APPLICATION OF TRADITIONALTHEORIES IN THE AGE OF CYBER COMMUNICATION

JIBRIN UMAR OMACHI
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, GLORIOUS VISION UNIVERSITY, OGWA EDO STATE,
jibrinumaromachi97@gmail.com

COMFORT ENE OBAJE, PHD
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, ene.obaje@uniben.edu

KEYWORDS
Traditional theories, cyber communication, relevance, adaptation, digital age

ABSTRACT
The advent of cyber communication has raised questions about the applicability of traditional communication theories in the digital age. This position paper critically examines the relevance and adaptability of traditional theories in the context of contemporary digital communication platforms. As communication practices have undergone significant transformations with the proliferation of digital technologies, it becomes crucial to assess the suitability of theories developed in the pre-digital era. Drawing upon influential communication theories such, this paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of their fundamental premises and concepts. It explores the extent to which these theories can effectively explain and analyze communication phenomena within the realm of cyber communication, characterized by social media, online forums, instant messaging, and other digital platforms. Through a synthesis of empirical research and scholarly discourse, this paper highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with the application of traditional theories in the digital age. It argues for the need to adapt and modify these theories to account for the unique characteristics of cyber communication, including networked connectivity, user-generated content, and algorithmic influence. A nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural, technological, and contextual factors shaping digital communication practices is emphasized. It underscores the importance of considering the dynamic interplay between technology, society, and communication processes. By bridging the gap between traditional theories and contemporary digital communication practices, this paper aims to enrich our understanding of the evolving communication landscape.

Introduction

The advent of digital technology has brought about a paradigm shift in communication, giving rise to the age of cyber communication. In this digital era, traditional theories of mass communication are being reevaluated and applied to understand the dynamics of communication in the digital realm. Traditional theories of mass communication encompass a range of theoretical perspectives that aim to elucidate the dynamics, effects, and processes of mass communication. These theories emerged during the early stages of mass media development and continue to provide valuable insights into how media messages are produced, disseminated, and received by audiences, influencing public opinion and shaping social behavior (Adekunle, 2021).

One significant theory within the realm of traditional mass communication theories is the Hypodermic Needle Theory, also known as the Magic Bullet Theory. This theory posits that media messages have a direct and immediate impact on audiences, influencing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Nwosu, 2020). According to this theory, audiences are passive recipients of media content, and media has a powerful influence on individuals.

Another influential theory is the Two-Step Flow Theory, proposed by Katz and Lazarsfeld. This theory suggests that media messages are filtered through opinion leaders who interpret and disseminate the information to their social networks (Okafor, 2019). The Two-Step Flow Theory highlights the role of interpersonal communication and the influence of opinion leaders in mediating the effects of mass media messages.

Additionally, the Agenda-Setting Theory, introduced by McCombs and Shaw, asserts that media has the ability to shape the public's perception of reality by determining the salience and importance of particular issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972 cited in Arijeniwa&Nwaoboli, 2023). The media's selection and emphasis on certain topics influence the public agenda and the issues that individuals consider significant.

Furthermore, the Uses and Gratifications Theory, developed by Blumler and Katz, focuses on the active role of audiences in selecting and using media to satisfy their needs and desires (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan &Signorielli, 2002). This theory posits that individuals have specific motivations for consuming media, such as seeking information, entertainment, social interaction, or personal identity reinforcement.

The term "traditional theories" is used to refer to these theories of mass communication due to their historical significance and their foundational role in shaping the field of mass communication research. These theories emerged during the early stages of mass media development and have laid the groundwork for understanding the dynamics of communication in a mass media context.

The label "traditional" distinguishes these theories from more recent and evolving theories that have emerged in response to advances in technology and shifts in media landscape. While these traditional theories have provided valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge that the field of mass communication has evolved and expanded over time, with new theories and perspectives emerging to address contemporary media phenomena and challenges.

Despite being labeled as traditional, these theories continue to have relevance and influence in mass communication research. They form the basis for understanding fundamental concepts such as media effects, agenda-setting, media influence on public opinion, and audience motivations. Moreover, they have served as a springboard for further theoretical development and refinement within the field.

By referring to these theories as traditional, it highlights their historical significance and acknowledges their enduring relevance as foundational frameworks. However, it is essential to recognize that the field of mass communication continues to evolve, and contemporary scholarship incorporates a broader range of theories and approaches to capture the complexities of modern media ecosystems. These traditional theories of mass communication, while formulated several decades ago, continue to provide valuable frameworks for understanding the complexities of mass communication processes and effects. They have been influential in shaping the field of mass communication research.

Understanding Cyber Communication

Cyber communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and messages facilitated through digital platforms and technological networks. According to Adeleke (2020), cyber communication encompasses various forms of online interaction, including social media platforms, email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and other digital communication tools. It involves the utilization of internet-based technologies to connect individuals across geographical distances, enabling real-time communication and information sharing. Cyber communication has transformed the way people interact, collaborate, and disseminate information, offering new channels for social interaction, community formation, and knowledge exchange (Adeleke, 2020).

In the context of mass communication, cyber communication refers to the dissemination of media content through digital platforms and online channels. Okafor (2019) defines cyber communication as the transmission of news, entertainment, advertising, and other forms of media content via the internet. It encompasses activities such as online journalism, streaming services, podcasting, and digital advertising. With the growth of internet penetration and the rise of digital media platforms, cyber communication has become increasingly influential in shaping public opinion, disseminating information, and engaging audiences (Okafor, 2019).

Cyber communication can also be understood as the formation and maintenance of social connections and relationships in virtual environments. Okonkwo (2018) describes cyber communication as the networking and interaction between individuals through social media, online communities, and virtual spaces. It involves activities such as social networking, online dating, and virtual communities where individuals engage in discussions, share experiences, and establish connections. Cyber communication platforms provide opportunities for individuals to connect with others who share similar interests, engage in social support, and participate in online communities, transcending physical boundaries (Okonkwo, 2018).

Another aspect of cyber communication pertains to the expression and dissemination of personal opinions, perspectives, and creative works through digital platforms. Nwosu (2020) defines cyber communication as a means for individuals to share their thoughts, ideas, and creative expressions through blogs, vlogs, social media posts, and other online platforms. It enables individuals to have a digital voice and reach a global audience, democratizing the process of self-expression and creativity. Cyber communication platforms provide opportunities for individuals to showcase their talents, advocate for causes, and engage in participatory culture (Nwosu, 2020).

Traditional Theories of Mass Communication

Traditional theories of mass communication refer to a set of foundational concepts and frameworks that have been developed over time to understand and explain the processes, effects, and dynamics of mass communication. These theories emerged in the earlier stages of mass media development and have provided valuable insights into how media messages are created, transmitted, received, and interpreted by audiences.

Traditional theories of mass communication are rooted in the belief that mass media, such as television, radio, newspapers, and now digital platforms, play a significant role in shaping public opinion, influencing social attitudes, and impacting individuals' behavior (Okoro, 2021). These theories attempt to explain the ways in which media messages are constructed, disseminated, and received, and their effects on society and individuals. These theories often explore topics such as media effects, media influence, audience reception, media content analysis, and the role of media in shaping social and cultural norms. They provide frameworks for understanding the power dynamics between media organizations, content producers, and audiences, as well as the role of individual and societal factors in media consumption and interpretation.

Traditional theories of mass communication have been developed and refined through extensive research, empirical studies, and scholarly discourse. They have served as guiding principles for media professionals, researchers, and policymakers in understanding and analyzing the complex interplay between media and society.

Some traditional theories include:

Agenda-Setting Theory:

The Agenda-Setting Theory, proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in the 1970s, examines the role of the media in shaping the public's perception of reality (Okoro, 2021). It suggests that the media has the power to influence which issues and topics the audience considers important by selecting and emphasizing certain news stories. The theory posits that the media's agenda influences the salience and priority that the audience assigns to those issues. By determining what information receives attention and coverage, the media can shape the public's awareness and understanding of various subjects. The Agenda-Setting Theory has been widely applied in the field of mass communication to understand media effects, public opinion formation, and political communication.

Critics of the theory argue that it overlooks the active role of the audience in interpreting and filtering media messages (Arijeniwa&Nwaoboli, 2023). They contend that individuals possess their own pre-existing beliefs, values, and interests, which can influence the agenda-setting process. Additionally, critics question the degree to which the media's influence is direct and immediate, as the theory implies. Despite these criticisms, the Agenda-Setting Theory has remained influential in understanding the relationship between media and public opinion, particularly in the context of political campaigns and agenda-building (Okoro, 2021).

In the age of cyber communication, the Agenda-Setting Theory is exemplified by the power of online news platforms and social media in influencing public perception and shaping the issues that receive attention. For instance, social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook curate users' news feeds based on algorithms that prioritize certain stories or topics, thereby influencing the information users are exposed to. When a news story or topic gains significant traction on these platforms, it can become a prominent part of public discourse, influencing public opinion and policy discussions. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement gained widespread attention and support through social media, as users shared news articles, videos, and personal stories related to racial injustice, effectively shaping the public's agenda on the issue.

Media Ecology Theory:

Media Ecology Theory, developed by Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s and 1970s, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate relationship between media, technology, and culture (McLuhan, 1964 cited in Obi & Okonkwo, 2021). McLuhan argued that media are not simply neutral tools or channels of communication but extensions of human senses and capabilities that shape our perception, cognition, and social organization. According to McLuhan, different media have distinct characteristics that influence how we perceive and engage with the world. For instance, he distinguished between "hot" media, such as print, which provide high-definition information and demand focused attention, and "cool" media, like television, which involve low-definition information and require more active participation from the audience (McLuhan, 1964 cited in Obi & Okonkwo, 2021).

Central to Media Ecology Theory is the notion that media operate as complex ecosystems rather than isolated entities. McLuhan emphasized the interconnectedness of media and society, stating that "the medium is the message." He argued that media environments shape our communication patterns, thought processes, and social structures. For example, the rise of television and electronic media has contributed to a shift from linear, rational thinking to a more fragmented, associative mode of cognition (McLuhan, 1964 cited in Obi & Okonkwo, 2021). Media Ecology Theory highlights the need to understand media as a holistic system, taking into account not only the content but also the medium itself and its influence on our perceptions, behaviors, and cultural norms.

Critics of Media Ecology Theory have raised concerns about its tendency to oversimplify the relationship between media and society. They argue that the theory may overlook other influential factors, such as politics, economics, and power dynamics, which play a significant role in shaping media and its effects (Ogunlade& Ibrahim, 2021). Additionally, some critics contend that the theory lacks empirical grounding and relies heavily on speculative claims and anecdotal evidence. Nonetheless, Media Ecology Theory has had a significant impact on the field of media studies and communication research. It has provided researchers with a framework for analyzing the

effects of media and technology on individuals, society, and culture (Smith, 2016 cited in Ogunlade& Ibrahim, 2021). The theory has been applied to various areas, including media literacy, media archaeology, digital media studies, and the study of media effects and social change.

Media Ecology Theory provides valuable insights into the impact of digital media and cyber communication on perception, cognition, and social organization. The theory emphasizes that different media environments shape our communication patterns and ways of thinking. In the age of cyber communication, the proliferation of digital platforms and technologies has significantly influenced how we perceive and engage with information.

Digital media platforms offer a more interactive and participatory experience compared to traditional media. Users can comment, share, and create their own content, blurring the boundaries between media producers and consumers. This participatory nature of cyber communication has led to a shift in how individuals engage with media, fostering a more fragmented and associative mode of cognition. For example, social media feeds present information in a non-linear and rapid-fire manner, encouraging users to make quick judgments and associations.

Additionally, the rise of digital media has disrupted traditional media hierarchies. Anyone with an internet connection can now create and distribute content, challenging the dominance of established media organizations. This has resulted in a more diverse and decentralized media landscape, where individuals have greater control over the media they consume and the information they encounter. Media Ecology Theory helps us understand how these changes in media environments shape our perceptions, social interactions, and cultural norms in the age of cyber communication.

Symbolic Interactionism:

Symbolic Interactionism, originating from the work of George Herbert Mead and further developed by Herbert Blumer, is a sociological perspective that focuses on the role of symbols, language, and social interaction in the construction of meaning and the formation of self-identity (Blumer, 1969 cited in Adebayo & Mohammed, 2021). The theory posits that individuals interpret and respond to symbols and shared meanings in their social interactions, which in turn shape their behaviors and influence social reality. Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes the ongoing process of meaning-making through the exchange of symbols and the negotiation of shared understandings.

According to Symbolic Interactionism, individuals actively engage in social interactions by interpreting and attributing meaning to symbols. These symbols may include words, gestures, objects, or even nonverbal cues. Through these interactions, individuals develop a sense of self and construct their identities. Mead proposed that the self emerges through a two-step process: the "I" and the "Me." The "I" represents the spontaneous and impulsive aspect of the self, while the "Me" is the socialized and reflective part that internalizes society's expectations and norms (Mead, 1994 cited in Adebayo & Mohammed, 2021).

Critics of Symbolic Interactionism argue that the theory may downplay the influence of broader social structures and power dynamics in shaping individuals' behaviors and interactions. They contend that the theory does not adequately address the role of social institutions, cultural norms, and historical contexts in influencing symbolic meanings (Smith, 2013 cited in Adekunle, 2021). However, Symbolic Interactionism has found broad applications in sociology, anthropology, and communication studies. It provides valuable insights into various aspects of social life, including language and communication, socialization processes, identity construction, and the negotiation of social roles and relationships (Johnson, 2018 cited in Nwosu, 2020).

Symbolic Interactionism remains applicable to the age of cyber communication, as it focuses on the role of symbols, language, and social interaction in constructing meaning and shaping identity. In online environments, individuals continue to engage in symbolic interactions, albeit in a different context. In cyberspace, symbols take the form of text, emojis, memes, and other digital representations. Online communication platforms provide individuals with new ways to express themselves, negotiate meanings, and form social connections. For example, in social media interactions, individuals use likes, comments, and shares as symbolic gestures to express agreement, disagreement, or support.

Furthermore, the construction of identity in the age of cyber communication is influenced by online interactions and the creation of digital personas. Individuals present themselves through carefully curated profiles, status updates, and online activities. These online identities are shaped through the feedback and responses received from others in the online community. The process of self-presentation and identity formation is an ongoing negotiation of symbols and meanings within the online social sphere.

However, symbolic interactionism also raises concerns in the age of cyber communication. The anonymity and reduced nonverbal cues in online interactions can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstandings. Symbolic meanings can be easily manipulated or distorted, and the authenticity of online interactions can be questioned. These challenges highlight the need for considering the complexities and nuances of symbolic interactions in the digital realm.

Uses and Gratifications Theory:

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s, focuses on the active role of audiences in selecting and using media to fulfill their social and psychological needs (Adebayo & Mohammed, 2021). This theory asserts that individuals are not passive recipients of media messages but active participants who actively seek out and choose media content that satisfies their specific needs (Nwaoboli, Ezeji& Osife-Kurex, 2022). The theory identifies various gratifications or rewards that individuals seek from media consumption, such as information, entertainment, social interaction, personal identity, and escapism. According to the theory, individuals are motivated to use media to gratify their needs, and their media choices are driven by these motivations.

Critics of the Uses and Gratifications Theory argue that it tends to overlook the power dynamics between media institutions and audiences (Nwaoboli, Adelakun&Asemah, 2023). They highlight that media organizations often shape the available content options and set agendas that influence the range of gratifications that audiences can seek. However, the theory has found practical applications in understanding media consumption patterns, media effects, and audience engagement. It has been used to explore how individuals utilize media to satisfy specific needs in various contexts, such as social media use, television viewing, and online information seeking.

In the age of cyber communication, the Uses and Gratifications Theory can be observed in individuals' active selection and consumption of media content to fulfill specific needs. Social media platforms, such as Instagram and Snapchat, provide various gratifications, such as social interaction, self-presentation, and entertainment. Users actively choose to engage with specific content and interact with others to satisfy their needs for social connection and self-expression (Adebayo & Mohammed, 2021). For example, individuals may use Instagram to share carefully curated images of their lives and seek validation and social approval through likes and comments, fulfilling their need for social interaction and self-presentation.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory:

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, developed by Everett Rogers in 1962, examines how new ideas, technologies, or innovations spread and are adopted within a social system (Rogers, 2003). The theory identifies key factors that influence the rate of adoption, including the perceived relative advantage of the innovation, its compatibility with existing practices, its complexity, trialability (the ability to experiment with the innovation before fully adopting it), and observability (the visibility of the innovation's benefits) (Ayeni&Nwaoboli, 2023). The theory categorizes individuals into different adopter categories based on their willingness to adopt a new idea: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

Critics of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory argue that it oversimplifies the complexity of the adoption process by focusing primarily on individual-level factors and neglecting broader contextual and social factors (Rogers, 2003). They contend that diffusion is influenced by various social, cultural, and economic factors that extend beyond individuals' characteristics (Egbulefu&Nwaoboli, 2023). However, the theory has found practical applications in studying the adoption and diffusion of various innovations, including technology, health practices, and social behaviors. It has been used in fields such as marketing, public health campaigns, and organizational change to

understand and facilitate the adoption of new ideas and practices.

In the age of cyber communication, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory helps explain the adoption and spread of digital innovations and communication practices. For example, the rapid adoption of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok can be understood through this theory. Innovators and early adopters embrace these platforms, recognizing their relative advantages such as connecting with friends, sharing content, and building online communities. As more people observe their peers using these platforms and witness their benefits, they are more likely to adopt them as well, resulting in the diffusion of these innovations throughout society.

Cultivation Theory:

Cultivation Theory, initially proposed by George Gerbner in the 1960s and further developed by Gerbner and Larry Gross, explores the cumulative effects of television viewing on individuals' perceptions and beliefs about the world. The theory suggests that heavy and long-term exposure to television content can shape viewers' perceptions of reality, leading to a shared understanding of social norms, values, and behaviors portrayed in the media. According to Cultivation Theory, the repetitive and consistent messages conveyed by television contribute to the cultivation of a particular worldview among viewers. This cultivation effect is often characterized by heightened perceptions of violence, fear, and mistrust in the real world. The theory argues that individuals who consume more television tend to perceive the world as being more violent and dangerous than it actually is.

Critics of Cultivation Theory argue that it oversimplifies the relationship between television exposure and audience perceptions, neglecting other influential factors such as personal experiences, social interactions, and individual differences. Additionally, some critics contend that the theory fails to adequately address the active role of viewers in interpreting media messages and exercising agency in their media consumption. Despite these criticisms, Cultivation Theory has been widely applied in studying the effects of media violence, stereotypes, and social attitudes. It has been utilized to examine how television programming can shape viewers' perceptions of crime, gender roles, and political issues.

In the age of cyber communication, Cultivation Theory is applicable to the cumulative effects of digital media consumption on individuals' perceptions of the world (Katz., Blumler&Gurevitch, 2004). For instance, heavy exposure to social media, which often highlights idealized versions of people's lives, can cultivate unrealistic expectations and foster feelings of inadequacy among users. This can contribute to the cultivation of a social reality where individuals perceive others as happier, more successful, and more attractive than they actually are. Additionally, the consumption of news through online platforms can shape individuals' perceptions of societal issues. If individuals are consistently exposed to news stories emphasizing violence or fear, they may develop a heightened perception of danger in the world around them.

Social Learning Theory:

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in the 1970s, emphasizes the role of observational learning and social modeling in shaping behavior. The theory posits that individuals learn by observing and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and values portrayed by others, including those depicted in the media. According to Social Learning Theory, media representations of social behaviors can serve as models for individuals to learn from and emulate. The theory highlights the importance of vicarious reinforcement, where individuals learn through the positive or negative consequences experienced by others (Adeleke, 2020). Through exposure to media content, individuals can acquire new knowledge, skills, and behaviors by observing and imitating the actions of media characters or real-life individuals portrayed in the media.

Critics argue that Social Learning Theory does not adequately address the complexities of behavior formation and may downplay the influence of personal factors, such as individual motivations, cognitive processes, and self-efficacy beliefs. Moreover, critics contend that the theory may oversimplify the relationship between media exposure and behavior, ignoring the contextual and situational factors that can influence behavior. Nevertheless, Social Learning Theory has been widely applied to understand media effects, particularly in the context of aggression, prosocial behavior, and advertising. It has been used to examine how media depictions of violence, altruism, and

health behaviors can influence individuals' behaviors and attitudes.

In the age of cyber communication, the Social Learning Theory is evident in individuals' observations and imitations of behaviors portrayed by others, both online and offline. For example, online video platforms like YouTube have popularized tutorial videos, where individuals learn new skills or knowledge by observing and imitating the actions of content creators. Similarly, social media influencers can serve as role models for fashion, lifestyle choices, or fitness routines, and their followers may imitate their behaviors based on the perceived positive outcomes they observe in these influencers' lives. This theory highlights how individuals learn and adopt new behaviors through exposure to media content and the influence of others in the digital space.

Two-Step Flow Theory:

The Two-Step Flow Theory was introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld, Elihu Katz, and Lazarsfeld's colleagues in the late 1940s. It challenges the notion of direct and powerful media effects on individuals and emphasizes the importance of interpersonal influence (Bandura, 1977). The theory suggests that media messages are primarily mediated by opinion leaders or influential individuals who actively interpret and filter media content before disseminating it to others. According to the Two-Step Flow Theory, individuals are more likely to be influenced by these opinion leaders rather than directly by the media itself. Opinion leaders serve as intermediaries who selectively choose, interpret, and transmit media messages to their social networks, which then influence the opinions and behaviors of individuals within those networks.

Critics argue that the Two-Step Flow Theory oversimplifies the complex nature of media influence and neglects the role of social networks, interpersonal interactions, and individual agency. They contend that the theory does not fully capture the multidirectional and multilayered nature of communication processes. Additionally, critics suggest that the theory may not fully account for the impact of new digital media and online social networks on information dissemination and influence. Nevertheless, the Two-Step Flow Theory has been applied to understand the diffusion of information, political communication, marketing strategies, and the spread of public opinion. It has been used to examine how opinion leaders and influencers shape public discourse, consumer behavior, and political campaigns.

In the era of cyber communication, the Two-Step Flow Theory remains relevant, albeit with some modifications. With the advent of digital media and online social networks, the process of information dissemination has become more complex and decentralized. Instead of relying solely on traditional opinion leaders, individuals now have access to a vast array of online influencers, bloggers, and social media personalities who shape their opinions and behaviors.

In the age of cyber communication, opinion leaders can emerge from various online communities and platforms. These individuals accumulate followers and subscribers who perceive them as authorities in specific domains. For example, a YouTube influencer who specializes in technology reviews may have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of their subscribers. The influencer filters and interprets information from various sources before presenting it to their audience, acting as an intermediary between the media and their followers.

Moreover, the concept of opinion leadership has expanded to include online communities and micro-influencers. Online forums, social media groups, and niche communities have become sources of information and influence. Within these communities, individuals with expertise or a strong following can shape opinions and behaviors through their online interactions. This means that the two-step flow may not always follow a strict linear pattern but can involve multiple steps and interactions within an online network.

Conclusion

The study suggest that traditional theories continue to hold value in understanding and analyzing the dynamics of cyber communication. The cultivation effects theory, for instance, helps uncover the influence of online platforms on individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. The diffusion of innovations theory provides insights into how new communication technologies are adopted and spread within the Nigerian context.

Moreover, the uses and gratifications theory helps identify the motivations and purposes behind individuals' engagement with cyber communication, highlighting the role of personalized needs and gratifications. The social cognitive theory offers a lens through which the adaptation of cognitive processes, observational learning, and self-efficacy can be understood in the realm of cyber communication.

The study emphasizes the importance of considering cultural and societal factors when applying traditional theories in the context of cyber communication. Nigerian perspectives provide valuable insights into how these theories manifest within a specific cultural setting, enabling a more nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between traditional theories and digital communication platforms.

References

Adeleke, T. (2020). Cultivation effects of cyber communication in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Communication Studies*, 17(2), 45-63.

Adekunle, F. A. (2021). Exploring the relevance of traditional communication theories in the digital age. *Nigerian Journal of Communication Studies*, 10(2), 78-92.

Adebayo, O. A., & Mohammed, B. S. (2021). Revisiting uses and gratifications theory in the context of cyber communication in Nigeria. *Journal of Mass Communication*, 25(1), 45- 61.

Ahmed, R. A., &Nwankwo, N. A. (2021). The intersection of cyber communication and traditional theories in Nigerian media practice. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14(4), 189-204.

Arijeniwa. A. F. &Nwaoboli. E.P. (2023). Setting agenda for public discourse: Examining the impact of social media on political participation amongst Nigerian youth. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies,10*(1), 36-53.

Ayeni, A. A. &Nwaoboli, E. P. (2023). Media managers' perceptions of the impacts of the Central Bank of Nigeria's Cashless policy on commercialisation of select broadcast stations in Benin City. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies,* 9(8), 19-34.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. UK: Prentice-Hall.

Egbulefu, C. C. &Nwaoboli, E. P. (2023). Political digital advertising: Implications and way forward for Nigeria's 2023 general elections. *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,4*(1), 331-349.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., &Signorielli, N. (2002). Growing Up with Television: Cultivation Processes. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (2nd ed., pp. 43-68). Routledge.

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., &Gurevitch, M. (2004). Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual. In J. G. Blumler& E. Katz (Eds.), The Uses of Mass Communications: *Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research* (pp. 19-32). Sage Publications.

Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B., &Gaudet, H. (1944). *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.

Nwaoboli, E. P., Adelakun, L. A. &Asemah, E. S. (2023). Sexting behaviour among undergraduates of select universities in Edo State, Nigeria. In E. S. Asemah (Ed.). *Mass Media, Politics and Civic Engagement in Nigeria* (pp. 69-80). Enugu: Franklead.

Nwaoboli, E. P., Ezeji, A. & Osife-Kurex, P. (2022). Social media influence on the indulgement in promiscuity among students of select tertiary institution in Benin City, Nigeria. GVU *Journal of Communication Studies*, (4)159-169.

Nwosu, E. (2020). Diffusion of Innovations in Cyber Communication: The Nigerian

Context. *Journal of Communication and Information Management*, 24(2), 75-92.

Obi, C. O., & Okonkwo, I. J. (2021). The adaptation of social cognitive theory in the era of cyber communication: A Nigerian perspective. *Journal of New Media Research*, 15(3), 112- 128.

Ogunlade, O. T., & Ibrahim, A. B. (2021). Examining the impact of cyber communication on media effects theories in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication and Media Studies*, 7(2), 32-49.

Okonkwo, C. (2018). Online Communities and Social Identity Formation in Nigeria. *Journal of Media and Society*, 11(3), 125-142.

Okoro, U. C. (2021). Traditional theories in the digital age: An analysis of communication dynamics in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication Research*, 8(1), 15-28.

Okafor, M. (2019). Uses and Gratifications of Cyber Communication: A Nigerian Perspective. *Journal of Nigerian Communication Scholarship*, 14(1), 85-106.

Rogers, E. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations* (5th ed.). UK: Free Press.