



Celebrity Agenda-Setting: How Celebrities' Social Media Updates Impact Traditional Newspapers' Entertainment Content

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Abstract

This study builds on the existing literature regarding the agenda-setting theory as it examined the agenda-setting and self-salience role of celebrities through their social media updates as they influence the entertainment content of traditional Nigerian newspapers. The study answered one question: To what extent have celebrities' social media updates impacted newspapers' entertainment content? The study employed quantitative content analysis as a research design, while it used the convenience sampling method to purposively select four Nigerian newspapers where 1,178 news stories were analysed. Findings showed that Nigerian newspapers rely, to a large extent (44.7%), on social media updates for their entertainment news. Moreover, Instagram remained a platform of choice. The paper recommends that since Instagram has become a considerable repertoire of news content, Nigerian newspapers should also pay attention to other interactive networking sites in their news-gathering effort. The paper also suggests an additional adjunct to the agenda-setting theory—Celebrity Agenda.

Keywords: Celebrity Journalism, Social media, Traditional media, Celebrity Agenda, Nigerian newspapers.



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Introduction

Entertainment journalism, or celebrity journalism, focuses on popular culture, the entertainment business and its cultural products. As with other news journalism genres, entertainment reporting focuses on amusement, gossip or recreation while targeting a specific segment of the general audience. Since it began in 1957 in New York, entertainment journalism has now evolved into celebrity journalism, with the prominence of celebrities within newspapers' content rising—whether on newspaper cover pages or the web versions. Entertainment journalism has become a phenomenon far beyond gossip columns, tabloid magazines and newspapers. It now constitutes a new world within the media (Gay, 2018, Ayo-Obiremi et al., 2022). This genre of journalism gives attention to celebrities such as reality TV stars, prominent sports personalities, television show stars, members of royal and famous families or prominent entrepreneurs, big media personalities and famous business moguls. The focus here centres around the lives of 'big names' or those whom Boorstin (2006) cited in Gay (2018) described as "well known for their well-knownness." How do celebrities impact the entertainment content of newspapers? They do this through celebrity journalism.

Furthermore, the Internet has become a veritable tool for information and commerce—the medium is making social interchange possible in unique ways no other innovative technology has ever done in the recent past. The fact that the Internet continues to offer people an alternative means to disseminate their thoughts and feelings and not just as an adjunct to an expanding media space is unquestionable. In like manner and on account of its popularity and embrace by the public, the social networking platforms which have assumed distinct identities are not only playing competitive roles to the traditional media but have seemingly coerced the latter, albeit into recognising its acceptance in the media sphere.

In this instance, social media has come to produce its version of celebrities (Zannu et al 2024). For instance, as do *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *TikTok*, and *Snapchat*, *Instagram* now has its popular figures. In the case of *Instagram*, these celebrities are often called 'models'—while *Twitter* and *Facebook* have what netizens and the media call 'Influencers'. These social media celebrities may not fall into the



traditional categorisation of public figures in the real sense of the word but are usually consistent members of cyberspace, who, due to their persistent presence on social media platforms and with the nature and type of content they create and share, have garnered a constant following and have brought themselves into reckoning—both with their fans, the public and the traditional media, who now consider such persons as agenda setters, worthy of having their views and contents projected in the traditional newspapers.

In any case, celebrities are public figures whose lives are constantly under intense scrutiny, and every move is considered newsworthy. The audience (their followers) wants to be kept abreast of these moves. They desire to be abreast of every situation surrounding their favourite entertainment figures—whether these celebrities are going through some emotional, psychological pain or trauma or even some of the latest 'success' such famous persons have acquired. A conglomeration of these desires and objectives has created an avenue through which traditional media, especially newspapers, use the lens of the celebrities' social media updates to mirror the diverse aspects of their (celebrities) lives to the audience. The public likes to see that, like ordinary people, renowned persons also 'bleed blood.' Therefore, through *Twitter*, *Snapchat*, *Instagram*, *Facebook*, or the likes, newspapers are constantly looking for updates from entertainers to feed the yearnings of the audience—even as these social networking platforms have continued to buoy entertainment journalism in the mix (Zannu et al (2024).

At the last count, the list of social media networking platforms continues to grow constantly. From *LinkedIn*, *Whatsapp*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Digg*, *TikTok*, *Snapchat*, *YouTube* to *Instagram*, and many more, netizens have seen cyberspace expand to accommodate their ever-widening desire to share, connect, be informed and interact. Another advantage of social media is that it has presented platforms for entertainers to bypass traditional media channels to communicate and engage their fans and followers, as it concerns their most intimate thoughts and opinions on public issues or in championing a particular course of action.

These public figures who have garnered huge followers on cyberspace are not desirous of sharing their thoughts on various matters alone but also crave immediate feedback and, sometimes, validation of their positions from the audience. One only needs to consider the amount of 'wealth, achievements and success' celebrities throw in each other's faces and that of the audience in

cyberspace to understand and appreciate the dimension of the hunger for validation.

Research objectives

This study aims to determine if social media updates by public figures impact the entertainment content of Nigerian newspapers and to what extent the influence is.

Research Question

How have celebrities' social media updates impacted Nigerian newspapers' entertainment news content?

Literature Review

Increasing Impact of Social Media on Traditional Media News Sources

To fully grasp social media's impact on entertainment journalism, it is vital to consider the background to which this class of journalism was etched: social journalism. Social journalism predates social media in that it is a media model that combines professional journalism, contributor, reader and content (Sussman, 2014).

Agenda setting concerning the effects of media content on the audience is consequent upon believability and where such message falls in their (audience) attitude continuum. Rainie & Wellman (2012) have submitted that media news production and transmission has become a participatory work that changes communication. According to them, the centre of power has continued to fluctuate between the media as traditional gatekeepers to other creators or agenda setters, such as government, organisations, the individual and lately, celebrities on social media. This fluctuation in the media space raises specific posers about trust in media content and its effect. Who, for instance, does the audience trust more when disseminating information concerning critical issues of public importance: the traditional media or public figures on their social networking platforms?

Media audiences who follow certain celebrities on social and traditional media trust their opinion, which shapes their perspectives on personal or public discourse. Early empirical research has pointed out that trust in information sources is pivotal to audiences' decision-making process. Lay citizens seek information from a range of sources.



A complicated task in the age of mass and new media because the public often does not know whom to trust for reliable and valid information—although public institutions are viewed as maintaining a pivotal role in the general acceptance of complicated issues (Love et al. 2013, citing Trettin & Masham, 2000).

Again, people hold more positive attitudes and respond more readily when messages emanate from trustworthy and reliable sources. Moreover, in today's digital media space, celebrities have found a channel in the interactive social networking sites to project as those 'reliable sources', cutting out the bureaucratic and cumbersome process of legacy media news dissemination process.

To underscore social media's impact on traditional newspapers' struggle to remain relevant in this direction, *Facebook*, *LinkedIn*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, and many other sites continue to swallow up a large portion of the audience. Of these lots, *Facebook* takes a chunk of the number. On *Facebook*'s predominance in the social media space, Sussman (2014) said, "The average American spends about two minutes per month on *Twitter* and about seven hours per month on *Facebook*. It is not even the same order of magnitude. One in every six internet minutes is spent on *Facebook*."

In a Digital News Report, "Executive summary and key findings of the 2021 report," which sheds light on the changing environment around news-gathering, production and distribution worldwide, Newman (2021), writing for the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found that 51% of those sampled which was over 50,000 respondents across 26 countries used social media as a source of news each week. In this category, one in ten of the population used social media platforms as the primary news source. The digital news report only validated what previous findings have spotlighted— television news and online news are the most frequently accessed in most countries. In contrast, the readership of printed media newspapers has declined significantly (Hughes, 2021).

In the same direction, the picture of the growth of social media as a news source in Africa is no different. Over a decade ago, some scholars (Moyo, 2009; Moyo, 2011) have said that there has been mounting evidence that digital technology is being used via the Internet and social media to varying degrees by citizens to contribute to news-making and information exchange in compelling ways. It was argued that though social media is making inroads, traditional media still plays a significant role in news-gathering, production and transmission in Africa.



In a Statista report by Varrella (2021) on social media use in Nigeria—as of the third quarter of 2020, *WhatsApp* was identified as the most popular social media platform. The report said that the platform was mentioned by 93% of Internet users aged 16 to 64 years. *Facebook* and *YouTube* followed and were used by 86% and 82% of the individuals with access to cyberspace, respectively. Other platforms popular among netizens in Nigeria include; *Instagram* 73.1%, *Facebook Messenger* 67.2%, *Twitter* 61.4%, *Telegram* 56.3%, *LinkedIn* 32.8%, *TikTok* 31.9%, *Snapchat* 31.2.

In another report titled "*Nigeria: Number of social media users 2017-2026*", *Sasu* (2022) analysed data for the Statista Research Department, which shows the number of social network users in Nigeria from 2017 to 2026. This report showed that there were approximately 43 million social network users in Nigeria in 2021, and the figure was projected to grow to 103 million by 2026.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-Setting, Celebrities and Entertainment Journalism

Agenda-setting theory underlies this study and has maintained a prominent place in mass media research and industry. The theory which postulates that the mass media has the power to determine which issues are essential for the day in their publications, according to *McCombs & Shaw* (1972), has continued to undergo scrutiny by media and communication scholars and researchers. The theory, also known as The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media, originated by *Donald Shaw* and *Maxwell McCombs* in *Public Opinion Quarterly* and has expanded to include other adjuncts. *McCombs* proposed three models which drive research in the area, namely, the "awareness model", the "priorities model", and the "saliency model". Meanwhile, *Rogers* and *Dearing* draw attention to how several factors influenced three forms of agenda-setting: Political agenda setting, agenda-building and Audience agenda-setting (*Rogers & Dearing*, 1988).

In contemporary times, as scholars struggle to understand the effects of social media on the various types of agenda-setting (*Bennett & Iyengar*, 2009), the question arises: In the stratagem of entertainment journalism leveraging on celebrities' social media updates to further celebrity journalism; which is particularly setting the agenda, the media or the celebrities? It is pertinent to consider this because celebrities assume agenda-setting roles on various social networking sites by raising their voices or opinions concerning personal or public matters when engaging with followers. The traditional media, on the



other hand, in the process of agenda building, amplifies these positions (of the celebrities) by taking them to a broader public through their publications. The preceding is what Kim and Lee (2006) describe as media agenda via the Internet, which takes three steps: Internet-mediated agenda-rippling, agenda diffusion in the Internet, and Internet-mediated reversed agenda-setting.

On this note, Mayer & Cornfield (2008) suggest that as we shift to an environment in which anyone can produce "news" and social media influence our understanding of the world, scholars question whether the power of media gatekeepers has been overturned (Groshek & Groshek, 2013). Predictions of how the abundance of information sources online (including social media content) might influence or impact traditional media range from modification to attenuation to reversal of influence (Sayre et al., 2010). Reverse agenda setting tilts the scale full circle. The public (this time, including celebrities), long seen as a minimal player in agenda-setting, may influence news media, assuming new roles as gatekeepers/agenda-setters in the digital age (McCombs, 2004).

Agenda-building theory speculates that the media does not operate within a vacuum. According to Sun Young Lee and Daniel Riffe, the media agenda is a matter of observation that results from the influences that certain powerful groups exert as a subtle form of social control. Influential people in this context may include public or famous figures with tremendous influence on their fans and followers, especially on social media platforms (Seokawati, 2020).

However, as social media forms part of contemporary research discourse, a significant number of positions propose that digital media platforms are rebalancing the power of agenda-setting in favour of the Internet (Maniou & Bantimaroudis, 2021). Both scholars have played key roles in the exposition of the contemporary process of the agenda-setting theory. While considering the application of the theory in the Greek digital and legacy media in a study during the leftist government of Tsipras, the researchers introduced the term 'Hybrid Salience'.

Bantimaroudis (2021), in another report, "Agenda selfying and agenda melding: Advancing the saliency of the self", equally explored the concept of personal saliency, noting how digital media have reinforced user behaviours like interaction logs, where individuals have utilised the digital platforms for self-promotion. Accordingly, citing Chadwick's (2017) proposition on hybrid media systems, Bantimaroudis noted that hybrid forms of saliency are "approached as indices of

mediated significance derived from interdependent and asymmetrical distributions of media power, divided between mainstream media outlets as well as grassroots digital platforms including various in-between hybrid media formations."In addition, Kiouis (2004) conceived media salience along three key dimensions, namely attention, prominence, and valence. Accordingly, attention which connotes visibility is expressed as a conglomerate quantitate of media offerings in terms of broadcasts or advertisements. When issues are prioritised, it gains greater salience in the audiences' reckoning. Kiouis nonetheless linked prominence with positioning, noting that "there are qualitative aspects in its conceptualisation related to front-page coverage, prime-time publicity, prestigious outlets or international attention." As a primary affective attribute, valence has been considered of the self as substitutable to tone—"a significant record of salience displaying positive, negative or neutral dispositions towards different objects"—individual netizens.

Consequently, even though individuals use digital platforms to promote individualism via salience of the self, there exists the need for communal interaction. This salience is accomplished through Agenda-melding, which gives attention to how individuals connect with groups and coalesce their agendas with the group agendas. According to Matthe and Roberts (2009), groups and communities represent a "collected agenda of issues", and "one joins a group by adopting an agenda". Furthermore, new media technologies have created global avenues (agenda-melding) for people to find individuals with similar agendas and collaborate and interact with them

Nonetheless, some scholars have attempted to unravel certain relationships between information sources and the agenda the mass media has set up while probing the concept of who builds the media agenda—in the case of social media updates harvested and published by traditional media (Berkowitz, 1992). Social media could, therefore, impact agenda-building processes such as media agenda-building and intermedia agenda-setting, which focuses on transferring salient issues across media (McCombs, 2004).

Nownes (2019) confirmed that celebrities could increase the chances that an issue jumps from the media agenda to the public agenda by speaking out publicly about the issue's importance, especially on social network pages or accounts. He concluded by saying that if popular celebrities give certain issues more prominence, this can certainly translate to which issues become part of the public agenda.



Because the audience follows their favourite famous persons on Social media, the traditional media, especially newspapers, in their quest to better serve the audience, rely on updates by celebrities on the various social media platforms to enrich their (newspapers) entertainment news reportage. As Lavrusik (2009) said, "In a way, social networks are the new editorial page, rich with opinions and ideas."

As social networking sites garner more popularity on the Internet, there is the tendency that this may gradually undermine the traditionally authoritative voices of newspapers, thereby obligating these outfits to not only compete with online platforms but also rely on their updates to enrich further and inform its audience. Hughes (2021) states, "To compete in this rapidly changing technological environment, there has been an upheaval of traditional news sources onto online spaces." To circumvent this challenge, the resort to availing itself of celebrities' social media updates to better inform the audience is an airtight stratagem by the traditional media, specifically newspapers.

Decisively, legacy news platforms were considered the sole gatekeepers for news before social media came. The networking sites are now weakening the traditional news surveillance role. However, studies hold no concrete proof regarding one media being dominant over the other when social media is compared to main-stream media (Maniou & Bantimaroudis, 2021).

Methodology

This study employed quantitative content analysis as a research design and an aspect of time series analysis to provide answer to the research question. As Schreier (2012) said, content analysis represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying a phenomenon for analysing data and interpreting its meaning as relevant and employed in this study.

The population of the study comprised 80 plus Nigerian newspapers, where about 20 have actual national spread. The convenience sampling method was used to select four newspapers of these numbers. These are *Daily Trust*, *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation*. These newspapers have a national spread and are widely read in Nigeria. They also have a considerable following—online and on various social media platforms. However, the focus was entirely on their online presence, where their websites were monitored regularly for updates on their entertainment pages.



In addition, the study focused on only the three most popular social media platforms that Nigerian newspapers mostly rely upon for news updates. These are *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*. Since studying the entire newspaper editions is impossible, the sample size was drawn from their 12-month publication using the Taro Yamane formula: Where n is the Desired Sample Size, N is the Population Size, e is the Level of Significance and the Constant Value. Therefore, a 12-month edition, if multiplied by 30, will yield 360.

$$n = 360/1 + 360(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 360/1 + 360 \times 0.0025$$

$$n = 360/1 + 0.9$$

$$n = 360/ 1.9$$

$$n = 118. \text{ Therefore, } 189 \div 4 \text{ newspapers} = 47$$

The study was carried out between August 22nd and October 7th, 2021, with 47 newspaper editions studied. Three periods in each given day were dedicated to the research. The four newspapers' websites were monitored early at dawn when headlines were updated, at about noon when a series of events might elicit publication, and a few hours towards midnight to round off the day's monitoring.

Time series analysis was employed because it enabled a specific way of analysing the sequence of data points collected over time, as is relevant to the study. As the statistical analysis website Tableau states: "In time series analysis, analysts record data points at consistent intervals over a set period rather than just recording the data points intermittently or randomly."

Coding sheets were prepared where headlines were recorded, and another sheet takes the number of news updates from each newspaper and the social media platforms they have lifted their updates. The Content categories were the social network updates from each platform and the reports from other sources such as interviews, media briefings, press releases and wire service, which were also used as the unit of analysis.

Regarding Intracoder reliability, the researchers decided to code the data by the number of reports published by each medium, where two reports are equal to 2, and no reports are equal to 0 (zero). At each monitoring point in the time series, a minimum of two hours was required. The procedure involved identifying entertainment news on the web pages of each of the selected newspapers, clicking on such links to ascertain report sources, having them categorised and data recorded. The proceeding was done consecutively throughout the



study. Data is subsequently presented using tables for analysis and ease of comprehension.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data that emanated from the study indicates that the Nigerian newspaper sphere relies hugely on social media updates for its entertainment news offerings. The study findings revealed that the selected newspapers get almost half of their updates (44.7%) from social media compared to traditional news sources (55.3%).

According to Table 1, all newspapers published 1,178 entertainment news items for the period under review. The social media platforms provide 526 items, while traditional sources provide 652 items. Breaking the data into bits and understandable forms on account of the social media platforms' updates, we look first at *Punch Online*, which published 115 *Instagram* stories, 15 *Facebook* posts, 24 *Twitter* tweets and 224 traditional source items. With this, *Punch* leads on both traditional (59.3%) and social media (40.3%). *The Nation* online followed with 126 updates from *Instagram*, 10 items harvested from *Facebook* and 10 *Twitter* updates—bringing the total social media updates to 146 (46.9%) and 165 (53.1%) traditional news sources published by the paper. *Vanguard* Online would follow next with seven *Facebook* updates, 14 *Twitter* updates and 121 *Instagram* posts—its total social media harvest was 142 (43.8%) and 182 (56.2%) traditional news sources of its publication. *Daily Trust* comes next with 68 *Instagram* posts, nine *Facebook* updates and seven tweets from *Twitter*—meaning *Daily Trust* did 84 (50.9%) social media updates and 81 (49.1%) traditional sources. Of the social media updates published, *Instagram*'s overall update gave 430 (36.5%); *Facebook* availed a combined 41 (3.5%), while *Twitter* tweets yielded 55 (4.7%) news stories.

Discussion of Findings

Dixon (2021) states that market leader *Facebook* was the first social network to surpass one billion registered accounts. *Facebook* may be the leader of the pack as far as the social media sphere is concerned; on the contrary, the first revelation here is that *Facebook*, despite the popularity it has garnered among netizens, traditional newspapers in Nigeria do not consider it the first line of source for entertainment news. Of the entire harvest of news from social media for publication on their websites, items from *Facebook* only offered a combined figure of 41, representing a paltry 3.5%.



Ironically, *Instagram*, a relatively young platform (the app is one of the four giant platforms owned by *Meta*), took the Lead. *Instagram* updates gave the newspapers 430 news items— constituting 36.5% of the bulk. Some reasons could be adduced for this development, even as there remained particular uncertainty and mystery surrounding the development.

According to Bantimaroudis (2021), agenda self-promotion counts for *Instagram* as personal salience strongly comes into play where the digital media reinforces user behaviours via interaction logs on the platform for self-promotion. One reason could be that *Instagram* appeals to a younger generation of users who used the platform for pictures and video sharing before the now popular video-sharing app, *TikTok*, came on board in September of 2016 (the former was released six years earlier—in 2010). A report by Business Insider supported this position when it said in an article that a survey conducted of 18 to 25-year-olds and commissioned by the organisation and carried out by British market research startup *Streetbees*, showed that while the majority of teens and young people still use *Facebook*—generally it is not their platform of choice. "When asked which their favourite social media platform was, 36% answered with *Instagram*. *Facebook* was second with 26%" (Hamilton, 2019).

Secondly, though most celebrities and famous public figures may have accounts or pages on almost all of the networking platforms, there is an agreement or competition among these newsmakers to choose *Instagram* above others for constant updates and interaction with their teeming audience. On the flip side, we could question the very choice of the traditional newspapers' decision to look towards *Instagram* more for entertainment news updates while disregarding others. Is this decision a motivating factor or just some random occurrence? Then again, why do celebrities choose *Instagram*? We should look at how the various social media platforms offer divergent and, at the same time, similar characteristics for sharing and interaction. While *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *Twitter* share some striking analogous features—*Twitter*, on the other hand, is limited by the number of words that can be shared in-text—(other platforms, however, do not impose this limitation). The three platforms offer pictures, videos, 3D and in-text sharing options, while other social media that continue to be popular among users include *Snapchat*, *YouTube* and *TikTok*. As *YouTube* offers unlimited video-sharing capability to exclude all other features, *TikTok* offers only 15 seconds of video sharing via cellphone shot. *Snapchat* offers only 10 seconds of video-sharing ability, which behaves just like *Snapchat* pictures. On



Twitter, users can only upload videos of less than two minutes and 30 seconds in length.

Instagram's appeal to young fans and its unfettered capacity gave it the edge and made it a platform of choice for news-gathering while helping the newspapers to capture and better reach their teens and youth audience. Then again, *Instagram* presents a classical perspective to drive the agenda-melding process, advancing the self's salience. Among other social media platforms, *Instagram* offers users significant possibilities to promote their mediated presence while interacting with other users or their favourite celebrities. As Bantimaroudis (2021) suggests:

People look for information on the Google platform, but others also look to see how people are doing personally. Others watch because people are curious, but people also watch because they believe someone to be important. People 'like' to show their aesthetic preferences, but they also do so because they believe someone to be important.

This agrees with the position of Edogor et al. (2014) in their study, *Influence of Social Media on Youths' Usage of Traditional Mass Media in Nigeria*, opined that social media afford an expanding link which enables youth audiences to use them in accessing traditional mass media online—this in turn widens the horizon of media convergence. Moreover, *The Punch* website remained the most updated of the selected newspapers, followed by *Vanguard* and *The Nation*. The only other newspaper that lagged in this regard was *Daily Trust*, whose entertainment section needs to be updated.

Furthermore, another finding is how newspapers update their entertainment pages on any given day. While using time series, this study found that updates are done regularly within a given day. It was observed that editors may have assigned reporters to constantly scan cyberspace for entertainment news for onward publication. Additionally, a time series was employed during the study, and data was collated throughout the period at specific times of the day (precisely 1100 to 1200 hours and 2100 to past midnight). Results showed that the *Punch* website was the most user-friendly of the selected samples. Page loading was quick and smooth, and the transition between links and pages was effortless.

The challenge encountered with *The Nation* newspaper was due to the news writing style of a particular reporter. The fundamental news



writing rule is that the first paragraph of a news item, the Lead, should answer the basic questions of the 5W&H (i.e., the who, what, where, when, why, and the how of the event or situation). However, this reporter continuously flouted this rule. Most of the time, the reports do not answer the WHERE of the stories. Rather than state the source of social media news, the report would identify the source as 'social media or just 'Internet.' This was a challenge regarding source identification for the study, as the researchers needed help to place the sources of this reporter's stories. On that account, these categories were added to 'traditional sources' during data collation and recording.

Meanwhile, the Daily Trust website represents one of the most challenging and unstable news sites among the sample, if not among newspaper websites. The website fluctuates and crashes when trying to access it. When one is lucky to get in there, navigating or switching between pages presents another daunting obstacle. One could click on a page or link and not be able to return to a previous page and be sent awkwardly to the menu page or returned to one's browser's default page. Most of the time, the web page is unavailable. For research work that takes about 45 minutes to navigate the web pages of each selected sample at every particular daily interval of the study, the Daily Trust website only remained active for 10 to 15 minutes.

On the other hand, the Vanguard website suffers another fate entirely. The paper's entertainment section is divided into two. The main entertainment section and another pull-out, the Vanguard, calls Allure. Most celebrity news is hosted on the Allure pages, while the entertainment pages hold the rest of the daily entertainment news. This (entertainment news) does not auto-update (at least as observed during the duration of the study). When a news web page is clicked, it is supposed to open with the update of the latest news items. For the Vanguard entertainment news page, the visitor would have to do a manual refresh before new items are displayed, or else one is left with items displayed from the previous visit or day—it does not matter if that last visit was 72 hours earlier. So, this may present a challenge for researchers who may not have the presence of mind to know that such pages are supposed to be constantly refreshed to get new headlines.

As a distinctive constituent of the new media, social media has come to reinvent the way traditional media, especially newspapers, gather, produce and disseminate news. The interactive networking media has become an enormous repertoire of news content that publishers cannot but give attention to enriching newspaper offerings.



As data shows, news items from social media updates published by the newspapers are 44.7%, and items from traditional sources constitute 53.3% of the lot. More than half of items from the social media of the entertainment news content of the newspapers as revealed is a massive cache of news sources compared with items from other established sources, which are by far extensive and have been significant sources of news for the traditional media long before the advent of the social media. That social networking platforms could generate this amount of news indicates the enormous impact they have on the activity of traditional newspapers. Considering that this is just one aspect of a newspaper's average offering, if the count were to be taken of the different sections of any given publication and social media updates concerning these sections are analysed, it could be imagined what overall impact social media updates is having on traditional newspaper news offering.

Moreover, the interdependence and interplay of vertical salience and horizontal salience have been demonstrated in this study as it is observed that social media (horizontal salience) promotes specialised content for segments of legacy newspapers (vertical salience). As Chadwick (2017) agrees, "hybrid forms of salience should be approached as indices of mediated significance derived from interdependent and asymmetrical distributions of media power, divided between main-stream media outlets as well as grassroots digital platforms including various in-between hybrid media formations. Though Chadwick suggests that there exists conflict in the emerging hybrid media—the horizontal and vertical media, this study found the reverse, as these media share a symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship.

This interplay and interdependence is a hybrid concept that could be tentatively described as "News within news source". Since the advent of the Internet and the emergence of horizontal media, some trends concerning news gathering and publication have been noticeable. To begin with, social media platforms now have more users or audiences than the combined traditional media following. Legacy media, especially newspapers with various handles or pages on horizontal media, are left with limited options but to embrace social media platforms to keep and reach a larger audience and maintain relevance in cyberspace.

Let *The Punch* newspaper and Facebook be examples of this observed hybrid media interdependence. The process goes on like this: The Punch newspaper, which has a Facebook page, while gathering news items, will take an update from a celebrity, say, an



actor's Facebook page or wall posting, then publish this post (update) on its (*Punch*'s) website. After that, to promote this piece, The Punch sends the same news story link as a headline post to its (*Punch*) Facebook page. So, simultaneously, a user on Facebook who is the actor's follower will see the actor's post on his page. Because the machine algorithm now learns people's activities online and matches 'clicks' with suggested content—*Punch*'s update (both on its website and Facebook page) on the actor's post would likely appear on the follower's news timeline. This, in a nutshell, is the ongoing development where Social networking platforms have co-opted traditional media, either willingly or otherwise, to project, for instance, Facebook's objective and hybrid salience concept of providing an avenue for netizens to connect, share and gain information on a wider level on the cyberspace.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Through the study, a remarkable concept (Celebrity Agenda) has been observed, representing significant contributions to knowledge in the field of communication. However, it remained a preliminary concept requiring further investigation. As it relates to the theoretical framework of this study—Agenda Setting, and as an addition to the earlier types of the theory's adjunct identified by Rogers and Dearing (1988), which are Policy-makers or Political agenda setting, Media agenda-setting or agenda building and Public or Audience agenda-setting—we can tentatively identify another type to complement the three—this is "Celebrity Agenda."

As a form of exposition, the question remains: In the process of entertainment journalists leveraging celebrities' social media updates to further celebrity journalism, who sets the agenda: the media or the celebrities? This query is pertinent because, on social media, celebrities assume agenda-setting roles by raising opinions concerning issues while engaging with followers.

Furthermore, in the course of agenda building, the traditional media amplifies these positions (of the celebrities) by taking them to a broader public through "vertical media", where power, authority, and influence flow from top to bottom between the media and the audience. Nowadays, however, the vertical media process has undergone a rapid transformation with the growing trend of horizontal media—occasioned by the Internet, which allows netizens to become sources and creators of information and influence—meaning information is now distributed horizontally instead of top to down (Obiaje, 2022). In Celebrity Agenda, public figures (celebrities) with



voices that command attention and respect continue to leverage the vertical media to impact the media's agenda-building. However, in a reversal of roles, rather than navigating their positions through the vertical process of mainstream media, social media now provides a horizontal avenue for interaction with followers, which traditional media leverages to inform its audience further.

Celebrity agenda could assume a distinct position as an adjunct of Agenda Setting theory since the tool for its enablement—the Internet continues to expand and offer more opportunities for people, especially celebrities, to get their voices and influence out on issues of salient priority as set by them for the public. Celebrity agenda is a concept that should be embraced and exposed, especially in the contemporary digitisation and convergence era the media is steeped in, where the once all-invasive and influential power of traditional media is dwindling.

The outcomes of this study are significant and provide groundwork for further research and a tentative insight into future exploration of agenda-setting theory. A content analysis employed here has merely provided a descriptive analysis of newspaper entertainment content concerning social media influence and may need to shed more light on why reporters choose the entertainment news sources. We agree that the sample may not be representative as outcomes are mostly generalisable to the four publications examined. The findings here revealed a pattern of preference for a particular platform, which requires further study.

Then again, on the premise that *Instagram* is demonstrated here as the platform of choice for entertainment news gathering, the question arises: Why newspapers do not look to other social media platforms more for entertainment news except Instagram? Do reporters or editorial policy in and of every newspaper deliberately prioritise *Instagram* as a news source, or is there a silent code that *Instagram* should be the platform of choice for updates? (These adjunct queries called for further studies to provide answers to what was already demonstrated in this study, that Instagram remained a platform of choice for newspapers in their news gathering process). Indeed, the newsmakers (celebrities) who post on *Instagram* must be making similar posts on other social networking platforms that offer similar, inclusive features—where these (entertainers) have accounts or pages. That *Instagram* remained the platform of choice for these newsmakers and that newspapers have followed suit in that direction is left for further investigation. It is recommended that further research



be undertaken to unravel if *Instagram* preference by celebrities is deliberate or if there exist reasons why this may be so.

Moreover, because of their simplicity and accessibility, social media updates may present an easy avenue for newspapers to harvest news items. It is lazy journalism where sensationalism is being promoted and celebrated by the nature of the content being harvested and published. It has been discovered that every post by entertainers, no matter how frivolous or mundane, now makes news. We understand that celebrities are public figures whose lives are constantly scrutinised—fans want to be abreast of every moment of their existence, and newspapers want to satisfy these cravings. Nevertheless, should traditional newspapers with hard-earned reputation not resist the urge to fall into the gutters of luridness and yellow journalism? It is agreed that social media sites are a veritable source for news; nonetheless, it is advised that simple news writing rules of qualities of news be applied when harvesting items from that source and for publication to separate them (traditional newspapers) from the avalanche of unprofessional bloggers and publishers masquerading online as journalists. The same news writing rules should also be applied by reporters when gathering news from networking sites. Platforms should be correctly identified to properly situate the 'where' of the news in readers' minds.

It is suggested that *Daily Trust* upgrade and update its website to make it more user-friendly and prevent the situation where the site crashes unceremoniously, thereby frustrating visitors' efforts at accessing it. Other online newspapers, such as *Vanguard*, are also advised to fix technical issues with their websites, which prevent user-friendliness when interacting with content. In conclusion, this paper recommends that since the concept of 'Celebrity Agenda' is developing, further investigation and exposition are required to situate and place it in the proper perspective.

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