

New Media, E- Publishing and the Fearful Realities: Implications for the Survival of Traditional Print Media in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined New Media, E-publishing and the Fearful Realities; Implications for the Survival of Traditional Print Media in Nigeria with particular focus on news media consumption patterns of university students in Ado Ekiti, South-west, Nigeria. Anchored on the Uses and Gratification and Diffusion of Innovations Theories, the survey research design was applied for the study. Questionnaire was administered on 200 respondents but 192 of them adequately responded and were analyzed. Stratified and convenience sampling techniques were employed to draw samples. Findings from the study revealed that new media in journalism practice poses a threat to the readership of traditional print media. A total of 93% of the respondents have very high access to online news sources, 3% of them have high access to online news sources, while 2% of the respondents have average access to online news sources. The other 2% of the respondents have low access to online news sources. Majority of the respondents read online newspapers more than they read traditional newspapers which shows that there is a drastic downward trend of the readership figures of traditional print media. The study recommends that print media publishers in Nigeria should re-strategize to improve readership among students of tertiary institutions because they form a large percentage of newspaper readers in the country.

Keywords: New Media, online news sources, print media

1. INTRODUCTION

Advancements in technology and the internet have greatly changed the way things are done virtually in all fields of human endeavour including the media landscape. Conversely, the media consumption habit of readers has also changed because the Internet has enabled thousands of students to communicate directly with one another through blogs or instant message services.

Indeed, the internet is increasingly asserting itself as a prime source of news and information globally, thus threatening the future existence and relevance of traditional news media such as newspapers and magazines. Its negative effect on sales and revenue streams of newspapers on the one hand, and its potential and ability to enhance the newsgathering and dissemination of printed publications are issues that have fed debate about the effect of online news sources on newspaper. Although the effect of the internet on traditional media is gaining currency, scholars hardly agree on the precise impact of the online newspapers on the printed traditional newspapers. While some argue that the internet is the new “knight” in a shining armour with vast potentials to uplift struggling publications, others posit that it constitutes the biggest threat to the printed newspapers because newspaper readers now spend more time surfing the internet while advertisers are migrating to the new medium leaving printed newspapers battling to keep their noses above water. Because of the polarized views on the subject the precise effect of the internet on the printed newspaper remains more a subject of conjecture than anything else. The connection between the online news sources and the printed newspapers is something worthy of academic inquiry given the enormous influence of the newspapers in Africa. (Ekeng, 2010);

However, “during the early years of the internet, online newspaper sites were slow to innovate. There was a fear that the web site would steal readers of the print version. Thus, many of them simply took their print stories and placed them online, updating them only once daily. Some even withheld stories until they were published in the print edition. Newspapers, however, now realize that if they want to compete with other news sites such as CNN and CBS News, their Web sites have to do more (Dominick, 2010: 115) in Kasmi (2015)

Experts in the nation’s media and marketing communication industries at a forum organized by the Advertising Agencies Association of Nigeria, (AAAN), in 2010 in Lagos, raised alarm on the future of newspapers in Nigeria. Majority of them concluded that unless the print media braced up to the challenges posed by the new

media, news papers might go extinct in the nearest future. This apprehension was no doubt a fall-out of the report which portrayed an alarming slide in the patronage of newspapers. According to the 2010 study carried out by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) across the country, the daily sales figure of all the newspapers was less than 300,000, meaning that only one in every 470 Nigerians buy newspapers daily (Ekeng, 2010). Putting this reality in proper perspective, Popoola (2010) said that all the newspapers in Nigeria today have a combined circulation figure far less than 500,000 copies per day of *Daily Times of Nigeria* in 1980 when the population of Nigeria was about half of what it is today. Presently, the stockpile of unsold copies of newspapers and magazines in the circulation departments of most print media organizations is a vivid sign of this challenge. Ekeng (2010), disclosed that *The Punch* as the number one selling national daily only circulates 34, 264 copies, *The Sun* was ranked third with 25, 632 unit sales. *Vanguard* got 25, 241, while *The Guardian* and *Thisday* came 5th and 6th respectively, with 25, 222 and 21, 703 daily sales. *Daily Trust*, the most popular newspaper up North has 11, 672 daily unit sales. *Tribune*, the oldest surviving newspaper in Nigeria, was another surprise, managing only 8, 314 daily sales. The above mentioned dailies constitute what is known as the top 8 in Nigerian newspapers standing. The others combined, including *Compass*, *Daily Independent*, *Leadership*, *National Life*, *New Nigeria*, *Mirror* and *Westerner*, could barely rake up 1,600 daily sales, Ekeng (2010). The question then should be “why the alarming slides in the patronage of newspaper?” This is very important as a wrong diagnosis will invariably lead to an inappropriate treatment. Ekeng (2010) noted that circulation decline is a global phenomenon as the newspaper industries in America, Europe and even Asia are also affected. This, he said, is primarily due to the effect of the Internet, which guarantees quick news for free. Topping the list of all the causes is the crashing Nigerian economy, which has greatly reduced the purchasing power of most Nigerians. According to the United Nations (2009), Nigeria is one of the poorest nations on earth and about 70 percent of her population lives on less than one dollar per day. Impact of this, Ekeng (2010) noted was between 2003 and 2010, when sales figures dropped from 570 000 units per day to less than 300 000 units, signifying almost 50 percent drop.

Patronage of Online Newspapers may be a result of one or more of the following factors: (i) to pass time and or entertain themselves, (ii) to decide on which of the newspapers to buy during the day, (iii) to fulfill official assignments and demands, (iv) to quench the taste and desire for news, (v) to keep abreast of contemporary and burning national issues, (vi) to get the summary of the day’s news, (vii) to gather information and education in their chosen carriers, (viii) to meet and fulfill their academic and research needs. (Kasmi, 2015). Traditionally, the university is one place that attracts the sales of newspapers. Students constitute the literate class who are targets for newspaper readership. However, in most Nigerian universities these days, one can hardly find students at news stands perusing the newspapers of the day as it used to be in the past.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Nigeria, the print media have since the advent of online news sources been undergoing some salient challenges, as far as readership and patronage are concerned. Earlier studies focused on the impact of technology on journalism. Some other scholars researched into the credibility of online news sources. A few, if any of these earlier researches looked into what motivated university students prefer online news sources to the traditional print media. This study therefore seeks to bridge that gap. The three big questions that have remained largely unanswered and to which this study seeks solutions are:

1. What motivates students to read news online?.
2. To what extent have students adopted online news media against the traditional print media?
3. Can the adoption of online news finally replace traditional print media especially among undergraduates?

3. CONCEPTUAL EXCURSION

Alongside the traditional mass media as sources of information and education are the new media, offshoot of information technology. New Media is a broad term in media studies that emerged in the later part of the 20th century. It holds out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. Another important promise of New Media is the "democratization" of the creation, publishing, distribution and consumption of media content. In a fast paced world where information can be found with the click of a button, newspapers are finding it hard to compete. (Rudin and Ibbotson. 2002).

Since the early 1990s the image of a new revolution has been haunting the traditional print media. Various called the Information Revolution or the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution, it assumes a classic shift in production processes and relations, the emergence of a new knowledge-based economy, and a quantum leap from an industrial society into an information society. Also, the Internet, a major force behind information technology, is argued by Song, Shao and Wu (2010) to represent the most significant change in the media market during the past decades. The Internet is becoming the dominant force in the information world, transforming the ways in which information is aggregated, stored, searched, and retrieved. In addition, Campbell, Martin, and Fabos (2009) noted that the Internet is facilitating the convergence of media forms, the process whereby old and new media are available via the integration of personal computers and high-speed satellite-based phone or cable links. Meyer (2009) argued that a newspaper can beat the Internet in portability. You can read it in the bathroom, at the breakfast table, in the back yard, or on the bus. But computers are getting smaller and more portable and are no longer in need of being hard-wired to the Internet.

They can even hide in your mobile phone, turning it into a multiple-use device for e-mail, Internet browsing, and GPS navigation. These developments tend to leave very little for a newspaper to do. Virtually all Nigerian newspapers have been adapting themselves to this new media age. The traditional medium for publishing content is paper, and now newspapers have tried certain new medium such as online newspaper edition and mobile phone newspapers. As at today, 60 Nigerian newspapers are online, www.onlinenewspapers.com/nigeria, while some operate mobile phone news services, such as *Mobile Nation* (www.thenationmobile.net), Mobile Punch (<http://mobile.punchng.com/default.aspx>), Vanguard Mobile (<http://m.vanguardngr.com>).

Sounding this warning in 2005, the media mogul, Rupert Murdoch, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of News Corporation, in a speech delivered to an audience of newspaper editors, noted that the "dynamic revolution taking place in the news industry today revolves around the fact that 'technology-savvy young people' are becoming increasingly likely to turn to the web as their news medium of choice." According to Amodu (2007) cited in Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) the unprecedented success of the Internet in most aspects of human endeavour, particularly e-commerce, has precipitated the incorporation of the same into the communication process. Also explaining the usefulness of the Internet in communication, Negroponte (1995) in Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) states that the fact that the Internet has the power to cut across social and geographic distance and help find new ways of facilitating the flow of information and knowledge makes it an especially attractive medium for communication.

4. HOW INTERNET THREATENS THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS

Thottam (1999: 217) outlined three principal ways through which the Internet poses a threat to the newspaper industry. These include loss of breaking-news function, declining newspaper readership owing to new technology-based leisure activities and the decline in advertising revenue. Drawing on data from the US, Thottam states that the percentage of adults who read newspapers has fallen from 77.6 per cent in 1970 to 58.7 per cent in 1999 (Thottam, 1999: 217). *The Economist On-line* (1999) suggest one explanation for declining readership is competition for people's time.

It argues: "Over the years, technology and economics have produced more and more ways of occupying people's leisure hours: more television channels, more magazines, more theme parks, and now video games, chat rooms and all the other delights of the digital age".

However, some of these competitors such as television, magazines and theme parks actually preceeded the Internet era. They may contribute to a decline in newspaper readership but we argue they do not constitute a key factor in readership decline. Furthermore, anecdotal and research evidence suggest the percentage of adult newspaper readers has been on the decline long before the emergence of the Internet.

Types of Online Journalism Websites

Web journalism covers a vast variety of things and there are different kinds of sites that are available online. For this work, only five major types of online journalism will be discussed. These are:-

➤ Newspaper Websites

These are just extensions of papers themselves such as *The Guardian* on line, *Punch Mobile*, *This day* live etc , and are able to cover a vast majority of subjects.

➤ **Independent News Websites**

These sites are hard-news coverage of municipal government, city agencies, law enforcement and schools. They also tend to be found in larger cities, and could be for profit or non profit organizations. They are known for their hardcore investigation, which is done by full time reporters spread across the country. Examples include *Sahara Reporters*, *Premium Times*

➤ **Hyper-Local News Sites**

these sites focus on small communities. They tend to be independent sites or run by a publisher in a particular local community. e.g. Idanre Hills Media Station

➤ **Citizen Journalism Sites**

These are usually very diverse and is a site where people usually post things such as pictures, information and videos, and some can be targeted to a specific geographical area. With citizen journalism sites, information sharing and dissemination is free for all. Some of these are edited, why others are not. Example Include *Naira land*.

➤ **Blogs**

These are sites where people deliver opinion and commentary on certain subjects of significance to the readers of such blogs. Issues covered include health, insurance, finance management, agriculture, governance and so on. Bloggers may or may not have the necessary journalism degrees.

5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEWSPAPERS

There is an ongoing debate that as internet journalism becomes more popular print journalism becomes less popular every year. To some, this means that print journalism is an endangered species that will one day become extinct? Newspapers possess certain survival qualities that could help them resist the storm of the Internet and the threat posed by the new technologies.

First, traditional newspapers are now matching the Internet news sources in their own game. Newspapers and even broadcast channels have also gone online to capture the untapped market and to draw back their traditional customers who might be wandering on the web in search of something different. As Teoh and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) pointed out, traditional newspapers with established names enjoy more credibility than the non-established Internet news sources. In an environment in which news is freely peddled, rumour tends to get more prominence than authentic news. Readers are left in the lurch: they can't distinguish between rumour and genuine information.

It has also been argued that the Internet is popular at the moment because most of the news materials are still free (Thottam, 1999). On this basis alone, many online users perceive the web as providing a free service. But all this is beginning to change. Hansell (2001) notes that while "most sites offering news and information are still free, a few have started to impose fees and more are considering doing the same."

Hansell provides evidence to demonstrate that once fees are charged for Internet services, many users are likely to drop off. This position is supported by the failure of online news providers who have charged for service. The most notable exception, the *Wall Street Journal (WSJ.com)*, has had limited success with fees and has had to balance the effect of subscription on readership against guaranteed income.

While the trend is for people to rush to the web for snippets of breaking news, it is also the trend that the same people will seek newspapers and other traditional and more reliable media for background information and analysis. This was clearly the case during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Many people watched the events on cable and satellite television but many people also read the next day's newspapers for background details and analysis.

The Newspaper Association of America (NAA) reports some evidence that online publications actually increase circulation of the traditional version of the papers. While this was especially true during the September 11 tragedy, the NAA cites evidence that it may also be true in general (www.naa.org/presstime/PTArtPage.cfm?AID=3314). The future of the newspapers, therefore, may be a future in which a multimedia publications - not just online but also in traditional format can actually thrive.

This also has relevance for the reference by Thottam (1999) and others to the declining readership of the traditional newspapers. While Thottam's reference to the increasingly time-poor future facing information

consumers is important, a recent study by Xerox PARC indicates that the traditional journalistic functions of gate-keeping will continue to be valued by audience members online. The study (quoted in Nielsen, 2001) concludes: "Users' most important Web tasks involve collecting and comparing multiple pieces of information, usually so they can make a choice" ([http:// useit.com/alertbox/20010415.html](http://useit.com/alertbox/20010415.html)).

The most common function of users in the study was to "evaluate multiple products or answers to make a decision". This describes the gate-keeping functions of journalists who must consider multiple sources of information before deciding to synthesize some of them into a single report for publication. Both online and traditional format publications can save poor audience members time via the copy-tasting functions. The popularity of online news sites as portals to the Web would indicate that audience members appreciate having journalists do much of the collecting, comparing and choosing for them.

It is premature to argue that online publications affect the sales (circulation) figures of traditional newspapers, with a concomitant reduction in advertising revenues, as news publishers find new ways to cross-subsidize both forms of publications and ways of counting online publications for Audit Bureau of Circulations' purposes.

The ABC circulation figures, both in Australia and the US, are the "official" figures, from which estimates of audience "reach" are drawn - an essential element in calculating advertising rates. The greater the audience reach, the higher advertising rate a publication can negotiate (usually within "bands" of circulation figures).

In Australia, *The Australian*, for example, has begun to sell an edition of the paper in 'pdf' format, delivered via the Internet, to international subscribers and is negotiating with the Australian Audit Bureau of Circulations to have the international sales included in its official figures. And in the US, Murray reported in *The Digital Edge* (Sept 2001): "Simply put, an electronic edition can be counted as paid circulation if the site contains the same name plate as the newspaper and consumers pay at least 25 percent of the basic rate charged for a home-delivered print subscription."

Another point not mentioned often is the fact that people, quite simply, prefer the 'physical copy' element of newspapers. To some people, online news has the same fleeting element as radio and television. Owing to constant updating of news on the web, online users can't keep online materials unless they are printed out. But there is a sense of accomplishment people have in reading a newspaper and knowing that the news will not disappear before their eyes because they can always keep the newspaper copy for future reference.

Even in developing African countries, traditional newspapers still have an edge over online news in a number of ways. In the rural areas, for example, where majority of the population resides, access to the Internet is a luxury. It is still cheaper to buy a newspaper than it is to access the web. For example, the cost of acquiring a computer, a telephone line, a modem, and subscription to an Internet Service Provider (ISP) in many African countries is equivalent to the total annual income of a university graduate (Obijiofor, Inayatullah and Stevenson, 2000). Beyond the problem of cost, there are other impediments to widespread use of the Internet in the rural areas of Africa. One of these is irregular supply of electricity (Obijiofor, 1995). Although it may be argued that laptop computers could be operated on batteries, the batteries still need to be recharged regularly. There is also the lack of telephone access in many African countries. Using Nigeria as an example, the Central Bank reported a total of 353,027 telephone sets in 1992. This figure pales in the face of Nigeria's estimated population of over 110 million people (Central Bank of Nigeria Annual Report, 1992: 110). The picture is almost the same in many other African countries.

Undoubtedly, new technologies are impacting journalism practice, but it is not on the scale being suggested. Newspaper readership is well and truly on the decline, but the trend started as far back as the early 1970s, long before the emergence of the Internet.

Moreover, online publishing opportunities presented by the new technology may in fact become the saviours of the traditional newspaper, as cross-subsidization of the two forms increases and as publishers discover new ways of enticing readers and advertisers into both forms. New audience members who discover a newspaper online may well be persuaded to become subscribers to the traditional version as well.

As argued in this essay, there are still opportunities for newspapers to fight back, to position themselves in such a way as to successfully face the challenges of the 21st century. The basis for optimism is also underpinned by the powerful argument advanced by *The Economist On-line*:

“Even if the Internet destroys the industry’s economics, the demand for well-researched, well-written news and analysis will not disappear. If anything, it may increase. The easier it is to publish, the more rubbish will get published, and trusted newspaper brands may become more valuable. The price of newspapers, however, is likely to rise, once the classified advertising that used to subsidize the copy has gone. How high prices go will presumably depend on how much a paper relies on classifieds. It is not clear that readers will want printed newspapers at any cost; it could well prove that they do not.” (The Economist On-line, 1999).

6. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Two theories: uses and gratification and diffusion of innovation theories provided support for this research work. Uses and Gratification theory was propounded by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974). According to Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008), the first assumption of this theory is that audiences are conceived as active. This idea focuses around the assumption that the users of available media are goal oriented and attempt to achieve their goals through the media source.

The second assumption is that in mass communication process, much initiative in linking need gratification with media choice lies with the audience members. This encompasses the idea that people use the media to their own advantage more often than the media use them. The receiver determines what is going to be absorbed and does not allow the media to influence them to the contrary.

Diffusion of Innovations is another theory upon which this study is hinged. Propounded in 1986 by Everett Rogers, diffusion of innovations theory seeks to explain how, and at what rate new ideas and technologies spread through cultures. The new communication technology is an innovation that has aided communication in two-ways in that the audiences have access to its use and then become senders themselves. However, new communication technology is an innovation that started in the western countries to create communication in a two-way format. It gradually spread to public relations practice in the western countries to help public relations practitioners talk to the organizations they serve and in the same way they talk to the clients on behalf of their organizations. Gradually but steadily, the innovation also began to spread to other countries and its efficiency was utilized. Today, the new communication technology has aided public relations practice in Nigeria in such a way that it creates a two-way access to mass media.

Many researchers have undertaken to study the effect of online news sources on the print newspaper readership among different audiences and in several societies. The works of some of these scholars are reviewed here. Nwabueze et al (2012) conducted a study titled "An Analysis of Online Newspaper Headlines Review: Influence on Readership pattern" which aimed at determining whether newspaper headlines review online influence respondents' exposure to newspapers, and whether there is a significant relationship between newspaper headlines review online and readership patterns.

The scholars adopted quantitative research methods and utilized multi-choice, close-ended questionnaires to collect data from 399 respondents. Findings revealed that 73.6% of the respondents both agreed and strongly agreed that online newspaper headlines review could stimulate readership of newspapers; that newspaper review online influenced buying decisions of respondents (49.1%); and that newspaper headlines review online influenced respondents' readership of newspapers (76.2%). The study concluded that newspaper headlines review online had positive influence on the readership patterns as it influenced people to buy and read newspapers. It provided an impetus to potential readers of newspapers to buy the papers.

Simmons (1967) study reported in Linton and Reinhard (2005), cited in Nwabueze, Okonkwo, and Nweke (2012, p. 229) reported that newspaper readership in the United States since 1967 among different age categories had continued to decline. The study found that readership of newspapers among people of 18-24 years in 1967 was 71%, but dropped to 42% in 1999. Similarly, the newspapers readership among people within 25-34 years age bracket dropped from 73% in 1967 to 44% in 1999. Simmons study in Linton and Reinhard (2005) cited in Nwabueze et al (2012) therefore, established declining newspaper readership among people of different age brackets in the United States of America.

Another study considered very important in this work is that of Latin American youths (1998, p.9) on newspaper readership. The study reported that only 20.8% of Latin American youths between the age brackets 18-25 years read once weekly, daily newspapers, and 18.1% read only Sunday newspapers. From the foregoing, there is strong research-based evidence of declining print media readership among people of different ages. There is also enough empirical data showing that youths do not read newspapers. However, at present newspapers are available in both hard copy and electronic form and are accessible through the Internet using all kinds of devices

which are at the disposal of youths, particularly students. All these innovations are meant to improve readership of newspapers and attract young readers.

7. METHODOLOGY

The survey research design of data gathering was used because of its effectiveness in attitudinal and behavioral studies. The stratified and convenience sampling techniques were used to administer 200 copies of the questionnaire on 200 students of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. However, only 192 copies of the questionnaire were correctly filled, retrieved and analyzed. The distribution of the respondents' age, sex, course and level of study varied.

Research Questions

The following research questions were postulated in the study.

1. What motivates students to read online news?
2. To what extent has students adopted online news media against the traditional newspapers?
3. Can online news adoption replace traditional media?

RQ1: What motivates students to read news online

To start with, a question was raised to ascertain why students read news online and the answers provided varied. From table 1 Immediacy of news was the reason 102(53%,) of the respondents read news online. To them, they confirm information about breaking news online almost immediately they hear of such information. They were of the opinion that online news sources provide round the clock information updates (24/7 updates of news). In essence, majority, 102(53%,) of those sampled would go to the internet first if they found out something interesting had happened.

In addition, interactivity with the media and other readers accounted for why 42(22%) read news online. These respondents said by reading news online, they are able to discuss the news with peers and other readers online because of the existence of different viewpoints adding that online news platforms give them the opportunity to "talk back" to the media almost immediately. A total of 33(16%) of the respondents sampled said online multi tasking experience was the reason they chose to read news online. The ability to combine news with other online purposes like checking of mail, responding to WhatsApp, BlackBerryMessenger chats and social media messages and posts, seemed to be extremely important for online news users.

Surprisingly, credibility of online news ranked low in the reasons why readers read news online. Only 18 or 9% of the total number of respondents ticked credibility as the reason they read news online. This, by implication reveals that inspite of the continuous updates, interactivity, multi tasking tendencies of online news sources, online news consumers are still sceptical about the credibility of online news hence, they also expect some credibility of news content as well. This finding is similar to the findings of Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Flanagan & Metzger, 2000; Kioussis, 2001 cited in William (2007) that concluded that online news is perceived as moderately credible overall. This finding was also corroborated by Olley and Chile (2015) citing Arant and Anderson (2001), who reported that nearly half of online editors reported that less time was spent verifying information before stories were posted.

RQ 2: To what extent has students adopted online news media against the traditional print media readership?

This question was raised to ascertain the extent of online news sources adoption as against traditional print media readership of students. From information presented in tables 2, 3 and 4, it is clear that majority of the respondents indicated their biases for online news sources. For instance, in table 2, 150(78%) said they do not read newspapers while only 42(22%) said they read newspapers. Also, in table 3, a total of 120 (62.5%) of the respondents claim that they read magazines not so often, 28(14.5%) read magazines often, 20(10.4%) rarely read magazines while 24(12.5%) indicated average readership of magazines. Also in table 4, (179)93% of the respondent noted that they have very high access to online news sources, 5 (3%) respondents have high access to online news sources, 4(2%) of the respondent noted average access to online news sources while 4(2%) of the respondents noted low access to online news sources. These results show that majority of the respondent have more access and use the internet more than they read print media. This is not surprising because majority of the students have data on their handsets to access the internet as against going to buy newspapers which could be considered a luxury or un-necessary after all. From the information presented in table 4, the most-threatened medium is represented by magazines, displaced especially by people who use online news because they are immediate and interactive. Only 28(14.5%) of a total of 192 respondents often read magazines. This finding explains why most of the magazines in Nigeria are no longer in circulation. Newspapers come

second, being replaced by the users that appreciated attributes such as immediacy. The finding is in tandem with the Uses and Gratification theory, which sees the users of available media as active, goal oriented and would achieve their goals through the media sources.

RQ3: Can online news adoption replace traditional media? Based on the information obtained in tables 5 and 6, majority of the respondents indicate their preference for online news sources to print media. It is clear that more respondents prefer online news sources to newspapers and magazines. 167(87%) say that they prefer online news sources, while 25(13%), less than a quarter of them indicate that they prefer print media to online news sources. Furthermore, findings on table 6, signify that there are several online news sources available to students as follows: Blogs, Reuters, newspaper and magazines websites, Information Nig, social media and Bloomberg. The findings of this study reveal that the newspapers websites is the most preferred online news source by the sampled university students in Ado Ekiti. Out of 192 respondents, 58 (30%) of the respondent use the newspapers websites followed by the social media 36(19%), Sahara reporters 28 (15%), Information Nig 27 (14%), Reuters 15 (8%), blogs 15 (8%) and Bloomberg 7 (4%) while only 6(3%) of them get online news from magazine websites. From the findings available it shows that the internet has conquered other news sources. Some argue that the internet is the new knight in a shining amour providing users with so many advantages like accessibility, timeliness and affordability which gives them reasons to prefer the newspaper websites to other online news sources.

Table 1: Students' reasons for preference for online news sources

REASON	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Immediacy Of News	102	53
Credibility	18	9
Online Multi Tasking Experience	30	16
Interactivity With The Media And Other Readers	42	22
TOTAL	192	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 2: Student readership of newspaper

READERSHIP	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	42	22
NO	150	78
TOTAL	192	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 3: Frequency of students' level of magazine readership.

LEVEL OF READERSHIP	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very Often	20	10.4
Often	28	14.5
Average	24	12.5
Not Often	120	62.5
TOTAL	192	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 4: Level of access to online news sources

LEVEL OF ACCESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very High	179	93
High	5	3
Average	4	2
Low	4	2
TOTAL	192	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 5: Student preference for online news sources to print media

PREFERENCES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES (%)
Yes	167	87
No	25	13
TOTAL	192	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 6: Online news sources student prefer most

Online News Sources	Frequency	Percent
Magazines Websites	6	3
Social media	36	19
Sahara reporters	28	15
Information Nig	27	14
Reuters	15	8
Newspaper websites	58	30
Bloomberg	7	4
Blogs	15	8
Total	192	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

With the advent of the internet and the appearance of newspaper online e.g. the various blogs and other social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter etc, the likelihood that readers will prefer online news sources to the printed hard copies is certain. Besides, mobile phones (smart phones) have found their ways into the hands of many university students. Hence, it is very unlikely that they will yet sit in the library or go to news stands on their campuses to read newspapers and magazines. The speed at which the internet operates makes it a very useful tool for retrieving and distribution of information. The findings support the Uses and Gratification theory, which sees the users of available media as active, goal oriented that would achieve their goals through the media source.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Concerted efforts should be made by publishers of print media to improve the newspaper and magazines readership among students of tertiary institutions since the youths form a significant hub of newspaper readers.
- Newspaper and magazine publishers should employ the production of campus copies of newspapers and magazines for universities and tertiary institutions maybe at subsidized rates to enhance the accessibility and purchase of such publications by students.
- Since respondents query the credibility of online sources, the print media publishers should leverage on this by improving the content of their publications. This is a pointer to the fact that hard copies of the newspapers and magazines can not totally be eradicated due to the fact that they provide more accurate and factual information than most of online sources of information.

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