AN EVALUATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS ON THEIR PRINT VERSIONS' READERSHIP IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigated the influence of online newspapers on their print versions' readership and revenue amongst Postgraduate students in South-East Nigeria The qualitative and quantitative methods employed focused on the research questions. Tables, figures and simple percentage counts were employed in making the research data easily understandable. The in-depth interview was employed in gathering data from Online Editors of The Punch, The Guardian, Vanguard, The Sun, The Nation, ThisDay and Business Day newspapers. Findings revealed that 542 (60%) of the online newspaper readers were motivated by the use of pictures, ease of reading. The Punch's online and offline (print) newspaper readers agreed that there were difficulties in accessing both online and offline newspapers as represented by 489 (55%), and 321 (36%) respectively. Online newspapers have both positive, 255(29%) and negative, 381 (43%) influences on their print versions' readership and revenue. It was discovered that Online Editors of the newspapers are aware of the Paywall billing system but said they have not employed it in running their online services. The study recommends that; offline newspapers should package attractive and contemporary editorial content; offline newspaper operators should build relationship with their readers through events sponsorship, marketing promotions, public relations, and advertising; newspaper organizations should train and retrain journalists on computer –assisted reporting and online journalism; newspaper organizations should reorganize their operations in the areas of data base infrastructure and web-focused sales to garner more revenues to remain relevant.

Keywords: Newspapers, Online newspapers, Print newspapers, Readership, Readership motivation, perception

Background to the Study
Newspaper, which came after the introduction of book as a medium of communication in 1580-135BC essentially represents one of the earliest attempts at mass communication. Since Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 15th Century, the journalism profession has, no doubt, witnessed and experienced tremendous progress mostly powered by incredible advances in communication technologies (Agba, 2002,: p. iv). "The newspaper remained the prominent medium for many Centuries before the advent of the electronic media (radio) in the early 20th Century. And it was not until the 1950s

that we began to rely increasingly on television and radio for news, even though they provide little more than the headlines" (Agba, 2002,:p. 120).

Okunna (1993: 56) thinks that "the press has developed through the acutely practical manoeuvres of the early journalists…to a press, which has embraced the full effects and vitality of both the print and electronic media". It is no surprise therefore that the nagging problems that have dogged every step of the print media industry have been seen as challenges that trail any concern known for great strides.

Reflecting on the coming of the electronic media, their challenge to the print media in focus, Ohaja (2005) notes inter alia:

> When the electronic media were introduced, they had an edge over newspapers because they were presenting the same condensed reports as the latter but at a faster pace and in form that clearly matched reality. Television, especially moving and talking pictures of scenes featuring almost simultaneously with the event itself. Feature writing became the print media's lifeline to prevent them from becoming obsolete and irrelevant to the public….(p. 16)

In view of the above challenges, Wilson (1997: p. 152) argues that "it is not true that the new technologies replace the old ones. They may replace some of their functions or create new functions or supplement the old one, but cannot replace them".

But the late Canadian Professor of English, Marshal McLuhan, with the benefit of hindsight in 1980 quoted in (Griffin, 1991:p. 295) submitted that "… we live in a unique revolutionary communication age, a balance point in history where the power of the printed word is over…. The age of print had its obituary tapped out by the telegraph". The thinking of the late Professor is among a handful of revelations that is the kernel of the current mind-blowing advances in information communication technologies that Ukonu (2004) referred to as the fourth revolution to be known by mankind.

Since the predictions of McLuhan there has been an unequalled surge in the introduction of new and better information tools, which, are increasingly complementing and replacing older traditional tools of mass information. New media delivery systems, new information processing, storage and retrieval systems have become the vogue.

Currently, newspapers make use of the World Wide Web (www) among other services of the net. They create and maintain web servers in which they publish contents of their papers for users of the Net to access. Newspapers using the web are connected to the internet via Local Area Network (LAN) that is directly connected to the Net via an Internet Service Provider's (ISP) facilities. In this way the electronic pages of newspapers are brought to the doorsteps of people in Nigeria and foreign countries as long as these people are connected to the Net.

The flooding of newspapers online may not be unconnected with some possible secondary reasons- including enthusiasm for new technology and the general sense that one wishes to be part of the new wave at the moment. The fundamental reasons may be economic. The people who own newspapers have, by and large decided that the internet provides opportunities and challenges to which they need to respond.

Some of the opportunities as a matter of fact may be obvious. The offline newspapers (the hard copies) are in part a process of manipulating symbols and in part a straightforward industrial production process. May be once the journalists and the

advertising people have delivered the made-up, final copy, the newspaper undergoes a series of transformations that constitute the physical production and distribution of the commodity.

As usual printers and printing presses produce thousands and millions of copies of more or less identical copies of the newspaper. Dispatchers load the newspaper on trucks and drivers distribute them to wholesalers and then retailers as the case may be. They in turn either deliver it to the user, or put it on display next to the sweets and the cigarettes. All of these cost money for wages and equipment.

Online newspaper on the other hand does not incur any of these costs so to speak. True, it requires some space on the server, but this is not a comparable expense to the printing processes and trucks needed for the physical product. The consumers themselves pay costs of distribution, buying the PCs and paying the telecommunications charges. The online newspapers, according to Sparks (1996) offer the proprietors the prospect of substantial cost reductions.

Online newspapers also confer what some journalists have come to perceive as an important competitive feature in newsgathering as compared with working offline. Physical newspaper, Sparks (2000: p. 272), says may produce several editions, but in general they only have one or at most two main publication points in any 24-hour period. The need to print and transport a physical product usually may impose strict time deadlines in the news day. This means that there is a risk that an important news development will occur too late to be put into the newspaper on the day of its occurrence. Some journalists think that covering these breaking stories is a very important part of their work. Printed newspapers may have long been thought of to be at a disadvantage to radio and television, both of which offer the opportunity continuously to update news throughout the day, although observation suggests that this facility is used, at best, for minority of items.

The online newspaper, essentially, is no longer distinguished by the fact that it appears every morning as opposed to the continuous flow of the broadcasters or the weekly and monthly periodicity of the magazines (Featherly, 1998). What's more, all of these different media now exist in exactly the same space. The geographic distances that previously segmented the market so powerfully have now more or less, been abolished. The online reader can have access to any form of news from anywhere in the world at any time he/she wants. Conversely, the advertiser can gain access to the most dispersed readership through new media and in new ways.

The upshot of all these is that for the first time in years, newspaper faces serious challenge and competition in their core business. They no longer or hardly have the privileged relationship with readers and thus with advertisers, that were to a large extent the foundation of their success in the offline world.

Statement of the Problem

The internet medium has engaged the power of the fast-paced Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in diverse ways and leaving its awesome influence in all spheres of human activities. One of such influences could be readily noticed in the online newspaper phenomenon that has greatly increased the accessibility of people to all kinds of information services. No wonder since the late Canadian Professor of English, Marshal McLuhan predicted that we live in a unique revolutionary communication age, there has been an unprecedented surge of new and better information tools, new media

delivery systems, new information processing, storage and retrieval systems and people are turning to the web for news that is rich and instantaneous compared to the analogue media where, according to Karlsson (2007), interactivity, convergence of pictures, moving images, fusion of text and sound into one medium of distribution are lacking.

Some media organizations may not have actually weighed the economic consequences and implications therein. Vivian (1998) had reported that San Jose, a newspaper in the USA, Mercury News in the early 1990s got as many as 325,000 visits to its online site in a day against only 270,000 copies of the newspaper's newsprint product that were circulated. What then is the implication of online editions of The *Guardian, The Punch, Vanguard, The Nation, The Sun, Business Day* and *ThisDay* newspapers for readership and revenue of their print versions amongst Postgraduate students in South-East Nigeria?

Research Questions
The following research questions were formulated to guide the study
1. What is readers' motivation for patronizing online newspapers against their print versions and vice versa?
2. What is readers' perception of Online and print newspapers in Nigeria?
3. How convenient is accessing online newspapers in comparison with their print versions?
4. To what extent are Nigerian newspaper organizations aware of the 'Paywall' billing system as it affects revenue of online newspapers?

Scope of the Study
The study was focused on Postgraduate students purposively drawn from across the three (3) federal universities in the Eastern part of Nigeria: University of Nigeria, Nsukka, (Enugu state); Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, (Anambra State); and Federal University of Technology, Owerri (Imo State) and the five (5) state universities in each of the five (5) Eastern states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states; (Abia State University, Uturu; Anambra State University, Uli; Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki; Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu; and Imo State University, Owerri). The choice of the Postgraduate students is based on the reasoning that Postgraduate students use the internet often and as well read newspapers online.

Literature Review
General Theoretical Issues on the Power of the Electronic Media
In the 'beginning' the hypodermic needle was used to represent an early but highly influential mass media version of the effect process. Media content was then viewed as injected in the veins of the audience that was then supposed to react in foreseeable and predetermined way. Griffin (1999) clearly captures the scenario thus:

> Early mass communication theorists assumed that print and electronic media have an enormous power to mould opinion, arouse feelings, and sway behaviour. They viewed the mass audience as defenseless and relatively passive – a herd of sheep that is easy for manipulative advertising or clever propaganda. The 'powerful effects' model

is likened media messages to bullets fired from a
machine gun into a crowd. (p. 288)

Consequently, the very first empirical findings of mass media effect research scientifically disproved the simple stimulus reaction model. Individual differences in people's personality organization – different motivation, capability to learn, attentiveness, awareness etc. were now taken into account. The effects of mass communication were no longer stringently regarded as deterministic since the personality structure of the individual recipient was perceived as an effect – modifying filter.

Behind the conception of the all powerful media effect perspective, McQuail and Windahl (1981: p. 42) say "an image of a modern society as consisting of an aggregate of relatively 'atomized' individuals acting according to their personal interests and little constrained by social ties and constraints". A dominant view of the mass media as engaged on campaigns to mobilize behaviour according to intentions of powerful institutions, whether public or private (advertisers, government bureaucracies, political parties, etc).

The main features of this "mass society" stimulus – response model according to them are:

(a)   The assumption that messages are prepared and distributed in systematic ways and on a large scale. At the same time they are 'made available' for attention by many individuals, not directed to particular persons.

(b)   The technology of reproduction and neutral distribution is expected to maximize aggregate reception and response.

(c)   Little or no account is taken of an intervening social or group structure and a direct contact is made between media campaigner and individual.

(d)   All recipients of the message are 'equal' in weighting or value – only aggregate numbers account (as voters, consumers, supporters, etc).

(e)   There is an assumption that contact from the message will be related at some given level of probability to an effect. This contact with the media tends to be equated with some degree of influence from the media, and those not reached are assumed to be unaffected.

Theoretical Views on the Nature, Relevance and Vibrancy of Newspapers
The newspaper represents one of the earliest attempts at mass communication. Newspaper came after the introduction of the books as a medium of communication (1580-135BC)…. The Gutenberg press invented by Johann Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, in 1450, revolutionized the print history (Agba, 2002: p. 120).

The newspaper, understandably, remained the prominent news medium for many centuries before the introduction of the electronic media in the early twentieth century. When Reverend Henry Townsend set up the very first newspaper in Nigeria called Iwe Irohin in Abeokuta, Egba land, in 1859, he was interested in developing and improving the literacy level of the Egba people. The first press established by the Presbyterian Mission in Calabar 13 years earlier and the second establishment in 1884 by Rev. Townsend had the same motive as Iwe Irohin. This underscores one of the cardinal roles of the print media, namely education.

The newspaper industry has recorded successes in the face of stifling odds. Njemanze (1996: pp. 164-165) notes "the country's press has always had a crusading

predilection since its inception. It is not shy to take positions and not for it the option to sit on the fence. Quite often, the press conducts investigations and takes necessary stance on issues of national importance. The print media have kept faith with the people".

Also, the press (newspaper industry) saw countless legal and extra legal measures to control it. Tador (1996: p. 42) states explicitly "criticisms of the editors, especially James Bright Davies of the Nigerian Iwes and John Payne Jackson of the Lagos weekly record compelled the government to think of ways of controlling the press".

The following, in the words of Agba (2002: p. 123), acting sometimes separately and sometimes as groups, are predictors (facilitators or inhibitors) of newspaper readership: Ownership-related issues (newspaper credibility), education, economic status, orientation,/exposure to the media, sheer apathy/unconsciousness to the need to read, electronic competition, gender, parent socialization values, ties to the community, socio-political/economic awareness, marital status, motivation (uses and gratifications) theory, circulation/coverage radius, newspaper aesthetics and content; and newspaper cover price.

New Media and Their Awesomeness
Essentially, new media are the new technologies that extend and change the entire spectrum of sociological possibilities for public communication. They are also taken to be those methods and social practices of communication, representation and expression that have developed using digital, multimedia, networked computer and the ways that this machine is held to have transformed work in other media, like books, movies, newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, telephones, etc.

Therefore, there are grounds for thinking that mass media have greatly changed, certainly from the early 20th Century days of one – directional and undifferentiated flow to an undifferentiated mass. McQuail (2005: p. 136) says there are social and economic as well as technological reasons for this shift, but it is real enough and secondly, information society theory also indicates the rise of a new kind of society quite distinct from mass society, one characterized by complex interactive networks of communication. McQuail continues that "the new media" are in fact a desperate set of communication technologies that share certain features apart from being new, made possible by digitalization and being widely available for personal use as communication devices".

Although new media have been greeted (not least by the old media) with intense interest, positive and even euphoric expectations and predictions and a general overestimation of their significance (Rossler, 2007), the most fundamental aspect of information and communication technology (ICT) is probably the fact of digitization, the process by which all texts (symbolic meaning in all encoded and recorded forms) can be reduced to a binary code and can share the same process of production, distribution and storage.

The 'new electronic media' can also be viewed initially as an addition to the existing spectrum rather than as a replacement. But McQuail (2005: p. 137) views that it seems that the interest in particular already deviates from the typification of digitalization on three of the five points identified. First, the internet is not only or even mainly concerned with the production and distribution of message but at least equally concerned with processing exchange and storage. Secondly, the new media are as much an institution of private as of public communication and are regulated (or not) accordingly. Thirdly, their operation is not typically processional or bureaucratically organized to the same degree as mass media. These are quite significant differences that underscore the

fact that the new media correspond with mass media primarily in being widely diffused, in principle available to all communication and at least as free from control although, it is not easy to become famous on the internet without the co-operation of the old media (traditional mass media).

An Overview of the Concept of Online News and Moving Audience Online
Online news is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of news and journalism. In the early 1990s, newspapers and other broadcast news providers were just beginning to explore the possibilities of delivering news content to readers via the World Wide Web (WWW) (Deuze 2003). By 2005, reading news online was becoming a regular habit for many people. According to the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) report at that time, the global readership for online newspapers rose by more than 200 percent between 2001 and 2005 (Asia Media, 2006). Since then, not only newspapers publishers but also television and radio stations, magazines, and other publications have constantly improved their presence online. Statistics from the Newspaper Association of America (NAA, 2009) report shows 67.3 million visitors in the year 2008, which is an increase of 12.1 percent over year 2007.

Nielsen Online for the NAA also reported that in the fourth quarter of 2008, there was an average of 68.2 million visitors, an 8.6 percent increase, over the same period of 2007, when there were only 62.8 million visitors. In Australia Fairfax Digital (from Fairfax Media Limited Annual Report 2007) claim to be the 'No.1 online news site', and reported over 14.3 million unique browsers per month have visited their online site, which was a growth rate of over 33 percent. An obvious trend is the merging of information and communications technologies and the Internet with all forms of the entertainment and news media. In addition, entirely new online news websites are emerging outside the mainstream traditional news media ownership, allowing both professional and amateur journalists a global forum for individual reports and opinions (see e.g. Connery and Hasan, 2005). Distributing the news online has a significant impact on the traditional news cycle (Hall, 2001).

For both traditional printed and broadcast news services there is a decreasing need to meet production as deadlines and stories are "not set in type" until the next edition or program. In the online environment journalists can put up one version of the story as soon as it breaks and then continue to revise and update the content as more is known (Flavián and Gurrea, 2008). In the same way that digital technology has revolutionized many industries the change in the world of news delivery has been rapid and transformational. What is more, many online news sites are now discovering that more and more users want to become part of the media conversation.

A Theoretically-Based Examination of Audience Motivation
One way to approach the task of developing an understanding of the motivations of online newspaper consumers is to place the examination within an appropriate theoretical framework. Some commentators have called for just such grounding in new media studies (see Williams, Rice, and Rogers, 1988, Chapter 11). With the rapidly increasing industry interest in online news, a theory-based examination of the phenomenon might be particularly timely and useful.

Undertaking such an examination can contribute to the discussion about the challenges facing daily papers, and online papers' opportunities to meet them, by

providing benefits typically associated with theoretical explorations. These benefits include synthesizing and integrating empirical findings, directing and focusing future research, adding rigor to research by basing it on a priori hypotheses, providing perspective on larger issues, and directing researchers' attention to central issues, rather than to hypotheses derived from "misguided technological imperatives" (Fulk and Steinfield, 1990, p. 14).

Many studies have considered print newspapers as a mass medium or applied mass media theory to a consideration of newspapers. Smith (1980) and Stephens (1988), in their historical overviews of the Western newspaper industry, both classify newspapers as a mass media. But current newspaper and media researchers seem to categorize online newspapers similarly. Lapham (1995) places her discussion of online newspapers in a consideration of mass media theorist Marshall McLuhan, among others. Levinson (1990) includes electronic media in his definition of "mass" media as media enabling an exponential increase in audience numbers. Morris and Ogan (1996) propose consideration of all Internet-based communications in a mass media framework. Williams et al. (1988) suggest a specific mass media theory, that of media uses and gratifications, as holding particular promise for the study of new communication technologies like "video cassette or disk, cable television, new telephone services, home computers, [and] videotext or teletext services" (p. 241). Palmgreen (1984), too, in a comprehensive review of uses and gratifications theory and research, issues the challenge to explore "the adaptation and molding" of the uses and gratifications "conceptual framework" to "deal with new communication technologies" (p. 49). And Compaine, in a posting to the online-news discussion list, identifies uses and gratifications theory as one that can, when "sorted through judiciously," help "(explain) why we see (certain online) phenomena" (15 January 1997).

Theoretical Framework
The Uses and Gratifications Theory
The focus of the Uses and Gratifications theory is the media consumer. The theory, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2011: p. 345), examines how people use the media and the gratifications they seek and receive from their media behaviours. Uses and Gratifications researchers assume that audience members are aware of and articulate their reasons for consuming various media contents.

The Uses and Gratifications approach, according to Baran (2003), claims that the media do not do things to people rather people do things with the media. In other words, the influence of the media is limited to what people allow it to be" (p. 428). Similarly, Uses and Gratifications in the words of Katz Elihu of Israel, is concerned primarily with the social and psychological origins of needs which generate expectations of the media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure, resulting in needs gratifications and other consequences perhaps mostly unintended ones. On the basis of the above position therefore, if media exposure results in both intended and unintended gratifications, it tends to suggest that online newspapers may or may not satisfy readers' needs for news.

Some contemporary proponents of Uses and Gratifications argue that one enduring challenge for their school of thought is to make a link from gratifications to effects. Windahl (1981) argues that a merger of 'Uses and Gratifications' and the 'effects' traditions were overdue and proposed what he calls 'Uses and Effects' model

that viewed the product of the uses of media contents as 'Cons-effects'. In a similar vein, Palmgreen, Wenner and Rosengreen (1985: p. 31) write, "studies have shown that a variety of audience gratifications(again both sought and obtained) as related to a wide spectrum of media effects, including knowledge, dependency attitudes, perception of social reality, agenda setting discussions and various political effects".

The Uses and Gratifications theory therefore underpins this study because source characteristics and other intervening variables interact with each other in formulating information behaviour, in this context online or offline disposition. Also, a person with limited education, for instance, might have limited cognitive capacity and, therefore, would not like reading, which leads him or her to preferring retrieving information from television and radio than from the more demanding newspapers and magazines, multimedia, etc.

Research Design
The study adopted the survey method using the questionnaire and in-depth interview as instruments of data collection. According to Osuala (2005: pp.253-254), survey research studies both large and small populations by selecting and studying sample chosen from population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables.

The questionnaire was used in gauging newspaper buyers' general disposition to the online newspapers vis-à-vis their buying behaviour of the print versions after they had been exposed to the former. This method employed a set of questions on aspects of the subject to which the selected members of the population responded.

Population of the Study
The population for this study comprised all Postgraduate students of all the federal and state universities in the South-eastern part of Nigeria. This category of respondents was specifically chosen because of their level of education. The pilot study revealed that Postgraduate students have access to the internet and also read online newspapers. The newspapers evaluated to discover the influence of online newspapers on their print versions' readership and revenue were *The Punch, Vanguard, The Guardian The Sun, The Nation, ThisDay, and Business Day* newspapers. These newspapers were chosen especially because of their national spread.

Sample of the Study
The foregoing therefore a sample of two thousand (2000) Postgraduate students across the three (3) federal Universities in the Eastern part of Nigeria: University of Nigeria, Nsukka,(Enugu state) Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, (Anambra State) and Federal University of Technology, Owerri (Imo State) and the five (5) state universities in each of the five (5) Eastern states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states were selected and surveyed. The purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting 250 Postgraduate students from each of the eight (8) universities selected.

Sampling Technique
The sampling technique employed in this study was purposive. Postgraduate students of federal and state universities in the South-eastern part of Nigeria were purposively chosen as they were viewed to be intellectually alert and capable of appreciating the dynamics of

the sustaining online newspapers phenomenon in the Nigerian media circles. According to Treadwell (2011: p. 109) "purposive or judgmental sampling is based on the idea that a specific person… will meet specific criteria the researcher has". The two hundred and fifty (250) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students in their faculties, departments and hostels until the allotted number got exhausted.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instruments employed in gathering data for this study were the questionnaire, and in-depth interview questions for proprietors, editors, online editors, which would assist the researcher in determining the direction of the revenue of *The Guardian, The Punch and Vanguard The Sun, The Nation, ThisDay, and Business Day* newspapers in the face of current online newspapers' challenge. Considering the employment of questionnaire in research, Nworgu (1991) reasons "with the questionnaire we can obtain data on the feelings and perceptions of a group of people towards certain things" (p. 83). The questionnaire, which can easily be administered, was designed with the research questions formulated for the study in focus.

Data Presentation

Research Question 1

What is readers' motivation for patronizing online newspapers against their print versions and vice versa?

Table 1

Motivation for Patronizing Online Newspapers Amongst Postgraduate Students in South-eastern, Nigeria

S/N	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
A	Read in Detail	192	22
B	Simply scan through	468	52
C	Just read Designated sections	232	26
	Total	892	100

Table 1 above shows where respondents read newspapers online. One hundred and ninety two (192) (22%) of the respondents read online newspapers in detail, 468 (52%) simply scan through the newspapers while 232 (26%) just read designated sections of the online newspapers.

Table 2

The Reasons that motivate respondents' Online Newspaper Reading Behaviour

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage
A	Use of Pictures	138	15
B	Depth of Reporting	78	09
C	The Headlines	142	16
D	News Interpretation	182	20
E	Ease of Reading	222	22
F	For Documentation	130	15
	Total	892	100

Table 2 above required the respondents to tick the reasons that motivated their online newspaper reading behaviour. One hundred and 138(15%) of the respondents said

they are motivated by the use of pictures, 78 (09%) are motivated by depth of reporting, 142 (16%) said the attraction is the Headlines, 182(20%) are moved by the "Ease of reading" and 130 (15%) said they read online newspapers for documentation.

Research Question 2

What is readers' perception of Online and print newspapers in Nigeria?

Table 3

Ranking of the Punch the Guardian, The Sun, the Nation, ThisDay, Business Day and Vanguard newspapers according to Respondents' Perception of the newspapers with Respect to timely, Authoritative, Popular and Currency Ratings of their Usage

Newspapers	Variable	Online					Offline					
	Timely, authoritative, popular, and current	SA	A	U	D	SD	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
The Punch	892	422	121	10	88	251	410	288	22	79	101	892
The Guardian	892	288	245	25	109	225	348	212	18	107	207	892
The Sun	892	392	108	15	142	235	411	214	24	205	38	892
The Nation	892	481	212	10	62	127	292	215	22	200	163	892
ThisDay	892	389	211	11	115	166	215	192	19	215	251	892
Business Day	892	418	214	18	114	128	217	302	16	231	126	892
Vanguard	892	382	217	12	211	70	214	222	14	148	294	892

The likert scaling system was employed in gauging respondents' perceptions of the online off line newspapers with respect to the newspapers timely, authoritative, popular and currency dating of their range. The keys were SA- Strongly Agree, A – Agree, U- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree.

The essence of the above Research Question was to ascertain readers' perception of the online newspapers and their print versions. Questionnaire item '13' was structured in such a way that respondents were expected to rank *The Punch, The Guardian, The sun, The Nation, ThisDay, Business Day* and *Vanguard* newspapers according to their perceptions of the online newspapers and their print versions with respect to their timely, authoritative, popular, and currency ratings of their usage.

Four hundred and twenty two (422) of the respondents strongly agreed that *The Punch's* online newspapers are timely, authoritative, popular and current while 410 respondents strongly agreed that *The Punch's* offline (print) versions are timely, authoritative popular and current. Two hundred and eighty eight (288) of the respondents strongly agreed that the *Guardian's* online newspapers are "timely, authoritative, popular and current" while, 348 of them strongly agreed that the *Guardian's* versions are "timely, authoritative, popular, and current".

Three hundred and ninety two (392) of the respondents strongly agreed that *The Sun's* online newspapers are "timely, authoritative, popular, and current" while, 411 of the respondents strongly agreed that "*The Sun's* newspapers are "timely, authoritative, popular, and current"

Four hundred and eighty one (481) of the respondents strongly agreed that *The Nation's* online newspapers are "timely, authoritative, popular and, current' while, 92 of the respondents strongly agreed that *The Nation's* offline versions are timely, authoritative, popular, and current".

Three hundred and eighty nine (389) of the respondents strongly agreed that *ThisDay's* online newspapers are "timely, authoritative, popular, and current" while, 251 of the respondents strongly disagreed that *ThisDay's* offline newspapers are timely authoritative, popular and current".

Four hundred and eighteen (418) of the respondents strongly agreed that *Business Day's* online newspapers are timely, authoritative, popular, and current" while, 231 of the respondents disagreed that *Business Day's* offline versions are "timely, authoritative, popular and current".

Three hundred and eight two (382) of the respondents strongly agreed that *Vanguard's* online newspapers are "timely, authoritative, popular and current", while 294 of the respondents strongly disagreed that *Vanguard's* offline versions are "timely, authoritative, popular and current".

Convenience and comfort in accessing online newspapers in comparison with their print versions.
Research Question 3
How convenient is accessing online newspapers in comparison with their print versions?

Table 4
Difficulty in Accessing Online Newspapers amongst Postgraduate Students in South-eastern, Nigeria
 Nigeria

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage
a	Yes	489	55
b	No	208	23
c	Sometimes	195	22
	Total	892	100

Table 14 above reveals the perception of the respondents in relation to the difficulty in accusing online newspapers in Nigeria. For hundred and eighty nine (489) (55%) of the respondents said they have difficulty in accessing 208 (23%) said 'No' they do not have difficulty in doing so, while 195 (22%) said that they have difficulties 'Sometimes'.

Table 5
Difficulty in Accessing Offline Newspapers amongst Postgraduate Students in South-eastern, Nigeria

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage
a	Yes	321	36
b	No	335	38
c	Sometimes	236	26
	Total	892	100

Table 15 above shows the perception of the respondents in relation to the difficulty in accessing offline newspapers in Nigeria. Three hundred and twenty one (321) (36%) of the respondents said "Yes" they have difficulty in accessing offline newspapers, 335 (38%) said "No" they do not while 236 (26%) said they have difficulties 'Sometimes'.

The follow-up question in questionnaire item '16' required the respondents to choose between online newspapers and their print versions, which is more challenging in accessing? Five hundred and eight nine (589) (66%) said online newspapers is more challenging while three hundred and three (303) (34%) said their print versions are more challenging.

Questionnaire item '17' being an opened one required the respondents to provide explanations of they chose either online newspapers or their print versions as more challenging in accessing. The respondents gave a galaxy of reasons for reasoning that the online newspapers or their print versions as more challenging. Their explanations are summarized in the fallowing words. Some said online newspapers 'are easily accessed since they have smart phones ranging from blackberries, communicators, Ipads, Ipods and other Iphones and other smart phones corrected to the internet, others said 'their laptops and desktops are also connected to the internet via any of the GSM providers' moderns'. To that extent they argued that the print versions of the newspapers are more challenging. Also, a few reasoned that since one has to travel long distances to buy newspapers, the offline versions are more challenging. According to the respondents, sometimes the newspaper vendors are not within sight to access the papers; sometimes readers may not have the means of transportation to travel the distance.

Furthermore, some of the respondents said the circulation officers and newspaper vendors are hardly reachable. Some argued that the newspaper stands may be far removed from their residences or location and one world need to travel long distances to access copies.

On the part of those who said the online version is more challenging they pointed to the difficulty in charging their electronic devices due to absence of electricity. Some pointed to the high cost of the electronic devices such as (Blackberries, Communicators, Ipod, Iphones, Ipad, Laptops, and Pamtops.

Research Question 4

To what extent are Nigerian newspaper organizations aware of the 'Paywall' billing system as it affects revenue of online newspapers?

From the responses of the Online Editors of the newspapers sampled it was discovered that their newspaper organizations are aware of the 'Paywall' billing system but have not employed it in their online newspaper business. This was corroborated by the 548 (61%) of the respondents who said they save money in course of reading newspapers online.

Discussion of Findings

Out of the two thousand (2000) copies of questionnaire administered, one thousand six hundred and sixty (1660) were duly filled out and returned in analyzable form. This figure represented 83% percent of the returned copies of the questionnaire showcasing a reasonable return rate. The study has revealed that online newspaper readers are motivated to read online newspapers due to the ease with which they scan through, use of pictures, depth of reporting, news interpretation, ease of reading, and documentation.

Readers of online newspapers and their offline (print) versions perceive online and print newspapers as timely, authoritative, popular and current although greater percentage of the respondents titled towards the online newspapers. More of the respondents have difficulties and challenges in accessing online newspapers as

represented by (489) (55%) while 321 (36%) of the respondents agreed that they have difficulties in accessing offline (print) newspapers.

Seven hundred and eighty nine (789%) (88%) of the respondents agreed that online newspapers have a greater level of negative influence on the offline newspapers in South-east Nigeria in terms of negative effect on circulation (purchase) of offline newspapers; impediment to revenue generation of the offline versions; unemployment of circulation officers; reduction in the quality of news reporting.

Conclusions

Following the findings of this study, we can draw these conclusions.

    (a) Gauging their exposure patterns and patronage, Postgraduate students in the South-eastern universities do not buy newspapers.

    (b) Two hundred and twelve (212) ((34%) of Postgraduate students' newspaper readers in the South-East who buy Nigerian newspapers do so once in a week.

    (c) Eight hundred and ninety two (892) (54%) of Nigerian Postgraduate students' newspaper readers in the South-East do so online.

    (d) Postgraduate students Newspaper readers in the South-East who read newspapers do so through any of the GSM providers' Modems especially through their smart phones; Blackberries, Android phones, Ipad, Iphones, Ipads, Laptops, Palmtops, and the like.

    (e) Five hundred and seventeen (517) (58%) Postgraduate students in the South-East who read online newspapers do so very often.

    (f) Postgraduate students' newspaper online readers in the South-East do so on the following websites – *www.bizlallmark.com, www.busniessdayonline.com , www.cometnewsonline.com, www.sunnewsonlinecom, www.championnewspaper.com, www.dailyindependent.com, www.thesunnewsonline.com, www.dailypost.com, www.financialstandardnews.com, www.ngguardiannews.com, www.ganiji.com/hotline:htm, www.newage-online.com, www.tribune.com.ng. www.the phctetegraph.com, www.punching.com, www.thisdayonlin.com, www.thetidenews.com, www.ndirect.com.uk. www.triumphenewspapers.com, www.vanguardngr.com. www.daily postng.org, www.saharareponfers.com. www.primuim times.org.*

    (g) Four hundred and sixty eight (468) (52%) online newspaper readers in the South-East simply scan through the headlines and pages.

    (h) Nigerian Postgraduate students' online and (offline) print newspaper readers have difficulties and challenges in accessing these papers due to the following reasons; unavailability of electricity, unavailability of newspaper stands, and vendors, unavailability of cybercafés, high cost of the electronic devices.

    (i) There are both positive and negative influences of online newspapers on their print versions' readership and revenue in Nigeria in terms of reduction in circulation (purchase) of the print copies; impediment to revenue generation of the print versions; unemployment of circulation officers; and reduction in the quality of news reports.

    (j) Online newspapers have the following positive influences, online newspapers complement their print versions; offer archives of other materials where one can easily make choices; add audio, video and other animated illustrations that

offline newspapers lack; are cheaper as evidenced in the 548 (61%) of the respondents who said they 'save money' in course of reading online newspapers.

Recommendations

1. Offline newspapers should package attractive and contemporary editorial content that are most times absent in their online versions.
2. Offline newspaper operators should build relationships with their customers/consumers through Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) with events sponsorship, marketing promotions, public relations and advertising. To that extent newspaper prices could be reduced to enable vendors continually them in getting their products across to their readers.
3. The offline newspapers can employ the services of a brand manager to position the newspaper brand. Product corporate positioning and the like have been viewed as one of the key factors for success (KFS) of organizations and their products, especially when they are experiencing one form of challenge or crisis as the case with online newspapers phenomenon.
4. As a follow-up to the fallout of this present study, offline newspapers could conduct media research, product research and consumer research to authenticate the newspaper brand's position in the market place.
5. The offline newspapers can be more aesthetically appealing than they are at present. The operators of offline newspapers could employ current design software in making newspaper designs more appealing.
6. Since online journalism has clearly changed everything about the media landscape, it is therefore imperative that newspaper organizations in Nigeria train and retrain their reporters on computer-assisted reporting to be up to the minutes of today's journalism.
7. According to a 2001 study of newspaper websites by the World Association of Newspapers in Paris, 38 percent of newspapers make money, 26 percent break even and 36 percent lose money, Nigerian newspapers should learn their lessons in the area of reorganization, improvement on data base infrastructure and web-focused sales team to assist them in scouting for and trapping advertising revenue.
8. In the contemporary information hungry society, readers want news on demand. Since online sites can keep updating, reporters need to continue gathering information for developing stories such as terrorist attacks, kidnapping, oil theft, and the like.
9. Newspaper organizations should use quizzes, polls, feedback questions and other types of interactivity because these distinguish the web (online newspapers) from print and broadcast news.

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