News on our Finger Tip: A Study of Online News Reading Habits of Undergraduates in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

The information age has created many challenges for every profession. In the case of journalism, the introduction of information technology has altered considerably various aspects of the profession. News consumption today is not the same as pre-satellite news when people waited for their morning papers or sat down at an appointed time for the evening news on television, but the reverse is the case. More recently, a growing number of readers, viewers and listeners are going online for their news. The advent of modern digital technologies, especially the growing popularity of social networking on the web, mobile phones, televisions, and other means of entertainment, the reading habit of the general public, especially the students, is on the fall. Reading newspapers is an important part of journalism education. The aim of this study was to examine the level of newspaper reading habits of undergraduate students of mass communication in South-East, Nigeria. Out of a total population of 4365 students, a sample of 368 respondents was studied. The study found that 36.9% respondents moderately read online newspapers and when they do read these newspapers, about 60.8% spend less than one hour reading these newspapers. The study concluded, therefore, that the online news reading habit of mass communication students in South-East, Nigeria is low. It was recommended that students of mass communication should be encouraged to look out for news stories online by reading online newspapers whenever they are on the Internet.

KEYWORDS: Online Journalism, News, Reading Habits, Students

1   Introduction

The consumption of news today is not the same as pre-satellite news when people waited for their morning papers or sat down at an appointed time for the evening television news. More and more readers, viewers and listeners are going online for their news. Television, newspapers and radio are still here but there is a growing competition.

The internet and its related technologies have significantly influenced not only the ways news is consumed, but also how journalism education is undertaken. The internet is an essential link for scholars and student studying mass communication in higher institutions. The internet has influenced the news reading habits of society and especially among students (Pew Research Center, 1999). Yau and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) observe that:

> *The Internet with its headline news format and its capacity for quick updates is clearly attractive to younger news consumers. The internet's hypertext-based ability to provide more depth on a subject also appeals to those with large news appetites ... and as a result, the growth of internet news has had a dramatic impact on the way people with access to technology get information on business and financial matters.*

The migration of readers, viewers and advertisers from newspaper and broadcast television to the web is not limited to the developed world but has also become a visible trend in developing countries such as Nigeria. Newspapers have for the past decade decried the decline in circulation as web visits continue to increase, making the future of newspaper journalism an uncertainty (Chukwu, 2014).

Reading is very important in education as we as the intellectual growth of a person. Tella and Akande (2007) assert that the ability to read is at the heart of self-education and lifelong learning, and that it is an art capable of transforming life and society.

Ever since the inception of the internet and the proliferation of its services, there has been an unremitting decline in the use of other media. This has initiated and sustained a global trend of unrelenting resort to the internet as a means of news and information dissemination. A trend of this nature has consequently had a baneful effect on the print media, and paradoxically, a positive one on online journalism and e-news. This evolution in media practice is also unequivocally evident in the developing countries of Africa such as Nigeria where the onset of online journalism is gradually putting the demand of newspapers on the ware. The migration of newspapers and television outfits to the web has been consequently accompanied with that of its readership and viewership

respectively. However, much as this poses a dilemma, it has jolted journalists and media organizations into the realization that being technologically *sorry* is the only sure means of remaining relevant in an increasingly changing and competitive journalism, and a good number of them are stepping up to the plate.

The migration of major newspaper outfits in the country to the internet reaffirms this. For instance, The Punch now runs an online press which avails its readers (both local and Diaspora) the opportunity to access news stories, and connect with the press on a social network to access and respond to news feeds through their mobile service. It also features opinion polls that aids in the reception of feedback from its readers. Some other news outfit go further to accord to its readers the liberty to upload reports of current news-worthy events within their vicinity. Vanguard offers to its readers such as service, Daily Sun in addition offers a search engine which enables its readers to rapidly retrieve information on trending events. Funny enough, it also does offers, for its fun-loving readers, a peculiar dating service (Chukwu, 2014).

All these commendable developments in the online media vividly portray the commitment of the online press and media practitioners towards a sustainable growth and efficacy of online journalism in Nigeria. This, considered from a futuristic viewpoint indubitably, guarantees a high prospect of survival, longevity, and success of online journalism in Nigeria. Nigeria has 294 radio and Television stations most of which also transmit on the internet for example Wazobia Fm and Cool Fm, which are both independent radio stations, have their audio programmes streamed live. Their audiences can dick, download and listen to these programmes (http://wazobiafm.com/). In addition, Cool Fm produces original videos, has a photo Gallery titled "Cool photos", online games titled "Cool Games", and maintains presence on Facebook and Twitter. Other features on its website include an opinion poll site titled "Football Polls" and a "Weather Forecast Site (http://www.coolfm.us/.), (Chukwu, 2014).

One of the landmarks in the era of online journalism has been the ability of the media to harness the potentials of world wide web (www) among other services provided by the net. The www which is a system for accessing, manipulation, and downloading a very large set of hypertext-linked documents and other file located on computers connected through the internet has afforded both the source and receiver to send and receive messages as well as advertise goods and services.

Television stations in Nigeria are not left out as a large number of them maintain presence on the web, where they transmit live programmes. Channels Television, a predominantly news television station, in addition to its live transmission, produces original news videos as well as offering links to YouTube videos. It also maintains presence on Facebook and Twitter, gives "Breaking News" through email alerts to subscribers, conducts "opinion polls" and gives Weather Reports, (http://www.channelstv.com/global/.), (Chukwu, 2014).

1.2   Statement of the Problem

There are many studies in the use of mass media for information purposes. With the growth and increase of electronic-media industries and internet accessibility in recent times, more people are reading news content from electronic or online newspaper sites. Regarding media usage among news consumers, readers seem to look out for fast ways of having more facts about events happening around them. As a result, Henke noted that newspapers were the number one choice for in depth local news and detailed information, with the television news being the overall top news source choice for both national and international events among readers (1985).

Readers are now looking at electronic news sources for their news consumption. This may be attributed to the fact that most newspaper houses are beginning to publish their news stories in their online sites and access to the internet is on the increase. Despite these recent developments, most mass communication students in undergraduate classes seem not to be abreast with the daily happenings making news around them, even with most universities building online libraries and creating access to the internet for students. It appears that the students seem not to use the online opportunity for their news readership. This study, therefore, sought to examine the extent to which students use the internet to read online newspapers.

1.3   Research Objectives
1. To find out the extent to which undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria access and read online newspaper for their news consumption.
2. To identify the category of news stories mostly read by undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria.
3. To find out the time frame spent by undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria when they read online newspapers.

4. To determine why these students read online newspapers.
5. To ascertain the factors that impinge on undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria from accessing online newspaper sites.

1.4   Research Questions

1. To what extent do undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria access and read online newspaper for their news consumption?
2. What category of news stories are mostly read by undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria?
3. Why do the undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria read online newspapers?
4. What is time frame spent by undergraduate students of mass communication when they read online newspapers?
5. What are the factors affecting undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria from accessing online newspaper sites?

2   Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on technological determinism theory because according to Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006), technological determinism is "the belief that technologies have an overwhelming power to drive human actions" which leads to social change. The relevance of this theory to the study is anchored on the fact that when new technologies are discovered, people tend to adjust to suit the use of such technologies, thereby, changing their usual way of life.

3   Methodology

The survey research method was adopted in this study. The choice of this survey was to facilitate the production of an accurate and identifiable picture of the chosen population. Thus, according to Baran (1999), surveys permit a true measure of opinions and characteristics of a population by studying a small sample from the entire group. Again, it is worthy to note that survey research entails the collection and analyses of data from a group of items, people or events considered to be a true representative of an entire given or targeted group (Nworgu, 2010).

The data gathering tool used was a well designed questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS, simple percentage and presented in tables and bar charts for easy comprehension.

The researchers administered 364 copies of questionnaire to the respondents. Out of the 364 copies of the questionnaire distributed for the study, 344 copies of questionnaire were returned, representing (94.5%) return rate, while 20 (5.5%) copies not returned represented the mortality rate. However, 344 (94.5%) copies returned were found useable.

The mortality rate was due to the fact that the respondents were more concerned with attending to their marathon lectures, some respondents were busy chatting with their friends rather than filling out the questionnaire. However, the researchers considered the 344 (%) copies returned and filled properly enough sample to make good analysis.

The research respondents were the undergraduate students of mass communication in the six universities in the south east Nigeria from year one to year four. Students in mass communication were surveyed in this study because they are the ones expected to disseminate news to the masses in the future. The population was 4,365 with sample size of 364 got through the use of Taro Yamani's formula.
(IMSU; ANSU; NAU; MADONNA; UNN; GO; ESUT; CARITAS; RENASSANCE; ABSU; EBSU; Admissions Unit, 2015)

3.1   Data Presentation and Analysis

The researchers distributed 364 copies of the questionnaire and retrieved 344 copies which amounted to 94.5% return rate, while 20 (5.5%) copies of the questionnaire were lost.

Table 1: Analysing Sex of Respondents

Sex of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	124	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Female	220	64.0	64.0	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015
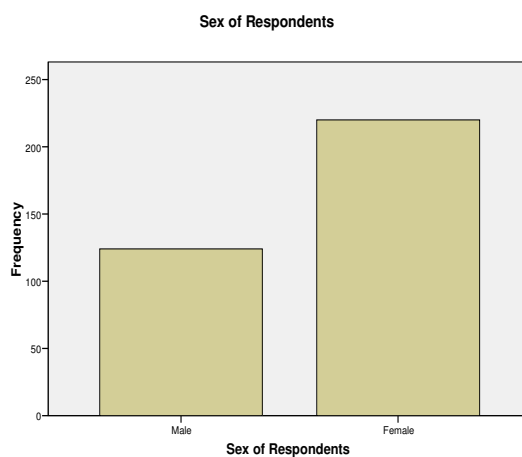
Sex of Respondents

Table one (1) indicates that 124 (36%) respondents are male, while 220 (44%) respondents are female. This means there were more female than male in the study carried out.

Table 2: Analysing the Age of Respondents

Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 -25 years	324	94.2	94.2	94.2
	26-15 years	18	5.2	5.2	99.4
	36-45 years	2	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015
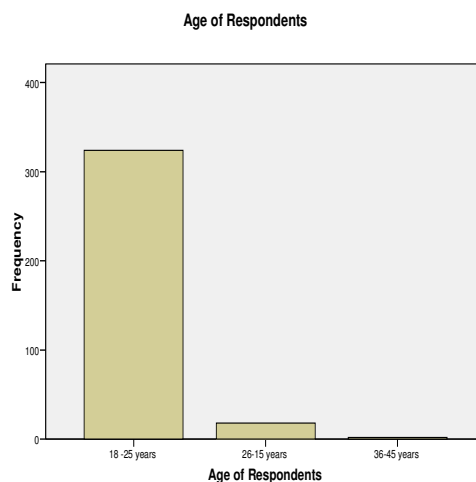
Age of Respondents

In table two (2), 324 (94.2%) respondents are within the ages of 18-25 years, 18 (5.2%) respondents are 26-35 years, while 2 (0.6%) respondents are within 36-45 years. The implication of this analysis is that most of its respondents are between a youthful age of 18-25.

Table 3: Academic Qualification of Respondents

Adademic Qualification of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 year	63	18.3	18.3	18.3
	2 year	33	9.6	9.6	27.9
	3 year	222	64.5	64.5	92.4
	4 year	26	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Adademic Qualification of Respondents

From table 3, 63 (18.3%) respondents are in first year, 33 (9.6%) respondents are in second year, 222 (64.5%) respondents are in third year, while 26 (7.6%) respondents are in fourth year. This means that 64.5% of the respondents are in third year.

Table 4: Responding Ownership of New Media Technological

Responding Onwership of New Media Technological

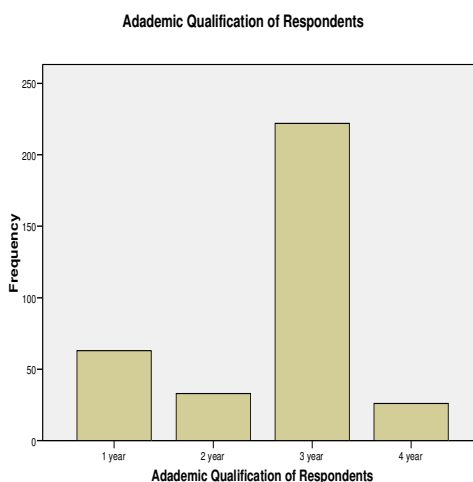|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Laptop	123	35.8	35.8	35.8
	Mobile phones	209	60.8	60.8	96.5
	Personal Computer	11	3.2	3.2	99.7
	4.00	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

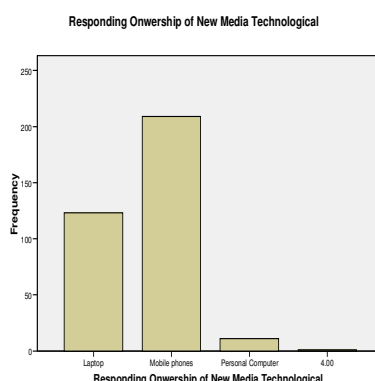**Responding Onwership of New Media Technological**

Table 4 indicates that 123 (35.8%) respondents have laptop, 209 (60.8%) respondents have mobile phones, while 11 (3.2%) respondents have personal computer. The implication of this presentation is that 60.8% of the respondents have mobile phones.
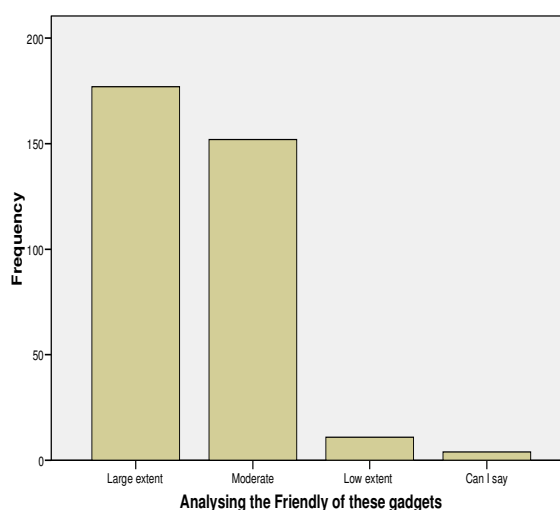
Table 5: Analysing the Friendly of these gadgets

Analysing the Friendly of these gadgets

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Large extent	177	51.5	51.5	51.5
	Moderate	152	44.2	44.2	95.6
	Low extent	11	3.2	3.2	98.8
	Can I say	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing the Friendly of these gadgets

From table 5, 177 (51.5%) respondents indicated that the gadgets they have are internet friendly to a large extent, 152 (44.2%) respondents said the gadgets are moderately friendly, 11 (3.2%) respondents said the gadgets are friendly to a low extent, while 4 (1.2%) respondents are indifferent about the gadgets.

Table 6: Analysing the extent these gadgets are used to access materials on the internet

Analysing the extent these gadgets are used to access materials on the internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Large extent	204	59.3	59.3	59.3
	Moderate	132	38.4	38.4	97.7
	Low extent	4	1.2	1.2	98.8
	Can I say	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing the extent these gadgets are used to access materials on the internet
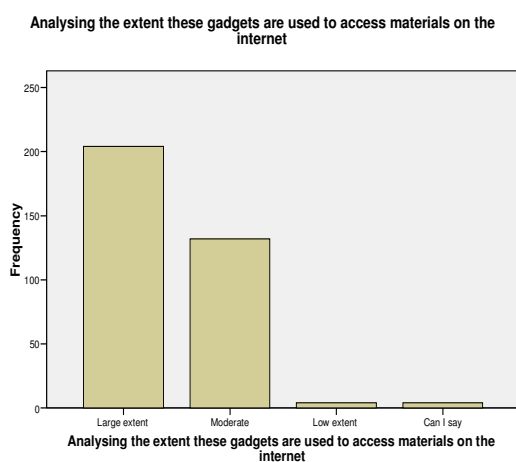
Table 6 reveals that 204 (59.3%) respondents use their gadgets to access materials online to a large extent, 132 (38.4%) respondents use their gadgets moderately to access materials online, 4 (1.2%) respondents use their gadgets to a low extent to access materials online, while and 4 (1.2%) respondents can't say.

Table 7: Analysing the extent these gadgets are used to access newspapers online

Analysing the extent these gadgets are used to access newspapers online

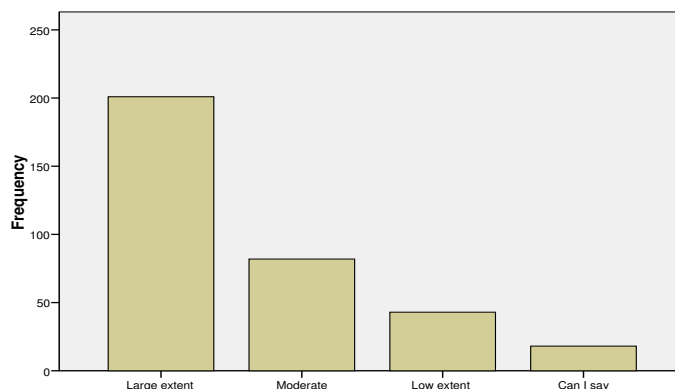|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Large extent	201	58.4	58.4	58.4
	Moderate	82	23.8	23.8	82.3
	Low extent	43	12.5	12.5	94.8
	Can I say	18	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing the extent these gadgets are used to access newspapers online

Analysing the extent these gadgets are used to access newspapers online

In table 7, it is evident that 201 (58.4%) respondents use their gadgets to access online newspapers to a large extent, 82 (23.8%) respondents use their gadgets to access online newspapers moderately, 43 (12.5%) respondents use their gadgets to access online newspapers to a low extent, while 18 (5.2%) respondents are indifferent.
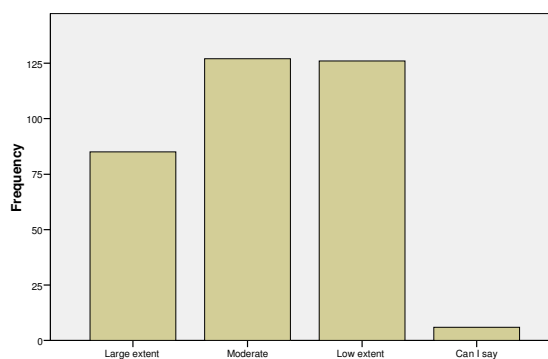
Table 8: Analysing the extent respondents read online newspapers

Analysing the extent respondents read online newspapers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Large extent	85	24.7	24.7	24.7
	Moderate	127	36.9	36.9	61.6
	Low extent	126	36.6	36.6	98.3
	Can I say	6	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing the extent respondents read online newspapers

Analysing the extent respondents read online newspapers

Table 8 indicates that 85 (24.7%) respondents read online newspaper to a large extent, 127 (36.9%) respondents moderately read online newspaper, 126 (36.6%) respondents read online newspaper to a low extent, while 6 (1.7%) respondents are indifferent.

Table 9: Analysing the category of new respondents read most

Analysing the category of new respondents read most

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Educational News	81	23.5	23.5	23.5
	Politics	99	28.8	28.8	52.3
	Sports	44	12.8	12.8	65.1
	Fashion	21	6.1	6.1	71.2
	Romance	65	18.9	18.9	90.1
	Advertisement	16	4.7	4.7	94.8
	Health News	9	2.6	2.6	97.4
	Economics	9	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing the category of new respondents read most
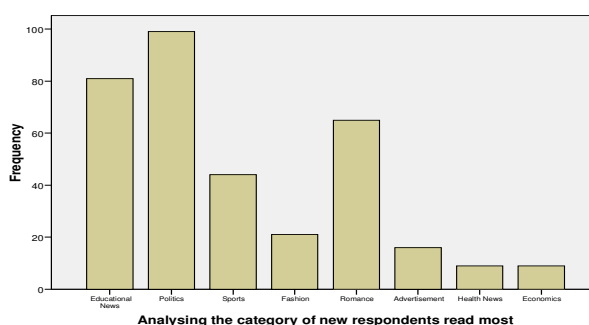
From table 9 above, 81 (23.5%) respondents mostly read educational news, 99 (28.8%) respondents mostly read political news, 44 (12.8%) respondents mostly read sports news, 21 (6.1%) respondents mostly read fashion news, 65 (18.9%) respondents mostly read news on romance, 16 (4.7%) respondents mostly read advertisements, while 9 (2.6%) and 9 (2.6%) respondents mostly read health and economic news respectively.

Table 10: **Analysing the choice that mostly influenced respondents in accessing online newspapers**

Analysing the choice that mostly influenced respondents in accessing online newspapers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Improve general knowledge	250	72.7	72.7	72.7
	Passing time	27	7.8	7.8	80.5
	Fun	31	9.0	9.0	89.5
	Hobby	36	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing the choice that mostly influenced respondents in accessing online newspapers
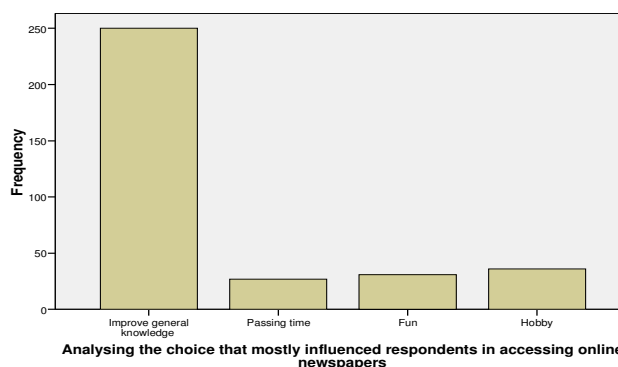
Table 10 shows that 250 (72.7%) respondents read online newspaper to improve their general knowledge, 27 (7.8%) respondents read online newspaper to pass time, 31 (9.0%) respondents read online newspaper for fun, while 36 (10.5%) respondents read online newspaper as hobby. This means that 72.7% of the respondents read online newspaper to improve general knowledge.

Table 11:   **Analysing how regular respondents access online sites for news consumption**

Analysing how regular respondents access online sites for news consumption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Daily Basis	80	23.3	23.3	23.3
	Weekly Basis	131	38.1	38.1	61.3
	Monthly Basis	122	35.5	35.5	96.8
	Yearly Basis	11	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing how regular respondents access online sites for news consumption
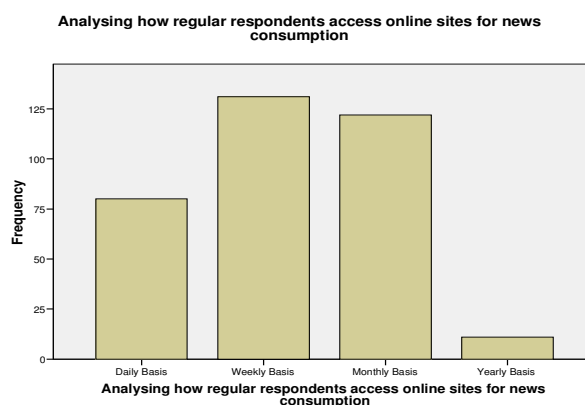
From table 11, it is evident that 80 (23.3%) respondents read online newspaper on daily basis, 131 (38.1%) respondents read online newspaper weekly, 122 (35.5%) respondents read online newspaper on monthly basis, while 11 (3.2%) respondents read online newspaper on yearly basis. This implies that 38.1% of the respondents read online newspaper on weekly basis.
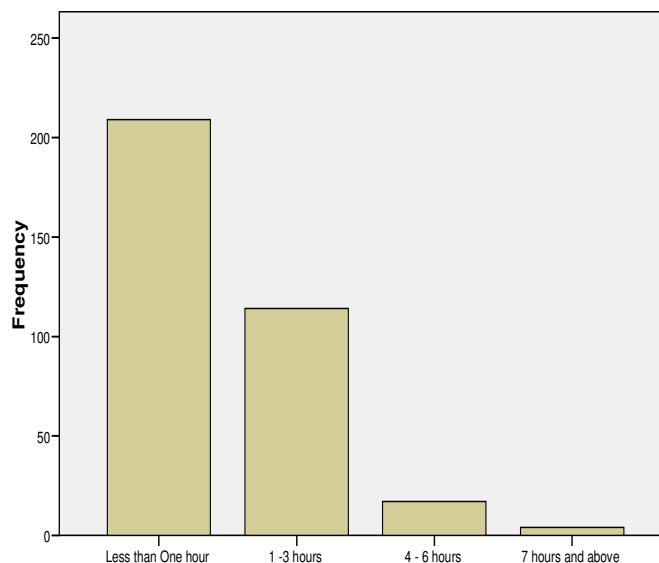
Table 12:   **Analysing the length of time respondents spend reading online newspapers**

Analysing the length of time respondents spend reading online newspapers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than One hour	209	60.8	60.8	60.8
	1 -3 hours	114	33.1	33.1	93.9
	4 - 6 hours	17	4.9	4.9	98.8
	7 hours and above	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Analysing the length of time respondents spend reading online newspapers

Analysing the length of time respondents spend reading online newspapers

Table 12 indicates that 209 (60.8%) respondents spend less than one hour reading online newspaper, 114 (33.1%) respondents spend 1-3 hours reading online newspaper, 17 (4.9%) respondents spend 4-6 hours reading online newspaper, while 4 (1.2%) respondents spend 7 hours and above reading online newspaper. The implication of the analysis is that 60.8% of the respondents spend less than one hour reading online newspaper.
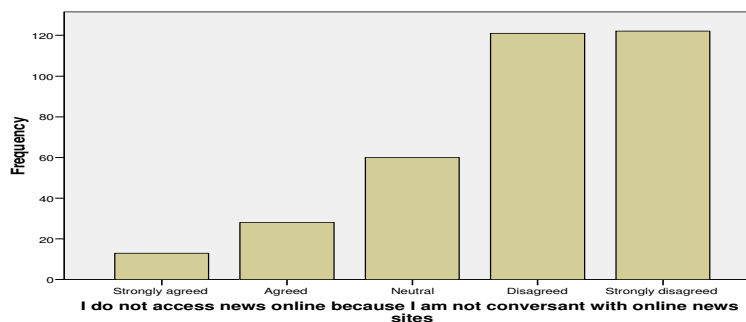
Table 13:   I do not access news online because I am not conversant with online news sites

I do not access news online because I am not conversant with online news sites

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agreed	13	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Agreed	28	8.1	8.1	11.9
	Neutral	60	17.4	17.4	29.4
	Disagreed	121	35.2	35.2	64.5
	Strongly disagreed	122	35.5	35.5	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

I do not access news online because I am not conversant with online news sites

Analysis from table 13 reveals that 13 (3.8%) respondents strongly agreed that they do not access news online because they are not conversant with online news sites, 28 (8.1%) respondents agreed that they do not access news online because they are not conversant with online news sites, 60 (17.4%) respondents are neutral on the reason they do not access news online, while 121 (35.2%) and 122 (35.5%) respondents disagree and strongly

disagreed respectively that they do not access news online news because they are not conversant with online news sites. This implies that 35.5% respondents strongly disagreed with the idea that they do not access news online news because they are not conversant with online news sites.

Table 14:   I do not go online for news benefits because my new media gadget is not internet supported

I do not go online for news benefits because my new media gadget is not internet supported

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agreed	9	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Agreed	30	8.7	8.7	11.3
	Neutral	35	10.2	10.2	21.5
	Disagreed	125	36.3	36.3	57.8
	Strongly disagreed	144	41.9	41.9	99.7
	6.00	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

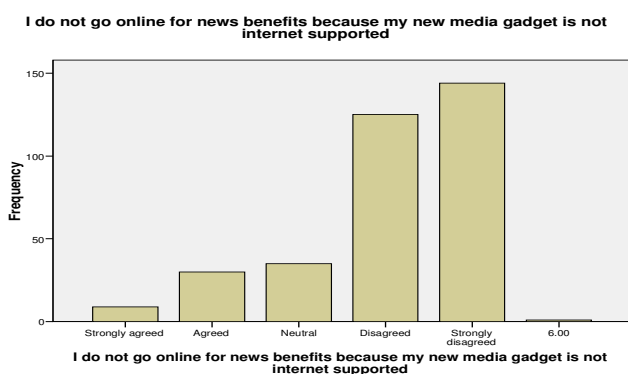I do not go online for news benefits because my new media gadget is not internet supported

Table 14 indicates that 9 (2.6%) respondents strongly agreed that they do not go online for news benefits because their new media gadgets are not internet supported, 30 (8.7%) respondents agreed that they do not go online for news benefits because their new media gadgets are not internet supported, 35 (10.2%) respondents are neutral on the reason they do not go online, while 125 (36.3%) and 144 (41.9%) respondents disagree and strongly disagreed respectively that they do not go online for news benefits because their new media gadgets are not internet supported. This implies that 41.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the idea that they do not go online for news benefits because their new media gadgets are not internet supported.

Table 15:   Poor power supply prevents me from accessing the internet for news benefits

Poor power supply prevents me from accessing the internet for news benefits

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agreed	40	11.6	11.6	11.6
	Agreed	111	32.3	32.3	43.9
	Neutral	43	12.5	12.5	56.4
	Disagreed	116	33.7	33.7	90.1
	Strongly disagreed	34	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Poor power supply prevents me from accessing the internet for news benefits
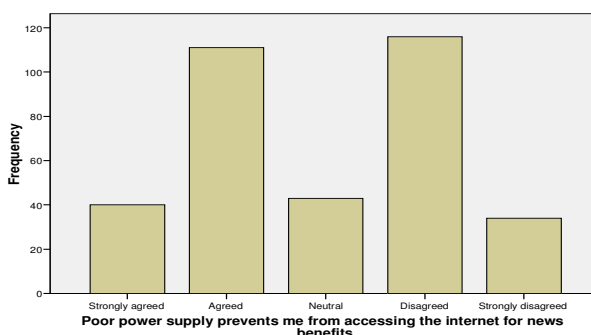
From table 15, it is evident that 40 (11.6%) respondents strongly agreed that poor power supply prevent them from accessing the internet for news benefit, 111 (32.3%) respondents agreed that poor power supply prevent them from accessing the internet for news benefit, 43 (12.5%) respondents are neutral on the issue of power supply and their internet access, while 116 (33.7%) and 34 (9.9%) respondents disagree and strongly disagreed respectively that poor power supply prevent them from accessing the internet for news benefit. This means that 33.7% of the respondents disagreed that poor power supply prevent them from accessing the internet for news benefit.

Table 16:   I do not read online news because I have no money to subscribe for mobile data

I do not read online news because I have no money to subscribe for mobile data

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agreed	28	8.1	8.1	8.1
	Agreed	43	12.5	12.5	20.6
	Neutral	107	31.1	31.1	51.7
	Disagreed	131	38.1	38.1	89.8
	Strongly disagreed	35	10.2	10.2	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

I do not read online news because I have no money to subscribe for mobile data
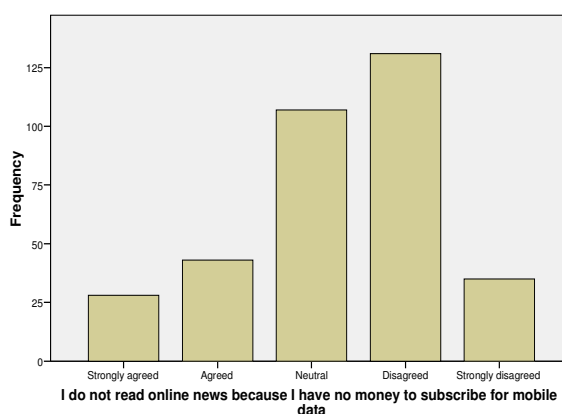

Table 16 reveals that 28 (8.1%) respondents strongly agreed that they do not read online news because they have no money to subscribe for data bundle, 43 (12.5%) respondents agreed that they do not read online news because they have no money to subscribe for data bundle, 107 (31.1%) respondents are neutral on the issue of money for data subscription, while 131 (38.1%) and 35 (10.2%) respondents disagree and strongly disagreed respectively that they do not read online news because they have no money to subscribe for data bundle. This means that 38.1% of the respondents disagreed that they do not read online news because they have no money to subscribe for data bundle.

Table 17:   **I do not read online news because I don't like reading news stories**

I do not read onlne news because I don't like reading news stories

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agreed	5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Agreed	6	1.7	1.7	3.2
	Neutral	32	9.3	9.3	12.5
	Disagreed	113	32.8	32.8	45.3
	Strongly disagreed	188	54.7	54.7	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

I do not read onlne news because I don't like reading news stories
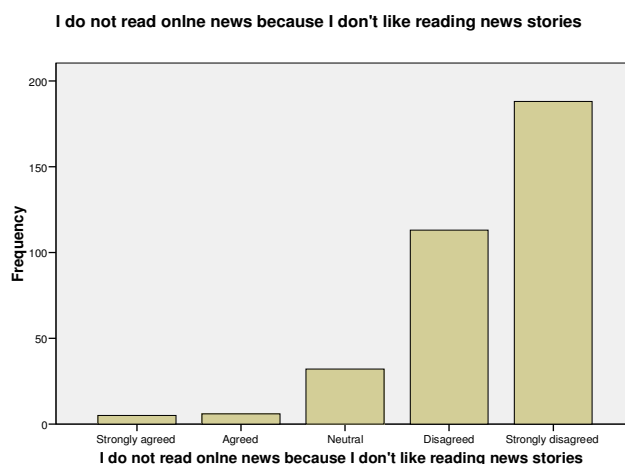
Analysis from table 17 indicates that 5 (1.5%) and 6 (1.7%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they do not read online news because they don't like reading online news stories, 32 (9.3%) respondents are neutral on their apathy to reading news stories, while 113 (32.8%) and 188 (54.7%) respondents disagree and strongly disagreed respectively that they do not read online news because they don't like reading online news stories. The implication of this analysis is that 54.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed that they do not read online news because they don't like reading online news stories.

Table 18:   **I do not read news online because I don't know how to use the internet**

I do not read news online because I don't know how to use the internet

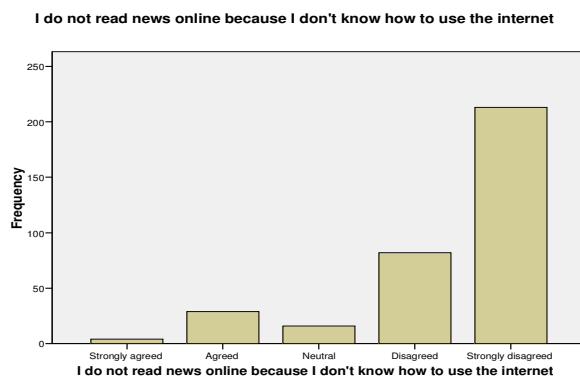|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agreed	4	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Agreed	29	8.4	8.4	9.6
	Neutral	16	4.7	4.7	14.2
	Disagreed	82	23.8	23.8	38.1
	Strongly disagreed	213	61.9	61.9	100.0
	Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 18 shows that 4 (1.2%) and 29 (8.4%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they do not read online news because they don't know how to use the internet, 16 (4.7%) respondents are neutral on their ability to use the internet, while 82 (23.8%) and 213 (61.9%) respondents disagree and strongly disagreed respectively that they do not read online news because they don't know how to use the internet. This means that 61.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed that they do not read online news because they don't know how to use the internet.

4   Discussion of Findings

Analyses of data revealed that out of 344 copies of questionnaire returned and used, 124 (36%) respondents are male, while 220 (44%) respondents are female. This means there were more female than male in the study carried out. It was also revealed that 94.2% of the respondents are between a youthful age of 18-25.

4.1   Research question one: To what extent do undergraduate students of mass communication in south east, Nigeria access and read online newspaper for their news consumption?

Data analyses revealed that 58.4% respondents, to a large extent, use their gadgets to access online newspapers; while 36.9% respondents moderately read online newspapers.

This implies that over 35% of the students of communication moderately read online news stories.

4.2   Research question two: What category of news stories are mostly read by undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria?

Findings from data analyses revealed that 23.5% respondents mostly read educational news, 28.8% respondents mostly read political news, 12.8% respondents mostly read sports news, 6.1% respondents mostly read fashion news, 18.9% respondents mostly read news on romance, 4.7% respondents mostly read advertisements, while 2.6% and 2.6% respondents mostly read health and economic news respectively.

The implication of this finding is that 28.8% of the respondents read political news stories, meaning that students tend to be drawn towards political events in the society.

4.3   Research question three: Why do the undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria read online newspapers?

Findings to this question revealed 72.7% respondents read online newspaper to improve their general knowledge, 7.8% respondents read online newspaper to pass time, 9.0% respondents read online newspaper for fun, while 10.5% respondents read online newspaper as hobby.

This means that 72.7% of the respondents read online newspaper in order to improve their general knowledge of the happenings in the country.

4.4   Research question four: What is the time frame spent by undergraduate students of mass communication when they read online newspapers?

Findings revealed that 38.1% of the respondents read online newspaper on weekly basis. It was further revealed that 60.8% respondents spend less than one hour reading online newspaper, 33.1% respondents spend 1-3 hours reading online newspaper, 4.9% respondents spend 4-6 hours reading online newspaper, while 1.2% respondents spend 7 hours and above reading online newspaper.

The implication of this finding is that 60.8% of the respondents spend less than one hour reading online newspapers; meaning that most students do not commit much time reading online news stories.

4.5   Research question five: What are the factors affecting undergraduate students of mass communication in south east Nigeria from accessing online newspaper sites.

Findings revealed that 35.5% respondents strongly disagreed with the idea that they do not access news online news because they are not conversant with online news sites. It was also revealed that 41.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the idea that they do not go online for news benefits because their new media gadgets are not internet supported. Further analyses found that 33.7% of the respondents disagreed that poor power supply prevent them from accessing the internet for news benefit.

Findings also revealed that 38.1% of the respondents disagreed that they do not read online news because they have no money to subscribe for data bundle. It was also revealed that 54.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed that they do not read online news because they don't like reading online news stories. Further analyses showed that 61.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed that they do not read online news because they don't know how to use the internet.

5   Summary of Findings
1.   Answer to research question one revealed that 36.9% respondents moderately read online newspapers.

2.   Findings to research question two revealed that 28.8% of the respondents read political news stories.

3.   Analysis to data on research question three revealed that 72.7% of the respondents read online newspaper in order to improve their general knowledge of the happenings in the country.

4.   Findings to research question four revealed that 60.8% of the respondents spend less than one hour reading online newspapers; meaning that most students do not commit much time reading online news stories.

5.   Answers to research question five revealed that 35.5% respondents strongly disagreed with the idea that they do not access news online news because they are not conversant with online news sites, 41.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the idea that they do not go online for news benefits because their new media gadgets are not internet supported, 33.7% of the respondents disagreed that poor power supply prevent them from accessing the internet for news benefit, while 38.1% of the respondents disagreed that they do not read online news because they have no money to subscribe for data bundle.

5.1   Conclusion
Considering the fact that only 36.9% respondents moderately read online newspapers, it can safely be concluded that the online news reading habit of mass communication students in South-East, Nigeria is low. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that 60.8% of the respondents spend less than one hour reading online newspapers; meaning that most students do not commit much time reading online news stories. They might spend much time on the Internet, but spend considerably insignificant time reading news stories.

5.2   Recommendations
The researchers recommend as follows:
1.   Students of mass communication should be encouraged to look out for news stories online by reading online newspapers whenever they go online.

2.   Students should spend considerable time reading online stories in order to equip themselves with the happenings in the country and beyond.

3.   This study is also recommended as a resource material for researchers who will like to carry out further study in this area.

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