

COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNANCE FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: ISSUES AND PLATFORMS

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Abstract

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Many political scientists think governance promotes the growth of trust between the state and society and serves as the long-term basis for state legitimacy. Haider, Mcloughlin, and Scott (2011). Many African societies' efforts to establish their cultures have been endangered by technology and civilisation. Despite this alarming and dire situation, communication is nevertheless believed to be a powerful force for spreading and transmitting culture, the center of human activity, and the advancement of society. This discourse examines the communication components for cultural development in Nigeria, focusing on platforms and concerns. The study is descriptive, predicated upon secondary sources, and anchored on the cultural imperialism thesis. The results show that communication can promote cultural development in Nigeria. The study suggests that to promote cultural development in Nigeria, some contact- and culturally-focused knotty issues be tackled by cultural communicators. It recommends using integrated media platforms for cultural campaigns to harness the nation's comprehensive cultural development.

Keywords: Communication, Culture, Development, Governance, Imperialism

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known truth that communication, the lifeblood of human existence, is essential for the spread of societal and cultural norms. Lasswell (1948), a communication researcher, identified the preservation of cultural heritage from one generation to the next as one of the functions of the mass media. Based on that function, the mass media can be seen as a preservation institution for both material and intangible parts of culture (Ate, 2008, p. 57). Every human interaction revolves around communication. There can be no meaningful activity in a communication-free setting. If there is improper communication, governance as an activity carried out by people will not accomplish the desired goal. Establishing authority, making decisions, and ensuring accountability will be impossible if contact is inadequate in governance. Information is exchanged between the government and the governed through communication in governance. Additionally, governance encourages communication between leaders and followers. Communication gives the leader a voice in addition to aiding leaders in altering people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours.

How individuals, leaders, and public institutions interact with one another to effect change is a crucial component of governance. It is hard to understand how states could respond to public demands and expectations without communication structures and processes that allow for the two-way exchange of information between the state and citizens. Importantly, two-way communication enables citizens to keep tabs on government operations, engage in discourse with the government about important issues, and have a say in political decisions. Many political scientists think that this promotes the growth of trust between the state and society and serves as the long-term basis for state legitimacy (Haider, McLoughlin, & Scott, 2011).

The challenges that impact the populace are determined by the system of governance and those tasked with administering it. One feature of any society that is affected by governance is its culture. People are periodically informed of these policies to assure compliance, which modifies their way of life, a key component of culture. Governance is centred on culture. It guides a group's rules and beliefs regarding the "right way" to govern and exercise authority and the "wrong way". Government regulation of the mass media, a significant route for transmitting culture, includes licensing and programming. According to Okwuchukwu (2014), the media serves as society's watchdog and alerts citizens to crucial societal issues, among other functions in society's political, social, and cultural structures. According to Olayiwola (1991), the media sets the agenda for political, social, and cultural discourse in addition to delivering news. The media's sourcing of news and information has its quirks; it is vital to remark at this point. Without question, a society's governing structure shapes its communication patterns, ultimately impacting how its culture is passed on to its citizens.

Since the former outpaces the latter in terms of political influence, economic strength, and technological advantage, severe political manoeuvres are played between major nations (economically

booming and politically strong countries) and periphery nations (financially vulnerable and politically weak countries) during the transmission of culture by the mass media. This development forces strong governments to use various communication outlets to impose their cultures on more vulnerable nations. We now arrive at the idea of cultural imperialism. According to Salau (2005), most problems with international mass communication are "directly or indirectly related to the theory of cultural imperialism or media imperialism" (p. 55).

This study examines Nigeria's efforts to use communication for the cultural development of its people from the weaker side of the split amid this violent media fight of cultural transmission between strong and weak nations. As a result, the research aims to answer the following queries:

RQ1: How much has communication helped Nigerian culture evolve in this age of technological colonisation?

RQ2: What problems prevent the successful transmission of cultural messages for development in Nigeria?

RQ3: Which platform, if any, can Nigeria's culture be best spread for development?

This study aims to analyse the problems mentioned above.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature using various concepts. Section 3 states the paper's methodology. Section 4 discusses the objectives, while Section 5 concludes and makes recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section captures a review of key concepts in the study, empirical thought and theoretical framework. For easy comprehension and appreciation of the work, it is necessary to clarify the three fundamental principles of communication, culture, and governance.

2.1. Communication

Communication plays a vital role in developing communication strategy and cultural development. Ineffective communication strategies have led to ethnic and religious differences within the population, making it challenging to implement the development plan. Efforts to understand barriers to effective communication strategies will reorient the nation to its development objective (Auwalu, 2021). Transferring thoughts, ideas, facts, sentiments, etc., from one person to another is called communication. Sharing information, expressing opinions, emotions, and attitudes, connecting individuals, and producing and exchanging messages within a network are all parts of communication. Experts quoted in Ate (2008, p. 2) see communication in line with the above. There is a need to examine their perspectives on the pertinent issues: for two people (or groups) to comprehend one another clearly, communication is the process by which one person (or group) passes knowledge to the other (Udall & Udall, as cited in Ate, 2008); giving understandable information and receiving and comprehending the message are all

parts of communication (Eyre, as cited in Ate, 2008) and any method of passing along a notion from one person to another is considered communication (Chappel & Read, as cited in Ate, 2008).

This concept is now more recently defined as “the process of communicating meaning based on information flow” by Castells (2019, p. 92). The two main types of human communication are verbal and nonverbal. Words are used to convey information verbally. It happens either orally or in writing. Conversely, nonverbal communication takes place without the use of words. More types of communication, including mass communication, group communication, interpersonal communication, and intrapersonal communication, have been identified (Ode & Soola, 1990; Akalugo, 2001; Baran, 2012). *Intrapersonal communication* is the information communication process that occurs within a person, such as a soliloquy (Soola, 1998). *Interpersonal communication* is another name for face-to-face interaction. This form of communication shares information, ideas, and opinions between two people.

In contrast to intrapersonal communication, when the communicator keeps their ideas to themselves, the sender here communicates ideas or information to the recipient (Akalugo, 2001). *Group communication*: a group is created when three or more people gather together intending to pursue a particular objective. Whether they came together on purpose or by chance, group contact is possible as long as there is an interchange of ideas and information (Ode & Soola, 1990). *Mass communication* establishes a mutual understanding between the public and the media (Baran, 2012).

Social engagement is facilitated via communication. It enables us to comprehend ourselves, stay in contact with others, and foresee how they will react to various circumstances (Sambe, 2005). Action, reaction, and engagement are all parts of the communication process. To better understand mass communication, which Sambe (2005) defines as “a device by which a group of people working together distributes information to a vast, heterogeneous, and anonymous audience simultaneously” (p. 28), further information must be provided. Wilson (2005) recommended that to effectively communicate with the general public, “first, the language of the message must be available to and understood by a reasonably broad segment of the people of each country. Second, the communication messages must be firmly rooted in and reflect the wide range of people’s cultural sensibilities” (p. 3). Sambe (2005) asserts that “variables of cultural communication include the type of food we eat, the kind of shelter we choose, the type of clothes we wear, the way we greet, the way we address people, the language we speak, our attitude to time, and so on” (p. 10) to emphasise the cultural elements of communication that are prevalent in the culture of the communicator.

2.2. Culture

The entirety of a person’s way of life is their culture. According to Rodney (1974), “culture embraces what people eat, and what they wear, and how they communicate, as well as how they greet the newborn

and treat the deceased” (p. 41). In contrast to genetic or hereditary transmission, Kornblum (2007) defines culture as “modes of thoughts, behavior that are handed down from one generation to the next through communicative engagement — language, gestures, writing, building and every other communication among humans” (p. 45). Taylor and many anthropologists and sociologists (as cited in Otite & Ogonwo, 2006) subscribe to the popular definition of culture as the complex whole of man’s acquisition of knowledge, morality, beliefs, arts, customs, technology, etc., that are passed down from one generation to another. According to the viewpoints above, UNESCO defines culture as a collection of unique, spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional characteristics of a community or social group, including, in addition to life value systems, customs, and beliefs (UNESCO, 2003).

In discussing culture, Henslin (2010, p. 36) notes that if you come across a young American woman from India who has just arrived, it is clear that her culture is distinct from yours. She is first noticed for her attire, jewellery, makeup, and hairstyle. You then hear her speaking. Her movements then make it clear. She may later display strange notions about relationships or what is essential in her life. Language, ideologies, attitudes, and items passed down from generation to generation indicate the culture. Culture can be divided into two categories: material culture and non-material culture. All societal artefacts, including human-made tools, housing, clothing, and weapons, are referred to as “material culture” (Ate, 2008, p. 56). Items not made of material things are people’s standards, values, and belief systems. They stand for psychology’s cultural branch. Non-material culture, according to Akanle (2012), is the force and spirit that propels a society’s progress down the correct course.

Cultural communicators might focus on the three components of culture that Bierstedt (as cited in Knornblum, 2008, p. 46), outlines:

- thoughts or modes of thought that structure human awareness;
- norms or established methods of carrying out our ideas;
- material culture or customs for distributing or utilising cultural artefacts.

The link between culture and communication must be emphasised in this context. According to Baran (2012), “a culture’s values and beliefs reside within the stories it tells” (p. 6); hence the mass media are cultural storytellers. In addition, meaning is simultaneously communicated through symbols to the mass media’s comparatively broad, diverse, and anonymous audience. It is asserted that mass media sources act as culture carriers from one location to another (Ate, 2008, p. 57).

2.3. Governance

The definitions of the word “governance” given by various authors vary. It is important to note that “governance” and “government” are frequently used interchangeably. Governance is the collection of strategies through which individuals and organisations in the public and private sectors deal with their mutual challenges. It’s a never-ending

process of balancing conflicting interests and establishing cooperative actions. It consists of formal institutions and processes with the capacity to ensure informal compliance and agreements that individuals and organisations have agreed to or accepted to achieve their objectives. Good governance, in essence, is a collection of principles and standards for social administration that attempts to maximise public benefits while fostering and assuring peaceful and long-term prosperity (Giao, as cited in Chien & Thanh, 2022).

In other words, it is the ideal state and goal of many countries' government reform projects, the state and government's guiding principles, or the whole system's designs and operations. Good governance is the partnership that considers the geopolitical challenges of integration and legal boundaries. The possibilities necessary for extending local self-governance are just a few issues that must be addressed (Ruohonen, Alhainen, & Astikainen, 2020). Demographic challenges that could jeopardise the country's socio-economic development and stability are easily noted and tackled (Bakkar & Ögcem, 2019). In many societies, the functioning of self-governance systems is vital for the overall development of society. Such systems are based on principles and values that benefit local communities, seeing them as part of the partnership. A political system cannot be accepted without local government involvement because it is considered the first stage of democracy (Vejseli & Kamberi, 2021).

2.4. Theoretical framework

The theoretical perspective of media imperialism serves as the foundation for this study. White (2001) used Herbert Schiller's (1976) writings to provide insight into the central cultural imperialism claims. Schiller's theory of cultural imperialism postulates that a society enters the modern world system when its dominant stratum is persuaded, coerced, compelled, and occasionally bought into, moulding its social institutions to coincide with or even advance the ideals and system's dominant center.

The main ideas of the theory are identified by Schiller (1976) and White (2001) as follows:

- The modern world system is an archaic idea that suggests capitalism.
- Society is a primordial idea that refers to any nation or locality that resides within particular geographic bounds and is thought to be less advanced than the dominant centre.
- The term "dominating centre of the system" refers to industrialised nations, often known as "centre nations" or "western power", in discussions about the global exchange of information. The idea of peripheral nations — also known as "emerging countries" or "dependent areas" — contradicts the concept of centre nations, the third world or "least developed nation".
- Values and structure: this phrase refers to a dominant centre's culture and actual organisational methods that are unfamiliar to the country that is thought to be less developed than the dominant centre.

Different specialists utilise unique terminologies from communication literature to describe the cultural imperialism theory. "Media imperialism" (Boyd-Barret, 1977), "structural imperialism" (Galtung, 1980), "dependence and

domination" (Link, 1984), "culture synchronisation" (Hamelink, 1983), and "electronic colonialism" (McPhail, 1987), and "communication imperialism" are examples of such terminology (Mattleart, 1994). Cultural imperialism, according to Boyd-Barret (1977), is the process by which the ownership, structure, distribution, or content of the media in any country is individually or collectively subject to significant external pressures from the media interests of any country or countries without a proportionate reciprocation of influence by the government so affected. Okhakhu and Ate (2011) define cultural imperialism as "a dynamic notion that is defined in the context of different variables — the economic, political, and technological influence of the centre nation on periphery nations" (p. 76).

This idea is pertinent to the study because sophisticated worldwide media heavily exposes our people to other cultures. As a result, our culture cannot advance in terms of growth through local media. All the nation's major players need to address the media's cultural imbalance or superpower dominance.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted the use of secondary data from already published materials. The study could be said to have adopted the historical research method. Historical research provides an opportunity to use obtained and existing data to understand the present, based on what lived in the past, to aid a forecast of the future. In this case, the researcher relies mainly on relevant documents and observation as significant sources of knowledge. It is from the papers that the extraction of information is vital to the interpretation of situations, which would enable a forecast of the future. It is an integrated narration or description of past events or facts written in a spirit of critical inquiry for the whole truth. The survey, focus group discussion (FGD) and interview are three alternative methods that may be utilised to conduct this type of study.

A focus group is a commonly used qualitative research method in data collection. The main aim of the focus group is to find answers to the *why*, *what*, and *how* questions. One advantage of focus groups is that the researcher doesn't necessarily need to interact with the group in person. Focus groups are expensive compared to the other qualitative research methods. Typically they are used to explain complex processes — this method benefits market research on new products and testing new concepts. The researcher should gather a large group of individuals for the FGD to debate concerns that arise from the research challenge. In the event of an interview, the researcher should create a list of questions to ask people chosen from the research population.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Extent of communication usage in bringing about cultural development in Nigeria

According to data, Nigerian media generally communicates the cultural aspects of their people. According to Akanle (2012), every culture in Nigeria has distinctive dietary customs, dress codes, production methods, linguistic greetings, marriage customs, socialisation customs, and political

systems that could be incorporated for growth. Agbana (2018) agrees, pointing out that television has developed into a formidable force in propagating cultural values and standards in any civilised community. The introduction of cable television, like Startimes, DSTV, GoTV, etc., has aided even more, in addition to terrestrial television stations that have developed unique entertainment programs.

We can all agree that the Nigerian media is making an effort when we view the problem by merely sharing cultural stories within the nation. But when it comes to developing our culture to the point that it can be competitively transmitted to other civilisations, we are nowhere to be found. Agbana (2018) is concerned that while westernisation has taken precedence in the media, which is supposed to promote indigenous cultures, the current situation of those cultures in Nigeria is very alarming. According to Ate (2008), "Africans are familiar with western habits, traditions, and values through the mass media" (p. 57). According to Giddens (1991), third-world nations are left defenseless in the marketplace of communication tools to uphold their cultural independence.

As can be seen from the preceding, economic captivity is followed by informational confinement, which is then followed by cultural captivity. Unfortunately, that is the narrative and reality in Nigeria. We are surrounded by a vibrant cultural history that cries out to be expressed to the outer world. In Tanzania, which is from East Africa, communication and the mass media play a crucial role in development. Toivanen (2014) affirms that in Tanzania "the potential for promoting development through the media has grown vis-à-vis its diversity. Possibilities for using media as a tool for social change are now vast in the country" (p. 8).

In Cameroon, Central Africa, communication has changed all society segments virtually. Wutofeh (2020) submits:

"Cultural and development associations of the region are taking advantage of this technology. Each time there is supposed to be a cultural manifestation, the people go to the media to announce and advertise their culture. The community radio and some local radio stations broadcast important programmes in local languages and most villagers take interest in listening to such programmes which in most cases helps them improve on language, agricultural practice health and education" (p. 1049).

4.2. Barriers for effective communication of cultural heritage in Nigeria

In Nigeria, many problems affect how successful cultural messages are communicated. Cultural imperialism, the environment, and the target audience are considered here.

4.2.1. Cultural imperialism

The notion is that one nation or group of people is attempting to exploit another by dominating them (Brown, 1974, p. 22). Media imperialism, often known as cultural imperialism, refers to expanding imperial or neocolonial control over the mass media of another nation (Ekeanyanwu, 2015, p. 16). Imperialism might be observed from a political,

economic, or technological perspective. According to Udeze (2005), media and cultural imperialism now assist economic imperialism. According to him, "people's brains are primed to acquire those things and services by the mass media to accept goods or services, or to embrace this habit or lifestyle as the superior one" (Udeze, 2005, p. 27). According to Ate (2008, p. 66), the powerful and prosperous nations had the advantage over the less developed ones in today's world; therefore, the former imposed their cultures or ways of life on the latter. This study's theoretical framework includes a thorough discussion of this issue.

Also, under cultural imperialism, China's influence on Nigeria is dominant. From investment, trade and cultural imposition, China has an advantage over Nigeria. Until Nigeria and other African countries dealing with China "regulate their engagement with China towards achieving national development and economic growth, they would remain at the receiving end of China-Africa relations" (Umejei, 2015, p. 74). In the media, commerce and engineering are dominating African countries.

In Tanzania, the government has banned all local media outlets from broadcasting foreign content without official permission to checkmate cultural erosion. Due to the above development, Arusha Press Club (2020) states that the media operating space in Tanzania has shrunk due to the introduction of unfriendly and draconian media laws and regulations.

In Cameroon, the country has been constructed from a colonial legacy left by four world powers: Portugal, Germany, Britain and France. The colonial heritage is rich; three colonial powers have had very close ties and an impact on the present life of the country (Nwetta, 2020).

The issue of language by foreign powers is very fundamental in the developmental initiatives of Cameroon. Nwetta (2020) attests to this fact:

"The Anglophone in Cameroon believes in the English language's sense of belonging, attachment, identity and culture enshrined. The spread of the language is redefining pre-colonial and colonial notions of English and a new dispensation and interpretation in setting in. The Francophones are gaining consciousness of English's international vitality and power and are rushing into it" (p. 214).

In all examined African countries, cultural imperialism is at work in favour of superior powers.

4.2.2. Environment

Because of the profit-driven nature of the Nigerian media landscape, news commercialisation is given more emphasis by media owners to remain viable. The implication is that cultural issues that might not provide media owners with additional financial value are given less attention. According to Hardt (2001), "commercialisation today sets the limit for public interest" and "dictates the form of journalism" (p. 83). Wilson (2005) laments that "news and information have a price tag since it is seen as a commodity rather than the product or a service delivered for the public good in keeping with individual's constitutional right to know" (p. 149). Nigeria's economic and media environment is now unfavourable for producing cultural messages that

will benefit the general. The diversity of cultures present in the Nigerian climate makes it difficult to decide which elements to emphasise or ignore. Nigeria is one of the world's societies with the most significant ethnic and linguistic diversity (Aduku, 2012, p. 201). This commercial hegemony is also visible in other African countries.

4.2.3. Audience

The audiences in Nigeria who are using new media platforms look ahead of the cultural communicators in the nation who are still using antiquated methods of communication. Cultural communicators in Nigeria must recognise how the audience, particularly young people, is changing their consumption habits. Okusaga (2018) offers perceptions of the preferences and demands of the media consumption of the twenty-first century:

"The young news-consumer is no longer interested in just reading, listening and watching alone, he wants to be at the centre and driver's seat of news creation. Urged on by the freedom created by new technologies, young news-consumer are also making their own news and building their own content without waiting for traditional news institutions to use it".

Okusaga (2018) adds:

"Social Media communities and content syndicators and aggregators are daily springing up to give vent to the voice of this generation as they strive for self-expression rather than media approval of their creative output".

Therefore, when packaging and delivering their messages, cultural communicators must consider the audience's comfort, ease of access, and potential for interactions.

4.3. Platforms for the transmission of cultural messages for the cultural development of Nigeria

From the above-the-line and below-the-line media views, one can appreciate media outlets that can communicate cultural messages to Nigerians. The mainstream media, such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, etc., are considered above the line. Other means of communication outside those mentioned above-the-line platforms are included in below-the-line media.

Ate (2008) attests that "radio, TV, newspapers and magazines make the learning, sharing and integration of culture possible among people of diverse backgrounds irrespective of distance, race, sex and other variables" (p. 57). He claims that it doesn't take much time to watch programs on CNN, MTV Base, Super Sport, Sky Sport, Hollywood, and Bollywood, all of which have a significant cosmopolitan and homogenising effect on the world's cultures.

Through the new media structure, you may quickly download cultural content on your computer or mobile device and transmit cultural elements like clothes, food, shelter, etc., to other people. The town crier or gongman, the horn man, the minstrel, the storyteller, traditional leaders, and social groupings can also convey many cultural items to the populace using the African Communication or traditional communication style. According to Ate (2008), the African communication system is robust

because it "reinforces and develops a sense of nationality and nationhood in Africa; establishes the foundation for diffusion network; minimises empty waste in information distribution and is simple and less expensive" (p. 9).

In Tanzania, blogs and online media platforms flourished together with the mainstream media until the Tanzanian Communication Regulatory Authority (TRCA) establishment in 2017 financially censored the process. Website owners "had to pay a fee USD 900 (equivalent to Tzs. 2,000,000). Many online content providers, including bloggers, were not able to pay the fees and had to stop operating their news sharing activities" (Arusha Press Club, 2020, pp. 23-24).

This scenario is different from the Nigerian and Cameroonian situations, where online platform operations are free.

The impact of globalisation on the development of cultural imperialism is fundamental and massive (Chen & Shen, 2021). Globalisation has many attractive technologies "to many people and makes people think it is development" (Rwegelera, 2012, p. 154). However, the reverse is possible in the form of aggressive cultural counter penetration of Tanzania (Rwegelera, 2012).

In Cameroon, Diang (2013) argues that colonialism has "altered Cameroon's way of education, it is thinking, its path to development and its way of worship or religion" (p. 17). However, the mainstream media and the new media structures are in use in Cameroon to propagate culture. Identifying films as one of the platforms for cultural construction in Cameroon (Nwetta, 2021), notes with colonial attachment:

"The technology to produce the movies is imported from the west and utilised by Africans as talented filmmakers, empowering them to tell and retell the story of Africa without fear, favour and in their way. To a large extent, movies are changing the narratives about Africa and Africans" (p. 91).

5. CONCLUSION

It is known that Africans have used a variety of instruments for public group knowledge distribution and reception throughout history, including drums, songs, clappers, whistles, artefacts, horns, stone tablets, scrolls, calabash, etc. (Odey & Ndoma, 2016). Additionally, media such as radio, newspapers, magazines, comic books, television, and billboards for advertising are used (Haralambos, Holborn, & Heald, 1986). In addition to the mass media, Nigeria and other African countries use other informatics and computing platforms for cultural transmission, including satellite, the Internet, and telephones, to name a few. However, cultural neocolonialism has resulted from the impact of foreign media, which has hampered the effective transmission of cultural messages for artistic growth.

The paper is key to future research due to the strategic role of communication in all human endeavours. It is to be noted that no meaningful governance can take place in an environment devoid of effective communication. For proper governance to take place in any given system, the communication issue must be prioritised which will lead to all-encompassing development.

This paper will engender future researchers,

such that researchers will explore how governance can bring about effective communication. This paper will serve as a springboard for researchers to examine how cultural development can bring about good governance in societies across the globe.

The following recommendations are essential for a path forward:

- With solid technical investment in the media, rich cultural material, and public service journalism, media professionals across Africa should destroy the scourge of cultural imperialism. Former Nigeria's Minister of Communication and Culture, Tony Momoh, asserts that "a culturally conscious person has won more than half of his fights for emancipation" (Okwuchukwu, 2014, p. 37).

- Also, cultural communicators should use various media platforms to capitalise on and spread the positive qualities of Africa's many cultures while

maintaining a strong sense of social responsibility and patriotism.

- It is also recommended that when disseminating cultural messages, it is essential to consider the sensibilities, preferences, and demands of the media audience of the twenty-first century. In terms of content, method, and the propagation of cultural messages, it could be counterproductive to take the audience for granted.

A significant flaw in this work is the historical research method relying on secondary data. Several times, the historical research method will not reflect current realities due to changes in the value system of governance that may occur from time to time. It is of note that documented evidence often does not align with present-day scenarios; therefore, the results from the historical method may be wrong and cannot apply to all situations.

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