

Correlations between Exposure to YouTube-Casting and Partisan Political Awareness

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ABSTRACT

Due to a significant digital mobile device penetration around the world, many conventional media broadcast outfits use YouTube as a synergising channel. Understandably, what is herein is coined as *YouTube-Casting*. It is usually intended to reach audiences who are assumed to view media contents via small-smart device screen, other than regular television sets. One may readily assume that YouTube-Casting is beneficial for conventional news dissemination towards partisan politics information awareness. In view of the resounding significance of contemporary partisan politics which is usually tension filled, and can drive passions, it is obvious that conventional television ideological information exposure on mobile sophisticated attractive smart digital screens via YouTube is growing. However, knowledge of the correlation between YouTube-Casting exposure to political information disseminated by conventional news organisations and partisan political awareness is limited. This research stems from such curiosity. While YouTube doubles as social media where people get exposed to entertainment among other light-hearted media contents, it remains doubtful how conventional television breast contents synergised via YouTube do offer partisan political information. This article, stemming from recruited survey research method that is built around the uses and gratification and rational choice theories found that audience research and ethical profiling is critical towards understanding phoned-based attitudes for enhanced efficient media convergence strategies. Digital channels such as YouTube, automatically provides for access to audiences towards dissemination of partisan political information. However, exposure to YouTube-Casting does not guarantee partisan Political awareness.

1. Introduction

According to Jarvey, as of 2018, YouTube had 88 localised versions and around 1.5 billion monthly viewers (Ha, 2018). As YouTube has developed from a straightforward user-generated video site to a virtual community with professionally produced content, it has continued to compete with traditional media outlets (Kim, 2012). Traditional media are being

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forced to adapt and make significant changes in structure, production, and content to reach audience members, because of the rise of online platforms like YouTube (Perez, Onate and Camussetti, 2018; Sorensen, 2016). The dissemination of news via social media sites like YouTube is one of these significant changes.

Online broadcasting platforms like YouTube and Spotify pose a significant threat to traditional media like radio and television because of their interactive and flexible nature. Content may now be viewed everywhere, at any time, and for hours without being restricted by the size of a tool or the amount of airtime accessible to users. (Kuyucu, 2019). As a result, mainstream media outlets like CNN, Aljazeera, Fox News, AIT, Channels, and Arise TV have YouTube channels as well; as they are fully aware of this evolutionary shift in media and communication. They transmit traditional news, interview snippets, SoundBits, and more to stay relevant in this rapidly digitising media sector (May 2010). This phenomenon is referred to as YouTube-Casting in this study.

2. Statement of Problem

According to scholars, the adoption of YouTube-Casting by mainstream media organisations became a need for survival as a substantial portion of their audiences began to prefer consuming media content on small-smart device screens (Kim, 2012). Since the rise in popularity of digital and social media, mainstream outlets have also taken advantage of this opportunity to reach a wider audience (Nyam and Oyewole, 2020; Nyam and Olubodede, 2020; Nyam and Okpara, 2021). Such a trend is particularly prevalent amongst people who grew up using devices other than traditional television sets; this trend is visible in the various social media accounts held by traditional media outlets (May 2010). Particularly, YouTube-Casting has been adopted by conventional news media to share news, which is chiefly political. Studies have shown that participation in political discourse on social media platforms, such as Twitter, has indeed influenced some level of political awakening (Edgerly, et al, 2009). However, not much of the correlation between regular exposure to YouTube-Casting and partisan political awareness has been explored, therefore this study seeks to determine the extent to which a direct relationship exists.

2.1. Objectives of the Research

This research has the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the extent to which levels of regular [normal] TV exposure affect preferences for YouTube-Casting.
2. To ascertain how normal TV exposure relates to levels of partisan political awareness.
3. To ascertain how exposure to YouTube-Casting relates to levels of partisan political awareness.

2.2. Research Questions

This research addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent do levels of regular [normal] TV exposure affect YouTube-Casting access preferences?
2. How does normal TV exposure relate to levels of partisan political awareness?
3. How do patterns YouTube-Casting access preferences relate to levels of partisan political awareness?

3. Literature Review

According to Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq (2019), the interactivity of social media platforms like YouTube and Twitter is a significant factor in the rise in youth political participation around the world. This is just as digital mobile technologies are increasingly adopted for a variety of niche media purposes. Various examples of such adoptions can be found in research works of Sambe and Nyam (2018); Nyam and Uwujougu (2021); as well as Nyam and Sambe (2021). According to the GSMA Mobile Economy (Nwachukwu, 2021), in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are 303 million mobile internet users, with a high likelihood that number will increase to 474 million by 2025. This can be attributed to several factors, but one must mention Africa's largely young population, with nearly 60 per cent of the continent's population under the age of 25 (Nwachukwu, 2021). Therefore, it is inevitable that this digital generation will take part in the political processes and discussions that affect their state or nation. However, the social medium site, the YouTube was used to disseminate political ideas long before it was a common method in Africa. This social medium as well as other social media have been used to create excitement around various political events in more developed nations, from politicians using their various social media accounts to keep in touch with the public, to uploading political debates between opposition factions - particularly on YouTube (Edgerly, et al, 2009). The general populace in these nations also frequently used the social media sites like YouTube and Twitter to voice their opinions on political issues and events and take part in public discourse (Edgerly, et al, 2009).

Traditional media organisations, including radio and television, are creating extensive IT Departments, and embracing more types of digital media because of what Kim (2012) refers to as the evolution of conventional media and communication, not just to enhance efficiency but also to stay competitive (Vyrkovsky, et al, 2020). Competition in the conventional news industry is, however, no longer limited to mainstream media outlets; the conservative Daily Wire and the leftist Young Turks channels, which have a combined viewership of 7.95 million YouTube subscribers, are two examples of online news platforms that compete with traditional media outlets in the conventional news sector. Additionally, a public forum for discussion, the development and effects of political campaigns, protests, and other kinds of expression allow both news providers and consumers to follow breaking news in real-time using hash tags, trends, and other tools of a like nature (Ghani, et al, 2020). The *EndSarsMovement* of 2020, which Abimbade, Olayoku, and Herro (2022) argue, represents a turning point in Nigerian youths' political participation, both online and in person, is a fantastic illustration of this. While social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram were predominantly used to broadcast images, videos, and real-time updates, YouTube was primarily used by traditional media sources and socio-political analysts to offer more in-depth and analytical perspectives on the movement (Akinyetu, 2021).

From an empirical research point of view, Fasola and Oyadeyi (2021) looked at the connection between Nigerian youths' physical political participation and the use of social media for political debate. They discovered that out of 1,023 respondents, 79.8% regularly used social media, of which 58.3% spent most of their time online participating in political discussions. Besides, voting between 2015 and 2019 indicates a positive correlation between Nigerian youths' physical political participation and social media use for political debate. Olubunmi and Folorunsho (2020) studied the use of social media for political participation by youths in Oyo State, Nigeria. After surveying 322 youths, findings showed that 98.8% use Facebook, 93.8% use Whatsapp, 60.2% make use of Instagram and 55.3% employed Twitter for receiving and interacting with political news and events.

In 2016, Nielson, Cornia and Kalogeropoulos studied the challenges and opportunities for news media and journalism in a digital, mobile and social media environment. The study covered legal and policy implications, the media industry responses as well as technological developments. Studying 26 countries across the world, the study found that the top two social networks used for news at the time were Facebook (44%) and YouTube (19%). Agboola and Yusuf (2015) studying the interface of social media in print media in Nigeria, found that print media can only continue to satisfy the demand of the public by adopting tools of technological innovation, concluding that the only way to expand and engage audiences is to employ and focus more on digital and social media. Examining the changes in the ecology of news, Newman, Dutton and Blank (2012) posit that a Fifth Estate will ultimately be created with internet users visiting news stories sites at the increasing rate of 12.93% while news and media outlets increased by 6.05% in three specific months (March, July, and November) over the course of three years (2008-2011).

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The theory of uses and gratification, presented by Blumler and Katz (1974), contends that media audiences and consumers actively choose and use the media rather than passively consuming media content. This theory further explains how audiences actively engage in communication and are goal-oriented in their media use. Uses and gratifications theory presupposes that the users have additional options for meeting their needs; as a result, users look for and choose the medium source that best meets those needs. This theory is pertinent to the study since it emphasises how actively consumers participate in choosing the media and the media contents from a wide range of possibilities as well as one that suites their needs best. In addition to this, the Rational Choice theory says that people make choices based on logical calculations and an awareness of how those choices will affect their own interests, which means they act as though calculating costs against advantages to arrive at a behaviour that optimises personal advantage (Ogu, 2013). This theory emphasises actions that arise from carefully analysing the information taken in, and thus going beyond a simple choice. As a result, this theory is relevant to the research topic since it seeks to ascertain to what extent political media consumers are deciding to take actions.

4. Method

Kraemer (1991) explains that to quantitatively define characteristics of a given population, survey research is employed. These elements frequently entail looking at the connections between different variables, gathering largely subjective information from people and using a subset of a population so that the results can be extrapolated to the entire population. Hence, this research is based on recruited survey responses. Questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. The instrument was validated through a process of face validity to ascertain the suitability of the question towards addressing the research questions, and scrutiny of levels of respondents' understanding of the actual questions final contained in the questionnaire. Ethical consideration guided the selection of recruited respondents and the manner of administration of the questionnaire. The instrument was administered as a soft version. However, respondents were properly briefed about digital collection aspects. The instrument and manner of collation of the responses ensured that no data besides the actual answers were collected. Also, all respondents were assured anonymity and confidentiality of responses -and this was fulfilled throughout the course of the research. Data derived from a random split selection of 20 respondents' level of understating of the question showed a spearman correlation coefficient test of validity and reliability of $R\text{-Value} = 0.8636$ [Sum of d^2 (σd^2) = 22.5 = It is a strong positive correlation value]. Overall, 237 respondents

participated in the recruited survey conducted for this research. All respondents were with the same geo-location and were not allowed to submit more than a single response.

4.1. Data Presentation & Analysis

Table 1.

Correlations between daily YouTube access being very politically informed

	Yes	No	Σ
Daily YouTube access	85	152	237
Being very politically informed	24	213	237
Σ	109	365	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 1, $X^2 = 44.3$; $p < 0.05$ at df 1. While there are differences in relative figures, the test suggests that such differences are not by chance. People must make deliberate efforts to become politically aware. Daily access to YouTube and possible conventional TV contents on YouTube do not guarantee political awareness, by chance. This means that there is a significant difference between access to YouTube and the level of knowledge about politics in Nigeria.

Table 2.

YouTube versus TV exposure and being very politically informed

	Number	Yes	Σ
Very regular TV exposure & being politically informed	37	10	47
Very regular YouTube exposure & being politically informed	85	24	109
Σ	122	34	156

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 2, $X^2 = 0.01$; $p > 0.05$ at df 1] = no significant difference. Partisan political information accessibility cum knowledge is a deliberate choice and less about type of media used. Media alternative only offers flexibility of access, but not choice of content to be exposed to. In fact, the ratio of “very regular TV exposure and being politically informed” = 3.7:1, while the ratio of “very regular YouTube exposure and being politically informed” = 3.6:1. TV had a slight edge, but not significantly. This means any such difference is by chance. This means that what people use media for [such as political awareness] is more critical than the media used. Therefore, selectivity and uses and gratification theories correctly frame the data outcomes.

Table 3.

Difference between daily TV exposure and being very politically informed

	Yes	Shortfall	Σ
Very regular TV exposure	37	200	237
Being very politically informed	10	227	237
Σ	109	365	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 3 indicates that only 10 out of 37 respondents who are very regularly get exposed to TV are equally very politically informed. Test further showed that $X^2 = 8.7$; $p < 0.05$ at df1-meaning there is a significant difference between the numbers. Indeed, this means that very frequent exposure to TV does not guarantee being very politically informed.

Table 4.

Difference between daily TV exposure and being basically informed about politics

	Yes	Shortfall	Σ
Very regular TV exposure	37	200	237
being basically informed about politics	25	212	237
Σ	62	412	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 4, data show that 25 of 37 respondents who very regularly get exposed to TV are equally basically informed about politics. Relative test showed X^2 to be 2.7; $p > 0.05$ at df 1, which means the difference is by chance. This means those who watch TV very regularly will certainly have basic knowledge of politics.

Table 5.

Difference between daily TV exposure and being basically informed about politics

	Yes	Shortfall	Σ
Very regular TV exposure	37	200	237
Not informed about politics	2	235	237
Σ	39	435	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 5, data show that only 2 of 37 respondents who very regularly get exposed to TV are not informed about politics. Test conducted showed that $X^2 = 34.2$; $p < 0.05$ at df 1] -showing a significant difference. This means some persons who very regularly get exposed to TV may deliberately choose not to be informed about politics.

Table 6.

Difference between daily YouTube access and very regular TV exposure

	Yes	Others	Total
Daily YouTube access	85	152	237
Very regular TV exposure	11	226	237
Σ	96	378	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 6 shows that the more one is exposed to YouTube daily, the less regularly they would watch normal TV. Test conducted indicated $X^2 = 71.6$; $p < 0.05$ at df 1 - showing a significant difference.

Table 7.

Difference between daily YouTube access and regular TV exposure

	Yes	Others	Σ
Daily YouTube access	85	152	237
Regular TV exposure	17	220	237
Σ	102	372	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

According to table 7, it shows that the more one is exposed to YouTube daily, the less regularly they would watch normal TV. Test conducted indicated $X^2 = 57.8$; $p < 0.05$ at df 1 –showing a significant difference.

Table 8.

Correlation between daily YouTube access and less regular TV exposure

	Yes	Others	Σ
Daily YouTube access	85	152	237
Not regularly TV exposure	45	192	237
Σ	130	344	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Based on the data in Table 8, daily exposure to YouTube, affect TV exposure - even if the exposure to normal TV is not regular. $X^2 = 17.0$; $p < 0.05$ at df 1 - showing a significant difference in the numbers.

Table 9.

Difference between daily YouTube access and No TV exposure

	Yes	Others	Σ
Daily YouTube access	85	152	237
No TV exposure	12	225	237
Σ	97	377	474

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 9 indicates shows that the more one is exposed to YouTube daily, the higher the chance that they will not be exposed to normal TV. $X^2 = 69.0$; $p < 0.05$ at df 1] - which is a significant difference. Increase in YouTube exposure significantly leads to non-exposure to TV.

Table 10.

Correlations between Normal TV and YouTube-Casting Exposure

	Normal TV Exposure	YouTubeAccess	Ratio
Very often	37	11	3.3:1
Often	52	17	3.1:1
Not often	130	45	2.9:1
Not at all	17	12	1.4:1
Σ	237	85	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In relation to Table 10, it may suffice to note that in relation to exposure to YouTube exposure and TV exposure seems proportionate to YouTube habits.

5. Discussion of Findings

In similarity to some of the studies reviewed, the research reiterates that exposure to conventional news via traditional media and social media platforms provide audience members with political information (Fasola and Oyadeyi, 2021; Olubunmi and Folorunsho, 2020). While the data in Table three (3) show that just 10 out of 37 respondents who watch TV very frequently are equally politically well-informed. The data in Table four (4) show that 25 of 37 respondents who watch TV very frequently are similarly well-informed about politics. Table five (5) data reveals that just 2 of 37 respondents who watch TV on a regular basis are uninformed about politics. The statistics does demonstrate that there is a distinction between being generally informed and participating in partisan politics.

This variation is evident in the relative figures in Tables One (1) and two (2), the test carried out suggests that these variations are not random; hence political awareness requires conscious effort on the part of the individual. A clear understanding of politics is not guaranteed by regular access to YouTube or any potential conventional TV content by

accident. This indicates that there is a big gap between having access to YouTube and having substantial knowledge about the Nigerian politics.

Accessibility to and comprehension of partisan political news is a conscious decision and less so of the media used. As seen in the presented data and previous related studies, alternative media; for instance, YouTube provides its user access and immense flexibility (Kuyucu, 2019; Nwachukwu, 2021). The ratio between being politically aware and having a lot of exposure to TV is 3.7:1, but the ratio between being politically informed and having a lot of exposure to YouTube is 3.6:1. TV had a tiny advantage, but not by much. As a result, any differences of this kind are purely accidental. This implies that the purpose of media use, such as increasing political awareness, is more important than the media itself. The data outputs therefore indicate that the study is appropriately framed by the theories of Rational Choice and Uses and Gratification.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that a social medium platform such as YouTube automatically provides access to audiences towards dissemination of partisan political information and might encourage political participation via its contents. However, exposure to YouTube-Casting does not, to any significant extent, guarantee partisan political awareness as media consumers must actively choose to consume such contents as well as act on it.

6.1. Recommendation

To develop better strategies and achieve enhanced efficient media convergence, conventional news media outlets must avoid limiting their services to conventional means and certain social media platforms. Whilst findings of this study indicate that there is no significant correlation between YouTube-Casting exposure and partisan politics, it also however reiterates the importance of employing digital channels in conventional news dissemination.

6.2. Main Contributions to Knowledge

This research has shown pattern in screen time do have a predictable outcome of aspects of audience information access and levels of relative awareness. This means once the media habits of certain categories of audiences are ascertained, the outcome of media effect can be profiled and used for projections. Partisan political awareness for instance, if found to be the result of deliberate information access points and content consumption. However, this research has shown that it is not just that one is exposed to, but how much and how deliberate one is exposed to it. While normal TV time is found to give some level of political information awareness, it takes more consciousness to attain a high appreciable level of knowledge about partisan politics and politics in general. Also, intersecting non-screen-based theories such and Multi-Step flow with audience-based theories such as Uses, and Gratification theory will enable media information influence analyst to better understand how structures and nature of opinion leadership may intervene towards patterns of media message flow and relative influence. This is because paradoxically, screen loving people are found to easily go from normal TV to YouTube, but do not automatically become more politically aware because of levels of media use.

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