



DISPLACEMENT OR ENHANCEMENT EFFECT: A REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION OF 'CREATIVE DESTRUCTION' THEORY ON ISSUES IN COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Early proponents of creative destruction theory argued that something new brings about the demise of whatever existed before it. This reasoning is, probably, derived from two different perspectives: structure-centred and medium-centred perspectives. These perspectives, however, negate the common premise that 'nothing in life can shoulder a complete functional alternative to another'. Everything, including new media and old media; if one reflects from a user-centred vantage point, has its own uniqueness and distinctive characteristic to serve and satisfy different users' needs, at different ages, societies or geographic entities; pithily, implying that a thing that is considered as an old thing, can yet be useful and irreplaceable to a user, despite the availability and accessibility of something new. Therefore, within the context of displacement-complementary effect debate, it becomes imperative to review the application of creative destruction theory in developed, underdeveloped and developing economies, with reference to new media-old media functional vicissitudes cum nexus, on issues in communication and society. This paper, using literature review approach, is a critique of the assumption of creative destruction theory; and, by extension, a scholarly appraisal of what is new about new media and what is old about old media. We argued that while new media technology (something new) could displace old media that existed before it, predominantly, in developed worlds, this displacement consequence could be unfeasible in underdeveloped and developing climes, where research has shown that the old does not easily give way to the new; but, alternatively, new media play enhancement role to traditional media.

Keywords: Displacement, enhancement, influence, creative destruction theory, communication, society, new media, old, traditional or legacy media.

Introduction

Creative destruction is a process through which something new brings about the annihilation, disappearance, end or death of whatever existed before it (Wigmore, 2018). Specifically, the proponents of 'creative destruction' theory, within the field of communication and media studies, have often promoted what could be viewed as a *dystopian-effect relationship* between new media and legacy, old or traditional media. The spotlight of this trending negative, and often, one-sided effect argument cum proposition is, invariably, constructed on the premise that different media serve the 'same functions' for users (information, education and entertainment), such that new media will eventually drive old media out of

existence, what McCombs (1972), cited in Nguyen and Western (2006) codenamed, reasoning from *medium-centred perspective*. Creative destruction has a way of phasing out old technologies and inviting new ones (Hoppock, 2015).

Similarly, the early adopters of creative destruction theory could have also considered the act of something new bringing about the demise of whatever existed before it, from *morphology or structure-centred perspective*, based on the notion of wear and tear of physical body parts or structural damage that occurs to something (media technology inclusive), basically, in the course of normal usage or aging. The foregoing assumptions, however, held sway, perhaps, without recognizing, functionally, based on media uses and gratifications, that nothing in life can be considered as a complete functional alternative to another; there is no time that bandwagon effect would sweep the entire society, such that everyone would accept new media and totally reject the old media; individual differences and preferences, as well as, knowledge gap, other socio-political and economic factors are intervening variables. Everything, including new media and old media, has its own uniqueness and distinctive characteristics to serve and satisfy different users’ needs, at different ages, geographic spaces or cultures. What this implies is that a thing that is seen as old, can yet be useful and irreplaceable to a user, despite the dominant availability and accessibility of something new. Hence, scholars (Nguyen & Western, 2006) argued, “From a *user-centred vantage point*, even if people have to reduce some of their time and financial resources spent on the old, after adopting the new, they do not necessarily abandon the former”.

Apparently, the ubiquity or omnipresence, the multitasking feature of new media, and the growing campaign, mostly, in developing climes, for ‘digital switch-over’ from analogue or old technologies to new technologies; as well as, the common grip or conservative characteristic of old media among users in underdeveloped worlds, could significantly contribute to the foundation for the displacement-complementary effect debate. Thus, Dunu *et al.* (2015, p. 8) opined, “Increasing access to and use of new communication technologies among audiences, in recent times, have led to the debate, discourses and assumptions on changing audience consumption patterns and the effects on traditional media”. Besides, because of the increase in accessibility and the availability to the public, the Internet has gained momentum and become a major part of our society (Kayany & Yelsma, 2000). Dunu *et al.* (2015) added that the general assumption suggests a deepening decline in the use of the traditional media by audience groups who are educated, the affluent and the youths; hence, bringing about the emergence of new media use pattern with a dominance of the use of the new media by these groups.

Indeed, there are existing studies on new media-old media displacement or complementary effect debate; some scholars, for instance, Cartledge (2002) posited that new media (the Internet) is a huge displacement to traditional media; other studies (e.g. Stempel, Hargrove, & Bernt, 2000; Lee & Leung, 2004; Dutta-Bergman, 2004; Nguyen & Western, 2006; Dunu *et al.*, 2015), on the contrary, argued that something new (new media) has not effectively displaced traditional media; instead, new media play roles that are complementary and supplementary to traditional media.

Whereas the displacement argument among media scholars, could survive, essentially, in the developed economies of Europe and America (see Cartledge, 2002); as a result of probable high level of technological advancement, availability and accessibility of these new media, high media literacy and awareness or knowledge of new media technologies (see Kayany & Yelsma, 2000; Dunu *et al.*, 2015); the situation could be quite unattainable in developing and underdeveloped countries, where scholars (e.g. Bazar & Boalch, 1997, cited in Hoa & Chow, 2004) have found dearth or weak technological infrastructure, unhealthy government policies on ICT development, lack or low level of internet penetration, high rates of poverty, as well as, increased mass illiteracy among the populace, as major factors responsible for poor use, low acquisition, and reduced access to new media possibilities and the Internet.

Therefore, within the context of displacement-complementary effect debate, it becomes imperative to review the application of creative destruction theory in developed, developing and underdeveloped economies, in relation to new media-old media functional changes on issues in communication and society. In other words, this paper, using literature review approach, is a critique of creative destruction theory; and, by extension, a scholarly appraisal of what is new about new media and what is old about old media.

Review of Literature

Creative Destruction: A Theoretical Discourse

The concept of creative destruction is, ideally, an economic concept. In essence, creative destruction is when a new invention, new discovery, service or product of human intellect, emerges to destroy or replace what came before it. The term can also be used to describe a ‘disruptive change’ phenomenon; that is, major transformation that occurs architecturally, methodically, technologically, economically, politically, or policy-wise, within human society, organizations or industries.

Historically, the concept of creative destruction was first coined by Austrian-American economist and political scientist, Joseph Schumpeter, in his book, ‘*Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*’ in 1942. Schumpeter (1942), cited in Kopp (2023), defined creative destruction as innovations in the manufacturing process that increase productivity; the “process of industrial mutation that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one”. Creative destruction or disruptive innovation is invariably characterized by a paradigm shift in product and service development; the theory is basically hinged on the proposition that the existence of something new, unintentionally, leads to the extinction or disappearance of other products, services and methods that existed before.

As captured by Clayton and Overdorf (2000), disruptive innovations create an entirely new market through the introduction of a new kind of product or service, one that is actually worse or strange, initially, as judged by the performance metrics that are generally valued by mainstream customers. It is the dismantling of long-standing practices, in order to make way for innovation, and it is seen as a driving force of capitalism (Kopp, 2023). In addition, while explaining the model of creative destruction, Kopp (2023) highlighted the following key viewpoints:

- ❖ Creative destruction describes the deliberate dismantling of established processes, in order to make way for improved methods of production,
- ❖ Creative destruction is most often used to describe disruptive technologies, such as the railroads or, in our own time, the Internet,
- ❖ The term was coined in the early 1940s by economist Joseph Schumpeter, who observed real-life examples of creative destruction, such as Henry Ford’s assembly line,
- ❖ Creative destruction can be seen across many different industries, such as technology, retail, and finance,
- ❖ Creative destruction often has ‘unintended consequences’, such as temporary losses of jobs, environmental issues, or inequity.

However, opponents of creative destruction theory often argue that old industries and technologies could be replaced, leading to job losses, and hardship for those who are displaced; even though, these old industries, products, services and technologies pave way for emergence of new ones. The theory is mainly

criticized for its tendency to create total destruction of old technologies and their removal from existence. Writing on what is termed, *the fallacy of creative destruction*, Juneja (2023) posited that the theory provides a biased and distorted view of the world, in order to make the business cycles appear in the positive light; it leads to resources being squandered over economic problems which are not important, and the entire process can be called *malinvestment*. Connotatively, according to Juneja (2023), creative destruction provides a biased and distorted view of the world by framing an impression that old things are no longer good and useful to people and the society; thereby, prompting squandering of resources, destruction of existing structures and investments; thus, unconsciously, creating hardships and job losses, with the ultimate intention of paving the ways for something new to emerge; hence the term, ‘malinvestment’.

Consequently, relying on the above criticisms, one may ask, assuming that something new, including, new media or new technologies emerge to completely destroy or cause the annihilation of what existed before, what exactly becomes the foundation for the study of History? It is, therefore, significant to contend that the postulation of creative destruction failed to recognize, operationally, based on media uses and gratifications, that nothing in life can be considered as a complete functional alternative to another.

Everything, including, new media and old media, has its own uniqueness and distinctive characteristics to serve and satisfy different users’ needs, at different ages, societies, geographic spaces or cultures.

An Understanding of the term ‘Society’

Simply put, sociologically and anthropologically, the term society refers to a social group that has distinctive cultural, political, and economic organization or structure. Contextually, society can be defined as a region, state, nation, country or a collection of people who live together, interact and share a common trait, usually, affiliated by cultural, political, religious, economic and geographic interests. The following can be classified as a society: Nigeria, China, United States of America, Canada, France, Chad, Niger, Germany, India, United Arab Emirates, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and continents such as: Africa, Asia, Europe and America, among others. Generally, economists and communication scholars have identified three ways to categorize human society; these categories are:

- i. Advanced or Developed societies,
- ii. Economies in transition or Developing societies, and
- iii. Backward or Underdeveloped societies.

Boyle and Velasquez (2023) stated that it is difficult to determine how best to quantify and qualify the differences between developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. Although Gross Domestic Products (GDP) is one of the most well-known values for assessing economic health; several other metrics can also be used to gauge a nation's development status. According to the United Nations (2023, pp. 117-118), cited in Boyle and Velasquez (2023) on World Economic Situation and Prospects, 36 countries were considered “developed”; all developed countries were located in either North America, Europe, or “developed Asia and Pacific”; 126 countries were considered “developing”; all developing countries were located in either Africa, Asia, or Latin America and the Caribbean, and others were considered underdeveloped nations.

Characteristically, developed societies are those societies that relish flourishing economy and industrialization with a dominant literate population that engages in industrial productions, increase in Gross Domestic Products (GDP) or Gross National Product (GNP), advancement in social infrastructures,

high standard of living, growing internet penetration, and progressive influx of new media technologies, among others.

Developing societies or ‘economies on transit’, succinctly, include the societies or nations, such as Nigeria, which enjoy gradual, but steady progress or rise in economic growth, GDP, standard of living and new technologies; they have not attained advancement in social infrastructures, high standard of living, growing internet penetration, and progressive influx of new media technologies. On the other hand, scholars (Mawdesly & Rigg, 2003), as cited in *Oxford Reference* (2023), argued that underdeveloped countries are defined by extreme poverty, mass illiteracy as a result of backwardness in education, low GDP, high mortality as a result of malnutrition, subsistence agriculture, weak economy, poor or no technological growth and overall backwardness in all forms of Human Development Index (HDI), as established by the United Nations.

An Overview of Issues in Communication and Society

Issues in communication and society simply refer to phenomena, activities, occurrences, happenings or events that shape human society and the ecosystem. These issues of differential socio-cultural kaleidoscope have communicative significance; they often, attract media attention, frames, discussion and debate. Also, these issues can be defined as developmental trends and challenges that affect society and communication atmosphere, such as: natural issues on meteorological conditions or climate changes and the environment, technology dynamics, fake news, gender-based violence communication, digital literacy, diversity and inclusion, crisis communication and management, etc. These issues, whether constructed by man or instigated by nature, determine the course of affairs in human life and society at large.

The principle of creative destruction simply suggests a deliberate dismantling of established or mainstream processes in any of these issues, in order to make way for either improved methods of production and consumption, practice or use. Therefore, the term, creative destruction can be espoused in variety of issues in communication and society.

Other issues include:

- a) Economics, commerce and industry, public relations and advertising,
- b) Behavior change and development communication,
- c) Corporate governance, organizational communication, product development and brand management,
- d) Arts, science and technology adaptation,
- e) Healthcare information management,
- f) Politics, political advocacy, social mobilization and social movements,
- g) Security and intelligence gathering, issues of corruption and crime fighting,
- h) Education, research and learning,
- i) Relationship communication, identity management and self-disclosure,
- j) Journalism and mass communication, etc.

Old Media: What is Old about Old Media?

The term, ‘old media’, goes by other nomenclatures such as: mass media, legacy media, mainstream, conservative, conventional or traditional media and means of mass communication. In short, old or traditional media are media in existence before the arrival of the Internet. They are: radio, newspapers, books, magazines, television and cinema. Explaining what old or traditional media of mass communication is, Okunna and Omenugha (2012, pp. 59-60) stated thus:

We have continued to use the word ‘traditional’ to describe what had been referred to as the ‘modern mass media’ before the emergence of the Internet. The emergence of computer and the Internet has relegated the so-called modern mass media into the domain of the traditional, while taking on the name, ‘new media’. A simple way to classify the traditional mass media, is to group them into **print** and **electronic** media. The print media are such mass media as: books, newspapers, and magazines, whose basis is the printed word, text, images. Electronic or broadcast media, on the other hand, comprise all the mass media which rely on electromagnetic force or electric power to transmit messages to their audiences. These include: radio (audio) and television (audio-visual).

Conversely, old or traditional media of mass communication, in this context, do not represent or denote ‘folk-media’, native or indigenous communication media- usually native communication channels designed by members of a group or society; which are, often, culture-specific. Folk-media, being culture-oriented, are used to satisfy the information, entertainment, education, social mobilization and development needs of an indigenous people, group or society. These folk-media include: proverbs, names, tribal marks, poetry, myths, folklores or stories, folk songs, traditional dance, costumes, signs and symbols, other culturally or traditionally oriented channels of communication (see, Uzochukwu & Udeh, 2022). Significantly, old media are considered old, legacy, mainstream or traditional media, simply because they are familiar, accustomed to, and in conformity with people’s communication culture, before the advent of new media and the Internet. The old media could also be adjudged old, because, currently, there are other new ways of doing, not only mass, but also multiple communications, which are less restricted or regulated, not time-bound, more interactive, participatory, inclusive and global, unlike the old media.

Underlining what makes old media old, Oji (2023, pp. 585-586) outlined the following distinctive features:

- a. The traditional media we know have strict rules, editorial policies and house-styles guiding what should be allowed to be published and how to publish. This is achieved through the gatekeeping practice of the traditional media; unlike the new media that allow everyone with possession of internet-enabled device and computer knowledge, to become ‘accidental journalists’, otherwise known as ‘citizen journalists’,
- b. Traditional media outfits are often known, registered and licensed organizations, with identifiable individuals or staff (reporters, editors, managers, supervisors, correspondents, presenters, content developers, etc.) who are in the business of printing and broadcasting of regulated media content, and who could be held accountable, if anything goes awry.
- c. The operations of these media institutions are controlled by media Codes, Laws, ethical regulations, and bodies such as: National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Nigerian Press Organization (NPO), etc.,
- d. Traditional media operations and communication exchange are time and location-bound. For instance, broadcast messages are transient in nature and receivable or accessible only to the mass audiences within a given coverage area or geographical entity, at a definite time of broadcast. Likewise, print media messages also circulate within a defined zone, and printed messages cannot be updated, once published.

Indeed, the media of old media are not necessarily old, in terms of obsolete physical forms and structure, out-of-date, or because they can no longer serve the society as useful means or channels of mass communication. Succinctly, what is old about the old or traditional media are not their extrinsic forms, wear

and tear of physical structures or features, but the intrinsic characteristics, methods of access, operational rules, regulations, bureaucracy, as well as, the terms and conditions guiding their communication processes.

What is New about New Media? A Conceptual Discourse

In terms of technological structure, new media or Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) refer to mainly ‘hardware’ technologies or devices that facilitate quick, steady, and interactive communications between individuals and groups over a distance. Although, generally, whenever new media (ICTs) are mentioned, the Internet and computers readily come to mind; a number of new media can still perform some functions that are not directly internet-based.

For instance, a computer set can be used to typeset, store, process and retrieve documents, while the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM/phones) can be used to compose and send texts or Short Message Services (SMS), over long distance without any direct internet connectivity. (See, Uzochukwu & Udeh, 2021, pp. 167-168)

Nwabueze (2014, p. 268) provided clear explanations of new media or ICTs thus:

New media or Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are communication gadgets, hardware, equipment or facilities that have modernized, improved and eased exchange of ideas and information of various kinds between and among people within or across distant boundaries or frontiers. They are also called New Communication Technologies (NCTs). The computer, Internet, World Wide Web, social media, GSM technology, Microwave, Cable and Satellite television channels are among technological strides that have transformed and are still transforming human existence today.

Socha and Eber-Schmid (2014), as cited in Oji (2023, p. 583) described new media as:

Content available on-demand via the Internet and accessed anytime, and from anywhere, on any digital, Web-compliant or Internet-enabled device, usually, enhancing interactive user-feedback, creative participation and community formation around media content. New media facilitate democratization of content creation, publishing, distribution and consumption of media content; thereby, prompting what is popularly known as User-Generated Content (UGC).

New media are not new in the sense of something being latest or fresh. New media are new because they provide innovative, unregulated, seamless, interactive or participatory paradigm shift to information and communication seeking, exchange and consumption of media content. New media, in this context, do not include television programmes, magazines, newspapers, books, musical content or films, in analogue forms; unless they have digital features that permit convergence, collaborative appeals or interactivity, unrestricted access through the Web or the Internet, and immediate feedback, in split of seconds. Commenting on what is new about the new media, McQuail (2010, pp. 137-138) surmised that:

The most fundamental aspect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is probably the fact of *digitalization*, the process by which all texts (symbolic meaning in all encoded and recorded forms) can be reduced to a binary code and can share the same process of production, distribution and storage. The most widely noted potential consequence for the media institution is the *convergence* between all existing media forms in terms of their organization, distribution, reception and regulation.

Furthermore, McQuail (2010) held that the mass media have already changed very much, certainly from the early twentieth century days of one-way, one-directional and undifferentiated flow, to an undifferentiated mass... The new media open up alternative forms of publication and present opportunities and challenges for traditional publishing. McQuail (2010, p. 141) enumerated the main traits that actually define what is new about the new media. These innovative features include:

- a. Digitalization and convergence of all aspects of media,
- b. Increased interactivity and network connectivity,
- c. Mobility and de-location of sending and receiving,
- d. Adaptation of publication and audience roles,
- e. Appearance of diverse new forms of media gateway,
- f. Fragmentation and blurring of the media institution.

In the same manner, Okunna and Omenugha (2012) described these innovations in traditional mass communication as ‘*modern mass communication: emerging trends*’. Dominick (2009, p.18), as cited in Okunna et al (2012, pp. 45-46), identified these emerging trends and improvement as:

- i. Audience fragmentation or break-up, based on differential choice of media content,
- ii. Convergence of all aspects of media, texts, audio, video, images, etc.
- iii. Increased audience control and selection of media content, based on pull and push models,
- iv. Multiple platform alternatives,
- v. User-Generated Content (UGC), as well as, User-Distributed Content (UDC)
- vi. Mobile media possibility.

Select Issues in Communication and Society: Examining the New Media Displacement-Complementary Effect Paradigm

Generally, literature have shown that new media displacement effect against the old media are evident mainly in developed economies, as a result of high investment in technological innovation, advanced technical knowledge and media literacy, high internet penetration, as well as, increased availability of and access to new media (see Cartledge, 2002), and possibly based on the assumption that people and government in these societies have the tendency of exploring something new and unique, and invariably advancing to be the best and the first to break barriers, record innovations or make new discoveries.

This situation could be different in developing and underdeveloped economies, where technological innovation, technical knowledge and media literacy, internet penetration, as well as, availability of and access to new media are likely poor and stunted; where the old does not easily give way to the new, and where both government and media organizations are reluctant in investing in modern technology (see Dunu, Ukwueze & Ekwugha, 2017). However, in other developing societies, such as Nigeria, there are somewhat pervasive increase in the use of new media among audience (Dunu *et al*, 2015). In Nigeria, for example, research indicates that a good percentage of the youths have increasingly been making use of the social media and online platforms to engage mostly in social activities and entertainment (see: Obijiofor, 2009; Agboola, 2014, as cited in Dunu *et al* (2015). These young people, who are digital natives and tech-savvy, comprise the heavy users of online media, with the majority of them maintaining active accounts (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013; Uzuegbunam, 2015, as cited in Udeh, 2021, p. 1).

Besides, Nigerian men, mainly young people, precisely in Southeast Nigeria, are among the active users of online media (Facebook) and cannot do without engaging in self-disclosure on Facebook (Udeh, 2021). Arguably, the youth population does not include all categories of media users; implying that, while new media could be serving media needs of young people who are tech-savvy, other categories of media users

who are not new media compliant are, invariably, dependent on the traditional media for their media uses and gratifications. Thus, in developing economies, both new media and traditional media can co-exist and share a complementary relationship. In other words, new media may not completely displace old media in developing countries, as could be in developed climes. Certainly, there are humongous issues in communication and society, but in this context, discussions are focused on a few number of these issues such as:

- i. Education, research and learning,
- ii. Journalism and mass communication,
- iii. Political communication, political participation, political advocacy, campaign or marketing, social mobilization and social movements,
- iv. Insecurity, intelligence gathering, reporting domestic violence and trafficking in persons, corruption and crime fighting,
- v. Economic issues, brand management, production and distribution of goods and services, commerce and industry, public relations and advertising,
- vi. Relationship communication, identity management and self-disclosure online for relationship purposes, and
- vii. Healthcare communication, management and information seeking.

Leading in the displacement-complementary effect debate and review of ‘creative destruction’ theory on issues in communication and society, McQuail (2010, p.138) critically emphasized:

As we have seen, many different forms of mass media have so far survived, retained their separate identity and even flourished. The general institution of mass media (old media) has also survived as a distinct element of public social life, perhaps, even strengthened, because of its central position for politics and commerce. The ‘new electronic media’ can be viewed initially as an addition to the existing spectrum rather than as a replacement. On the other hand, we have to consider that digitalization and convergence might have much more revolutionary or innovative consequences.

For instance, on the issues of education, research and learning, despite the humongous revolution and emergence of e-learning system in the digital age, analogue classroom education and library researching methods have continued to thrive and would invariably be embraced. For instance, in developing and underdeveloped societies, what the Internet and new media have done, is a mere remodeling, revamping or face-lifting of education, research and learning. Hence, Uzochukwu and Udeh (2021) inferred:

New media and ICTs are encouraging and expanding global learning and academic research communication across national frontiers; such that, with mobile phones, tablets and laptop computers, teachers and students can go online to download academic forms, books, course materials- audio and visuals or even publish or upload research studies, as well as, make online payment for tuition fees from any location. It is easy now for students in Nigeria to reach out to colleagues in London by a simple click and use of social media and ICTs; therefore, we talk about e-libraries, e-book, and e-learning, all made possible by ICTs. (p. 178)

Displacement or Enhancement Effect: A Review of the Application of ‘Creative Destruction’ Theory on Issues in Communication and Society

Again, the use of communication tools such as: the e-mail, fax, computer and video-conferencing, overcomes barriers of space and time, and opens new possibilities of learning (Akonu, 2003). Recently, developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), especially, the Internet and the Web, have brought significant changes in the ways we generate, store, access and make use of information (Ukwueze, 2014, as cited in Uzochukwu & Udeh, 2021; Owe *et al.*, 2023).

In Journalism and Mass Communication, Anorue and Onyike (2021) argued that mass communication (journalism) is, now, technology-driven; thus, ICT, being a communication phenomenon, holds the greatest impact on journalism.

Lately, the news media industry has been significantly disrupted by the potentials of technology-driven approaches across its entire value chain, including the creation, production, and distribution of news, products and services (Serrano *et al.*, 2015; Jumbo *et al.*, 2023). “News is currently taking different forms, and technologies are defining new forms of media audience, with sophisticated needs and demands” (Ezeanwu *et al.*, 2022, p. 111).

Also, as the media landscape becomes more complex, with viewers becoming more fragmented and empowered; a growing number of technologies and platforms, such as *camera-equipped drones*, are emerging to assist in navigating this complex world (Thomas & Jean, 2009; Philip, 2014, as cited in Ezeanwu *et al.*, 2022). Hence, Harvard (2020) explained that camera-equipped drones have emerged as an increasing commonplace tool for media to acquire aerial imagery; drones are seen by many as more convenient tools to do things that journalism has done before; that is, there are older ways of capturing journalistic aerial imagery, which yet survive in developing and underdeveloped societies, but the introduction of new media-oriented camera-equipped drones, is now, ‘just a new practice of convenience’; thereby, prompting blatant revelation of news sites and presentation of scope.

Likewise, Ibemesi (2007, p. 254) argued, ‘Coverage is another aspect in which the relevance of the new information technologies to broadcasting expresses itself vividly; radio and television stations are always concerned with the extent of their coverage, and satellite technology offers television and radio stations the opportunity to take their programmes to all nooks and crannies of the globe’. Apart from enhancing broadcasting and mass communication on a larger scale, new media, such as the Internet TV, newspaper, magazine and radio make it possible to send messages, texts, sound files, pictures and videos to ‘just a few people’, what Lee (2020) termed ‘*podcasting*’- production and distribution of audio files on the Internet so that the files can easily be downloaded or streamed, on demand, from a smartphone at no cost; and Dominick (2002, p. 312) codenamed it ‘*micro-casting*’. On their part, Dunu, Ukwueze and Ekwughu (2017) stated:

The Internet has created a whole new platform for news and information within minutes; with the click of a button, news and information can be posted on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Myspace, Weblog, and the world can become aware of recent development instantaneously; there are now possibilities of digital editing, and use of online sources in reporting news and scoops. News stories are now people-driven, instead of being just media-outlet driven as before; news is now disseminated both top-down and bottom-up, instead of just top-down; journalists are not just gate-keepers, but also gate-watchers. (pp. 29-30)

In political communication, political participation, political advocacy, campaign or marketing, social mobilization and social movements, new media (social media and ICTs) have altered what we used to know and how we used to know. For instance, in developing and underdeveloped societies, the old ways of writing letters to the editors, as means of participation in social discourse and debate, as well as, the conventional

convergence of a group of people at a particular point for political communication, social movements or mass actions, have only received unique transformation, but not totally displaced or abandoned; new media only serve as new forms of desiderata for socio-political activism and public opinion formation on local and global issues.

New media have only bridged the extant digital gap among media and groups; old and new media can interact and embrace each other, as a result of digital media integration and interconnectedness. The haves and the have-nots (developed, developing and underdeveloped societies) can currently share ideas and exchange knowledge on socio-political issues. Politics all over the world is now interconnected and the original palpable social and economic distinctions among people, as regards access to modern socio-political information and communication, have been eroded. The society has moved away from the era of ‘digital divide’ to ‘digital inclusion’ or convergence. With digital media ‘connective’, rather than ‘collective’, the conventional perspectives of social movements and political agencies as ‘mass or collective action’, whereby a group of people must organize themselves and converge on a physical arena, with stable identities or ideologies, for purposes of achieving a common goal, is, henceforth, perceived as an open-ended process, and no longer a rigid phenomenon. As a result, Kavada (2016) underscored:

Digital media destabilize long-held assumptions about the nature of collective action, about social movements and their capacity to effect change. Digital media are thought to facilitate more decentralized, dispersed, temporary and individualized forms of political action that subvert the notion of the collective as singular, unified, homogeneous, coherent, and mass. This is evident, for instance, in the declining use of the collective identity concept in recent studies of social media and activism. Digital media platforms bring disparate individuals together, without the need for a coherent collective identity or formal organization.

Furthermore, the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought innovations in different spheres of life, in commerce and industries, journalism, security services, banking, education, automobile, aviation, medicine, public relations and diplomatic communications, etc. For instance, Barbuti (2024) reported in the *New York Post* that the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine, recently, introduced an AI-generated spokesperson, named “Victoria Shi”.

Victoria Shi, according to the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, would be used to make official statements on behalf of Ukraine; thereby, signaling the first ever introduction of AI algorithm, in global diplomatic or international relations communications. In her first video appearance on social media, on Wednesday, 1st May, 2024, Victoria Shi, dressed in a dark suit, declared thus:

Dear members of the media and the public, I welcome you. My name is Victoria Shi, I have been created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, using Artificial Intelligence to provide you with timely and high quality information on consular affairs. I am a digital person; that means, that the text that you hear was not read by a real person; it was generated by Artificial Intelligence. I will carry out a number of tasks. First and foremost, I will inform the general public, providing timely and verified information from Ukraine’s consular services, I will provide journalists with updates about the work of consuls, in protecting the rights and interest of Ukrainian citizens abroad... With my appointment, we are taking a step into the future...

Certainly, the groundwork for AI began in the early 1900s; but, the biggest strides are beginning to manifest today, in virtually every facet of human endeavour. With this bizarre development in robotics and new media technologies, there are palpable anxiety and common arguments that AI has emerged to take over, submerge and completely displace human labour. Contrary to the popular viewpoints, what AI does is to

make human labour easier and smoother (a complementary effect), as well as, make up for human deficiencies, such as: fatigue, inefficiency, poor execution of jobs, unnecessary delay, poor feedback, memory loss and general body weaknesses, sluggishness, etc.

Indeed, AI ought to be understood as a product of human intellect and cannot be said to possess the capacity to displace and totally replace human factors. Undoubtedly, AI would rather benefit from human intuition and ‘thinking-out-of-box factor’, which it would find very difficult to achieve, despite the humongous machine learning phenomena, across the globe. AI could only be adjudged a significant collaboration for now and the future, but cannot replace man; however, there could be job losses in situations, where AI use, has been fully adapted. Justifying this perspective, regarding why AI cannot replace human capital, but only serve as a ‘saving grace’, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, in a press service, stated that, “The statements issued by Victoria Shi, would not be generated by AI, but “written and verified by real people. It is only the visual part that AI helps us to generate. The main reason for creating AI, Shi, was to save time and resources for diplomats” (*Agence France-Presse*, 2024).

Moreover, scholars (Salvagno *et al*, 2023) argued that AI (e.g. ChatGPT) should not be used as a replacement for human judgment, and the output should always be reviewed by experts, before being used in any critical decision-making or application. Salvagno *et al* (2023) vehemently posited that several ethical issues arise about using AI tool, such as the risks of plagiarism and inaccuracies, as well as, a potential imbalance in its accessibility between high and low-income (developed and developing or underdeveloped) countries, if the software becomes paying. The AI, Chabot-generated text might lack the subtle phrasing and word choice that a human author might use to convey a certain meaning or tone; it might also be vague and contain inconsistencies that would not be present in a human-written paper (Salvagno *et al*, 2023).

In curbing insecurity, improving intelligence gathering, reporting domestic violence and trafficking in persons, corruption and general crime fighting, new media have not totally displaced the adaptation of old media or circumvented the traditional approaches to crime fighting, intelligence gathering, reporting domestic violence and child trafficking in developing and underdeveloped societies. Rather, new media have closed the obvious time and space constraints, whereby security operatives, Investigative Police Officers (IPOs) and intelligence personnel, travel from a long distance and take long periods to investigate a crime. At times, before the arrival of these officers to a *locus criminis* (crime scene), crimes might have happened and suspects disappeared.

Meaningfully, new media have aided ‘immediacy’ in these circumstances, by facilitating the involvement of every citizen in crime fighting, reporting domestic violence and child trafficking. Currently, security personnel may not need to be everywhere to fight crimes; while at home, around neighborhood or on the streets, anyone who owns and operates a smartphone can take videos and pictures of violent crime and post same, immediately, on social media; hence, an enhancement to old media. Again, the deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) could affect national security by driving changes in the areas of military superiority and information superiority; AI cannot only dramatically enhance capabilities for the collection and analysis of data, but also the creation of data and intelligence operations (Nsude, 2022). Besides, commenting on the supplementary effect of new media in reporting domestic violence and child trafficking, Okoye (2023, p. 20) posited:

Every day, we wake up to one gory tale of domestic violence or the other, where lives are lost on a regular basis. We hear of child trafficking, where some children are rescued from traffickers very far away from home. We see missing children’s posts all over the social media, and thankfully, some are good news of children reunited with their families. However, in most climes, the digital technology often become a menace because, instead of being put to good use in curbing the rising cases of domestic violence and child

trafficking, it is used to propagate gossips and irrelevances. Digital technologies, which include: mobile phones, social media, Close Circuit TV cameras, computers, etc., can be channeled effectively in curbing violence against women and children in the society, and crimes generally. The digital technology like the CCTV can be installed in strategic places, such as our homes, street corners and public places. Our mobile phones should be put to good use or better use to record live crimes, make these videos, push them online and make them go viral. Let us see something and say something and together we can curb the menace of in our society.

In addition, Anyigbo (2023, p. 7) highlighted the enabling features of ICT in curbing domestic violence and child trafficking to include:

1. Ease of production and propagation, anyone with basic knowledge of the operation of a smart cellphone can take pictures or videos of violence and upload same on the Internet,
2. Action from a distance, one no longer needs to be physically present in a particular location to be able to communicate or expose violent crimes.

In order to improve on prevention, protection and prosecution of child trafficking offences, using ICTs, Anyigbo (2023, pp. 12-13) proposed three key technological models namely:

- i. Adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Facial Recognition technologies,
- ii. Implementation of Child Abduction Emergency Alert Platforms, such as launched by the Chinese Ministry of Public Security, on May 15th, 2016. One major shortcoming of the Alert system is its heavy reliance on the Internet and smartphone, and
- iii. Installation of Anti-trafficking DNA data base at security stations.

Anyigbo (2023) further emphasized:

Advancements in technology have made ICT and innovative player in the fields of both perpetration, on one hand, and prevention, protection and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes of domestic violence and child trafficking, on the other hand. The good news about the role of ICT in domestic violence and child trafficking is that the same technology that enabled them can also be used to impede them or at least considerably reduce them. (p. 17)

On economic issues, brand management, production and distribution of goods and services, commerce and industry, public relations and advertising, new media have not have also displaced old media. Whereas the conventional methods continue to survive, new media have only introduced something new, in addition. “There is no doubt that the Internet has had an impact on the nation’s financial condition. By reducing the cost of information and increasing its availability, the Internet allows companies to function more efficiently, thus, increasing profits and productivity. “E-commerce” is the term used to describe selling goods, products and services online. There are two kinds of e-commerce: the better-known type where companies sell directly to consumers, and a less visible kind called B2B, or e-business, where companies sell to each other” (Dominick, 2002, p. 313).

Today, people all over the world can engage in brand promotion, buying and selling of goods and services online, e-payments or e-funds transfer via Point of Sale Terminals, (POS) and Automated Teller Machine (ATM), as well as, through mobile and Internet banking platforms. Small and big business firms also place advertisement on social media and engage in relationship marketing communications beyond national borders (Uzochukwu & Udeh, 2021, p. 181). The application of information and communication

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technology to increase the effectiveness of business between trading partners on IT network, is now popularly known as e-business; hence, we have terms like e-commerce, e-enterprise, e-banking, e-Funds transfer etc., (Ibenta, 2004).

Other issues in communication and society that have received a boost in the digital age, even though, the traditional methods of managing the issues have continued to survive, are issues of relationship communication, identity management and self-disclosure online, for relationship purposes. As a result, Udeh (2021) underlined that social media, especially Facebook, propel increased participation in public sphere, help users disclose their personal information to other users online, engage in identity or image construction, as well as, enable relationship seekers to build and maintain social relationship and communicate via: signs and symbols, videos, texts and voice chats, on daily basis, with their mobile phones, irrespective of geographic distance or space.

In healthcare communication, management and information seeking, the conventional face-to-face, medical paper works and analogue means of doctor-patient communication have continued to exist in developing and underdeveloped societies.

Native healthcare management, drug production and services have also continued to exist and users continue to access healthcare through the native means, despite the emergence of new methods and applications in the healthcare sector and healthcare services. Advancement in Health Information Technologies (HITs) and growth of Mobile Health Apps (MHAs) now facilitate an ICT-enabled connection, integration or convergence of healthcare seekers and providers for health conversations, over a long distance, without necessarily visiting a health management organization or hospital.

Presently, there are terms as, health informatics, e-health and ‘Internet medicine’, which refer to health communication and management system that absorb the application of electronic communication tools or Health Information and Communication Technologies (HICTs); including computers and Mobile Health apps, in modern society, to disseminate and manage health information, data storage, recording, diagnosis, drug prescriptions, patients’ profiling, data retrieval and general promotion of public health (see, Kreps, 2017). Many native medicine producers and healthcare providers are beginning to take advantage of these new health information, communication and management systems to improve on their drugs and healthcare services, in order to stay alive in business, but have not totally abandoned the native healthcare method.

Notwithstanding the enhancement role of new technologies, something new or new media, on issues in communication and society, it must be stated that these new things (new media technologies) have certain problems. These problems can exist by means of invasion of privacy or identity theft, advertent and inadvertent corruption of social media spaces, through unregulated sharing and posting of pornographic reels and content, creation of deep-fakes or digital manipulation of image or video, using Artificial Intelligence apps; thereby, paving way for conspiracy theories, misinformation, information distortion and fake news, etc.

No wonder, Okoye (2023) stressed that the digital technology often becomes a menace because, instead of being put to good use in curbing the rising cases of domestic violence and child trafficking, it is used to propagate gossips and irrelevances. In the same view, Anyigbo (2023) emphasized that just as ICT has positively impacted communication which enhanced trade, commerce, education, health, journalism, *et cetera*; it has also been manipulated by unscrupulous elements in the society, as a tool for the perpetration of incredible criminal activities.

Conclusion

The early schools of thought about creative destruction theory argued that something new brings about the demise of whatever existed before it. Thus, based on this probable conservative assumption, this paper critically examined creative destruction theory on issues in communication and society, specifically, within the precinct of new media and old media displacement-complementary effect debate.

In other words, the paper, while espousing literature review approach, focused on a comparative assessment of the application of creative destruction theory in developed, developing and underdeveloped economies. Perhaps, the first theorists had constructed their theoretical assumptions, while reasoning from *morphology or structure-centred perspective*- based on the common notion of wear and tear of physical body parts or structural damage that occurs to something, in the course of normal usage or aging (media technology inclusive). They could have also reasoned from *medium-centred perspective*- based on the belief that different media serve the same functions for users; thus, new media will eventually drive old media out of existence. These assumptions, however, became prominent and held sway, not considering the possibility that ‘nothing in life can shoulder a complete functional alternative to another’.

It is, thus, argued that everything, including new media and old media; if one reflects from a *user-centred vantage point*, has its own uniqueness and distinctive characteristic to serve and satisfy different users’ needs, at different ages, and within differential geographic spaces or cultures; implying that a thing that is seen as old, can yet be useful and irreplaceable to a user, despite the availability and accessibility of something new.

Comparatively, therefore, in developed climes, creative destruction model could result in new media dislodging old media; thereby, prompting technology-displacement effect, because of high level of internet penetration and technological advancement, availability and accessibility of new media, high media literacy and awareness or knowledge of the operation of new media technologies; but, the situation is quite different in developing countries, such as Nigeria, and indeed in underdeveloped societies, where, literature have shown that ‘the old does not easily give way to the new’, and where both government and media organizations are reluctant in investing in modern technology.

Also, in developing and underdeveloped countries, studies have found slow and weak technological infrastructure, unhealthy government policies on ICT development, low level of internet penetration, high rates of poverty, as well as, increased mass illiteracy among the populace, as factors responsible for poor use, low acquisition, and reduced access to new media. Nevertheless, with the recent gradual shift to digitalization, increasing internet penetration, new media awareness, technological advancement, mostly in developing nations, for instance, from 3G, 4G to 5G networks, adoption of social media in virtually all issues in communication and society, politics, commerce, health, public relations and advertising, journalism, to mention just a few, the prospect or possibility of new media displacement of old media, may have been positively set in motion. But, it would be very unlikely for new media to completely displace, annihilate or lead to extinction of the traditional media; based on the fact that, in these climes, literature suggest, ‘the old does not easily give way to the new’; instead, both media would co-exist, and new media role would remain complementary and an enhancement to traditional or old media.

Recommendations

Everything, including new media and old media; if one thinks from a *user-centred vantage point*, has its own uniqueness and distinctive characteristic to serve and satisfy different users’ needs, at different ages, and within differential geographic spaces or cultures.

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This implies that a thing that might be considered as old, can yet be useful and irreplaceable to a user, despite the availability and accessibility of something new. There is no time that bandwagon effect would sweep the entire society, such that everyone would accept new media and totally reject the old media; individual differences and preferences, as well as, knowledge gap, among other socio-political and economic factors, are intervening variables. Consequently, it is recommended as follows:

1. Government and private organizations, in developing and underdeveloped countries, should partner to invest in technological development and create enabling policies and environment for both media- new and old media to co-exist, for the purpose of serving the media needs of different users in these societies.
2. Digital or new technology users in developing and underdeveloped societies should often, for purpose of ethical behaviour and a decent society, put these technologies to good use, such as in curbing the rising cases of domestic violence and child trafficking, rather than using technologies to propagate gossips, fake news and other irrelevances,
3. This paper, essentially, within the realm of media and communication studies, therefore, proposes an empirical study by new media and communication researchers, using relevant research design and methods, so as to develop and validate a new theory to be known as **Creative Enhancement Theory**, which assumes that something new enhances, improves, boosts, complements or supplements whatever existed before it; rather than bringing about its annihilation, disappearance, end or death.

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