

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN MULTIMEDIA OPERATIONS IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS (A STUDY OF BENIN JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTION)

Abdulazeez Isah, \* Omachi Umar Jibrin, \*\* Aisha Egwa, \* Victor Ehiagwina, \*\*\*

<sup>\*</sup>Department of Mass Communication, Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu

<sup>\*\*</sup>Department of Mass Communication, Glorious Vision University, Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Department of Mass Communication, Edo State Polytechnic Usen

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## Abstract

This study examined the digital transformation of multimedia operations in Nigeria, focusing on the perceptions of journalists in Benin City, Edo State. It aimed to explore the main drivers, regulatory influences, and socio-economic implications of digital migration within the Nigerian media landscape. Guided by the Technological Determinism Theory, which posits that technological innovations shape societal and media structures, the study adopted a quantitative research design using a census survey of all 120 registered journalists in Benin City. Respondents were drawn from various media houses, including Independent Television (ITV) Benin (12 journalists), The Nigerian Observer (10), Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) (10), Rhythm FM (8), Silverbird Correspondents/Raypower (7), Guardian Correspondent (5), Punch Correspondents (6), NTA Benin (12), and Freelance Journalists (50). Data collected through structured questionnaire were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that digital transformation has improved content quality and audience engagement but is hampered by challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, high migration costs, and digital illiteracy. Regulatory efforts were inconsistent, with delayed policy enforcement and poor public awareness slowing the transition. Economically, while new digital platforms have opened up alternative revenue streams, traditional income sources like print advertising and circulation have declined. The study concluded that Nigeria's media sector is evolving under technological pressure but remains constrained by infrastructural and regulatory challenges, recommending greater investment in digital infrastructure and training, improved policy implementation, and diversified revenue models to enhance competitiveness in the digital age.

**Keywords:** Digital Transformation, Multimedia Operations, Technological Determinism, Nigerian Media, Journalistic Practice

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## Introduction

Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of business operations, leading to fundamental changes in service delivery and consumer interaction (Westerman et al., 2014). This transformation is particularly significant in the multimedia industry, where digital technologies have reshaped content production, distribution, and audience engagement. In Nigeria, the shift from traditional media—such as print newspapers, radio, and analogue television—to digital platforms has

revolutionised the media landscape, enabling greater accessibility, interactivity, and efficiency in information dissemination (Okon, 2021). This shift aligns with global trends where digital platforms increasingly dominate the media space, offering consumers personalised and on-demand content (KPMG, 2023).

The evolution of multimedia operations in Nigeria is driven by advancements in digital television, the proliferation of online streaming services, and the rise of social media as a dominant platform for news

consumption (Umoren&Akpan, 2024). Digital television, facilitated by Nigeria's Digital Switch Over (DSO) initiative, aims to transition the country from analogue to digital broadcasting, improving picture quality and expanding content variety (National Broadcasting Commission [NBC], 2023). Streaming services, both international (such as Netflix and Amazon Prime) and local (such as iROKotv and Africa Magic Go), have introduced new models of content consumption, challenging traditional broadcasters to adapt or risk obsolescence (Akinwale, 2022). Similarly, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok have become primary news sources for many Nigerians, altering audience preferences and consumption patterns (Eze, 2023). Despite the evident benefits of digital transformation, Nigerian multimedia operations continue to grapple with several challenges. One of the foremost barriers is poor digital infrastructure, particularly inadequate broadband penetration and erratic power supply, which limit the accessibility and affordability of digital content (Oduyemi, 2022). High data costs also pose a significant obstacle, as many Nigerians struggle with the financial burden of accessing online media, thereby restricting the reach of digital platforms (Adeleke& Yusuf, 2021). Additionally, regulatory constraints, including stringent licensing requirements and censorship policies, create hurdles for media organisations seeking to expand their digital presence (NBC, 2023).

Another critical issue is media sustainability in the face of digital disruption. While digital platforms offer new revenue opportunities through advertisements and subscription models, many traditional media houses in Nigeria are struggling to monetise digital content effectively (Akinwale, 2022). Print newspapers, for instance, have witnessed a sharp decline in circulation as audiences migrate to free digital news sources (Eze, 2023). Similarly, local television stations face stiff competition from global streaming services, leading to revenue losses and workforce reductions (Oduyemi, 2022). Addressing these financial sustainability challenges is crucial for ensuring the long-term viability of Nigerian multimedia operations.

Furthermore, digital transformation has raised concerns about misinformation and media ethics. The widespread use of social media for news dissemination has increased the prevalence of fake news, propaganda, and unverified content (Ojebuyi&Salawu, 2020). Unlike traditional media, which operate under professional editorial standards, digital platforms often lack rigorous fact-checking mechanisms, leading to the

rapid spread of false information (Adeleke& Yusuf, 2021). This phenomenon has significant implications for public trust in media and the role of journalism in a democratic society. Implementing robust media literacy programmes and regulatory frameworks is essential to mitigate the risks associated with digital misinformation.

Despite these challenges, digital adoption in Nigeria presents immense opportunities for growth and innovation. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, and blockchain offer potential solutions to enhance content personalisation, streamline media operations, and improve audience engagement (Okon, 2021). Additionally, the growing influence of digital content creators, influencers, and independent media platforms has diversified the media ecosystem, providing new career opportunities and fostering creative entrepreneurship (Eze, 2023). If properly harnessed, these developments can contribute to the expansion of Nigeria's digital economy and reinforce the global competitiveness of the country's multimedia industry.

This study provides a critical analysis of the ongoing digital transformation of Nigerian multimedia operations, examining its impact on content production, audience engagement, and economic sustainability. It also explores the major challenges hindering full-scale digital adoption, including infrastructural deficiencies, regulatory hurdles, and financial constraints. By evaluating the opportunities and challenges in Nigeria's digital media landscape, this study aims to provide insights into the future trajectory of multimedia operations and recommend strategic interventions for sustainable digital growth.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the global shift towards digital media, Nigerian multimedia operations continue to grapple with significant challenges in fully integrating digital technology. The transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, which is crucial for enhancing the quality of media content and expanding access to information, has been marked by delays and missed deadlines (NBC, 2023). The slow pace of digital switch-over is partly attributed to infrastructural deficits, high operational costs, and inadequate investment in digital technology. Many media organisations struggle to acquire the necessary equipment and technical expertise required for seamless digital operations. Additionally, policy inconsistencies and regulatory bottlenecks further complicate the digital transformation process, making

it difficult for media institutions to achieve full-scale digitisation (Ojo, 2022).

Beyond infrastructural and regulatory challenges, the digital divide remains a critical issue, especially between urban and rural communities. While urban centres have witnessed some level of digital advancement, rural areas continue to lag due to poor broadband penetration and limited access to digital resources. This disparity affects the inclusivity of digital media services, restricting the reach and impact of multimedia operations across the country. The high cost of digital devices and internet services further exacerbates the problem, making digital media access a privilege rather than a universal right. Without comprehensive strategies to address these challenges, the Nigerian media landscape risks falling behind in the rapidly evolving global digital space.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were:

1. To identify the major drivers and challenges of digital transformation in Nigerian multimedia operations.
2. To examine the influence of regulatory policies on the transition to digital media in Nigeria.
3. To assess the socio-economic impacts of digital transformation on Nigerian media organisations.

### **Research Questions**

This paper seeks to address the following key questions:

1. What are the major drivers and challenges of digital transformation in Nigerian multimedia operations?
2. How have regulatory policies shaped the transition to digital media in Nigeria?
3. What are the socio-economic impacts of digital transformation on Nigerian media organizations?

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Digital Migration**

Digital transformation refers to the adoption and integration of digital technologies into various aspects of business processes, service delivery, and operational frameworks to improve efficiency and innovation (Westerman et al., 2014). In the Nigerian media industry, digital transformation has led to significant changes, particularly in broadcasting, journalism, and content delivery. Traditional media

outlets such as newspapers, television, and radio stations have had to adapt to digital platforms to remain relevant in an increasingly technology-driven society (Akinfeleye, 2020). This transformation is evident in the rise of online journalism, the adoption of digital broadcasting, and the proliferation of multimedia streaming services.

Multimedia operations encompass the creation, distribution, and consumption of media content across multiple digital platforms. These include television, radio, websites, social media, and mobile applications (Oluwaseun, 2021). The digitalisation of multimedia operations in Nigeria has enabled media houses to reach a broader audience, as consumers can now access news and entertainment content on demand. For instance, major Nigerian media organisations such as Channels Television and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) have embraced digital platforms, providing live streaming services and interactive online content (Ekeanyanwu&Okoro, 2022). Additionally, social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have become essential tools for news dissemination and audience engagement.

The transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, known as digital migration, is a crucial aspect of Nigeria's digital transformation. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) initiated plans to switch from analogue broadcasting to digital terrestrial television (DTT) as part of global efforts to improve broadcasting quality and expand media access (NBC, 2023). However, Nigeria's digital migration has faced several challenges, including regulatory bottlenecks, infrastructural deficits, and funding constraints. The initial deadline for the switchover was set for 2015, but multiple postponements have hindered its full implementation (Udom, 2021).

Despite the delays, digital migration offers numerous benefits to the Nigerian media industry and its consumers. It enhances signal quality, provides more broadcasting channels, and promotes media convergence, allowing audiences to access diverse content on various platforms (Olayiwola, 2022). Furthermore, digital broadcasting supports interactive television services, enabling viewers to participate in real-time discussions, access on-demand content, and enjoy enhanced audiovisual experiences. Additionally, the migration fosters competition among media organisations, encouraging innovation and better service delivery (Adebayo & Idowu, 2020).

### **Challenges of Digital Transformation**

Digital transformation is often hailed as a catalyst for development, efficiency, and innovation in both public and private sectors. However, scholarly literature identifies a multitude of challenges that hinder its full realisation, especially in emerging economies like Nigeria. One of the foremost challenges is infrastructural inadequacy. As noted by **Ojo (2022)**, a significant portion of Nigeria still struggles with unreliable electricity supply and poor internet connectivity. This weak foundation limits the deployment and sustainability of digital systems across critical sectors such as education, health, governance, and media. Without stable power and broadband access, the benefits of digital transformation remain inaccessible to vast populations, deepening the digital divide.

Additionally, the high cost of digital devices and technologies remains prohibitive for many organisations and individuals. **Adebayo (2021)** highlights that smartphones, computers, and associated software are often priced beyond the reach of the average Nigerian, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. This financial barrier hinders digital inclusion and perpetuates inequality in access to information and services. Compounding this is the limited digital literacy among both users and implementers. As **Ogunleye (2020)** points out, many media practitioners, civil servants, and even business owners lack the necessary digital skills to effectively use and manage modern technological tools. This skills gap stalls innovation and prevents the optimisation of digital platforms.

Moreover, regulatory and policy inconsistencies further complicate the digital transformation agenda. **Okon (2021)** argues that fragmented regulatory approaches and poor implementation of ICT policies create confusion among stakeholders. In some cases, overlapping mandates between regulatory agencies result in bureaucratic delays and stifled innovation. Furthermore, frequent policy changes without adequate stakeholder engagement undermine confidence and lead to reluctance in digital investment. This policy instability discourages long-term planning and hinders the scalability of digital solutions.

Another critical issue is cyber insecurity. As digital platforms become more central to governance and commerce, the threat of cybercrime increases. **Eze (2022)** observes that Nigeria has seen a rise in online fraud, identity theft, and data breaches, largely due to weak cybersecurity frameworks and limited enforcement capacity. These risks deter digital

adoption, especially among small businesses and government institutions that may lack the expertise or funds to invest in robust security systems. The lack of a coordinated national cybersecurity strategy also leaves users vulnerable and erodes public trust in digital systems.

Resistance to change is also a notable challenge. According to **Afolabi and Musa (2021)**, institutional inertia and organisational culture can impede digital transformation. In many government agencies and traditional businesses, there is a preference for manual processes and a reluctance to embrace new technologies. This is often driven by fear of job loss, lack of understanding of the benefits, or concerns about increased transparency and accountability. Without deliberate change management strategies, such resistance can stall or even derail digital initiatives.

Lastly, inadequate funding poses a significant obstacle. Digital transformation projects often require substantial financial investment in infrastructure, training, systems integration, and maintenance. **Umar (2021)** points out that many public-sector institutions in Nigeria operate under tight budget constraints, making it difficult to prioritise digital initiatives. Even when donor or private-sector funding is available, mismanagement and corruption can divert resources away from intended objectives, leading to failed or unsustainable projects.

While digital transformation holds immense promise, its implementation in Nigeria is hindered by multifaceted challenges. These include infrastructural deficits, high technology costs, low digital literacy, regulatory inconsistencies, cyber threats, resistance to change, and financial limitations. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach involving policy coherence, investment in infrastructure and capacity building, public-private partnerships, and robust cybersecurity frameworks. Only then can the full potential of digital transformation be realised in Nigeria.

## **The Role of Online Journalism in Digital Transformation**

The rise of online journalism is one of the most notable impacts of digital transformation in the Nigerian media industry. Many traditional newspapers, such as *The Guardian*, *Punch*, and *Vanguard*, now operate digital platforms where they publish news articles, opinion pieces, and investigative reports in real time (Ekeanyanwu & Okoro, 2022). The shift to online

journalism has increased media accessibility, allowing audiences to consume news through smartphones and other digital devices. However, this transformation has also led to concerns about misinformation and the credibility of online sources, as unverified news spreads rapidly on social media platforms (Akinfeleye, 2020).

Another key aspect of digital transformation is the growth of multimedia streaming services. Platforms such as Netflix, Showmax, and IrokoTV have revolutionised content consumption in Nigeria, offering audiences access to local and international films, television shows, and documentaries (Udom, 2021). This shift has also impacted on the traditional broadcast industry, prompting local television stations to develop their streaming services to remain competitive. Additionally, Nigerian musicians and filmmakers leverage YouTube, Audiomack, and Spotify to distribute their content, reaching global audiences without relying on conventional distribution channels (Ojo, 2022).

Digital transformation has also reshaped advertising and revenue generation in the Nigerian media landscape. Traditional media houses increasingly rely on digital advertising through programmatic ads, influencer marketing, and social media promotions (Adebayo & Idowu, 2020). Companies now allocate significant portions of their marketing budgets to online campaigns, recognising the effectiveness of targeted digital advertising. However, the shift to digital platforms has also posed financial challenges for traditional media outlets, as print newspaper sales and television ad revenues decline in favour of digital alternatives (Okon, 2021).

To facilitate digital transformation, Nigeria's government and regulatory bodies must establish clear policies and frameworks that support technological advancements while ensuring fair competition and consumer protection. The NBC, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), and other stakeholders play vital roles in regulating digital broadcasting, ensuring ethical journalism practices, and safeguarding consumer interests (NBC, 2023). Furthermore, policies aimed at improving digital infrastructure, expanding broadband access, and promoting media literacy are crucial to fostering sustainable digital transformation (Olayiwola, 2022).

The future of digital transformation in Nigeria's media industry is promising, as emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and virtual reality continue to reshape content creation and distribution. Media organisations must adapt to these

advancements by investing in digital skills training, adopting innovative storytelling techniques, and leveraging data analytics to understand audience preferences (Ekeanyanwu&Okoro, 2022). While challenges remain, sustained efforts in policy implementation, infrastructure development, and technological adoption will ensure Nigeria's successful transition into a fully digital media ecosystem.

## **Opinion Review**

Public opinion on digital transformation in Nigeria is diverse, reflecting both optimism and concerns about its implications. Media professionals acknowledge that digital technology has significantly enhanced content quality, audience engagement, and accessibility. The adoption of digital tools allows for real-time reporting, interactive media content, and a broader reach beyond traditional broadcast and print platforms (Umoren&Akpan, 2024). The shift to digital platforms has also created opportunities for media organisations to diversify revenue streams through digital advertising, paywalls, and subscription models. Additionally, social media and mobile applications have enabled direct communication between journalists and their audience, fostering a more dynamic and participatory media landscape.

Despite these benefits, one of the major concerns surrounding digital transformation is the fear of job losses due to automation. As media houses embrace artificial intelligence (AI) and automated systems for news curation, video editing, and content production, traditional roles such as print journalists, typesetters, and production staff face redundancy (Ojo, 2022). The introduction of AI-driven algorithms for news writing and analysis further raises questions about the future of human journalists in an increasingly automated environment. While some experts argue that digital transformation creates new job opportunities in data analytics, digital marketing, and multimedia production, the transition requires upskilling and reskilling, which may not be readily accessible to all professionals.

Another challenge is the high cost of digital infrastructure, which poses a significant barrier to full-scale digital adoption. Establishing and maintaining digital broadcasting equipment, high-speed internet networks, and secure digital platforms require substantial investment. Many media organisations, particularly smaller outlets, struggle with the financial burden of transitioning from traditional to digital formats. The cost of acquiring licences for digital platforms, purchasing advanced software, and training

staff in digital skills further compounds these challenges. Additionally, unreliable power supply and limited broadband penetration in some areas hinder the smooth operation of digital media platforms, thereby affecting content delivery and audience experience.

The digital divide between urban and rural communities further complicates the effectiveness of digital transformation in Nigeria. While urban areas benefit from relatively stable internet access, higher digital literacy rates, and greater affordability of smart devices, rural communities often lack these advantages (Ojo, 2022). Limited access to digital tools in rural regions restricts the dissemination of information, marginalising certain demographics from participating in the digital economy. The lack of digital literacy programmes in rural schools and among older populations exacerbates this divide, making it difficult for these groups to engage with digital media platforms effectively. This gap in access and knowledge widens socioeconomic inequalities and limits the impact of digital transformation on national development.

Moreover, concerns about cybersecurity and data privacy have emerged as key issues in the discourse on digital transformation. As media organisations migrate to online platforms, they become vulnerable to cyber threats such as hacking, data breaches, and misinformation campaigns. The absence of stringent data protection laws and enforcement mechanisms in Nigeria further exposes media platforms to risks associated with digital security. Cases of identity theft, unauthorised data mining, and digital surveillance raise ethical questions about user privacy and trust in digital media. Addressing these concerns requires the implementation of comprehensive cybersecurity policies, investment in secure digital systems, and public awareness campaigns on digital safety.

In conclusion, while digital transformation offers immense opportunities for media growth and accessibility, it also presents challenges that require strategic interventions. Ensuring that media professionals are adequately trained, bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas, reducing the cost of digital infrastructure, and strengthening cybersecurity measures are critical steps towards maximising the benefits of digitalisation. Policymakers, media stakeholders, and technology providers must collaborate to develop inclusive policies that address these concerns while leveraging digital advancements to enhance Nigeria's media landscape. By adopting a balanced approach, Nigeria can harness the full

potential of digital transformation without leaving vulnerable groups behind.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Recent studies on digital transformation in Nigerian multimedia operations highlight key trends and challenges: Umoren & Akpan (2024) examined the prospects and challenges of digital migration in Nigeria, focusing on infrastructural constraints. Using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the study explored how media professionals perceive the transition to digital platforms. Through a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews with 250 media professionals, the study found that while digital migration enhances content quality and audience reach, poor infrastructure, high costs, and digital illiteracy hinder progress. The authors concluded that without government intervention in subsidising digital equipment, improving power supply, and enforcing digital policies, Nigeria's media industry would struggle to achieve full digitalisation.

Ojo (2022) investigated the economic implications of digital transformation on Nigerian media organisations, using the Political Economy of Communication Theory to analyse financial shifts within the industry. A survey of 300 media professionals and secondary data analysis revealed that digital transformation has significantly boosted revenue from digital advertising, programmatic ads, and influencer marketing. However, traditional revenue streams, such as newspaper circulation and analogue advertising, have declined. The study concluded that while digitalisation presents new financial opportunities, media organisations must diversify income streams and enhance digital skills to remain profitable.

Oluwaseun (2021) explored the impact of social media on traditional media houses in Nigeria, applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to assess audience preferences. Using a combination of content analysis and surveys involving 400 newspaper readers, the study found that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have contributed to the decline in newspaper sales. Readers preferred digital platforms due to their accessibility and real-time updates. However, media houses that adapted by integrating online subscriptions and digital engagement strategies experienced better audience retention. The study concluded that traditional media must embrace digital tools to remain relevant in the evolving media landscape.

NBC (2023) documented the delays in Nigeria's

digital switch-over and the challenges of implementing digital broadcasting, using the Diffusion of Innovation Theory to explain the slow adoption of digital technologies. Through secondary data analysis and interviews with regulatory officials, the study revealed that poor funding, lack of public awareness, and limited access to affordable digital receivers have hindered the transition. Originally scheduled for 2017, the switch-over remains incomplete, leaving many households reliant on analogue broadcasts. The study concluded that addressing financial and infrastructural barriers, alongside stronger regulatory enforcement, is critical for Nigeria to achieve a successful digital broadcasting transition.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Technological Determinism Theory

#### **Technological Determinism Theory (McLuhan, 2001)**

Technological Determinism Theory, as proposed by Marshall McLuhan (2001), asserts that technological advancements are the primary drivers of societal transformation. This perspective suggests that media technologies shape how societies communicate, interact, and function. In the context of Nigerian media operations, digital transformation has been significantly influenced by global technological trends, necessitating adaptation by media organisations. The proliferation of digital tools such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and automation has redefined news gathering, dissemination, and audience engagement. Traditional media houses in Nigeria, such as The Punch, The Guardian, and Channels Television, have integrated digital platforms to remain relevant in an evolving landscape where audiences increasingly consume content online.

Furthermore, McLuhan's assertion that "the medium is the message" highlights how technological innovations reshape the nature of communication itself. In Nigeria, the shift from analogue to digital broadcasting, the rise of mobile journalism, and the expansion of online streaming platforms illustrate how media technology dictates the pace and structure of information dissemination. As more Nigerians access news through mobile devices and social media, legacy media outlets must innovate by embracing multimedia content, interactive storytelling, and real-time audience engagement to stay competitive.

The impact of technological determinism on Nigerian media also extends to journalism ethics and

media control. With digital platforms enabling instant news dissemination, issues such as misinformation, fake news, and media regulation have become critical concerns. The ease of content creation and distribution through social media has challenged traditional gatekeeping roles, necessitating new regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible journalism. Consequently, media organisations are compelled to adopt digital verification tools, fact-checking mechanisms, and artificial intelligence-driven moderation to enhance credibility and maintain public trust.

Additionally, the rapid digital transformation driven by technological determinism has resulted in a shift in audience behaviour and expectations. The rise of citizen journalism, where ordinary Nigerians use smartphones to report events in real time, has decentralised information flow. This phenomenon has forced traditional media outlets to incorporate user-generated content, interactive discussions, and multimedia storytelling to retain audience engagement. Thus, the theory underscores how Nigerian media must continuously evolve alongside technological advancements to remain relevant and competitive in a dynamic digital ecosystem.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a quantitative research design and utilised a survey method to examine the perceptions of journalists in Benin City regarding digital transformation in multimedia operations. The survey approach was deemed appropriate for obtaining standardised responses from a clearly defined population within a specific geographical area. It facilitated the collection of measurable data suitable for statistical interpretation and generalisation.

The target population comprised all registered journalists actively practising in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, which was estimated at 120 individuals. The study employed a census approach as its sampling technique, given the manageable size of the population. This method allowed the researcher to include every journalist within the defined population, thereby eliminating sampling bias and enhancing the inclusiveness, reliability, and accuracy of the findings.

Journalists who participated in the study were drawn from various media organisations and platforms. These included staff from Independent Television (ITV) Benin, The Nigerian Observer, Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), Rhythm FM, Silverbird Correspondents, Guardian Correspondent, and Punch Correspondents. A significant proportion of the

respondents were freelance journalists, reflecting the growing presence and influence of independent media practitioners in the digital age. Additionally, the study included reporters from other newspapers and media outlets operating within the city.

Consequently, the final sample size was 120, which equalled the total population of practising journalists in the study area. Engaging the entire population allowed the research to capture a comprehensive spectrum of experiences, views, and professional attitudes concerning digital transformation in multimedia journalism.

S/N	Media House / Affiliation	Number of Journalists
1	Independent Television (ITV)	12
2	The Nigerian Observer	10
3	Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS)	10
4	Rhythm FM	8
5	Silverbird Correspondents/Ra7	7
6	Guardian Correspondent	5
7	Punch Correspondents	6
8	NTA Benin	12
9	Freelance Journalists	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. It was carefully designed to elicit responses on key themes such as adoption of digital technology, changes in journalistic workflows, operational challenges, perceived benefits, and the overall impact of digital transformation on journalistic practices. The structured format ensured uniformity in responses and facilitated systematic data analysis.

The data obtained from the field was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. These analyses enabled the researcher to identify key patterns, highlight significant trends, and draw meaningful conclusions in line with the objectives of the study.

### Presentation of Data

A total of 120 copies of the questionnaire were administered out of which 100 were returned and found useable.

**Table 1: Major Drivers of Digital Transformation in Nigerian Multimedia Operations (N = 100)**

Drivers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Technological advancement	30	30%
Audience preference for online media	25	25%
Competition among media houses	20	20%
Cost-efficiency in operations	15	15%
Government and donor funding	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data reveals that technological advancement (30%)

and audience preference for online media (25%) are the most significant drivers of digital transformation in Nigerian multimedia operations. Other contributing factors include competition, cost-efficiency, and external funding.

**Table 2: Challenges of Digital Transformation in Nigerian Multimedia Operations (N = 100)**

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor internet infrastructure	28	28%
High cost of digital tools	24	24%
Lack of skilled digital personnel	20	20%
Regulatory bottlenecks	15	15%
Resistance to change	13	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The main challenges facing digital transformation are poor internet infrastructure (28%) and high costs of digital tools (24%). Lack of skilled personnel and regulatory bottlenecks also hinder progress, while resistance to change plays a lesser but notable role.

**Table 3: Influence of Regulatory Policies on Digital Transition in Nigeria (N = 100)**

Influence of Policies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positively influenced growth	40	40%
Delayed innovation through confusion	25	25%
Neutral/No significant impact	20	20%
Caused confusion and misinterpretation	10	10%
Not aware of any policies	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Most respondents (40%) believe regulatory policies have positively shaped digital media growth in Nigeria. However, 25% think these policies have delayed innovation, while others report confusion or are unaware of existing regulations.

**Table 4: Awareness of Digital Media Regulatory Policies Among Media Practitioners (N = 100)**

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly aware	35	35%
Moderately aware	30	30%
Slightly aware	20	20%
Not aware	15	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

A significant number of respondents (35%) claim high awareness of digital media policies, while another 30% are moderately informed. Only 15% indicated no awareness, suggesting the need for more policy education among practitioners.

**Table 5: Socio-Economic Impacts of Digital Transformation on Media Organisations (N = 100)**

Impacts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increased audience reach	30	30%
Reduction in operational costs	25	25%
Job losses due to automation	20	20%
New job creation in digital media	15	15%
Greater revenue generation	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6: Overall Perception of Digital Transformation Among Media Workers (N = 100)**

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Very positive	35	35%
Positive	30	30%
Neutral	20	20%
Negative	10	10%
Very negative	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

The overall perception among media workers is largely positive, with 65% describing the impact as either very positive or positive. Only a small minority (15%) view digital transformation negatively, showing general acceptance and optimism.

## Discussion of Findings

### 1. Major Drivers and Challenges of Digital Transformation in Nigerian Multimedia Operations

The findings reveal that the leading drivers of digital transformation in Nigerian multimedia operations include technological advancement (30%) and changing audience preferences for online media (25%) (Table 1). This aligns with the principles of Technological Determinism Theory, which posits that technological progress drives societal and institutional change. As McLuhan (2001) asserted, technological innovations like mobile journalism, social media, and real-time news platforms are reshaping media operations and compelling traditional media to adapt. However, the transformation process is fraught with challenges. Table 2 highlights poor internet infrastructure (28%) and the high cost of digital tools (24%) as the most significant obstacles, consistent with the findings of Umoren&Akpan (2024). Their study, grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model, emphasised that infrastructural limitations and digital illiteracy hinder the smooth adoption of digital tools. Furthermore, resistance to change and a lack of skilled manpower reflect internal organisational inertia, often observed in legacy media organisations grappling with modernisation pressures.

### 2. Influence of Regulatory Policies on the Transition to Digital Media

The data (Table 3) indicates that 40% of respondents believe that regulatory policies have positively influenced the transition to digital media, suggesting a somewhat optimistic perception among media practitioners. Nevertheless, a significant portion (25%) believes that these policies have delayed innovation. This mixed perception resonates with

NBC's (2023) study, which attributed delays in Nigeria's digital switch-over to poor funding, lack of public awareness, and weak enforcement of digital broadcasting regulations.

Table 4 further supports this with 35% of respondents reporting high awareness of digital media policies, while 20% express low or no awareness. This underscores the need for regulatory bodies like the National Broadcasting Commission to enhance policy sensitisation and implementation. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory, referenced in NBC (2023), aligns with this observation by illustrating how awareness and relative advantage perception influence the adoption of innovations. Therefore, while technological tools may be available, without coherent and enforced policies, the pace of digital transformation remains sluggish.

### 3. Socio-Economic Impacts of Digital Transformation on Nigerian Media Organisations

As shown in Table 5, increased audience reach (30%) and cost reduction (25%) are major socio-economic benefits experienced by Nigerian media organisations. This supports Ojo's (2022) findings that digital transformation has led to new income streams through digital advertising and programmatic campaigns. However, traditional revenue channels like newspaper circulation have declined, and job losses due to automation (20%) raise concerns about employment sustainability in the sector.

These socio-economic shifts mirror Technological Determinism Theory's assertion that technological change influences social and economic structures. The digitisation of media has created new roles such as digital strategists and content managers, while phasing out analogue-dependent functions. Therefore, Nigerian media houses must invest in upskilling employees and redesign business models to harness digital opportunities while mitigating negative impacts.

Table 6 reveals that 65% of respondents have a positive perception of digital transformation, reflecting a broader acceptance of its inevitability and advantages. This finding is in harmony with Oluwaseun (2021), who documented that media organisations integrating digital platforms experienced better audience retention. The Uses and Gratifications Theory used in that study also supports the notion that audience demands for real-time and accessible content are reshaping media practices. Traditional media must thus evolve by offering interactive and personalised content, as the "medium" itself (digital tools) now dictates the mode and tempo of audience

engagement—echoing McLuhan's perspective.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the major drivers, regulatory influences, and socio-economic impacts of digital transformation in Nigerian multimedia operations. The findings reveal that while technological advancement and evolving audience preferences are propelling the transition to digital platforms, the process is significantly hindered by infrastructural deficits, high costs, and regulatory inconsistencies. Regulatory frameworks have made moderate progress in facilitating digital transition; however, poor policy enforcement and limited public awareness have delayed widespread adoption. Economically, digital transformation offers Nigerian media organisations new revenue opportunities and broader audience engagement, but it also threatens traditional revenue streams and poses employment challenges due to automation. Grounded in Technological Determinism Theory, this study underscores the need for media organisations and policymakers to embrace and manage technological change as an inevitable force shaping the future of communication in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

1. The government and private sector should invest in reliable internet connectivity, affordable digital tools, and power supply. Additionally, media organisations should prioritise regular digital skills training for staff to effectively manage and utilise evolving technologies.
2. Regulatory bodies like the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should intensify efforts to implement digital media policies and raise public and industry awareness through targeted campaigns. This will improve adoption rates and ensure a more coordinated national transition to digital platforms.
3. Media organisations should diversify income streams by integrating digital advertising, online subscriptions, and influencer marketing, while also retaining core journalistic values. At the same time, efforts should be made to retrain existing staff to fit into digital roles, thereby reducing job displacement caused by automation.

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