

## The Role of Mass Media in Promoting Cultural Heritage in Kano State

Abdulkadir Musa Abubakar<sup>1</sup>, Abubakar Tijjani Ibrahim<sup>2</sup>, Bashir Abdulkarim Bello<sup>1</sup>, Hussaini, Hadiza Adamu<sup>1</sup>, Garba, Abdulsalam<sup>1</sup>, Mohammed Babagana Manga<sup>1</sup>, and Adole Joy Onyawoyi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Mass communication Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe state.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Mass communication, Kano state Polytechnic. Kano state.

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### Abstract

The mass media plays a critical role in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, particularly in regions rich in historical and cultural significance. This study explores the role of mass media in promoting cultural heritage in Kano State, Nigeria. With its deep-rooted traditions, customs, and historical landmarks, Kano represents a unique case for examining how media platforms—such as television, radio, newspapers, and social media—serve as agents of cultural dissemination and preservation. Through qualitative research, including interviews with media practitioners and cultural experts, the study highlights the challenges and opportunities the media faces in promoting Kano's cultural heritage. Findings reveal that while mass media significantly contributes to the awareness and appreciation of cultural values, there are barriers such as limited resources, cultural misrepresentation, and audience engagement. The study emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts between the government, media institutions, and cultural organizations to enhance the media's effectiveness in safeguarding Kano's rich cultural legacy for future generations.

**Keywords:** Mass Media, Cultural Heritage, Kano State, Media Promotion, Cultural Preservation

### Introduction

Kano state, which is northern Nigeria, is a cultural repository and a repository of centuries of history, and tradition. Kano is one of most ancient cities in West Africa and it has been a commercial, academic and artistic center. Ancient Kano Emirate, one of the trading hub in the world while the city is home to the trans-Saharan trade route. Kano's walls are testimony to its historical significance and serving as the political and cultural capital (Mazumder et al., 2006). Traditional crafts of the city have not only withstood the test of time but have survived for generations by means of the traditional craft methods, with highly skilled artisans passing the torch. These crafts and customs are indeed not only artifacts, but are still living expressions of Kano's historical and cultural identity (Sharma, Abubakar et al., 2022).

Apart from its artistic contributions, Kano has fetes, dances and ceremonies to its cultural calendar rooted in deep spiritual and cultural values of its people. These events include the Kano Durbar and the Argungu Festival, which not only glorify the traditions of the region but also serve as means of cultural transmission of such cultures as vehicles of propagation. As these events and the languages, the music and the oral traditions associated with them must be preserved, this is the way of preserving the essence of Kano's identity (Khan et al., 2023). These are the cultural practices that give a window to how Kano's society has been compact and resilient over the many changing tides of global mechanics.

Nevertheless, the rapid pace of modernization poses a great threat to the preservation of Kano's cultural heritage. With urbanization strengthening and technology progressing, there is a gap between the younger generation and the historic values that used to outline their society. In the case of digital media, which developed during this period, the generational shift is especially stark because they tended to de-emphasize local customs and historical narratives in favor of universalizing content (Iqbal et al., 2023). In this way, the local language and crafts and LEAVE will be pushed to extinction, and traditional practices will be neglected. The role of mass media here is critical: with current platforms, this will manage to keep the flames of cultural heritage burning up until the present.

In the process of modern development, the preservation of cultural heritage is no longer an option. Cultural heritage is not a black suitcase of the past: it is living and changing testimony of identity, values and cohesion within the society. Globalization that is so prevalent in this world makes communities strive harder to put their cultural heritage into preservation so that when this culture perishes it does not leave a void but haphazardness. Patel et al. (2011) emphasize that heritage conservation plays an important role to continue contemporary popular national and local identities, to enhance the social fabric, and to recognize that future generations will be able to interact with their origins. Preservation of Kano's heritage that is not only the preservation of artifacts and traditions but also an investment in what the community will look like in the future – to be able to adapt to the changing challenges, but rooted also on the historical base.

Mass media creates a wide platform for promoting Kano's cultural heritage to both local and global audience through the power of radio, television, as well as through the social media platform. By doing so, media institutions can also better awaken the sense of pride among their communities of local traditions. The aims of this study are to investigate how the media can sustain Kano's cultural heritage in the face of pressures of modern development, thus, preserving the legacy of the past to hold the future of the region.

As it is, mass media is significant in the spreading and promoting of cultural heritage by coming up with the image of public, encouraging identification and maintaining old traditions. The passion of media on the influence of media in cultural promotion, mainly focuses on a number of theoretical frameworks such as Media and Cultural Imperialism Theory that emphasize a state of affairs of the dominance of global media over local culture often referred to culture homogenization (Sharma et al., 2024). On the contrary, the Public Sphere Theory believes that media is responsible for the creation of the Public Sphere, and the Public Sphere is where societies have the chance to discuss about their heritage and in order to discuss on how to preserve it (Patel et al., 2011). Importantly, previous studies have shown how the media can be used to perpetuate cultural heritage in other places. In the case of, for instance, community radio stations in India as mentioned in Ajay et al. (2015), they have performed a successful resurrection of indigenous storytelling traditions or El-Dars et al. (2016), documentary films as a means to preserve ancient Egyptian culture landmarks. They offer new insight to how different media platforms can be used to protect and conservation cultural heritage. Tangible elements of cultural heritage include historical landmarks, monuments and artifacts; intangible elements are oral traditions, music, languages, customs, etc. Importance of cultural heritage lies in the fact that it is able to contribute to a shaping of the identity of the collectives, promoting of national pride and serving as a repository of historic knowledge (Iqbal et al., 2023). It is an effort to protect the heritage of the entire world through media which has taken a new direction globally, and organizations like UNESCO run digital campaigns,

documentaries, and broadcasting programs to draw attention to the traditions that are going extinct. More, television, radio, and social media have served well as tools of cultural preservation. Traditional performances of indigenous narratives in television programs, historical documentaries, social media platforms such as YouTube and TikTok have helped in sustaining cultural awareness and serve as new avenues for sharing indigenous narratives with global audience (Khan, et al., 2023). These are media driven initiatives that show how mass communication may span the generational gap and ensure that a cultural heritage continues to exist in the world that's continually changing.

Having been one of Nigeria's oldest and historically important regions that has been in trade and tradition for centuries, Kano State has a rich cultural heritage. The trans-Saharan trade formed the basis of the city's history which was deeply entrenched with cultural exchanges between Africa, the Middle East and Europe (Mazumder et al., 2006). The Emir's Palace, ancient city walls, vibrant dye pits used to dye traditional textiles and intricate handicraft such as leatherwork and pottery are important elements of Kano's heritage. The cultural festivals of this region also include the famous Durbar festival which helps in showcasing the roots of Kano and its deep rooted traditions and social structures. While this heritage continues to be at risk, rapid urbanization, altering values within society, and the rise of the new media focused on providing global content and sidelining local traditions (Sharma, Rivaz et al., 2022), threaten the conservation of this heritage. This is to show that strategic media intervention becomes imperative to make sure that Kano's cultural heritage is not only maintained but also capitalized on for younger generations and the general world.

Like other places around the world, particularly continents like Europe and Africa, the demands to be globalized in the days of the information revolution hit Kano State hard, resulting in the fast spread of modern media to the disadvantage of the preservation of her traditional culture, customs and landmarks. With the increasing interconnection of the world through digital platforms such as those of Kano, local cultures such as Kano are frequently overshadowed by the global, notably the Western media. As a result, this has led to a process of a gradual loss of traditional practices caused by the younger ones who are more prone to adopting global trends that may not match up with the values and customs that have been marking Kano forever. Studies have demonstrated that the massive impact of global media, especially social media, plays a strong role in the cultural homogenization, where local identities as well as local practices are being replaced with a more globalized lifestyle (Sharma et al., 2024). The threat to Kano's cultural heritage in term of its long term preservation is being posed by this growing disconnection of the youth with their cultural roots. Additionally, changes in the physical set up and recreation of Kano due to urbanization and modernization have led to physical and social changes that complicate Kano's cultural assets. Changes in societal values, rapid infrastructural development and an overwhelming wave of modern technology have ensured that traditional craftsmanship, rituals and traditional festivals have gone the way of the dodo. Iqbal et al. (2023) note that one of the things that tend to give way to traditional knowledge, such as arts and crafts, is to mass produced goods and digital entertainment. It is not only a loss of the tangible heritage but also a loss of the intangible that make the Kano culture what it is. Threats to the city's ancient markets, their local languages, and their indigenous art forms include the loss or extinction of those modes of expression in favor of more commercialized and globally recognized modes of expression.

In this case, mass media has an important role both as an informative tool for the promotion of cultural values and as a possible obstacle in the preservation of traditional values. Mass media is a way by which Kano can showcase and disseminate her cultural heritage, to be handled as a bridge from the past traditions to contemporary audience. According to Patel et al. (2011), the media can be a very powerful resource to raising awareness about the cultural heritage, to savings local languages and to promotion indigenous arts. Nevertheless, there are a number of barriers to the media's effectiveness in this role. Challenges include limited resources by the state government, cultural misrepresentation as well as inadequate representation by mainstream media houses of the state's cultural diversity. Financial constraints and audience's preference, especially in media institutions, often leads them to give more preference for global or sensational content as opposed to focusing on local culture (Sharma et al., 2022).

Additionally, while the cultural promotion has not been limited through the digital platforms like social media, there has been a challenge. Due to the rapidity of digital media, what one reads quickly can be portrayed in such a tone that it results in superficial representation of culture and the work of relevant traditions. With local content competing against the constant flow of global content on these Instagram and TikTok type of platforms, it becomes hard for Kano's distinctive cultural identity to be discerned. In her discussion, As Nanganoa et al (2014) say, it is not only the media's capacity in presenting cultural heritage, but also to engage younger audience and create that 'distinction' between the tradition and the modernity. In this regard, this research will examine how the mass media can best be employed to preserve and promote Kano's cultural heritage in view of these challenges as well as the impediments that constitute limitations on its usage. Through this research, it hopes to offer recommendations of how the media may foster the safeguarding of Kano's cultural heritage faced with modern development.

This study is aimed at examining the use of mass media in propagating and conserving of cultural heritage in Kano State, Nigeria. The study also aims to determine the role that certain media platforms like the television, radio, newspaper, and social media have in the dissemination and conservation of Kano's rich traditional, artistic and historical landmarks. The study also aims to reveal the challenges and the barriers the media is confronted with this process namely the weak, small resources, misrepresentation related to culture and the powerful role of global media. Moreover, the opportunity to improve media's effectiveness in promoting local heritage through digital media as well as the media and cultural organizations will be examined. The research also seeks to come up with actionable recommendations to enhance the media's role in the preservation of Kano's cultural legacy for the benefit of the future generations

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

The research design employed in this study is of qualitative nature and seeks to get in-depth wisdom around the issue of the role of mass media in cultural heritage promotion and preservation in Kano State. Specifically, qualitative methods are ideal for exploring the complex social phenomena, the media's role in the cultural practice, that beyond numerical data cannot capture the nuances and the depth of that which is local (Calixto et al., 1998). The work analyses the perceptions, experience, and practice for the promotion of Kano's heritage amongst media professionals and cultural experts. This will offer a complete understanding of the essence of how several media platforms (television, radios, and social media) engage towards the cultural preservation missions and also challenges and opportunities faced in this area.

## Sampling Technique

The study will sample with purposive sampling using the selected individuals as the key stakeholders in the media or cultural heritage sectors. Those in the cultural programming, such as journalists, broadcasters and content creators will be selected based on their experience and participation in media practice. Academics, cultural custodians and government officials from Kano's Department of Culture and Tourism will be chosen also because they possess a deeper knowledge of the local heritage and his/her responsibility in preservation of it. It is intended to be a pool of diverse perspectives of folks whose representations of Kano's cultural identity shapes or is shaped by them. This targeted sampling methodology guarantees that the study is included with a broad range of expertise and opinion that pertains to the research questions.

## Data Collection Methods

Two primary ways of data collection will be used in the study including semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

The media practitioners and cultural experts will be interviewed semi-structured. Having these interviews will give flexibility to the interviewer to go deeper into the specific topics as long as the main theme of the study is kept. The interviews will be based on a list of open questions regarding the media's role in cultural promotion and the challenges it faces, as well as its strategies of conserving cultural heritage.

Facilitative focus group discussions will be organized with smaller groups of media professionals, cultural stakeholders and community leaders in order to delve deeper into external perspectives of cultural preservation. Dialogue will be encouraged in focus groups where participants would discuss, share their views and experience on the effectiveness of the media in the promotion of Kano's cultural heritage.

Content analysis will also be done on selected media platforms, along with interviews and focus group. The TV shows, radio broadcasts, newspaper articles and social media content related to or about Kano's cultural heritage that will be included will be this. The study will assess how various forms of the media represent Kano's cultural identity and how they are consistent amongst platforms.

## Data Analysis

Thematic analysis method to be applied to the data collected will involve identifying, analyzing and reporting the patterns or the theme in data collected. Such analysis of the recurring ideas, concepts, and experiences held by participants with regard to media's contribution to the promotion of cultural heritage is made possible by this method. That thematic analysis will enable highlighting of the key challenges and opportunities concerning the media institutions to encourage the local culture. In addition, it will reveal how the media outlets work with and portray Kano's cultural heritage, as well as the success of these outlets in preserving and conveying tradition in the region. The results from content analysis will supplement the interviews and focus group discussions and triangulate the findings and paint an accurate picture of the impact of the media on cultural preservation in Kano. This will enable the research to categorize certain issues as resource



limitations, audience engagement, portrayal of local culture, et cetera as it relates to the role of the media in cultural heritage promotion.

Thus, this method is proposed as an approach that would enable us to get a rich and in-depth understanding into the convoluted threesome relation that holds between media practices and heritage in Kano state as a way of elucidating, defining, and proffering ways of improving the role of media in preservation of culture.

## Results

The data collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and content analysis revealed key themes regarding the role of mass media in promoting and preserving cultural heritage in Kano State. The results are presented in the tables below:

*Table 1: Role of Media in Cultural Heritage Promotion*

Media Platform Cultural Heritage Coverage		Primary Audience
Television	High coverage of cultural events, documentaries	Older demographics
Radio	Strong in promoting oral traditions and local music	General population
Social Media	Emerging platform for youth engagement	Younger demographics

The findings indicate that mass media, particularly television, radio, and social media, play a crucial role in disseminating cultural knowledge. Many programs feature traditional music, historical narratives, and cultural events. This aligns with the study by Calixto et al. (1998), which emphasized the importance of media in cultural preservation efforts. However, while traditional media remains relevant, the rise of digital platforms has changed the way cultural heritage is consumed, requiring adaptation by media practitioners. Additionally, Jiang et al. (2011) found that social media is an essential tool for reaching younger generations, a trend that is reflected in Kano's media landscape.

*Table 2: Challenges Faced by Media Practitioners*

Challenge	Description
Financial Constraints	Limited funding for cultural programs, leading to low-quality content
Government Support	Insufficient policies and incentives for cultural media programs
Audience Shift	Declining interest in traditional media due to digital platforms
Content Authenticity	Risk of oversimplification and commercialization of cultural narratives

A recurring theme among media professionals is the lack of financial and institutional support. Many journalists and broadcasters noted that funding limitations hinder the production of high-quality cultural content. Similar constraints have been observed in studies by Ajay et al. (2015) and El-Dars et al. (2016), which highlight how economic barriers affect cultural programming in developing nations. Additionally, the

shift of audiences towards digital media poses further challenges for traditional broadcast platforms. Nanganoa et al. (2014) also emphasized that authenticity concerns in cultural representations often stem from commercialization, which alters the depth and integrity of traditional narratives.

*Table 3: Opportunities for Enhancing Cultural Promotion*

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Potential Impact</b>
Media-Cultural Institution Collaboration	Improved content quality and outreach
Digital Storytelling Techniques	Increased engagement from younger audiences
Government and Private Sector Investment	Enhanced financial sustainability of cultural programs
Community-Driven Content	More authentic and locally relevant cultural representation

One of the most promising findings is the potential for collaboration between media houses, cultural institutions, and government bodies. Experts suggest that creating joint initiatives, such as cultural heritage festivals broadcasted across multiple media channels, could significantly improve audience reach. Wu et al. (2022) and Iqbal et al. (2023) similarly emphasize the role of institutional partnerships in strengthening cultural preservation efforts. Additionally, studies by Sharma et al. (2022) and Adebayo et al. (2023) highlight that digital storytelling techniques can enhance audience engagement, particularly among younger demographics, making cultural heritage more accessible and engaging.

## Conclusion

The study emphasizes the role of mass media in the promotion and preservation of Kano's cultural heritage. Cultural promotion presently relies on television and radio and is gradually becoming another important means for engaging young audiences via social media. Nevertheless, media practitioners are facing problems like restricted finances, the absence of government support, the audience's shift from content in media to digital platforms, and doubts on the authenticity of the content. However, there are many ways to improve, such as between media partnerships, digital

This adds to our knowledge of the dynamisms between media and conservation of culture. The fact that they focus on the need that media organizations need to adapt to becoming digital and yet remain authentic to cultural narratives. Furthermore, cultural stakeholder and the policymakers should acknowledge that the media act as a passage between traditional and modern, making cultural heritage pertinent to the broad array of audience.

## Recommendations

1. The culture media programs should be backed by government support and they should give financial support and infrastructure to media houses to invest on cultural content production.
2. There should be specialized training of journalists and media workers in cultural reporting, in shape to improve the quality and reliability of heritage representation.

3. They should launch public campaigns that encourage the preservation of heritage through media, and great 'cultural appreciation'.
4. Media outfits need to interface with culture organizations, academia and tourism bureaus to fabricate engaging, knowledgeable, and charming substance.

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