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# MEDIA VIABILITY AND NATIONAL RESILIENCE: ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNICATION MODELS FOR CONFRONTING FOOD AND SECURITY CRISES IN NIGERIA

**Peter Iorper Ugondo[1]*, Oberiri Destiny Apuke[2],**
[1]Department Communication and Multimedia Design, American University of Nigeria, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria
[2] Faculty of Communication and Media Studies Department of Mass Communication Taraba State University, Jalingo
**Corresponding author: peter.ugondo@aun.edu.ng,, [2]apukedestiny@tsuniversity.edu.ng*

**Abstract**
*Persistent food insecurity and multidimensional security crises in Nigeria reveal the fragility of governance and information systems of the country. While the media are central to the national response to crises, little attention has been paid to the viability and sustainability of media institutions themselves as infrastructures of resilience. This study examines the relationship between economic sustainability, technological innovation, and civic trust and how this relates to the media's ability to communicate effectively during food and security crises. Anchored in Media Viability Theory, Resilience Communication Framework and Innovation Diffusion Theory, the research uses qualitative research design which is interpretive, document analysis and in depth interviews with journalists, policy makers and development partners. Findings show that in the context of the information era, low economic resilience, technological divide and crisis of public trust have the combined effect of weakening crisis communication and public participation. The paper proposes a Media Viability - Resilience Framework (MVRF) that combines economic sustainability, technological adaptability, and civic trust as interdependent capacities leading to institutional media resilience that leads to national resilience. By linking communication studies, development policy and security research, this research provides a multi-disciplinary model in repositioning Nigerian media as an institutional actor in resilience governance, as well as a strategic driver of informed and participatory responses to the country's food and security problems.*

**Keywords**: Media Viability; National Resilience; Entrepreneurial Communication; Technological Innovation; Food and Security Crises.

## 1.0 Introduction

Persistent food insecurity and multidimensional security crises in Nigeria reveal the fragility of governance and information systems of the country. According to the recent report provided by the United Nations and the World Food Programme (WFP), an estimated 30.6 million Nigerians are suffering from acute food insecurity in 2025, and Nigeria is one of the worst-hit countries in the world (United Nations, 2025; World Food Programme, 2025). The recent wars and the impact of inflation, climate shocks and bad governance continue to be alarming to agricultural production systems and have disrupted the lives of millions of people, specifically in the northern states (Borno, Yobe, and Zamfara). As the UN revised upward its assessment in July of 2025, it also mentioned that 1.3 million northeast people might face food suspension, and that could see an unprecedented rise in hunger levels and a higher chance for new recruits among at-risk people to fuel armed groups(United Nations, 2025).

At the same time, the media institutions which have been regarded as the pillar of democratic accountability and national resilience in Nigeria are themselves suffering from a severe sustainability crisis. Scholars have observed that the media which used to be agenda setters and watchers of power are now groaning under the weight of political capture, corruption and economic weakness (Elega et al., 2024; Olukotun, 2018) . A 2024 study focusing on Media Practice and the Failures of Development in Africa draws conclusions about how the state repression and decline in funding means that most of the press on the continent have become a "lapdog" rather than a watchdog of society, thus lessening their capacity to educate, criticise and strive to hold governments accountable (Adebayo et al., 2024).

The learnings from the 2025 Media Sustainability Conference underscores a renewal of Nigeria's infrastructure for understanding journalism, which must be multi-pronged in its approach to funding, technological innovation, and institutional sustainability. As Dapo Olorunyomi, the publisher of *Premium Times* has stated, sustainable media organisations have become indispensable stakeholders in democracy, whose social entrepreneurship, innovation, and profit making balance the value of ethical journalism and build trust in the civic state (Yusuf, 2025). Akanbi (2024) describes a Nigerian media landscape of dwindling revenue, digital disruption and political repression, which threatens not only the independence of the media but the general communicative capacity of the country to solve existential issues like hunger, insecurity and misinformation.

Therefore, this paper aims to establish a conceptual link between media viability and national resilience, hypothesising that the ability of media organisations to be economically viable and technologically innovative and entrepreneurially adaptive determines the impact of their media reporting on crisis communication and food and security. By reintroducing the notion of media viability into the model of national resilience, the study demonstrates the proposition that an unstable media structure cannot sustain a resilient nation.

Considering this, the art of media entrepreneurship appears to be a strategic device to convert the fragile communication systems into adaptive and sustainable communication infrastructures. Engagement models, both outside and in the context of the Behaviour Change for Development communication model, based on innovation, media analytics and participatory communication, provide possibilities of not only financial sustainability but also of cultural value creation (Ibuot, 2025; Mabweazara & Mare, 2021). These models can aid media organisations to diversify sources of income; enhance the integration in the online media and work on inclusive coverage around food and security governance.

The study is based on three theoretical perspectives that overlap with each other: the Media Viability Theory (Moore et al., 2021), the Resilience Communication Framework (Houston et al., 2015), and the Innovation Diffusion Theory (Rogers, 1983). The Media Viability Theory (MVT) deals with the interaction of economics, content, technology and policy being primary determiners of what sustainable journalism is. The Resilience Communication Framework describes how the processes of communication contribute to resilience in society, the ability of society to adapt and recover from crisis. Meanwhile Innovation Diffusion Theory describes the diffusion of new ideas, technologies and entrepreneurial practises in media systems, and how they are used to enhance organisational performance. A combination of these theories helps the study to conceptualise media viability not as an economic situation but as a process of resilience building of the national information ecosystem.

The study uses a qualitative, interpretive design and incorporates evidence obtained from policy documents and media development reports and interviews with practitioners and policy makers. It also examines and analyses how entrepreneurial media models are harnessing digital technologies including artificial intelligence, data journalism, and digital storeys, in order to enhance coverage of food- and national security-related issues and guarantee institutional sustainability. The results also reveal that technological innovation and viable business models are not marginal, but central and core to successful crisis communication.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Media Viability: Concepts, Evidence, and Institutional Dynamics

Media viability has become a key term in media studies, and it evolves as a response to the increasingly fragile state of journalism in the digital age. It reflects the ability of media organisations to remain financially viable while maintaining editorial independence, technological agility, and trust by the audience (Moore et al., 2021). In consonance with traditional concepts of media sustainability which emphasise on revenue generation through advertising, media viability conceptualises journalism as part of a wider ecosystem which includes diverse structural forces.

In Africa, studies on media viability have faced many structural and contextual challenges which have been reflected across sub-Saharan Africa in areas including political economy, content credibility, community relevance and innovation. Nigeria in particular has been singled out in Ojo (2018) as the case that concentrated media ownership and political patronage create inequalities in the market that threaten the viability of smaller, independent outlets. Private organisations struggle with fragile financial circumstances, their operational viability dependent on fickle advertising revenue or government patronage at the whim of politicians with resulting loss of editorial independence. The COVID-19 pandemic further undermined these vulnerabilities; (Olorunyomi, 2022) notes the Nigerian media houses lost vast advertising, event-based income streams never before seen, and consequently downsized drastically, causing a corresponding depletion of newsroom capacity.

Digital transformation said it would bring about new revenue models, but its deployment has been patchy. A case study (Elega et al., 2024) did on EcoNai and Ushahidi Nigeria shows that though the integration of the digital had enhanced content delivery and report and analysis based on data collection, it failed to bring stable revenue stream due to underdeveloped monetisation strategies. Likewise, the (Media Development Investment Fund, 2025) has put in a frame of mind innovations in journalism that are more human than technical which is the significance of leadership, appropriate business strategies according to context and organisational resilience to sustain viability.

However, most scholarship approaches media viability as output and not as an ongoing process. (Adebayo et al., 2024) notes that there are few studies that are able to follow the path of media institutions from fragile to adaptive and then to resilient states. Moreover, the literature is characterised by a lack of empirical evidence linking institutional viability and agenda-building capacity. If a media house is able to survive financially but loses its credibility or reach to audience, its democratic and developmental impact remains considerably reduced.

These deficiencies imply that media viability should be reconceptualised as a dynamic bundle of economic, technological and relational capabilities that help media institutions to stay functional in the face of systemic crises. Such a reconceptualisation raises viability as a prerequisite for and a determinant of effective crisis communication. From this synthesis arises the first guiding research question:

***RQ1: How do the economic, technological, and relational dimensions of media viability interact to support or undermine the media's crisis-communication capacity in Nigeria?***

### 2.2. National Resilience and the Information Ecosystem

Resilience theory focuses on the ability of social systems to absorb shocks, adapt to change and recover from crises (Houston et al., 2015). Communication is among the key components of this adaptive capacity. A well-connected and trusted information ecosystem can help in reducing uncertainty, overcoming coordination challenges, and maintaining civic cohesion in crisis situations. In the Nigerian context, where there has been chronic food insecurity, violent conflict, and displacement, the media is more than an information bored into the environment it serves as a resilience infrastructure that influences way of societies reacting to disruption.

The communication-resilience relationship is illustrated through Empirical examples from Nigeria and those outside. A digital stories initiative in Borno State, which was sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2025), empowered young individuals who had been displaced to collect and publish narratives of their experiences. The initiative helped to achieve stronger social connections and psychosocial resilience in internally displaced individuals, which depicts the ability of participatory media to empower those vulnerable communities. Similarly, the #EndSARS movement in 2020 was a good example of the mobilising potential of social media in challenging state repression and organising as a collective. Studies conducted by (Bello et al., 2023), and (Ikubor et al., 2025), prove that Twitter acted as decentralised system of communication, which enhanced protest discourses, solidarity, and pressure to policy response. These functions are the key components of societal resilience.

In the domain of health communication, (Onuegbu et al., 2022), social media campaigns in Anambra State during the covid-19 pandemic significantly improved awareness and public adherence to preventive measures which thus showed the communicative responsiveness can enhance adaptive capacity. However, these studies often consider communication as an input, instead of an institutional capacity that is governed by the structural integrity of the media system. The causal pathway between media institutional viability, information flow, and resilience outcomes is underdeveloped in theory and under explored in practise.

In Nigeria, resilience scholarship has been mainly around acute disasters - for example pandemics or floods - rather than chronic stressors like food insecurity that require sustained communication strategies and long-term persistence of the agenda. Combining Agenda-Building Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) with resilience theory should, therefore, be able to reveal how sustainable media organisations not only communicate information but also maintain the salience of issues and policy engagement over time. The fundamental research question, therefore, focuses on whether viable media institutions will be able to preserve the continuity and credibility of such communication over the long haul of crises, rather than simply determining the question of whether communication does occur. This conceptual gap leads to the second research inquiry:

***RQ2: In what ways does the institutional health of media organisations mediate the relationship between information dissemination and community-level adaptation to food and security shocks?***

### 2.3. Entrepreneurial Communication Models: Innovation, Diffusion, and Civic Efficacy

In the emerging field of media entrepreneurship, the idea of innovation is considered as a key approach for economic viability and public participation. These models combine commercial pragmatism and civic purpose using emerging technologies, hybrid models of revenue and participatory approaches to reinvigorate journalism in fragile contexts. Innovation Diffusion Theory (Rogers, 1983) provides a powerful analytical perspective for understanding diffusion processes of such models. The adoption depends on the relative advantage, compatibility with the incumbent practice, and the implementational feasibility.

In Nigeria, (Ifeduba, 2013) described various forms of media entrepreneurship, which include niche audience targeting, sponsored columns, event-based monetization, and digital subscription. While such strategies are important for organisational survival, they are often reactive coping strategies rather than transformative institutional innovations. According to the recent report on entrepreneurial success in creative and media industries in Africa, PwC Nigeria, Restless Global, & TFCC (2024) emphasised the role of strategic alliances, policy promotion, and mixed revenue models to enable sustainable media development. Corporate-(media) partnerships, such as the MTN Pan-African Media Innovation Programme, have delivered additional training and support to journalists to try out data storytelling and content production with the help of AI (Ibeh, 2025).

These positive changes notwithstanding, the diffusion of innovation in the media industry in Nigeria is uneven. Successful adoptions mostly occur in urban centres with capital resources and stable digital infrastructure hence marginalising local or community-based media. Moreover, most publications in eulogy of technology, fail to question who is given a voice and how innovation can handle inequalities in information access. Unreasonable focus on the use of digital instruments often hides dysfunctions of governance, market mining, and political coercion that limit any meaningful diffusion (Mabweazara & Mare, 2021).

The second area of research that has not been thoroughly explored is the assessment of civic efficiency: can entrepreneurial innovations improve the national knowledge, responsibility, and involvement of the population in the discussion? For example, a data-journalism project may lead to an improvement in the capacity of newsrooms without reaching rural people who are most affected by hunger and insecurity. Therefore, future research needs to evaluate innovation not only in terms of economic sustainability, but also in terms of its ability to enhance inclusive communication and trust. From this critical reflection emerges the third research question:

***RQ3: Which entrepreneurial communication models demonstrably increase both media viability and civic engagement in Nigeria's food and security contexts?***

The above-mentioned situation points towards a constant gap between media institutional sustainability, innovative entrepreneurship, and national resilience. Empirical studies of media sustainability often do not consider the social consequences of institutional vulnerability, and studies of resilience rarely take into consideration the structural situations of the media system that either favor or hinder the adaptive reactions. In addition, innovation research tends to focus on technological experimentation with little or no evaluation of civic or resilience performance.

The proposed Media Viability Resilience Framework (MVRF) will seek to bridge these disciplinary divides in the present paper. This framework theorises the concept of viability as a dynamic capability which incorporates economic flexibility, technological development, and civic faith. To do so, the MVRF brings together the theory of Media Viability Theory, Resilience Communication Framework and Innovation Diffusion Theory to positing the media as not just an inert transmitter but an agent of resilience in the Nigerian information environment. This holism aims at promoting theoretical understanding and concrete measures of implementing the entrepreneurial media model to address the twin crises of food insecurity and national instability.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The study combines in depth interview and document analysis methods using qualitative interpretive approach to examine the interrelationship between media viability, entrepreneurial communication and national resilience in view of the prevailing food and security crises in Nigeria.

The interpretative approach is justified due to its emphasis on the subjectivities and lived experiences of media practitioners, policy-makers and development actors. Rather than seeking to draw causal generalisations, the design aims to explain the deeper institutional and contextual dynamics that shape the innovation, survival and resilience in the work of media organisations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Consequently, this research takes an exploratory and inductive approach, thus allowing the development of conceptual linkages based on empirical field realities and documentary evidence.

### 3.2 The Study Context

Nigeria is an interesting case study for understanding the viability of media as one of the pillars of national resilience. In a climate of information disorder, characterised by limited access to and constraint of press freedom, digital silos and economic vulnerability, the country continues to face an information gap that is worsened by food insecurity catalysed by climate change, armed conflict, and the physical and digital governance challenges. It is in this context that media functions and their ability to impact the policy discourse have acquired a high degree of heterogeneity from well-resourced urban newsrooms to fragile community radio stations in crisis-affected regions. The interest in such heterogeneity enables a capacious understanding of the dynamics that exist between structural fragility, innovation, and entrepreneurial activity in the information ecosystem of the country.

### 3.3 Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population of the study includes media professionals, policy stakeholders and representatives of development organisations who are actively involved in food security, media innovation or crisis communication. A purposive sampling approach was used to identify those people who have direct involvement or expertise in these areas. The sample is comprised of 20 participants (11 males and 9 females) extracted from media entrepreneurs and editors from national and regional news media (print, broadcast and online), agricultural and food security programmes lead in the area of communication, policy analysts and scholars who have expertise in the areas of media economics and resilience studies and representatives of civil society and donor organisations that are in favour of media innovation.

The sampling strategy reflected diversity across the six geopolitical regions of the country (North-East, North-Central, and South-West Nigeria), and in terms of gender and media ownership structure. The focus on purposive inclusion rather than statistical representation is in line with the qualitative goal of depth over breadth (Patton, 2002).

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

Primary data were collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders as well as a review of relevant policy documents. These interviews were carried out during the month of July 2025 and used both face-to-face as well as telephone modes. Each interview lasted for 45-60 minutes and was informed by an interview protocol designed specifically to ask questions about perceptions of media sustainability, the appropriation of entrepreneurial communication models, and the perceived relationship between media sustainability and national resilience. Recordings were then transcribed with the help of Note AI.

A documentary analysis was carried out of a variety of relevant policy documents, media development reports and institutional strategies, among which FAO (2024); FAO/IFAD/UNICEF/WFP/WHO (2023,2024); MDIF (2023); World Association of Newspapers (WAN - IFRA) (2011); World Bank (2021); DW Akademie's Media Viability Indicators (2018); Media Development Investment Fund (2025); and NGE (2025). This documentary corpus provides an institutional background where interview findings are triangulated. The combination of these sources of data provides a form of methodological triangulation that helps create greater credibility and analysis.(Flick, 2009).

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

This study uses a thematic content analysis approach that combines both inductive and deductive coding processes. The analytical process is a iterative process consisting of several separate stages. First, a phase of transcription and familiarisation was undertaken during which the investigators submerged themselves in the data, returning to transcripts and associated documents repeatedly in order to determine emergent meaning from the data. Second, a first coding was performed manually, in which codes for themes, such as viability, innovation, resilience, entrepreneurship and policy impact, were extracted. Third, the codes were clustered to create higher-order themes through a category clustering process and included the following themes including economic sustainability category, technological innovation category, civic trust category, and policy relevance category. Fourth, an interpretive synthesis was conducted to combine these themes in the theoretical contexts of Media Viability Theory, the Resilience Communication Framework and Innovation Diffusion Theory. The iterative analytical process led to development and expression of the Media Viability-Resilience Framework (MVRF) which provides an articulation of the dynamic interdependency between media survival, technologically adapting and national resilience.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability

To help ensure analytic rigor, a full range of validation strategies were implemented in this study. Triangulation of data from interviews to policy documents allowed for an interconnection of the empirical findings. Member checking was done by distributing preliminary summaries for feedback and correction to a select group of participants helped to establish interpretive authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing within a circle of communication scholars further provided evidence of the analytical consistency of the study. Additionally, to improve transparency and the replicability of the processes, there was an audit trail of coding memos, reflexive notes and analytic decisions that were made in writing.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews. Participants' identities were anonymised. Special care was also taken to avoid harm, coercion, or exposure of respondents to potential reprisals. Thus, data collection conformed to the ethical principles of respect, confidentiality, and non-maleficence as outlined by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), (2025).

## 4.0 Findings

The empirical evidence drawn from semi-structured interview and documentary analysis was organised according to the triadic research questions. The interpretative work throughout the analytic process was based on four thematic clusters that form the conceptual pillars of the proposed Media Viability-Resilience Framework (MVRF): economic sustainability, technological innovation, civic trust and national resilience. The thematic dimensions help to explain how Nigerian media institutions have been competing for economic stability, managing digitalization, restoring popular legitimacy, and increasing national adaptive capacity in the face of food and security crises.

**Table 1: Economic, Technological, and Relational Dimensions of Media Viability and Crisis Communication**

**Research Question 1:** *How do the economic, technological, and relational dimensions of media viability interact to support or undermine the media's crisis-communication capacity in Nigeria?*

| Dimension | Media Entrepreneurs/Editors (ME) | Policy Stakeholders (PS) | Development Partners/NGOs (DP) | Academics/Analysts (AA) | Interpretive Insight (MVRF Linkage) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Economic** | Revenue collapse means we cannot deploy reporters to conflict or flood-affected zones. We rely on citizen clips. | When the media lack funds, official information does not reach vulnerable communities fast enough. | We have seen partners shut down mid-project due to financing issues; sustainability is the weakest link. | Financial fragility leads to inconsistent crisis reporting, amplifying misinformation. | Economic viability sustains operational continuity and determines the depth, speed, and credibility of crisis communication. |
| **Technological** | Our newsroom uses WhatsApp and AI tools for crowd-sourced reporting during food crises. | Digital mapping tools help coordinate relief efforts, but many media houses lack such capacity. | We provide media training in GIS and data journalism, yet uptake is slow outside major cities. | Innovation remains elite-driven; unequal access deepens the information divide. | Technological adaptation strengthens media responsiveness but remains hindered by infrastructural inequity and uneven capacity. |

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| **Relational (Trust & Collaboration)** | We build WhatsApp groups with farmers to verify reports before publication. | Trust between state agencies and journalists determines how quickly crisis alerts spread. | Collaborative reporting between local stations and humanitarian partners improves message accuracy. | Relational viability, trust and partnership are the least studied but most crucial for resilience. | Relational linkages anchor the flow of verified information, while trust networks enhance credibility and foster community cooperation during crises. |

Table 1 illustrates that media viability in Nigeria is a tripartite construct, comprising financial stability, technological innovation, and relational trust, which collectively ensure continuity, enhance agility, and build credibility. Weakness in any of these dimensions undermines the media's ability to function as a reliable channel for crisis communication.

**Table 2: Institutional Health, Information Dissemination, and Community Adaptation**

**Research Question 2:** *In what ways does the institutional health of media organisations mediate the relationship between information dissemination and community-level adaptation to food and security shocks?*

| Focus Area | Media Entrepreneurs/Editors (ME) | Policy Stakeholders (PS) | Development Partners/NGOs (DP) | Academics/Analysts (AA) | Interpretive Insight (MVRF Linkage) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Information Flow** | Weak institutions produce sporadic reporting; audiences turn to rumours during crises. | Policy responses rely on consistent coverage; weak outlets create communication blackouts. | Our programmes depend on credible media partners to localise information about food aid. | Institutional weakness disrupts the persistence of agendas on chronic issues, such as hunger. | Institutional health mediates the stability and consistency of information flows during protracted crises. |
| **Community Engagement** | We collaborate with rural reporters who send updates via | Community feedback helps adjust relief plans, but only | Partnerships with local radio foster two-way communicati | Resilient media connect the state and citizens in adaptive loops of | Healthy media systems act as adaptive intermediari |

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| | phone, but poor pay discourages them. | when local media are functional. | on, enhancing awareness of food distribution. | information and response. | es linking policy communication to grassroots behavioural change. |
| **Policy Responsiveness** | Our consistent reporting on fertiliser scarcity pushed state authorities to review their supply chains. | Reliable coverage pressures institutions to act faster during emergencies. | We fund journalism fellowships to bridge research-policy gaps in food systems. | Viable media translate civic signals into policy attention, a resilience feedback mechanism. | Institutional health determines how effectively media translate civic information into actionable governance responses. |

Table 2 shows the mediating role of institutional health in media organisations in the dissemination of information and adaptation to food and security shocks at the community level. The analysis is structured to show that the stronger and independent a media institution is, the more likely it is to be able to enable adaptive behaviour and policy responsiveness at both the local and national levels.

Across all groups of participants, this dissemination of information, and the following community responses, are mediated by the health of institutions, defined as the stability of the institution, its professional capabilities and its editorial integrity. When media institutions function properly, they help to maintain the communication-adaptation feedback loop, which in turn contributes to behavioural change, accountability and local resilience. Nonetheless, viable media are an important aspect of resilient governance because they help to keep communication flows consistent, trusted and socially actionable.

**Table 3: Entrepreneurial Communication Models Enhancing Viability and Civic Engagement**

**Research Question 3:** *Which entrepreneurial communication models demonstrably increase both media viability and civic engagement in Nigeria's food and security contexts?*

| **Entrepreneurial Model** | **Media Entrepreneurs/Editors (ME)** | **Policy Stakeholders (PS)** | **Development Partners/NGOs (DP)** | **Academics/Analysts (AA)** | **Interpretive Insight (MVRF Linkage)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Membership &** | We introduced a membership plan for investigative stories on | Paid content fosters independence, but | Membership models often require subsidies or | These models embed accountability between the | Membership-based revenue aligns |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subscription Models** | agriculture; loyal readers sustain us. | affordability remains a concern for low-income audiences. | donor top-ups to reach excluded demographics effectively. | audience and the newsroom, a participatory resilience mechanism. | financial sustainability with civic accountability, fostering participatory communication. |
| **Collaborative & Data-Driven Journalism** | We partner with NGOs to access data on nutrition and climate, strengthening our reporting. | Data collaborations help government transparency; media amplify the evidence. | We fund newsroom data hubs on food production; co-ownership builds trust. | Data partnerships exemplify resilience-oriented innovation, and shared resources mitigate fragility. | Collaborative innovation increases media credibility, enhances accuracy, and extends policy influence. |
| **Community Media and Co-production** | Our rural correspondents co-produce programmes with farmers, making coverage more authentic. | Community radio reduces misinformation in high-risk areas. | Local co-production ensures policy messages are culturally understood. | Grassroots co-production transforms audiences into co-resilient actors. | Entrepreneurial co-production expands the media's social base, integrating marginalised voices into resilience communication. |
| **Hybrid Grant–Market Model** | Donor grants enabled us to build our digital infrastructure; now, ad revenue supports our operations. | Public–private partnerships stabilise communication flow during crises. | Our funding strategy aims for donor exit after capacity consolidation. | Hybrid financing aligns with media viability theory, which emphasises sustainability through diversification. | Diversified hybrid models secure operational longevity while retaining editorial independence and |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | innovation capacity. |

Results in table 3 suggest that entrepreneurial innovation is multidimensional in Nigerian media. Membership, collaboration, community co-production, hybrid grant-market models, are all models for increased viability as well as increased engagement contextualised ethically and inclusively. The result is also a strengthening of the concept of the entrepreneurial adaptability, the ability of media systems to reinvent their economic and communicative functions in a situation of stress, without losing the trust and inclusivity of the larger society.

**Table 4: Summary of Documentary Analysis**

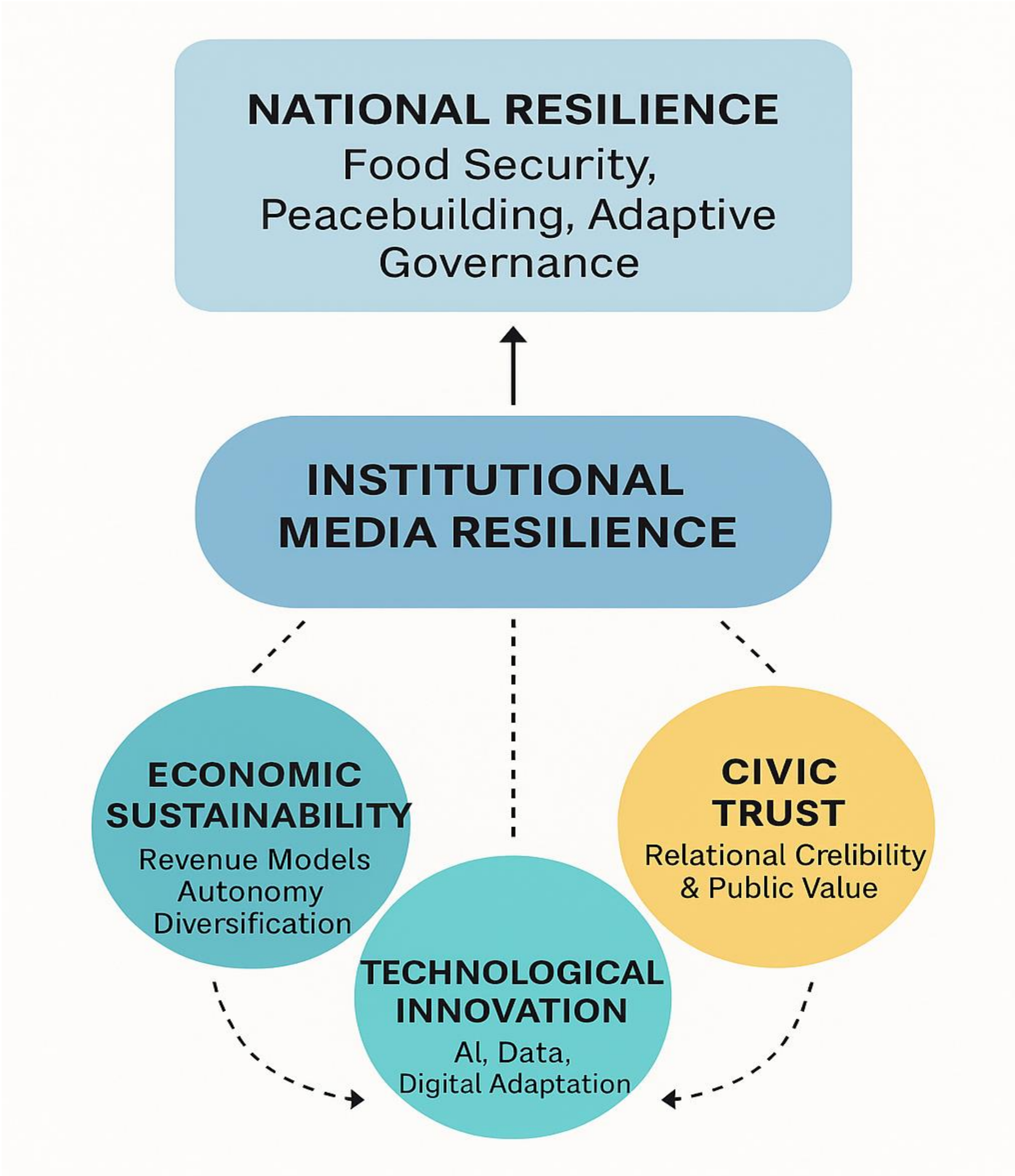
| Source / Data Type | Key Findings | Interpretive Implications for Media Viability and National Resilience (MVRF Linkage) |
|---|---|---|
| **DW Akademie – Media Viability Indicators (2018)** | Reveals structural weakness in Nigeria's media system, especially in economic sustainability and political enabling conditions. Approximately 45–60% of outlets depend on politically aligned advertising. | Indicates that economic fragility and lack of policy independence weaken institutional media resilience. Highlights the need for diversification and entrepreneurial financing as pathways to viable communication systems. |
| **Nigerian National Media Policy (2021)** | Identifies policy priorities, ownership transparency, digital transition, and editorial autonomy, but implementation remains inconsistent. Limited evidence of media innovation support mechanisms. | Demonstrates a gap between policy formulation and enforcement. Underlines the importance of institutional health as a mediating variable linking media viability to national governance and resilience. |
| **National Food Security Council Communiqués (2019–2024).** | Repeatedly emphasise public enlightenment and community sensitisation but show weak integration with media institutions. Communication remains reactive, not proactive. | Reveals a disconnect between governance communication and public media systems. Suggests that resilience communication requires formalised state–media partnerships and continuous engagement structures. |
| **FAO Nigeria Country Reports (2022–2023)** | Highlights the need for behavioural change communication in food systems but notes limited reach of verified messages in rural areas due to poor media coordination. | Supports the MVRF argument that technological innovation and institutional coordination amplify crisis-communication reach and adaptive responses. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **UNDP – Resilient Governance Index (2023)** | Nigeria scored 42/100 on "information system coherence," indicating fragmented communication between government, media, and civil society. | Confirms that institutional misalignment weakens national adaptive capacity. Strengthening inter-sectoral media–policy collaboration is essential for resilience. |
| **MDIF – African Media Innovation Report (2023)** | Finds 25–30% improvement in financial stability among outlets with diversified income (subscriptions, data services, hybrid funding). Case examples: *Dataphyte*, *HumAngle*, *Premium Times.* | Validates that entrepreneurial innovation fosters both economic sustainability and civic engagement, core dimensions of the MVRF. Entrepreneurship thus becomes a strategic resilience mechanism. |
| **Nigerian Guild of Editors** | Reports that digital disruption reduced traditional advertising revenue by 60% between 2010 and 2020. Notes uneven digital adaptation across outlets. | Reinforces the necessity of technological innovation for sustainability. Media digitisation should be integrated with capacity-building and inclusive technology access. |

Table 4 indicates that the crisis of the viability of Nigeria's media is systemic, structural, policy and market related. Documentary and archival evidence do show that, despite institutional and economic fragility, entrepreneurial innovation and collaboration in the form of technology is also manifesting as an adaptive mechanism.

**Figure 1. The Media Viability–Resilience Framework (MVRF).**

The framework treats media viability as an advanced construct comprising three dimensions, namely, economic sustainability, technological innovation and civic trust. The combination of these three capacities leads to institutional media resilience which contributes to national resilience through efficient crisis communication, agenda building and policy accountability. The model incorporates Media Viability Theory, Resilience Communication Framework, and Innovation Diffusion Theory to describe the concept of viable media ecosystems that support adaptive governance and stability of the Nigerian society.




The Management of Vulnerabilities and Resilience in Media Framework (MVRF) illustrates that resilient countries require resilient media systems. A resilient media system that is characterised by economic sustainability (continuity and editorial independence), technological innovation (increased responsiveness and inclusiveness) and civic trust (legitimising and engaging). When these three capacities are balanced, they form Institutional Media Resilience - an ecosystem that is able to maintain credible communication in food and security crises. Concurrently, such institutional resilience enhances national resilience by optimising information flows, developing collective learning and sustaining public participation in governance processes. The recipral arrows between the national and institutional levels indicate that supportive policy environments and public trust can support or undermine the viability of media and therefore create a circular relationship between communication systems and social adaptation.

Through blend and combination of theory and empirical evidence, the MVRF can serve as diagnostic and prescriptive tool in evaluating entrepreneurial and innovative model for media in sustainable governance, especially in fragile democracies like Nigeria.

Empirical results support the Resilience Communication Framework, which emphasises inclusive participation as one of the elements of adaptive capacity. Within the MVRF, community co-production helps build horizontal resilience, and local voices help enhance national narratives to build multidirectional and trust based communication. Several respondents considered hybrid financing (donor grant financing of infrastructure and revenue from the market) a pragmatic approach to viability.

Development partners emphasised the need for strategic and planned donor exit strategies in order to prevent dependency. This model is in agreement with global best practises caught in a report by the Media Development Investment Fund (2025) that supports diversification as a buffer against political or economic shocks. With the MVRF, hybrid models are a pictorial representation of economic flexibility; with their institutionalization, there is a combination of external aid and local marketization with the objective of maintaining service delivery through troubled times.

The MVRF conceptualises this as entrepreneurial adaptability, in which innovation, participation and diversification come together to engender institutional and societal resilience. Consequently, entrepreneurship is reconceptualised not only as commercial opportunism but as a communicative strategy for maintaining trust, relevance and public value during crises in the country..

## 5.0 Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide evidence of a complex and fluid interaction among the economic, technological, and relational dimensions of media viability, in totality, which impacts on the crisis communication capacity in Nigeria. They also illustrate the mediation effect of institutional well-being in the relationship between information sharing and adaptation in communities, and provide entrepreneurial communication models that enhance the viability of media and civic action simultaneously. Put together, these insights provide a demonstration of the fact that living media institutions are not treacherous to the side of national development, but represent the pillar of resilience governance. The combination of these empirical patterns with existing literature leads to the development of the Media Viability-Resilience Framework (MVRF) that reconceptualises the media as an infrastructural actor of national adaptation systems.

The data proves that economic hardship remains the overarching danger to the media ecosystem in Nigeria. Journalists and editors are regularly observing a trend towards declining revenues, reliance on political advertising, and subjugation to the state. This observation confirms the assertion made by Ojo (2018) that concentration of ownership and clientelist funding creates editorial compromise and institutional precarity. However, the study concludes that there have been adaptive responses by some outlets through entrepreneurial diversification - through creation of membership schemes, hybrid grant/market models and cross-sector partnerships. These activities are an outstanding example for the multidimensional logic of media viability identified by DW Akademie (2018), which is characterised by a balance between economic viability, editorial freedom and social responsibility. In this way, economic viability is more than a fiscal property, but a strategic ability for agenda setting during times of crisis, thus keeping informational flux, and building higher public awareness and policy-sensitivity. On the other hand, economic collapse produces communicative vacuums where misinformation and propaganda become dominant with national political ideologies, thus proving Adebayo (2021) right that viable media are the first line of national resilience in fragile states.

Technological innovation as an enabler and differentiator in the media viability landscape Recent information and communication technologies - open data platforms, AI-based reporting, and crowd-sourcing reporting stacks - provided increased timeliness and granularity of crisis communication during instances of food insecurity and displacement. This is consistent with Rogers' (2003) Innovation Diffusion Theory which suggests that the rate at which technology is adopted depends on three factors: perceived advantage, compatibility, and complexity. In the Nigerian context, the process of diffusion of innovation is, however, uneven and accentuates deep digital divides. Communication resources: The superior infrastructure at urban-based newsrooms makes them early adopters whereas the limited resources and digital literacy at community radio outlets and rural outlets act as a barrier. Mabweazara and Mare (2021) warn that such innovation, which is unbalanced in other ways, only reproduces existing inequalities and does not alleviate them.

The MVRF extends the idea of the technological adaptation as an adaptive amplifier, that is a device that increases the communicative responsiveness only when integrated within economically and institutionally stable structures. Fragmentation and isolated digitalisation leads to fragile innovation that breaks under stress. In addition, policy and donor support have to give primacy to capacity enhancement, fair infrastructure and context-based innovative approaches that bridge rather than expand the technology gap.

The study concludes that civic trust is the social basis for media viability and goes beyond economic and technological dimensions. Among the groups of participants, there was a strong agreement that the loss of public confidence is the biggest crisis in Nigerian journalism. Scepticism surrounding mainstream sources of traditional media because of the perceived bias, sensationalism and politicization has steered audiences towards unverified sources on the internet. This trend reflects McQuail's (2010) argument that legitimacy, other than profitability, is the basis of long-term media power in democratic societies. By adopting transparency, consultative reporting and grass-roots partnerships, organisations responding to the economic uncertainty have been more successful in rebuilding credibility and maintaining participation. Community co-produced information fact-checking initiatives like HumAngle's Trust Tracker project are good examples of how this kind of misinformation debunking restores dwindling trust in professional journalism. This document is an extension of the Resilience Communication Framework (Houston et al., 2015), which defines mutual trust between the communicator and the communities as the foundation for adaptive capacity. Within the MVRF, civic trust is an input and an output for the dissemination of messages, feedback and cooperation, and it is furthered by credible and transparent patterns of communication.

The third is institutional health, the mediator between flow of information and adaptation of the community. This could include media organisations that have professional standards, stability of ownership and codes of conduct to help assure their long-term sustainability in terms of salience of issue and their ability to stay engaged with policy. This is consistent with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) logic of agenda setting, which states that institutional continuity will ensure that issues will be maintained within the public discourse. The paper found examples where sustainable outlets' investigative follow-up had positive impacts on public policy by prompting decisive measures by governments in response to issues of fertilizer scarcity and post-flood recovery measures. Reflecting the importance of long-term coverage, the media is re-established as an accountability infrastructure, and stakeholders remark that long-term coverage "keeps the pressure on the system." Conversely, institutional frailty - be it in the form of non-payment of salaries, censorship or interference in ownership - severs the communicative channels between citizen and government. As Ojebode and Oladeinde (2020) note, fragile institutions give rise to "policy amnesia," whereby social issues disappear from the public consciousness as a result of inconsistent reporting. By setting institutional health as the center around which communicative energy refocusses in an outcome of adaptation, the MVRF announces the existence of a media system too sturdy to contain feedbacks necessary to intelligent governance and social support.

Findings on the models of entrepreneurial communication show that innovation is both strategic and civic and technological. Membership and subscription journalism, data partnerships and hybrid models of financing all at once boost financial sustainability and civic engagement. Reconfigure these models and entrepreneurship shifts back to mission, or adaptive, orientation from opportunism to fulfill a social need while maintaining profit orientation. The role of cross-sectoral collaboration is further demonstrated by Nigerian examples like Dataphyte and TheCable, which have developed collaborative initiatives which have brought together the capacity for investigation and credibility of journalists. Ifeduba's (2013) initial findings that the majority of Nigerian media entrepreneurs are improvised with, is furthered by this new wave of entrepreneurial media, which consciously combines economic innovation with civic purpose. For MVRF, such synthesis is conceptualised as entrepreneurial adaptability where innovation, revenue diversification and participatory communication are clustered in an ecosystemic resilience model.

By incorporating these findings and the literature, the MVRF provides a systemic theoretical explanation of communication resiliency. Dominant values for sustainability include economic sustainability (institutional continuity) and editorial independence, technological agility and inclusiveness, and civic trust for credibility and social cooperation. Together these abilities create the idea of Institutional Media Resilience - the ability of media to sustain its function and integrity when disrupted. This in turn contributes to the National Resilience by efficient information flow, continuous public engagement and responsive policy development. This relationship is two-way, i.e., a sustainable media ecosystem strengthens redistributive governance, and a conducive policy environment creates media viability. This dynamism supports the argument made by DW Akademie (2018) that the viability of media needs to be conceptualised as an ecosystemic rather than a sectoral property.

The MVRF is a trio of scholarly developments that draw from the theoretical foundations of Media Viability Theory, Resilience Communication and Innovation Diffusion. First, it goes beyond traditional viability studies in that it integrates technological and relational dimensions and highlights viability as a capability system. Second, it establishes media as a governing actor in a resilience, or where a variety of adaptation strategies or responses to crisis are learned and enacted, thus mapping out the processes involved in the learning of society. Third, it offers the Diagnostic for Assessing the Health of Communication Ecosystems in Fragile Democracies. Accordingly, the study reconfirmatively establishes the communication as both instrument and infrastructure of resilience; a media can be viable not only because it reports crises but because it anticipates, withstands and emerges from them. The study contextualises the Nigerian situation of food insecurity and conflict, combined with the diminishing press freedom, as a scenario in which media sustainability is a national rather than a private industry issue. Media sustainability is inextricably tied to that of democracy, development and peace. Although subject to constraints, in combination with economic pragmatism and technological flexibility and civic trust, the Media Viability-Resilience Framework represents a holistic approach to rebuild the media as a driver of national strength rather than a victim of systemic weakness.

## Conclusion

This study examines media sustainability, entrepreneurial journalism and national resilience in the context of the combined food and security crises that are afflicting Nigeria. The analysis reveals that the fragility of the country's media institutions is not limited to a professional or economic issue, but a structural factor of the national resilience capacity of the country. Based on qualitative data collected from journalists, policymakers and development practitioners, the study identifies economic sustainability, technological innovation and civic trust as interdependent capabilities that collectively define the effectiveness of media organisations' crisis communication and agenda setting roles.

The interdependence is concretised into a self-consistent theoretical framework, proposed as the Media Viability-Resilience Framework (MVRF). Rather than model media viability as a static measure of financial viability, the framework models media viability as a dynamic system of adaptive capacity that ensures communication functions under conditions of uncertainty. The MVRF therefore assures institutional continuity and editorial independence through economic sustainability; technological innovation through agility, inclusiveness and timeliness; and civic trust through legitimacy, credibility and public cooperation. The interplay of these dimensions produces institutional media resilience that consequently enhances national resilience because of the proper circulation of information, the responsiveness of policies and the collective adaptation to emergencies. Thus, the framework places the media in a new category of critical infrastructure of resilience, which is absolutely indispensable to governance, development, and social stability.

Theoretically the study contributes to communication and development scholarship by bringing three streams of inquiry together: Media Viability Theory, the Resilience Communication Framework and Innovation Diffusion Theory. It builds on DW Akademie's (2018) conception of viability as it is situated in the socio-political ecology of resilience governance and emphasises relational and technological dimensions that have traditionally been marginalised in economic analyses of media. The results support Houston et al.'s (2015) claim that communication is at the heart of community resilience and add to Rogers' (2003) diffusion theory by drawing on the challenges from fragile settings in which adoption is mediated through institutional fragility and power imbalances. Accordingly, the MVRF will contribute to an eclectic understanding of how media ecologies work as adaptive agents and structural enablers of the resilience of societies.

Empirically, the study clarifies our understanding of the operation of Nigerian media institutions in dealing with systemic fragility through entrepreneurial innovation. It identifies and observes a new range of adaptive strategies such as membership models, collaborative data projects, community co-production and hybrid grant market financing, which group together between financial sustainability and civic purpose. These models indicate that media entrepreneurship need not be a product based on commercial logic, but can be a tool for public control and participatory discourse. The evidence also highlights the underlying fragility of the media, which in the form of underfunding, digital inequality and declining public trust, can undermine the management of crisis, aggravate the spread of misinformation and reduce the country's ability to respond collectively to insecurity and food scarcity.

In a nutshell, the research was a call for understanding of resilient governance enshrined in robust communication systems. The media viability should be realised as a national security issue and not a sector-specific issue. Communicative resilience is only possible if there is a continuous investment in media infrastructure, digital capacity and press freedom. Development partners should plan interventions that move from donor-dependency models to self-sustaining models and make institutional learning, leadership development and innovation diffusion central to the interventions. Media organisations themselves need to adopt entrepreneurial strategies based on ethical practise and community engagement which will ensure that innovation does not compromise organisational survival but also does not compromise the public good.

The MVRF is a useful analytical and policy tool for the assessment and improvement of the resilience of national communication systems. BCAY can inform media audits, drive development funding frameworks and the basis for compound cross sector partnership arrangements that again seek to integrate media systems into resilience and disaster governance structures. More importantly, it encourages the media development process to shift from subsidising survival to strategically engineering sustainability. In the longer term, another important contribution of resilience governance will be to put viability at the centre of the sustainability of journalism, and thereby increase national adaptive capacity.

This study therefore confirms that the future of democratic and developmental stability of Nigeria lies in the vibrancy of the information ecosystem. A nation that ignores the viability of media undermines its ability to anticipate, absorb and recover from crises. On the other hand, a nation investing in viable, innovative and trusted media systems builds its resilience. The Media Viability-Resilience Framework thus offers us both theoretical perspective and viable direction in which to redefine the media not as passive observers of insecurity and hunger but as institutional agents of adaptation, accountability and collective survival.

**Recommendations**

The present study demonstrates that media viability is not only an interest for industry but a national priority from the perspective of resilience. Consequently, policy frameworks should include communication systems in comprehensive strategies to deal with issues of food security, conflict management and adaptive governance. Governments should institutionalise the viability of the media in national development and resilience policies and at the same time create enabling environments for building media innovation and ensuring press freedom as well as access to equitable digital infrastructure. This mode requires efficient investment for rural connexion through broadband, specialised training in data journalism and preservation of incentives for ethical media entrepreneurship. By ensuring that media sustainability is included in governments and security planning, policy makers will strengthen the information infrastructure upon which transparency, accountability and social stability are the market drivers.

The findings for media institutions point to the need to move away from a state of dependency towards one of entrepreneurial adaptability. Nigerian media organizations are required to diversify their revenue base, technologically leverage and rebuild civic trust through participatory journalism and transparency. Economic sustainability, technological innovation and relational credibility are interdependent capabilities rather than parallel objectives, all together determining institutional survival. Development partners should therefore change from discrete, short term project funding approaches to ecosystem-based approaches to strengthen leadership, financial management and collective innovation across media networks. Exit strategies should be incorporated into sustainable donor programmes and local ownership encouraged to ensure that there is continuity at the end of external donor support.

More research to test and refine the Media Viability -Resilience Framework (MVRF) in multiple African settings using mixed-methods designs would help in investigating the interplay of economic, technological and relational variables in producing institutional and national resilience. Longitudinal research would help shed light on the trajectories of media adaptation over time, and new research questions would need to be studied regarding the impact of digital platforms, algorithmic governance and audience trust on media sustainability. Ultimately, the visages of this study converge to a principal proposition that says: Resilient nations must have resilient media systems that are economically viable, technologically adaptive, and socially trusted. And therefore, the viability of media is one of the strategic dimensions that enhances democratic stability, enlightened citizenship and sustainable national development.

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