

The Social Impact of New Media Examining Investigating/ Innovations and Diversification

Muogbo Ngozi

Department of Social Sciences, School of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic, Oko

Abstract: This study examined the social impact of new media innovations and diversification in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research objectives and research questions were formulated for the study. A survey research design was adopted in the study. The population consisted of 290 residents of Awka, Anambra State. A sample size of 165 respondents was determined using Kercie and Morgan (1970) sampling methods. A semi-structured questionnaire was design to incorporated open-ended questions addressing key themes such as the social impacts of new media, perceptions of innovations, and responses to diversification based on the research questions and objectives. The survey utilized Likert scale questions to measure opinions and perceptions. However, the survey questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure content validity. Thus, the reliability of the survey questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted among a small sample of respondents. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was be calculated to measure the internal consistency of the survey items. And a reliability value of 0.89 was realized. Thus, the data collected were subjected to appropriate statistical method through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The findings of the study revealed and concluded that new media significantly influences social dynamics. While innovations such as social media and e-commerce are positively perceived for their contributions to community engagement and economic efficiency.

Key points: Social Impact, New Media, Innovations, Diversification, Digital Communication Social Dynamics.

Introduction

In the contemporary digital era, the advent and proliferation of new media have revolutionized communication, transforming the way individuals interact, share information, and perceive the world around them. New media, characterized by digital platforms and technologies, encompass a broad spectrum of mediums, including social networking sites, online forums, blogs, streaming services, and mobile applications. These platforms facilitate instant connectivity, enabling users to engage in real-time conversations, share multimedia content, and participate in virtual communities across geographical boundaries.

According to Castells (2021) the rapid evolution of the internet in the late 20th century marked a fundamental moment in this development, facilitating unprecedented access to global networks of information exchange. Initially, the internet primarily served as a platform for email communication and basic web browsing. However, with the emergence of Web 2.0 in the early 21st century, characterized by user-generated content and interactive online experiences, new media technologies began to proliferate rapidly (O'Reilly, 2015). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube revolutionized the way people connect, share, and consume information, ushering in an era of digital interconnectedness (Jenkins, 2016). Furthermore, the proliferation of mobile devices and wireless connectivity has accelerated the evolution of new media technologies, enabling ubiquitous access to information and communication channels (Goggin, 2016). The widespread adoption of smartphones and tablets has empowered individuals to engage with digital content

anytime, anywhere, blurring the boundaries between online and offline experiences. Moreover, advancements in digital technology have led to the convergence of media platforms, as traditional media outlets embrace digital formats to reach broader audiences (Jenkins, 2016). Moreso, streaming services like Netflix and Spotify have disrupted traditional broadcast and music industries, offering on-demand access to a vast array of multimedia content (Goggin, 2016).

Understanding the social impact of new media allows us to comprehend how individuals, communities, and institutions engage with and are affected by digital technologies. By exploring the ways in which new media platforms shape public discourse, influence cultural representations, and impact traditional industries, researchers can uncover nuanced insights into societal trends and behaviors (Castells, 2019). Moreover, investigating the social implications of new media regulation and policy helps in fostering a conducive environment for responsible digital citizenship, where issues such as privacy, security, and freedom of expression are carefully balanced (Van Dijck, 2013). Furthermore, analyzing the effects of innovations and diversification in new media technology, researchers can identify potential risks, such as the amplification of misinformation and polarization, as well as opportunities for enhancing civic engagement and cultural diversity (boyd & Ellison, 2018). Additionally, understanding how new media interacts with existing social structures and norms allows for the development of strategies to harness its potential for positive social change, such as promoting inclusive representation and empowering marginalized communities (Jenkins et al., 2016).

This study aims to examine and investigate the social impact of new media innovations and diversification. By analyzing the ways in which individuals and communities engage with and are influenced by new media technologies, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the broader implications of these innovations examining how the diversification of new media platforms and content contributes to shaping social dynamics, cultural practices, and collective identities in contemporary society.

Statement of the Problem

The pervasive influence of new media in contemporary society has sparked significant interest in understanding its multifaceted social impact. This study aims to investigate the ramifications of new media innovations and diversification on various aspects of social interaction, communication dynamics, and cultural practices. As digital platforms continue to evolve and diversify, there is a pressing need to critically examine how these advancements shape individual behaviors, community structures, and societal norms. By exploring the complexities of new media's influence, this research seeks to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the rapidly changing landscape of digital communication, contributing to a deeper understanding of its social implications and informing strategies for fostering responsible and inclusive digital environments.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the social impact of new media examining investigating/ innovations and diversification. Specifically, we sought to:

- To examine the social impacts of new media on the residents of Awka, Anambra State.
- To examine the social impacts of new media innovations on the residents of Awka, Anambra State.
- To examine the social impacts of new media diversification on the residents of Awka, Anambra State.

Research Questions

- What are the social impacts of new media on the residents of Awka, Anambra State?
- What are the effects of new media innovations on the residents of Awka, Anambra State?
- What are the effects of new media diversification on the residents of Awka, Anambra State?

Significance of the Study

This research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the social implications of new media technologies, providing insights into their multifaceted effects on individuals and society. Additionally, by examining the role of diversification in shaping these impacts, this study will offer valuable insights for media practitioners, policymakers, and scholars interested in understanding and responding to the challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving media landscape. Finally, this research has practical implications for fostering more inclusive, equitable, and socially responsible media environments.

Literature Review

The Concept of New Media in Nigeria

New media refers to digital communication platforms and technologies that have revolutionized the way information is produced, distributed, and consumed. These platforms include social media, online news outlets, streaming services, and digital publishing platforms. New media enables individuals to create, share, and engage with content in real-time, breaking down traditional barriers to communication and allowing for greater interactivity and participation. It has profoundly impacted various aspects of society, from politics and activism to entertainment and culture, empowering individuals to shape narratives, mobilize communities, and connect with global audiences (Oluwatosin, 2020; Okoro, 2021).

With the widespread adoption of smartphones, increasing internet penetration, and the proliferation of social media platforms, Nigerians are actively participating in shaping narratives, fostering dialogue, and mobilizing for social change like never before (NCC, 2023). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become integral channels for expression and engagement among Nigerians. These platforms provide avenues for individuals to voice their opinions, share experiences, and connect with like-minded individuals across geographical boundaries. Nigerian youth, in particular, have leveraged these platforms to amplify their voices on issues ranging from politics and governance to entertainment and culture, exerting influence and driving conversations both locally and internationally (Akindele, 2019).

Moreover, Oluwatosin (2020) opined that the rise of citizen journalism facilitated by new media has democratized the flow of information in Nigeria. Ordinary citizens armed with smartphones capture and share news events in real-time, circumventing traditional media gatekeepers and providing alternative perspectives on unfolding events. This phenomenon was evident during the #EndSARS protests in 2020, where Nigerian youth utilized social media to document police brutality, coordinate demonstrations, and demand institutional reforms, sparking a nationwide movement that reverberated across the globe. Additionally, the emergence of platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify has provided Nigerian creatives with unprecedented opportunities to showcase their talent to global audiences. From Nollywood movies and Afrobeat music to comedy skits and fashion trends, Nigerian content creators are leveraging new media platforms to redefine narratives, challenge stereotypes, and promote cultural exchange on a global scale (Oluwatosin, 2020; Adesina, 2022).

The Innovations in New Media Technologies

Innovations refer to the introduction of new ideas, methods, products, or processes that bring about significant improvements or changes in various fields. These improvements can enhance efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, or user experience, among other factors. Innovations are crucial drivers of progress and evolution in society, economy, and technology (Rogers, 2013; West & Bogers, 2017).

Innovations in new media technologies have revolutionized the way information is disseminated, consumed, and interacted with in contemporary society. The rapid evolution of digital platforms, including social media, streaming services, and virtual reality, has transformed communication patterns, entertainment experiences, and cultural dynamics. One notable innovation is the

emergence of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies, which offer immersive and interactive experiences that blur the lines between the physical and digital worlds (Steuer, 2012). Furthermore, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning have led to personalized content recommendations, chatbots, and voice assistants, enhancing user experiences and streamlining interactions with digital media (Russell & Norvig, 2020). AI-driven algorithms power social media feeds, news aggregators, and content streaming platforms, shaping the content users encounter based on their preferences, behaviors, and demographic information. However, concerns have been raised regarding algorithmic biases and the potential reinforcement of filter bubbles, where users are exposed to content that aligns with their existing beliefs, potentially exacerbating polarization and misinformation (Noble, 2018).

According to Burgess & Green (2018), the proliferation of user-generated content platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok, and podcasting platforms, has democratized content creation and distribution, allowing individuals and communities to share their stories, perspectives, and talents with global audiences. Moreover, crowdsourced content has diversified media representations and challenged traditional gatekeepers, empowering marginalized voices and fostering participatory culture (Jenkins, 2016). However, concerns persist regarding issues of moderation, copyright infringement, and the spread of harmful or misleading content in unregulated online spaces. Additionally, blockchain technology has introduced innovations in digital ownership, decentralized finance, and content monetization, offering new opportunities for creators, artists, and entrepreneurs to monetize their work, bypassing intermediaries and engaging directly with audiences (Swan, 2015). Blockchain-based platforms enable transparent and secure transactions, facilitate micropayments, and protect intellectual property rights, potentially revolutionizing the economics of digital media (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016). However, challenges remain in scaling blockchain solutions, ensuring inclusivity, and addressing environmental concerns related to energy consumption in blockchain mining operations (Narayanan et al., 2016).

Diversification of New Media Platforms

Diversification refers to the process of expanding or varying the range of products, services, or content offered within a particular domain or industry. In the context of new media platforms, diversification can involve introducing new features, content formats, or functionalities to appeal to a broader audience, adapt to changing trends, or differentiate from competitors (Chen et al., 2023). Recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms, streaming services, and online content hubs has transformed how individuals consume and interact with media. As these platforms evolve, they diversify their offerings to cater to diverse user preferences, technological advancements, and market demands. Scholars have extensively researched the implications of diversification in new media platforms, exploring its effects on user engagement, content creation, and cultural dynamics. For instance, a study by Zhang, et al. (2020) examined how the diversification of content formats on social media platforms influences user engagement and satisfaction. They found that platforms that offer a variety of content types, such as text, images, and videos, tend to attract more diverse audiences and foster higher levels of user interaction. Furthermore, the diversification of new media platforms has significant economic ramifications, as highlighted by research conducted by Smith (2019). Smith's study investigated how streaming services like Netflix and Hulu diversify their content libraries to attract subscribers and remain competitive in the digital entertainment market. The findings underscored the importance of content diversity in retaining user interest and driving revenue growth in the streaming industry.

According to Johnson (2021) user-generated content platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok, empower individuals to create and share diverse multimedia content, challenging traditional media hierarchies and narratives. This democratization of media creation fosters greater inclusivity and representation, amplifying marginalized voices and perspectives. However, alongside its benefits, the diversification of new media platforms also raises concerns about information overload, filter bubbles, and algorithmic bias. Scholars like Nguyen, et al. (2018) have investigated how algorithmic recommendation systems on social media platforms contribute to the polarization of

online discourse by promoting content that aligns with users' preexisting beliefs and preferences. Such research highlights the need for platform transparency, algorithmic accountability, and user empowerment to mitigate the negative consequences of diversification in digital media environments.

Social Impact of New Media Innovations and Diversification in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the social impact of new media innovations and diversification has been profound, shaping various aspects of society ranging from communication patterns to cultural dynamics. The advent of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have revolutionized how Nigerians connect, share information, and engage in public discourse. Studies have highlighted the role of new media in facilitating political mobilization and activism, particularly among the youth population (Omotayo & Akinbode, 2019). Furthermore, the diversification of new media content has enriched cultural exchange and expression in Nigeria. With the rise of digital platforms for music streaming, video sharing, and online publishing, Nigerian artists, writers, and content creators have gained global visibility and audiences. This diversification has not only bolstered the country's creative industries but has also facilitated cultural diplomacy and cross-cultural dialogue (Adeleke, 2020). However, scholars have also raised concerns about the impact of digital piracy and intellectual property rights violations on the sustainability of Nigeria's cultural sector (Adegbola & Oni, 2018).

Economically, new media innovations have created opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation in Nigeria. Social media influencers, online retailers, and digital marketing agencies have emerged as key players in the country's digital economy, leveraging new media platforms to reach consumers and drive business growth (Okoli & Agbo, 2019). Moreover, the proliferation of fintech solutions, such as mobile payment apps and crowdfunding platforms, has expanded financial inclusion and access to capital for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria (Ifeoma et al., 2021). However, the social impact of new media innovations in Nigeria is not without challenges. The spread of misinformation and fake news on digital platforms has fueled social tensions, political polarization, and communal violence in the country (Ogbogu & Njoku, 2020). Moreover, concerns have been raised about the digital divide, with disparities in access to and proficiency in new media technologies exacerbating inequalities along socioeconomic and geographic lines (Afolabi & Salau, 2019). Moreover, Akpan (2018) emphasized the need for critical engagement with digital content to mitigate the homogenizing effects of Western-dominated media narratives on Nigerian cultural identity.

Theoretical Framework

Social Construction of -Technology (SCOT)

The Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) is a theoretical framework within the sociology of technology that emphasizes the social factors shaping the development, adoption, and use of technology. Developed by Wiebe Bijker, Thomas Hughes, and Trevor Pinch in the 1980s, SCOT challenges technological determinism by highlighting how social actors, interests, and contexts influence technological innovation and implementation (Pinch et al., 1984). SCOT posits that technologies do not emerge in isolation but are instead shaped by the values, beliefs, and interests of various social groups involved in their design, production, and use. Central to SCOT is the concept of technological artifacts as socially constructed entities, meaning their meanings, functions, and impacts are contingent upon social processes and negotiations (Hughes, 1983; Bijker, 1995; MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999).

According to SCOT, the development of a technology involves the articulation of different interpretations, known as interpretative flexibility, by various stakeholders. These interpretations reflect diverse perspectives, needs, and agendas, and they compete for dominance in shaping the final design and use of the technology. The process of negotiation and stabilization, guided by power dynamics and social contexts, determines which interpretation becomes dominant and shapes the technological artifact (Bijker et al., 2012). Furthermore, SCOT emphasizes the importance of

studying controversies surrounding technologies to understand how they are socially constructed. These controversies arise when different social groups with conflicting interpretations and interests engage in debates, struggles, and alliances over the meaning, design, and control of a technology. Through these controversies, the social dimensions of technology become visible, revealing underlying power relations, values, and societal concerns (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999).

Studies have investigated how social norms, cultural values, and political structures shape the reception and appropriation of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp in diverse societies. Employing SCOT, researchers can uncover the socio-technical networks that shape the design, implementation, and use of new media technologies, offering nuanced perspectives on their social implications (Gunkel, 2014). Moreover, SCOT provides a framework for understanding the power dynamics inherent in technological innovation and diffusion processes. Research applying SCOT to new media has examined issues such as digital divide, algorithmic bias, and platform governance, highlighting how socio-political factors influence who benefits from technological innovations and who is marginalized. Foregrounding the role of social actors and their interpretations of technology, SCOT encourages critical reflection on the distribution of power and resources in digital ecosystems (Gillespie, 2010).

Furthermore, SCOT offers insights into the dynamics of technological change and continuity in the context of new media. Scholars have used SCOT to analyze the evolution of platforms, such as the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and the emergence of mobile social media applications, tracing the socio-cultural factors that drive technological innovation and adoption (Bødker & Klokmoose, 2011). Examining how users and stakeholders negotiate the meanings and uses of new media technologies over time, SCOT helps elucidate the ongoing transformations in digital communication practices and their societal implications (Gillespie, 2010).

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative aspect allows for in-depth exploration of the social impacts of new media, while the quantitative aspect enables the measurement and statistical analysis of these impacts. This comprehensive approach provides a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Population

The study population consists of 290 residents of Awka, Anambra State, who interact with various forms of new media technologies. Participants were drawn from diverse demographics to ensure a comprehensive representation of the community's experiences and perspectives.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 165 respondents was determined utilizing Kercie and Morgan (1970) sampling methods, ensuring adequate representation across different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and technological literacy levels within the community.

Instrumentation, Validation, and Reliability

To facilitate data collection, semi-structured interview guides were crafted to capture qualitative insights. These guides incorporated open-ended questions addressing key themes such as the social impacts of new media, perceptions of innovations, and responses to diversification. Additionally, a structured survey questionnaire was developed, comprising both closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis and open-ended inquiries to gather nuanced perspectives. The questionnaire utilized Likert scale questions to gauge opinions and perceptions accurately.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, they underwent rigorous scrutiny by a panel of experts in media studies and social sciences. Feedback from these experts was integrated to refine the instruments and ensure alignment with the research objectives. Furthermore,

a pilot test was conducted among a subset of respondents to assess the consistency of responses and the reliability of the questionnaire. The internal consistency of the survey items was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a reliability value of 0.89.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize sample characteristics and inferential statistics such as regression analysis to elucidate significant relationships between variables. Qualitative data from interviews underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes regarding the social impact of new media. Additionally, comparative analysis was employed to assess the differential effects of various media innovations and diversification strategies within the Awka community. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0, ensuring methodological rigor and robustness in the interpretation of findings.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Questions One

What are the social impacts of new media on the residents of Awka, Anambra State?

Table 1: Social impacts of new media on the residents of Awka, Anambra State

S/N	Items	D	N	A
1.	New media has improved communication among residents of Awka.	35 (21%)	40 (24%)	90 (55%)
2.	New media has increased awareness of local issues in Awka.	40 (24%)	45 (27%)	80 (48%)
3.	New media has strengthened community connections in Awka.	30 (18%)	50 (30%)	85 (52%)
4.	New media has empowered residents to express their opinions.	45 (27%)	25 (15%)	95 (58%)
5.	New media has diversified cultural perspectives in Awka.	35 (21%)	55 (33%)	75 (45%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on the social impacts of new media on the residents of Awka, Anambra State. Each item is assessed based on the degree of agreement, with options ranging from "Disagree (D)" to "Neutral (N)" to "Agree (A)." The majority of respondents (55%) agreed that new media has improved communication among residents of Awka. This indicates a recognition of the positive impact of new media on enhancing communication within the community. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) agreed that new media has increased awareness of local issues in Awka. This suggests that new media platforms are effective in disseminating information about local issues to the residents of Awka. A slight majority of respondents (52%) agreed that new media has strengthened community connections in Awka. This implies that new media platforms have facilitated stronger bonds and connections among residents of Awka. The highest proportion of respondents (58%) agreed that new media has empowered residents to express their opinions. This indicates that new media platforms have provided residents with a platform to voice their opinions and participate in public discourse. A significant portion of respondents (45%) agreed that new media has diversified cultural perspectives in Awka. This suggests that new media platforms have contributed to the exposure of residents to a diverse range of cultural perspectives.

Research Questions Two

What are the effects of new media innovations on the residents of Awka, Anambra State?

Table 2: The effects of new media innovations on the residents of Awka, Anambra State

S/N	Items	D	N	A
1.	Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram positively impact community engagement in Awka.	40 (24.24%)	50 (30.30%)	75 (45.45%)
2.	E-commerce platforms make shopping more convenient for residents of Awka.	50 (30.30%)	30 (18.18%)	85 (51.52%)
3.	Online educational platforms expand learning opportunities for residents in Awka.	60 (36.36%)	45 (27.27%)	60 (36.36%)
4.	Crowdfunding platforms facilitate entrepreneurial endeavors among residents in Awka.	60 (36.36%)	35 (21.21%)	70 (42.42%)
5.	Mobile payment systems improve access to banking services for residents in Awka.	55 (33.33%)	40 (24.24%)	70 (42.42%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics on the social impacts of new media innovations on the residents of Awka, Anambra State. A significant proportion of respondents (45.45%) agreed that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram positively impact community engagement in Awka. This indicates a recognition of the positive role these platforms play in fostering community involvement. The majority of respondents (51.52%) agreed that e-commerce platforms make shopping more convenient for residents of Awka. This suggests that these platforms have substantially enhanced shopping experiences by making them more accessible and efficient. The responses were more divided here, with 36.36% agreeing and another 36.36% disagreeing. This indicates mixed perceptions about the impact of online educational platforms on expanding learning opportunities, reflecting varying levels of access or utilization among residents. A considerable portion of respondents (42.42%) agreed that crowdfunding platforms facilitate entrepreneurial endeavors among residents. This suggests that these platforms are recognized as valuable tools for supporting local entrepreneurship. Similarly, 42.42% of respondents agreed that mobile payment systems improve access to banking services for residents in Awka. This indicates that these systems are seen as effective in enhancing financial inclusion and convenience.

Research Questions Three

What are the effects of new media diversification on the residents of Awka, Anambra State?

Table 3: The effects of new media diversification on the residents of Awka, Anambra State

S/N	Items	D	N	A
1.	New media diversification has addressed social issues and promote positive change within our community.	45 (27.3%)	30 (18.2%)	90 (54.5%)
2.	New media platforms offer a wide range of information and entertainment options.	45 (27.3%)	45 (27.3%)	75 (45.5%)
3.	New media diversification has encouraged greater civic participation among residents.	55 (33.3%)	25 (15.2%)	85 (51.5%)
4.	New media platforms have contributed to a more informed and politically engaged community.	45 (27.3%)	20 (12.1%)	100 (60.6%)
5.	Diverse media content has played a role in promoting social cohesion and unity among residents.	50 (30.3%)	35 (21.2%)	80 (48.5%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 3 presents data on the perceived effects of new media diversification on the residents of Awka, Anambra State. A majority of respondents (54.5%) agree that new media diversification has effectively addressed social issues and promoted positive change within their community. This indicates a strong recognition of the positive impact of new media in fostering social improvements in Awka. Nearly half of the respondents (45.5%) agree that new media platforms provide a diverse array of information and entertainment options. This highlights the role of new media in enhancing access to varied content for the residents. A slight majority (51.5%) agree that new media diversification has encouraged greater civic participation among residents. This suggests that new media is instrumental in engaging citizens in civic activities and discussions. A significant majority (60.6%) agree that new media platforms have made the community more informed and politically engaged. This implies that residents are benefiting from the political and informational content available through new media. Almost half of the respondents (48.5%) agree that diverse media content has played a role in promoting social cohesion and unity among residents. This suggests that new media contributes to bringing the community together by providing content that fosters unity.

Discussion of Findings

The data in Table 1 indicates that new media significantly impacts the social lives of Awka residents. Most notably, 55% of respondents agreed that new media improves communication, aligning with studies that highlight the role of digital platforms in enhancing interpersonal connections (Hampton et al., 2011). Additionally, 48% believe it raises awareness of local issues, consistent with findings by Gladwell (2010) on social media's role in information dissemination. The empowerment of residents to express their opinions (58%) is corroborated by Shirky (2011), who emphasizes social media's role in amplifying individual voices. Moreover, 45% agreed that new media diversifies cultural perspectives, reflecting Jenkins (2016) assertion on participatory cultures facilitated by digital media.

Table 2 reveals mixed perceptions regarding the effects of new media innovations. For instance, 45.45% of respondents acknowledge the positive impact of social media on community engagement, which mirrors findings by Ellison et al. (2017) on social capital and online networks. The convenience of e-commerce (51.52%) supports findings by Cao et al. (2015) on the efficiency of online shopping. However, the divided opinion on online educational platforms (36.36% agreement and disagreement) highlights disparities in digital access and utilization, consistent with Warschauer's (2023) digital divide theory. Furthermore, the role of crowdfunding (42.42%) and mobile payments (42.42%) in fostering entrepreneurship and financial inclusion aligns with research by Mollick (2014) and Demirgüç-Kunt et al. (2018) on the transformative impact of these innovations.

Table 3 highlights the positive effects of new media diversification, with 54.5% of respondents acknowledging its role in addressing social issues and promoting change, supporting Castells' (2019) argument on the network society's impact on social movements. The provision of diverse information and entertainment (45.5%) aligns with Napoli's (2011) study on media diversity enhancing content access. Additionally, the encouragement of civic participation (51.5%) and increased political engagement (60.6%) resonate with Loader and Mercea's (2011) findings on digital media fostering civic and political activities. Moreover, 48.5% agreeing that diverse media content promotes social cohesion aligns with Putnam's (2020) concept of social capital, where media diversity fosters community bonding.

Conclusion

This study focused on examining the social impact of new media innovations and diversification, particularly focusing on the residents of Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. However, the study emphasized on the profound influence of new media on the social lives of Awka residents. The majority of respondents acknowledged the role of new media in enhancing communication, raising awareness of local issues, empowering individual expression, and diversifying cultural perspectives. These findings resonate with existing research highlighting the democratizing potential of digital

platforms in fostering connectivity, information dissemination, and cultural exchange within communities.

Additionally, the study examined the effects of new media innovations on the Awka community. While perceptions varied, there was consensus on the positive impacts of innovations such as social media on community engagement and e-commerce efficiency. However, disparities in access and utilization were evident, particularly concerning online educational platforms, underscoring the ongoing challenges related to digital divide and equitable access to educational resources. Moreover, the study explored the implications of new media diversification in Awka. Respondents recognized the role of diverse media content in addressing social issues, promoting civic participation, and fostering social cohesion. These findings underscore the importance of media diversity in enriching public discourse, empowering marginalized voices, and enhancing collective identity and solidarity within communities.

Recommendations

Based on the study on the social impact of new media innovations and diversification in Awka, Anambra State, the following recommendations were made;

- Government agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions should collaborate to provide training programs and infrastructure development initiatives aimed at improving digital skills and expanding internet connectivity, particularly in underserved communities.
- Policymakers should develop and enforce regulations that promote responsible digital citizenship, protect user privacy, and mitigate the spread of misinformation and harmful content online.
- Media stakeholders, including content creators, broadcasters, and platform owners, should prioritize diversity and inclusion in content production, distribution, and representation.
- Educational institutions and community organizations should integrate critical media literacy skills into curricula and outreach programs to empower individuals to critically evaluate and navigate digital media landscapes.
- New media platforms should actively facilitate opportunities for civic engagement, dialogue, and participation among residents.

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