a tool for behaviour modification has increased the significance of multimedia news distribution (Mensah, 2022). The visual inclusion make television a comprehensive news source for different age groups and sensory adaptations.

Contextualising the study in rural Ghana, where mass media play an even more important role, Agyemang (2020), notes that the exploitation of these platforms can have a positive or detrimental impact on the preservation of cultural norms and values. Rural Ghana, as noted Osei (2020), is mostly dependent on traditional media for information and cross-cultural communication due to restricted access to modern digital technology.



The barrier dependent transmission by the traditional mass media was abridged by the fast-emerging digital platforms that only need internet connectivity as against the nearness of news source (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to Marshall McLuhan, the world has become a global village united by internet services and data bundles. Because of their accessibility, McLuhan (1964), emphasized that these platforms can be utilised to highlight the developmental needs of the community, as seen by the influence of radio, television, and newspapers.

Traditional mass media, which include radio, Newspapers and television, are viewed as more than just routes of communication in rural Ghana, where there is a wealth of diverse socio-cultural identities and economic power. Amoakohene (2012), the mass media are also recognised as pillars of cultural continuity throughout generations. Newspapers, radio, and television address a wide range of regional and socioeconomic audiences, providing them with priority in areas with low levels of literacy, poor internet connectivity, and low economic standing. These media outlets play a vital role in maintaining the rich and varied cultural legacy of rural Ghana by facilitating the transfer of cultural knowledge and traditions, customs, and values from one generation to the next (Amoako, 2019).

Like any other culture, Ghanaian culture is distinguished by its own languages, artwork, music, dance, rituals, folklore, and other customs. The social cohesiveness and cultural identity of Ghanaian communities are fundamentally based on these cultural identifiers. For rural inhabitants to retain a sense of continuity and identity, these cultures must be preserved and promoted. In rural Ghana, traditional mass media platforms such as radio, television, and newspapers, alongside African traditional communication systems like town criers, drums, and oral traditions, both play vital roles in preserving and promoting cultural identity and continuity.

This study focuses on five rural communities in the Upper West Region of Ghana: Takpo, Charia, Kaluri, Piisi, and Kunfaabiala. Each of these communities is unique in its demographic composition, which plays a significant role in how modern media impacts cultural preservation and erosion. Kaluri and Takpo are both located in the Nadowli Kaleo District in the Upper West Region with related attributes and cultural identifiers. Takpo has a population of around 2,500 while Kaluri has a little of over 1000 natives. Both communities have low literacy rates compared to other communities within the district. Charia, Piisi, and Kunfaabiala are also located in Wa Municipality in the Upper West Region and share similar cultural attributes. They have similar languages, culture and trade. Charia leads the trio with a population of 3,000 as against 2,000 and 1,500 for Piisi and Kumfaabiala respectively. Natives are predominantly engaged in farming and craftsmanship as the leading occupation within the communities.

What is the problem?

Conventional mass media in rural Ghana occupy a central position in the dissemination of cultural content. Yet, as these media channels become increasingly influenced by global trends, their role in preserving indigenous cultures is under threat. The core problem addressed by this study is the dual nature of modern media as both preserver and destroyer of indigenous cultures in rural Ghana. While these conventional mass media are crucial for maintaining cultural



continuity, they also introduce and propagate Western ideals that may undermine traditional practices.

This research sought to explore the extent to which modern media contribute to the preservation of indigenous cultures in rural Ghana, as well as how they may inadvertently facilitate cultural erosion. Addressing this issue is critical for informing media policies and practices that support cultural preservation while navigating the challenges posed by globalisation. This research therefore seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of exposure to modern media and evaluate its effectiveness in preserving indigenous cultures in rural Ghana.
2. To investigate the inhibitors to the use of modern media in promoting cultural heritage in rural Ghana.
3. To explore the contribution of modern mass media in contributing to the erosion of indigenous cultures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An analysis of the body of research demonstrates the fundamental role that modern media play in both protecting and undermining indigenous cultures. A double edge study from past literature revealed that same media platform that transmits and preserves these traditional cultures is the same platform eroding the native cultures through westernization.

Radio as a Tool for Cultural Preservation

One of the best traditional media for conserving cultural heritage is radio, especially in rural areas with low literacy rates. Boateng (2018), asserts that local language radio programming is essential to preserving cultural customs in Ghana's rural areas. Oral traditions including folklore, storytelling, and talks about cultural norms and values are frequently included in these events. These traditions are essential for maintaining cultural continuity.

Boateng's research revealed that radio's accessibility and linguistic relevance make it very useful for reaching a large audience. Radio is the principal channel for the dissemination of cultural knowledge among low-literate societies. The ideas of Cultural Preservation Theory are in line with this, as radio plays a role in preserving and advancing language diversity and oral traditions. One of the best traditional media for conserving cultural heritage is radio, especially in rural areas with low literacy rates. Boateng (2018), asserts that local language radio programming is essential to preserving cultural customs in Ghana's rural areas. Oral traditions including folklore, storytelling, and talks about cultural norms and values are frequently included in these events. These traditions are essential for maintaining cultural continuity.

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Television's Role in Cultural Preservation and Erosion

Television, with its ability to both hear and see, has a dual effect on maintaining and destroying traditional customs. In her investigation into how television affects cultural practices in rural Ghana, Agyemang (2020), discovered that feature customs, dances, and festivals play a major role in maintaining cultural traditions. Because they make cultural behaviors understandable to a wide range of people, these visual representations aid in the reinforcement of cultural identity.

Agyemang did point out, though, that television's influence has two drawbacks. Western media, including movies, music, and commercials, is becoming increasingly prevalent on television, bringing in elements of foreign culture that are in opposition to customs. This exposure to Western culture can cause a change in cultural tastes and behaviors, especially in younger viewers, which further undermines indigenous cultures and other identifiers.

Newspapers and Cultural Documentation

Due to lower literacy rates, newspapers are less commonly consumed in rural areas, yet they are nevertheless crucial for recording and preserving cultural knowledge. Newspapers are important cultural history archives because they document customs, historical events, and local histories, as noted by Amoako (2019). Newspapers help to preserve cultural narratives that could otherwise be lost by providing written records.

Newspapers' reach, however, restricts their usefulness in cultural preservation. Radio and television have a greater influence than newspapers in many low-literate rural populations. Furthermore, the role of print media in cultural preservation is further complicated by the emergence of digital media and the fall in newspaper reading.

Inhibitors faced by Traditional Media

Traditional media in rural Ghana have a lot of obstacles in their quest to maintain local traditions, despite their promise. Osei (2021) and Nweze et al., (2020), noted a number of significant barriers, such as inadequate financial resources, restricted access to technology, and competition from digital platforms. Traditional media sources frequently struggle financially to create excellent culture programming, and out-of-date broadcast technology can make it more difficult for cultural programming to be effectively distributed.

Furthermore, traditional media is seriously threatened by the rising popularity of digital media, especially among younger audiences. As more people rely on digital platforms for entertainment and information, conventional media's ability to preserve cultural heritage is waning. Given that digital content is frequently dominated by Western influences, this shift towards digital media also makes the decline of indigenous cultures worse.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is governed by two key theories namely, Cultural Preservation Theory and Agenda Setting Theory. These theories provide a lens through which the role of modern media in both preserving and eroding indigenous cultures can be understood.



Cultural Preservation Theory

Cultural Preservation Theory, proposed by Girard (2007), asserts that media play a crucial role in the transmission and preservation of cultural heritage. This theory is particularly relevant in the context of rural Ghana, where modern mass media platforms, such as radio and television, are central to safeguarding indigenous cultures. According to Girard (2007), while media can serve as tools for cultural preservation by promoting traditional knowledge and practices, they also have the potential to erode these very elements due to the influence of globalizing forces and the widespread availability of foreign media content. In this study, we apply Cultural Preservation Theory to examine how modern media in rural Ghana contribute to both the preservation and potential transformation of indigenous cultures.

According to Denis McQuail (2010), media platforms including radio, television, and print media serve an essential function in documenting, preserving, and conveying cultural traditions, linguistic expressions, and societal practices to an extensive audience. This theory suggests that by consistently broadcasting cultural content, media help to safeguard cultural symbols, traditions, and knowledge from one generation to the next.

In the specific context of rural Ghana, conventional forms of media, with a particular emphasis on radio, have played a pivotal role in sustaining linguistic plurality and safeguarding oral cultural practices. Programs broadcast in local languages, including folklore, traditional music, and discussions on cultural norms, help sustain the cultural identity of communities. Television and newspapers also contribute by visually and textually documenting cultural events, rituals, and practices, ensuring they are archived and remembered.

However, Cultural Preservation Theory also acknowledges the challenges that media face in fulfilling this role, particularly in the face of competing global media influences that may introduce foreign cultural elements into local contexts. This theory is central to understanding how traditional media in rural Ghana can either reinforce cultural continuity or be overwhelmed by external cultural forces.

Agenda Setting Theory

The Agenda Setting Theory, which was created by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, looks at how the media can influence public opinion by giving some issues or themes more weight than others. According to this idea, the media actively shapes reality by selecting which subjects to emphasize and how to show them, rather than just reflecting it. The public believes that the issues that are covered by the media the most are the most significant.

Agenda Setting Theory suggests that by regularly showcasing cultural content, traditional media can increase the significance of indigenous cultures in the context of cultural preservation. But if these media outlets mostly present Western material, they can unintentionally give precedence to Western ideals and customs over regional ones, which would further undermine cultural diversity.

The cultural significance of certain topics is heavily influenced by traditional media in rural Ghana, where there may be little access to other information sources. Prioritizing Western



cultural content on radio, TV, and newspapers in these areas runs the risk of marginalizing indigenous activities and causing a slow disintegration of cultural identity.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To examine the role of some modern media in the preservation and deterioration of indigenous cultures in rural Ghana, this investigation employed a mixed method research approach. The utilisation of a mixed methods approach amalgamates the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive analysis. While qualitative techniques provided profound insights into the cultural significance of various media forms within the communities under investigation, quantitative methodologies yielded measurable data regarding media usage patterns.

To collect the qualitative data, the researchers incorporated focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews alongside a cross-sectional survey for quantitative data collection. By integrating these methodologies, the study was able to present a holistic understanding of the ways in which modern media influences cultural practices across the five selected communities.

Participants

The study was conducted in five rural communities situated in Ghana's Upper West region namely Takpo, Charia, Kaluri, Piisi, and Kunfaabiala communities. These communities were selected based on some criteria including geographic location, demographic diversity, and varying levels of media exposure.

To ensure representation across age, gender, and educational backgrounds, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a total of 75 participants. Initially, the population within each community was stratified according to key demographic variables, allowing for random selection of participants from each stratum. This methodological approach ensured that a broad spectrum of perspectives on the role of modern media in cultural preservation and erosion was captured, thus rendering the sample representative of the larger community.

Data Collection Methods

A combination of semi-structured interviews, focus groups discussions, and questionnaire were used to gather data. Every technique for gathering data was specifically selected to work in tandem with the others and offer a thorough grasp of the study questions.

To collect quantifiable data on media consumption patterns, tastes, and opinions regarding the contribution of traditional media to cultural preservation, surveys were distributed. Both closed-ended and open-ended survey questions were included, enabling the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data.

The questionnaire was designed based on existing literature and was pretested in a pilot study conducted in Kunfaabiala to refine the questions for clarity and effectiveness.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into individual experiences and perspectives on the role of modern media in cultural preservation and erosion.



Open-ended questions from the interview guide allowed participants to go into further detail about their interactions with modern media. The purpose of the questions was to find out how participants felt about the ways in which traditional media influenced their cultural practices and sense of self.

Face-to-face interviews in the native tongues were used to make sure participants could express themselves completely. With the participants' permission, each interview was recorded and lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes.

To investigate common perspectives and experiences of conventional media and cultural practices, focus group discussions (FGDs) were employed. Because the talks promoted interaction among participants, which frequently resulted in the emergence of new insights, FGDs offered rich qualitative data.

Each FGD had 10 to 12 members from the same community, making sure that the group was both small enough for everyone to participate and large enough to produce a range of viewpoints. A facilitator led the discussion in the composed FGDs by using a pre-written guide. With the participants' permission, the conversations were audio recorded and held in the local tongue. In all, 5 FGDs were conducted.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was divided into quantitative and qualitative components, reflecting the mixed-methods approach.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data from the surveys were coded and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 21) for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and crosstabulations, were used to summarize media consumption patterns and participants' perceptions of traditional media.

Frequencies and percentages were calculated to determine the most common media types consumed by participants and their perceived effectiveness in preserving cultural practices.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the interviews and FGDs were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved coding the data, identifying patterns, and developing themes that captured the key findings related to the role of traditional media in cultural preservation and erosion. The coded data were then grouped into themes that reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives. Key themes included the effectiveness of traditional media in preserving cultural practices, challenges faced by these media, and the impact of Western content on cultural erosion.



Ethical Considerations

The design and execution of the study were heavily influenced by ethical considerations. To make sure that the research was carried out ethically, the following steps were taken:

Each participant received information on their rights as participants, the nature of their involvement, and the goal of the study. Before any data collection started, participants gave their informed consent and were reassured that their participation was completely voluntary and they may end it whenever they wanted to without incurring any fees. Clearance was sought before data collection started.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The study's results are presented in this section, which integrates survey data (both quantitative and qualitative) from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The analysis is organized according to the main research concerns, which are: how well traditional media preserve indigenous cultures; what difficulties these media confront; and how much they contribute to cultural eroding.

Quantitative Results

A survey was given to 75 participants in each of the five communities namely, Takpo, Charia, Kaluri, Piisi, and Kunfaabiala communities as part of the study's quantitative component. Data on media consumption habits, opinions on the contribution of traditional media to cultural preservation, and worries about cultural eroding were all gathered by the poll.

Media Consumption Patterns

According to the results, radio is the media that is most frequently listened to, with 80% of the participants routinely listening in. Newspaper use is at 40% of the sample, while television usage comes in second at 60%. Even though it is less common, 20% of participants still use digital media, suggesting that it is becoming more and more present in these rural places. See the table below:

Table 1: Media Consumption by type (n = 75)

Media Type	Number of Users	Percentage Representation
Radio	60	80%
Television	45	60%
Newspapers	30	40%
Digital Media (social media)	15	20%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Perceived Effectiveness in Cultural Preservation

Radio is thought to be the best media for preserving culture; according to 60% of respondents, it is 'Very Effective' The effectiveness of television varies, with 40% of respondents rating it as 'Very Effective' and another 40% as 'Moderately Effective'. Nevertheless, it still has a big



impact. Newspapers are perceived as less successful in maintaining cultural practices; a greater proportion of respondents (33.3%) said they are "Not Effective" in this regard. See table below:

Table 2: Perception of Media Effectiveness in Cultural Preservation (n= 75)

Media Type	Very Effective		Moderately Effective		Not Effective		Totals
Radio	45	60.00%	25	33.33%	5	6.70%	75
Television	30	40.00%	30	40.00%	15	20.00%	75
Newspaper	20	26.70%	30	40.00%	25	33.33%	75

Source: Field survey, 2024

Concerns on Cultural Erosion

Users of digital and television media are most concerned about the destruction of culture. Due in large part to the overwhelming amount of Western content on television, more than half of the respondents (53.3%) said that it significantly contributes to the eroding of culture. Despite being less widely utilized, digital media also caused serious concerns (80% of respondents), which reflected worries about the impact of global culture. On the other hand, radio and newspapers raised less concerns from respondents regarding cultural eroding, with a sizable percentage saying they had "No Concern" (33.3% for radio and 60% for newspapers). See table 3.3 below for more details.

Table 3: Concerns on Cultural Erosion by Media type (n = 75)

Media Type	Significant Concern		Moderate Concern		No Concern	
Radio	20	26.70%	30	40.00%	25	33.30%
Television	40	53.33%	25	33.33%	10	13.34%
Newspapers	10	13.33%	20	26.70%	45	60.00%
Digital Media	60	80%	10	13.33%	5	6.67%

Source: Field survey, 2024

Qualitative Analysis

Data from FGDs and semi-structured interviews done in each of the five communities are used in the qualitative analysis. The analysis is structured around three main topics that were found throughout the coding process: the contribution of modern media to cultural erosion, the difficulties these media face, and their role in cultural preservation.

The Role of Modern Media in Cultural Preservation

A common theme among the participants was the significance of modern media, especially radio, in maintaining their cultural customs and sense of self. A sixty-year-old Takpo resident said:



Radio has been our companion for many years. When asked about the function of the medium, we are able to hear our language, history, and stories through it. It helps us stay true to our identity. With radio, we are not lost as a group of people. When I hear issues of my community being discussed in the radio station, I feel like my culture is upgraded to a higher level. (P1, 2024)

Another 45-year-old Kaluri resident agreed:

Radio shows in our language are highly significant. They provide cultural knowledge to our kids, which is especially important in times when we cannot get together for holidays. Kids these days do not go closer to the grandparents to listen to stories that can keep the well abreast with their culture. I think radio and other modern media does that. (P2, 2024)

These quotations emphasize how important radio is to the preservation of culture, especially in areas where oral traditions are highly valued. Television was acknowledged for its visual narrative as well, as a thirty-year-old native opined:

The advantage of TV is its multimedia nature where they are able to present text, visuals and sound in one platform. It is expensive to access but is better than radio and newspapers. When drama is performed locally and is shown on TV, our children are forced to see it and listen to it. In so doing, they learn their indigenous culture, hence it is preserved. (P3, 2024)

Challenges faced by Modern Media

The participants recognized a number of obstacles that prevent modern media from effectively conserving cultural practices. A fifty-year-old farmer from Charia identified the lack of local television material as a major issue, saying:

We don't see our own culture on TV as much as we used to. These days, international films and TV series are more popular. Our kids find it challenging to learn about their culture through television. They become more comfortable with the TV series to the extent that they now try to live and behave like the actors and actress they see in the TV series. This is barrier to our cultural preservation attempts. (P4, 2024)

Concerns concerning the financial limitations preventing local radio stations from generating top-notch cultural programming were voiced by a 35-year-old Kunfaabiala woman:

Although our local radio makes an effort, there is no adequate funding to produce additional shows that explore our culture. They depend on volunteers, and so, initiatives may come to an end." (P5, 2024)

These difficulties draw attention to the monetary and content-related obstacles.

Contribution to Cultural Erosion

Concerns over the decline of indigenous cultures have often been linked to the impact of western media, especially on digital and television platforms. A forty-year-old Charia shopkeeper voiced his concerns:



Our children are losing touch with our traditions. When kids watch TV, they aspire to speak and dress in English and even eat like the individuals they see. In any attempt to tune to a local TV station, children will not agree and if you forcefully do it, they sometimes walk out. It's not how we do things." (P6, 2024)

Likewise, a 25-year-old Piisi university student made the following observation about the influence of internet media:

These days, social media is present everywhere, even here. Instead of following our conventional methods, young people are more interested in what's trendy online. It is altering the way we live and think. (P7, 2024)

These quotations highlight the participants' worries that traditional cultural traditions and values are being replaced by Western media content, especially among the younger generation.

Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provided a comprehensive understanding of the role of modern media in both preserving and eroding culture in rural Ghana. Radio was found to be the most popular and successful medium for cultural preservation, with qualitative observations emphasizing its role in preserving oral traditions and connecting communities to their cultural identity. This was supported by quantitative evidence showing radio's widespread appeal and influence.

Television, while praised for its ability to tell stories visually, raised concerns due to the predominance of Western content. Both quantitative and qualitative data suggested that television may contribute to cultural erosion, reflecting its complex effect on societal norms. Additionally, the challenges faced by traditional media, such as limited budgets and a lack of local content, were highlighted in both the poll results and participant testimonials, further exacerbating concerns about the deterioration of cultural values, especially in relation to television and newspapers.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of the quantitative and qualitative studies are combined in the discussion section, which also interprets them in light of current theoretical frameworks and literature. The study's ramifications for media laws and rural Ghanaian cultural preservation initiatives are also covered in this section. The results further show how traditional media in rural Ghana plays a multifaceted role in both maintaining and destroying indigenous traditions. As the media that is most consumed, radio is essential to the preservation of culture. Most participants said radio was "Very Effective" at promoting cultural practices, especially when it ran oral tradition-focused programs in the local languages. This is consistent with the Cultural Preservation Theory, which posits that media play a pivotal role in the generational transfer of cultural information (McQuail, 2010).



Nevertheless, television has proven to be a double-edged sword despite its ability to express stories visually. Although it does a good job of showcasing local holidays and customs, the overwhelming volume of Western television programming has raised serious worries about cultural eroding. This finding reflects the principles of Agenda Setting Theory, which posits that media shape public perception by prioritizing certain content (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In this case, the prioritization of Western content over local cultural programming on television appears to be influencing younger generations, leading to a gradual shift away from traditional practices.

The survey results also highlighted the growing concern about the influence of digital media, with 80% of respondents identifying it as a significant contributor to cultural erosion. This is consistent with global trends, where the rise of digital media has been linked to the spread of Western culture and the marginalization of local traditions (Boateng, 2018; Agyemang, 2020).

The study's conclusions support earlier studies on the function of traditional media in cultural preservation. According to Boateng (2018), radio is still an essential medium for preserving traditional customs in rural Ghana, especially in those with strong oral traditions. This study expands on Boateng's research by offering more proof of radio's potency in fostering cultural identity, particularly in communities with low literacy rates. The current findings are consistent with Agyemang's (2020) research on television's function in cultural erosion and preservation. The testimony of participants who voiced concerns about the decreasing amount of local content on television demonstrated television's dual role as a conduit for Western influences and a preserver of culture.

But this study also emphasizes the expanding influence of digital media, a topic that hasn't gotten as much attention in the literature. Future studies should examine how traditional and digital media interact in rural areas, given the serious worries of cultural eroding associated with digital media. The study challenged the assumption of the Agenda Setting and Cultural Preservation theories but also offered empirical evidence to support the aforementioned theories. The narratives below explain more on the theoretical implications of the study's findings.

Findings from the study confirmed the theory's position on media as a fundamental platform for maintaining cultural identity. This is confirmed by radio's role in disseminating cultural norms, identifiers, physical and non-tangible aspects of culture. The ability of the media, especially radio and television to shape the agenda is a confirmation of the Agenda Setting Theory as posited in the literature review. What is aired on the media waves shaped the cultural norms of consumers as opined by the Agenda Setting Theory.

In furtherance, persistent airing of western cultures played key role in eroding local cultures. If young people are exposed to foreign cultures, they stand the chance of trading their native cultures for foreign or western cultures. However, given the advent of digital media, the theory's emphasis on the ability of media to influence people's perceptions needs to be relooked at. The mainstream media has been replaced, to some extent, by digital platforms, negating the position of Agenda Settings Theory.



CONCLUSIONS

Radio, television, and newspapers are examples of traditional media that are essential to preserving and promoting Ghanaian indigenous rural traditions. Because of its wide audience and local language programming, which encourages cultural transfer and continuity, radio stands out as having the largest influence of these. Television plays this role more effectively since it gives visual depictions of cultural practices and events, even though its audience may be smaller. Newspapers record and preserve cultural information, which helps them contribute despite challenges like low literacy rates.

However, traditional media faces many operational challenges, including limited budgets, competition from emerging platforms, and shifting viewer preferences. These factors mean that for cultural preservation programmes to be successful, media operations and management must adapt to the constantly shifting media ecosystem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Traditional media companies should adopt rapidly developing and popular digital platforms like Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and others if they wish to broaden their appeal and reach, particularly to younger audiences who are consuming more and more media online. Collaborative projects that can preserve culture and encourage younger generations to participate in indigenous cultural programs include joint content production, social media campaigns to promote cultural messages, and digital cultural program streaming.

Strong content creation and the continuation of traditional media activities depend on support from the public and private sectors. Traditional media can better fulfil their responsibility of cultural preservation by funding infrastructure, equipment upgrades, and capacity building efforts. Training programs emphasizing the production of cultural content and its adaptation for a variety of media platforms should be attended by media professionals. Enhancing the skills and knowledge of journalists and broadcasters will ensure that top-notch, culturally relevant material is produced that appeals to audiences in rural areas.

Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions.

Cuthbert Baataar and Thomas Agana conceived the study, including the design, Ismail Saani and Thomas Agana collated the data, and Ismail Saani handled the analysis and interpretation, while Ismail Saani, Thomas Agana and Cuthbert Baatar the initial manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Data availability statement.

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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