

Technological Innovation and Employee Engagement in the Nigerian Media Industry

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Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving media landscape, technological innovation plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of the industry. This paper examines the impact of technological advancements on employee engagement within the Nigerian media industry. The objectives of the paper are to examine the extent of technological innovation adopted by media organizations in Nigeria, and to identify the factors influencing employee engagement in the context of technological innovation. The paper is anchored on technological determinism theory to explain the influence of technological innovations in the media industry. The paper notes that technological innovation significantly influences employee engagement in the Nigerian media industry. Also, media organizations that embrace technological advancements tend to have higher levels of employee engagement compared to those that lag behind in innovation. In addition, employees perceive technological innovation as an opportunity for skill enhancement, job enrichment, and improved communication within the workplace, leading to heightened engagement levels. In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of aligning technological innovation with organizational culture and leadership practices to maximize its positive impact on employee engagement in the Nigerian media industry. By fostering a culture of innovation, providing adequate support, and addressing challenges proactively, media organizations can harness the transformative power of technology to cultivate engaged, motivated, and productive workforce.

Keywords: Technological Innovation, Employee Engagement, Digital Platforms, Organizational Culture

Introduction:

In the contemporary landscape of organizational management, the symbiotic relationship between technology and the management of human resource management stands as a pivotal axis shaping the dynamics of workplaces worldwide. As technology continues its rapid evolution, it significantly influences how employees are managed by ushering in a plethora of

trends and challenges that necessitate scrutiny and adaptation. In fact, in today's rapidly evolving media landscape, technological innovation plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of the industry.

Advancements in digital communication technologies have placed the global media terrain and the Nigerian mass media at the crossroads of a media revolution, which is marked by a wide range of changes in media production, distribution and use. The revolution which is marked by a wide range of changes in media production, distribution and use. In recent years, the Nigerian media industry has seen significant technological innovations that have revolutionized how information is disseminated, consumed, and interacted with (Ludmilla & Labeat, 2024). These innovations have not only transformed the way media organizations operate but have also had a profound impact on employee engagement within these organizations. The Nigerian media has always required technology to broaden its reach and expand its influence on audiences across Nigeria and the globe (Ugo, Odeh, Odeh & Abu, 2023).

One of the most notable technological innovations in the Nigerian media industry is the advent of digital media platforms. With the widespread availability of the internet and the proliferation of smartphones, social media, and streaming services, traditional media outlets have had to adapt their business models to remain relevant in an increasingly digital landscape (Oso & Akani, 2018). This shift has presented both challenges and opportunities for media organizations and their employees. Olukotun (2018) noted the media, be it radio, television, newspaper, magazine or advertising media, is very crucial to globalisation and civilization. This new digital culture results in the widespread of digital media platforms or internet-enabled communication technologies.

In recent years, the Nigerian media industry has seen significant technological innovations that have revolutionized how information is disseminated, consumed, and interacted with. These innovations have not only transformed the way media organizations operate but have also had a profound impact on employee engagement within these organizations. Several scholars such as, Maikomo, Targema and Obun-Andy (2021), Adejuwon (2018), Ameme and Wireko (2016), etc. have written on technological innovations. It is important to note that most of these studies focus on developed societies. Few studies have been conducted relating technological innovation to employee engagement. While there is limited study on technological innovation and employee engagement in the Nigerian industry, this paper tries to fill the gap. It, therefore,

considers the extent of technological innovation adopted by media organizations in Nigeria and identifies the factors influencing employee engagement in the context of technological innovation.

History of Media Industry Experience regarding their Technological Adoption

The history of the media industry's technological adoption is quite fascinating and spans several key innovations. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg revolutionized mass communication, enabling the widespread distribution of written materials. The telegraph allowed for rapid long-distance communication, transforming news gathering and dissemination. Radio broadcasting enabled real-time transmission of news and entertainment, reaching a broad audience. Television became a dominant medium for news and entertainment, with the ability to broadcast audio and video content (Ludmilla & Labeat, 2024).

The advent of the internet brought about significant changes, facilitating digital media formats, online news platforms, streaming services, and social media. The proliferation of smartphones and social media platforms further transformed media consumption habits, offering personalized content and real-time interaction. AI and big data analytics are increasingly shaping the media landscape, influencing content creation, audience targeting, and business models (Jelena, 2023).

The history of the media industry's technological adoption in Nigeria mirrors global trends but also has unique characteristics shaped by the country's specific socio-economic and political context. The first newspaper in Nigeria, "Iwe Irohin," was established in 1859 by the Anglican missionary Henry Townsend in Abeokuta. This marked the beginning of print media in Nigeria. Subsequent newspapers like "The Lagos Times" (1880), "The Lagos Observer" (1882), and "The Nigerian Chronicle" (1908) played crucial roles in educating the public and advocating for independence. Radio broadcasting began in Nigeria in 1933 with the establishment of the Radio Distribution Service (RDS) by the British colonial government. In 1951, the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) was established, which later became the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in 1957.

Nigeria was the first country in Africa to introduce television broadcasting with the establishment of the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) in 1959. Following WNTV, other regional television stations were established, such as the Eastern Nigeria Television (ENTV)

and the Radio-Television Kaduna (RTK). In 1976, the federal government created the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), which consolidated most regional television stations into a single entity (Jelena, 2023). The 1990s saw the liberalization of the broadcast sector, allowing private television and radio stations to operate. The launch of satellite television services like Multichoice's DSTV brought a wide array of international channels to Nigerian viewers. In the 2000s, digital satellite TV providers like StarTimes and GOtv also entered the market, increasing access to digital content.

The internet became accessible to the Nigerian public in the late 1990s and early 2000s, drastically changing the media landscape. Online news platforms, blogs, and social media have become significant sources of information, with platforms like Nairaland, Sahara Reporters, and Pulse.ng gaining prominence (Gruman & Saks, 2020). The rise of mobile technology, with increasing smartphone penetration, has made mobile platforms a major medium for consuming media content. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have become central to news dissemination, public discourse, and entertainment in Nigeria. Influencers and citizen journalists have gained prominence, contributing to a more decentralized media landscape (Bhat, Bashir & Jan, 2024).

The media industry's technological adoption in Nigeria has been shaped by a combination of global technological trends and local innovations, significantly impacting how information is disseminated and consumed across the country (Ludmilla & Labeat, 2024). Throughout history, each technological advancement has reshaped how media is produced, distributed, and consumed, reflecting broader societal changes and innovations in communication technologies.

Literature Review:

Conceptual Review

There are two concepts central to the discussion in this paper. These include technological innovation and employee engagement. These two concepts are explained in order to give them explanatory power in this paper.

Technological Innovation: technological innovation is a dynamic and multifaceted process that drives progress, fosters economic growth, and shapes the future of societies around the world. By harnessing human ingenuity, scientific knowledge, and technological advancements,

innovators can address pressing challenges and unlock new opportunities for the benefit of humanity (Goldman, 2020).

The concept of technological innovation refers to the process of creating, developing, and implementing new or improved technologies to solve problems, meet needs, or create value. Technological innovation involves the application of scientific knowledge, engineering principles, and creative thinking to develop novel solutions or improve existing products, processes, or services.

Employee Engagement: Employee engagement refers to the emotional commitment and involvement employees have towards their organization and its goals. It goes beyond mere job satisfaction and encompasses factors such as dedication, motivation, and enthusiasm for their work and the organization as a whole (Akpan, et al, 2019). Engaged employees are deeply connected to their work, willing to go the extra mile, and actively contribute to the success of the organization.

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment an employee has towards their organization and its goals. Employee engagement describes the level of enthusiasm and dedication a worker feels toward their job. Enhancing employee engagement is a multifaceted process that involves creating a supportive work environment, offering professional development opportunities, leveraging technology, promoting work-life balance, strengthening communication, involving employees in decision-making, investing in innovation, enhancing leadership, and supporting community initiatives.

Theoretical Review

This paper is anchored on technological determinism theory. The theory states that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act and how the society operates as we move from one technological age to another. It was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1962. Technological determinism is a theory that suggests that technology is the primary driver of social and cultural change. According to this theory, technological developments shape and influence human behavior, societal structures, and cultural norms, often in predictable and inevitable ways.

Technological determinism asserts that technology is the dominant force driving societal change. It argues that advancements in technology dictate the direction and pace of social

progress, with human agency playing a secondary role in shaping outcomes. Proponents of technological determinism argue that certain technological developments create "imperatives" or pressures for change within society. These imperatives compel individuals and institutions to adapt their behaviors, practices, and institutions to accommodate or exploit new technologies (Ameme & Wireko, 2016). Technological determinism suggests that once a new technology is introduced, its adoption and impact on society are inevitable. It implies a linear progression of technological development, with each innovation leading to subsequent changes that are difficult to reverse or resist. Anaeto, Osifeso and Onabanjo (2018), averred that there are critical role of technology in mass communication efforts towards reaching the audience. These technologies in form of digital media applications are channels of messages as well as messages of innovations. It sees technology as value free that can be harnessed by users positively or negatively in a disruptive way

Technological determinism has been a subject of debate among scholars and theorists. While some argue that technology exerts a deterministic influence on society, others emphasize the role of human agency, social context, and cultural values in shaping technological outcomes. The theory explains the linkage between breakthroughs in communication technology and the factors that propel them to effectively drive social change in society (Maikomo, Targema & Obun-Andy, 2021).

In the context of the media industry, technological determinism theory suggests that advancements in technology play a significant role in shaping the structure, practices, and content of media organizations, as well as the consumption patterns of media audiences. Technological determinism has driven the convergence of previously separate media industries (e.g., print, broadcast, telecommunications) into integrated digital platforms. This convergence blurs the boundaries between different types of media and creates new opportunities for cross-platform content distribution and monetization. Technological determinism theory helps us understand how advancements in technology drive changes in the media industry, influencing everything from production processes and content formats to audience behaviours and business models.

Technological determinism has been criticised based on the fact that technology does not force itself on members of the society. Human creates technology and chooses to use it. For instance, people invent television and then decide to watch it. There is no inherent pressure from the technology to be used; instead technology needs people to engage themselves at some point or

another, whether using a microwave or driving a car (Adejuwon, 2018). The decision of using technology and experiencing its effects, therefore, lies in the hands of humans.

Technological determinism is a theory that posits technology as the primary driver of social change, shaping human behavior, institutions, and culture. While it provides valuable insights into the impact of technology on society, it is also subject to critique and debate, particularly regarding the role of human agency and social context in shaping technological outcomes.

Methodology

The paper is qualitative in nature, focusing on reviewing existing literature on the identified problem. The paper reviewed existing journals, textbooks, official/government documents, and internet materials related to the work. This approach allows for synthesizing and summarizing existing research on the topic, providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge, identifying trends, controversies, and gaps in the literature.

Overview of the Nigerian Media Industry

Mass media are believed to be central to the overall development of the society. This perception, which has become accepted by different authorities of mass communication is derived from the age-old traditional roles of the media as agent of change (Igben, 2016).

The Nigerian media industry is a dynamic and diverse sector that plays a crucial role in the country's socio-political and economic landscape. The Nigerian media industry has a rich history dating back to the 19th century. The Nigerian media industry is one of the largest and most dynamic in Africa, playing a critical role in the country's political, economic, and social landscape. The Nigerian mass media have been described as a product of nationalist struggle (Oso, et al, 2011). The Nigerian media industry dates back to the colonial era with the establishment of newspapers like *Iwe Irohin* in 1859. These early publications were primarily used to disseminate news and missionary activities. Post-1960, the media landscape saw rapid growth with more newspapers, radio, and television stations emerging (Simon, Abimaku & Moven, 2022). This period was marked by increased government control, especially during military regimes.

Over the years, the media industry has witnessed tremendous progress in terms of expansion, coverage, technology, personnel and managerial capability. According to Ukonu (2006), the

electronic press era is witnessing breath-taking improvements in the mode of message gathering, storage, retrieval, packaging and dissemination. The print media are also circulating at electronic speed through the satellite and computer-aided technologies thus making the entire world a global village.

The Nigerian media industry is robust and diverse, reflecting the country's complex socio-political landscape. While it faces significant challenges, particularly concerning press freedom and economic sustainability, the industry continues to evolve, driven by digital innovation and a vibrant journalistic culture (Agba, 2017).

Technological Innovation in the Nigerian Media Industry

The society we live in these days is a fast developing one and it is characterized by various technological changes. The changes are fast encroaching into every sector of life, however the media seems to be one of the various sectors that consistently tune in to whatever form of technology seems available (Akpan, et al, 2019). The introduction of the internet is a major technological advancement in the Nigerian society which has given birth to what is referred to as the new media (Ayotunde, 2012). The importance and role of technology in the media process cannot be over emphasised as since the evolution of technology, visible changes have been recorded in the success of the media.

Technological advancements have significantly transformed the Nigerian media industry, impacting how content is produced, distributed, and consumed (Olukotun, 2018). The rise of internet penetration has given birth to numerous online news platforms such as *Sahara Reporters*, *Premium Times*, *The Cable*, and *Naij.com*. These platforms leverage digital technology to provide real-time news updates and multimedia content. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are crucial for news dissemination and audience engagement. Media houses use these platforms to reach broader audiences, share breaking news, and interact with readers (Ukonu, 2022).

Increased internet penetration has revolutionized how media content is accessed. More Nigerians are consuming news, entertainment, and educational content online. The proliferation of smartphones has made it easier for people to access media content on the go. Mobile apps and responsive websites have become crucial for media companies (Jelena, 2023).

Many media organizations have developed mobile applications to deliver news directly to users' smartphones. These apps often include features like push notifications, live streaming, and offline reading. Media organizations are incorporating data journalism to provide in-depth analysis and interactive visualizations. This approach helps in explaining complex issues through data-driven storytelling. Media organizations sometimes use crowdsourcing to gather information and eyewitness accounts, enhancing their reporting capabilities (Ameme & Wireko, 2016).

Technological innovation significantly influences employee engagement in the Nigerian media industry. Also, media organizations that embrace technological advancements tend to have higher levels of employee engagement compared to those that lag behind in innovation. In Nigeria, these technological innovations have significantly impacted the media industry. Technological innovations continue to shape the media industry, making it more dynamic and interactive. In Nigeria, these advancements are driving growth, improving access to information, and empowering content creators and consumers alike.

Technological innovation is reshaping the Nigerian media industry, making it more dynamic and accessible. These advancements offer new opportunities for engaging audiences, enhancing storytelling, and improving journalistic practices. However, addressing challenges like the digital divide and monetization remains crucial for the industry's sustainable growth (Ameme & Wireko, 2016).

Employee Engagement in the Nigerian Media Industry

Technological innovations have led to increased competition and the need for media companies to produce content more efficiently and effectively. This has put pressure on employees to acquire new skills, adapt to new technologies, and work more collaboratively across different departments. In response, many media organizations in Nigeria have invested in training programs and professional development initiatives to help employees stay abreast of the latest technological trends and tools (Jelena, 2023). On the other hand, technological innovations have also opened up new avenues for creativity and expression, allowing media professionals to experiment with new formats, storytelling techniques, and distribution channels. This has fostered a sense of excitement and empowerment among employees, as they are encouraged to explore new ideas and push the boundaries of traditional media (Valentina & Niccolo, 2020). The Nigerian media industry is dynamic and fast-paced, with constant changes in technology, audience preferences, and regulatory frameworks. This can create both opportunities and

challenges for employee engagement (Bhat, Bashir & Jan, 2024). On one hand, it offers opportunities for creativity and innovation, but on the other hand, it can lead to stress and burnout if employees feel overwhelmed by the pace of change. Employee engagement in the Nigerian media industry is a topic of growing importance as organizations recognize the value of having a motivated and committed workforce. Like in any other industry, engaged employees in the media sector are more likely to be productive, innovative, and dedicated to achieving organizational goals (Sundarrajan & Krishnan, 2024).

The rapid advancement of technology has transformed the way news and information are produced, distributed, and consumed. Media organizations that invest in training their employees on new technologies and digital skills are more likely to have engaged workforce who feel equipped to navigate the digital landscape. The demanding nature of work in the media industry, with tight deadlines and irregular hours, can take a toll on employees' work-life balance. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being by offering flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and adequate time off can improve engagement and reduce burnout.

Employee engagement in the Nigerian media industry is influenced by a combination of factors including the dynamic nature of the industry, ethical considerations, resource constraints, diversity and inclusion efforts, technological advancements, recognition and feedback mechanisms, and work-life balance initiatives. Organizations that address these factors effectively are more likely to have engaged and motivated employees who contribute to their success.

Technological Innovation and Employee Engagement

Technological innovation has a significant impact on employee engagement in Nigeria, particularly in industries like the media where digital advancements play a crucial role. Technological innovation has a profound impact on employee engagement in the media sector. These innovations can enhance communication, collaboration, productivity, and overall job satisfaction, which are key components of employee engagement. Technological innovations such as digital platforms, content management systems, and mobile devices provide employees with easier access to information and tools necessary for their work. This increased accessibility can enhance engagement by empowering employees to perform their tasks more efficiently and effectively.

With the proliferation of digital communication tools and platforms, remote work has become more feasible in Nigeria. This flexibility allows employees to have better control over their work schedules and can lead to higher levels of engagement by reducing commuting stress and improving work-life balance. Technology enables seamless collaboration and communication among employees, regardless of their physical location. This fosters a sense of teamwork and camaraderie, which is essential for engagement, especially in a diverse and dispersed workforce like Nigeria's (Valentina & Niccolo, 2020). Technological innovation encourages a culture of innovation and creativity by providing employees with the tools and platforms to experiment and explore new ideas. This can lead to higher levels of engagement as employees feel empowered to contribute to the organization's success in meaningful ways.

Technological innovations have led to significant changes in employee engagement, such as, Remote Reporting, Content Collaboration, Interactive Storytelling, etc. (Sundarrajan & Krishnan, 2024). Technological innovation significantly impacts employee engagement by enhancing communication, providing flexibility, supporting professional development, improving performance management, and promoting well-being.

Furthermore, technological innovations have enabled media organizations to better engage with their audiences through interactive content, personalized experiences, and real-time feedback mechanisms. This has not only enhanced the quality of the content being produced but has also increased employee satisfaction and morale, as they see the direct impact of their work on audience engagement and satisfaction.

Conclusion

The changing technologies in the Nigerian mass media offers new means of reaching out to the teeming population as well as the audience, thanks to their interactive nature, which gives room for feedback as well as immediate communication. The various media in Nigeria have passed through various developmental changes that have altered the traditional ways by which information dissemination.

Technological innovation has a multifaceted impact on employee engagement in Nigeria, from improving access to information and tools to fostering collaboration and creativity. Organizations that embrace and leverage technology effectively are more likely to have engaged and motivated employees who contribute to their success. Technological innovation

has played a crucial role in shaping employee engagement in the Nigerian media industry. While it has presented challenges in terms of skill acquisition and adaptation, it has also provided exciting opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and audience engagement. As the industry continues to evolve, media organizations and their employees will need to embrace technological innovations as a means of staying competitive and relevant in an increasingly digital world.

While technological innovation in the Nigerian media industry offers numerous opportunities to enhance employee engagement through increased efficiency, access to training, flexibility, and collaboration, organizations must also be mindful of potential challenges such as job displacement concerns and digital overload. By addressing these challenges proactively and fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, media organizations can maximize the positive impact of technological innovation on employee engagement.

Enhancing employee engagement in the media industry in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the unique challenges and opportunities within the sector. Involving employees in decision-making processes, especially those related to their work. This can increase their sense of ownership and commitment. There is need to foster a positive work environment by implementing programs to regularly recognize and reward employees for their contributions, can include awards, shout-outs in meetings, or bonuses.

It is believed that the advent of the new technologies has brought about an encouraging growth and change in the Nigerian media. Technologies have sprung up to aid the functionality of our media system as such it is recommended that media planners and those generally involved in the media business must be abreast of the various technological changes so as to be able to match any form of innovation that could affect the media industry.

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