ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Effect of Electronic Newspaper on Print Newspaper Patronage in Lagos State, Nigeria

[1] EMMANUEL O. OLUMUJI (Ph.D) & [2] TAYE C. OBATERU (Ph.D)

Chrisland University, Abeokuta, Ogun State, builderemma1@gmail.com University of Jos, Jos, Plateau State, tbateru@yahoo.com

Abstract

Information is necessary if people want to take meaningful part in the affairs of that society. The Internet has taken over other forms of media with the availability of digitization and online publication. This study assessed the effect of electronic newspapers on print newspaper patronage in Lagos State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 1,113 newspaper readers from four local government areas of Lagos State for survey. Data were obtained with the use of structured questionnaire. The study is anchored in Technological Determinism Theory which holds that all technology is communication. Findings revealed that electronic newspaper is negatively affecting print newspaper because electronic newspaper is the main source of news of respondents because it meets their information needs faster than print newspaper. There is also the gradual replacement of print with electronic newspaper. This study concluded that the Internet has transformed the media world especially in newspaper publication thus negatively affecting print newspaper readership. The paper recommended that publishers should consider the publication of evening print newspaper to meet the information need of the public faster and update newspaper readers on the latest events or breaking news to be able to retain and gain more readership for print newspaper.

Keywords: Electronic, Internet, Newspaper, Patronage, Print

Introduction

Over the years, technology's fast pace is unprecedented, and the Internet has taken over other forms of media with the availability of digitization and online publication. The Internet provides the technical capability for a user to read an article, examine its sources, and interact through a natural conduit that other media do not provide (Smith, 2005). The Internet has also broken down the geographic boundaries that previously defined the newspaper industry like issues of readership and revenue (*Chyi & Lewis, 2009)*.

The introduction of electronic newspaper has undoubtedly brought a new approach to seeking information and, by extension, the use of electronic newspaper has attracted much attention to the use of internet-enabled gadgets (Asemah & Gambo, 2016). In this case, electronic newspaper allows anyone who is connected to a particular server to be a producer and receiver of information. This has led to a gradual decline in the readership of the print edition of newspaper (Singh, 2009; Goyanes, 2014).

Today, the emphasis is no longer on text but on hypertext – a presentation of news with related links, multimedia links, images navigation menu, and source documents (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001). Online journalism is changing the traditional role of the reporter and editor with advanced technology. The Internet and the WWW have obtained the power to establish a specific agenda for the rest of the media and the public (Singh, 2009). People can now communicate with one another easily and quickly. Information can be transferred from one place to another rapidly, plainly and freely; thus, electronic newspaper provides the opportunity to develop a new way to present journalism (Smith, 2005). *This has brought* the fourth kind of journalism – next to print, radio and television – known as online journalism, seen as gathering and distributing news content on the Internet (*Bardoel & Deuze, 2001)*. The interactive nature of the Internet gives it value as a medium.

The development and penetration of the Internet in Nigeria has surged over the last few years. This gradual change and improvement in the country's adoption of the Internet technology is noticeable to the extent that Nigeria is counted as one of the top 20 nations of the world in Internet use and penetration (Aborisade, 2012; Pate & Wilson, 2014; Nkemdilim, 2015). Electronic newspapers

which can be accessed 24 hours a day such as the www.punchng.com, www.guardian.ng, www.vanguardngr.com, www.championnews.com.ng, www.thisdaylive.com, www.independent.ng and sunnewsonline.com are emerging in Nigeria (Talabi, Ogundeji & Odewole, 2016). Electronic newspapers in most cases contain more than the printed newspapers. They are run by a separate online team with their own editor. They upload content in real time as much as possible ahead of the print edition, though they still upload some print content in the morning. They also have content other than the text and pictures in print. They have video and audio contents. They generate other contents that are not in the print newspaper.

It is not clear whether electronic newspaper is complementary to or competitive with the print newspaper. Asemah and Gambo (2016) note that there is a continuous decline in print newspaper circulation, readership and advertisement. The fate of print newspaper publication is becoming uncertain, owing to the exodus of readers to electronic newspapers. What then happens to the sales of print newspaper and to advertisement revenue if readers shift to electronic newspaper?

Objectives of the Study

This study ascertained:

1. the effect of electronic newspaper on print newspaper patronage in Lagos State, Nigeria.
2. whether electronic newspaper is replacing print newspaper in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Newspaper

There is a French word – *nouvelles* which means news. The French word for paper is derived from the Latin word *papyrus*, which means the material on which people could write and print. News and paper make up newspaper; meaning, a paper published periodically and that bears tidings or timely reports (Baran, 2002). Newspapers are periodicals with informative, educative, entertaining and cultural promoting messages which are usually daily publications (Goodluck, William & Adebisi, 2016).

Newspapers are traditionally referred to as a collection of folded printed sheet of paper published. It is a printed publication issued at regular, close intervals, especially daily or weekly, consisting of folded unstapled sheets and often containing current news, comment, feature articles, advertising and correspondence (Edegoh, Ezeh & Samson, 2015). The first printing press in Nigeria was established in Calabar in 1846 by Rev Hope Waddell of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission and in 1854, Rev Henry Townsend established a press used to print the very first newspaper in Nigeria (Odorume, 2012). Today, we have numerous newspapers in Nigeria owned by individuals or the government. The continuous increase in the number of newspapers available on the stands and, consequently, competition has pushed newspapers to increase the diversity of their contents and the diversity of the views captured in their contents

Newspapers are now looking for new and grey areas to gain advantage over other titles and capture a larger market share, and the Internet has presented them this platform (Okonofua, 2014). With advancement in technology, newspapers now come in print and electronic editions. Newspapers serve at least three distinct markets which are the *information* market, the *advertising* market and the *intellectual* market with the same product offering (*Chyi et al., 2010)*. These markets have become more pronounced in the digital era, as new technologies have opened vastly more choices for media consumers.

Effect of Electronic Newspaper on Print Newspaper

Some scholars are of the opinion that there are reasons to believe that electronic newspapers are not as good as their printed counterparts in depth of reporting and the range of topics, and that reading electronic newspaper is actually not a substitute for reading print newspapers. Waal et al. (2004) conducted a survey of almost 1,000, the result of which shows that reading electronic newspaper harms using print newspapers among the young or youthful readers because print newspaper reading has lost ground among younger cohorts. However, electronic newspaper does not substitute the use of

other media or the time spent on them. On the contrary, electronic newspapers readers use some information channels more often and more extensively, even after other important reasons for media use are controlled because they regard printed newspapers as still better suited for their information needs.

Readers can get almost the same content online for free what subscribers had to pay for in the print edition. This is negatively affecting the print edition's subscription base (Adams, 2007; Cosgrove & Gomaa, 2014). If offering free electronic content has a negative impact on subscriptions of the print edition, then the newspaper industry would most likely reduce print production in any location where there are lots of readers of electronic editions.

An online survey of newspaper readers was conducted in India by Tawari (2016). The study notes that a majority of electronic newspaper readers are still reading print newspaper. Electronic newspaper have not much affected print newspaper circulation but print version is gradually losing young readers. 15-40 age group readers have reduced their interest in reading print newspaper because they prefer to read electronic newspapers. The displacement effect of electronic newspaper is very low. The older readers of above 50 years read both print and electronic newspapers equally. There is higher percentage of male newspaper compared to female newspaper readers. The study concluded that the decline of younger readers' interest in print newspaper is a big threat to electronic newspaper.

Asemah and Gambo (2016) equally examine the effect of electronic newspapers on the readership of print newspapers, focusing on the staff of Kogi State University, Anyigba in Nigeria. The study seeks to determine the influence of electronic version on the readership of the printed version. Findings show that electronic newspaper is negatively affecting the purchase of print newspapers as readers now prefer to read newspapers electronically.

Talabi *et al.* (2016) reiterate that, for now, electronic edition of newspaper will not replace print newspaper in the South-Western Nigeria, but the negative effect of electronic edition on print newspaper is on the increase. Thus as time goes on, electronic edition will continue to garner more readers; therefore, such may signify the death of print newspaper if its readers continue to dwindle.

The emergence of electronic newspaper comes with several effects and reactions from newspaper readers in Nigeria. Ashong and Ogaraku (2017) examine the effect of electronic newspaper on print version in Southwestern Nigeria. Whereas the general belief is that the electronic version of newspapers are a threat to print newspaper, the study reveals that it is difficult to tell between electronic version and print newspapers which one is negatively affecting the other because both newspaper versions are readily available and appear to thrive at least in Nigeria.

The effect of electronic newspaper on print newspaper is noted also in Northwestern Nigeria (Isyaku & Mohd, 2018). The study finds that a majority of the readers spend less time reading the print copy of the newspaper due to the availability of its electronic version. Isyaku and Mohd (2018) in agreement with the submission of Talabi et al. (2016) affirm that a higher percentage of readers will continue to read print newspaper because newspaper readers are confident that print newspaper will continue to survive in Nigeria despite the availability of electronic newspaper and its negative effects on the hardcopy.

Different studies on newspaper growth and newspaper readership over the years have addressed emerging issues on content differences between print and electronic newspapers (Smith, 2005), print as opposed to online journalism and where readers find information (Speakman, 2011), and newspaper consumption in the digital age (Thurman, 2014). Other studies focused on the assessment of patterns of readership of electronic newspapers (Patrick, 2015), the influence of electronic editions on newspaper readership (Talabi *et al*, 2016) and readers' preference for print and electronic newspapers (Isyaku & Mohd, 2018). Meanwhile the patronage of print newspaper publication is becoming uncertain, because of increase in electronic newspapers readership. This study therefore becomes necessary to determine the effect of electronic newspaper on print newspaper patronage.

Theoretical Scaffolding

Technological Determinism Theory was chosen to provide the theoretical scaffolding for this study. The theory was formulated by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. The basic precepts of the Technological Determinism Theory are that all technology is communication is an extension of people that allows them to reach further through time and/or space; these extensions mirror the human body; and no one can fully understand a medium until it is no longer the foremost medium.

The theory holds that the media not only alter their environment but the very message they convey (Asemah, 2011). The media bring new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. The medium determines the content of communication. The medium has the power to change people's perceptions of the world and mass communication has become the foremost form of interaction.

McQuail (2005) elucidates the theory further that people adopt their environments through a certain branch or ratio of their senses and the primary medium of the age bring out a particular sense ratio. McLuhan sees every medium as the extension of human faculty, with the media of communication, exaggerating the sense. Whatever predominates the media will influence human beings by affecting the way they perceive the world.

Each stage in McLuhan's theory marked an improvement in the communication process. As new technology advances, such as the Internet permeate the media industry, newspaper organizations continually have to assess the technology and determine how the innovations fit into their organizations (Asemah & Gambo, 2016). Talabi *et al.* (2016) add that the use of the Internet to project electronic edition of newspaper has revolutionized the whole business of mass communication. Though no new medium can send the old one packing, advancement in technology has continued and will continue to alter the functions of each medium.

In addition, Hauer (2017) avers that technological determinism is the belief that technology is the principal initiator of the society's transformation. Social changes are controlled by the technology, technological development, communications technology and media. The modern information society arises because of the development of innovations, new technologies and their social and political implications. The expansion of computers, networks and the Internet has radically changed many aspects of not only human communication, but also the entire society's life. The rising popularity of electronic newspaper is changing the nature and the way the society and individuals receive information for different use.

Therefore, the use of technology in newspaper production places emphasis on communication elements, such as feedback in the process of information, the use of communication technology, audio(visual) equipment, videos, and computers.

Methodology

This study is a survey of print and electronic newspapers readers in Lagos State. The population for the study consists of all newspaper readers in Lagos State. It is estimated to be 231,208 which is the average number of newspaper readers in Lagos State (Media Reach, 2017). Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the survey.

Stratified sampling technique was used to select the readers of print and/or electronic newspaper(s) and in order to give a better representation, Lagos was divided into three senatorial districts Central, East and West. Four LGAs were selected from the senatorial districts Lagos Central, Lagos East and Lagos West with distribution as one LGA each from Lagos Central (Lagos Island), Lagos East (Ibeju-Lekki), and two LGAs (Oshodi-Isolo and Ikeja) from Lagos West which has twice the number of LGAs of each of the other two senatorial districts.

In agreement with Wimmer and Dominick (2006) four LGAs were purposively selected based on the factors and characteristics they possess: Lagos Island, Lekki, Oshodi/Isolo and Ikeja. The four LGAs selected are also major newspaper distribution centres in Lagos State.

Snowball sampling technique was used to select areas/location for the administration of the questionnaire. Five locations in each of the four LGAs where people buy or subscribe for the newspapers were selected for the study giving a total

of twenty. Finally, convenience sampling method was used to identify people who read newspaper from the selected locations.

Adopting the Watson (2001) formula in determining the sample size for the survey, 296 respondents from each of the LGAs were chosen making a total number of 1,190 respondents though 1,131 responses gotten were analysed as a few invalid returns and non-responses were experienced.

The research instruments for primary data collection was structured questionnaire and face-to-face mode of questionnaire administration was used. The questionnaire was administered to the sampled newspaper readers in the four LGAs. The questionnaires collected were collated and analysed. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and mean were used to analyse the data.

Result and Discussion

The respondents' submission on the effect of electronic newspaper on print newspaper is presented in Table 1. The result shows that there is a gradual replacement of print with electronic newspaper This is affirmed by respondents who indicated their shift in interest from print newspaper ($\bar{\chi}$ = 2.77) and a possible replacement of print newspaper in the future ($\bar{\chi}$ = 2.54) There is also low patronage of print newspaper as respondents confirmed that they rarely use/rely on print newspaper for breaking news ($\bar{\chi}$ = 2.64)

The advent of electronic newspaper also led to low interest in reading print newspaper contents ($\bar{\chi}$ = 2.71) and newspaper readers rarely use print newspaper ($\bar{\chi}$ = 2.61). This has also led to low satisfaction in using print newspaper ($\bar{\chi}$ = 2.59). Though result showed that electronic newspaper is negatively affecting print newspaper, some respondents indicated that they will continue to read print newspaper even with the availability of electronic newspaper (χ = 2.48)

The finding on the negative effects on print newspaper agrees with Tawari (2016) and Asemah and Gambo (2016) that electronic newspaper is actually negatively affecting print newspaper especially among youths. The relatively free subscription to access electronic newspaper reduces print newspaper subscription base (Casgrove & Gomaa, 2014). This negative impact on print newspaper will affect not only the subscription base but also revenue from advertisement because advertisers want to place advertisements in medium/media where they can inform and persuade existing and new customers to use their products or services.

Table 1: Effect of Electronic Newspaper on Print Newspaper (n = 1131)

S/N	Variable	A	D	U	$\bar{\chi}$
1.	Shift in interest for news to electronic	910 (80.5)	186 (16.4)	35 (3.1)	2.77
2.	Low interest in reading print	852 (75.4)	235 (20.7)	44 (3.9)	2.71
3.	Stopped buying print newspaper	652 (57.7)	419 (37.0)	60 (5.3)	2.52
4.	Continue to read both editions	633 (56.0)	410 (36.2)	88 (7.8)	2.48
5.	Low patronage of print	701 (61.9)	295 (26.2)	135 (11.9)	2.50
6.	Rarely reads print	749 (66.2)	324 (28.7)	58 (5.1)	2.61
7.	Rarely use print for breaking news	770 (68.1)	313 (27.7)	48 (4.2)	2.64
8.	Low satisfaction from print	755 (66.8)	292 (25.8)	84 (7.4)	2.59
9.	Replaced print with electronic	679 (60.1)	387 (34.2)	65 (5.7)	2.54
10.	Complete replacement of print in future	695 (61.5)	353 (31.2)	83 (7.3)	2.54
11.	Shift to electronic forthcoming month	654 (57.8)	321 (28.4)	156 (13.8)	2.44

(Where A = Agreed, D = Disagree, U = Undecided, $\bar{\chi}$ = Mean

The negative effects of electronic on print newspapers supports the submission of some authors that electronic newspaper is a functional supplement instead of a displacement mechanism to print newspaper (Lin, 2002; Smith, 2005; Asemah, 2011). Though this submission has given rise to diverse opinions about the future of print and electronic newspapers, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusion because media environment is changing rapidly and the Internet has opened a new landscape for newspapers as it has given the print a platform to overcome its limitations, since newspaper readers are active participants in the news making process and are able to shape the news to meet their needs. Today, the Internet has changed the way news is produced, delivered and consumed.

This finding that electronic newspaper is a functional supplement to print newspaper answers the question posed by Dutta-Bergman (2004) cited in Smith (2005) on whether electronic newspaper is complementary to or competitive with the print newspaper, the answer is that electronic newspaper is complementary to print newspaper in Nigeria. The complementary stance of electronic newspaper reinforces Adams' (2007) position that electronic newspapers are complementary to the print edition. This also verifies an assumption of Technology Determinism Theory will holds that though no new medium can send the old one packing, advancement in technology has continued and will continue to alter the functions of each medium (Talabi *et al.*, 2016). Electronic newspaper has not taken over the subscription base of print edition. In some cases, newspaper companies do not put all their content online for free, some of them put only half of the print edition stories on their electronic edition such that readers will still have to read the print version for details despite the availability of the electronic edition. Some recent studies in Nigeria support the finding that electronic newspaper is negatively affecting print newspaper as readers now prefer to read newspapers electronically. This shows that electronic newspaper affects the readership of the print newspaper to a great extent but has not led to the extinction of print newspaper because some categories of readers still read the print version of the newspaper (Asemah & Gambo, 2016; Talabi *et al.*, 2016; Ashong & Ogaraku, 2017; Isyaku & Mohd, 2018).

Findings

Findings showed that electronic newspaper is negatively affecting print newspaper because electronic newspaper is the main source of news of respondents because it meets their information needs faster than print newspaper. Also, the gradual replacement of print with electronic newspaper, low patronage of print newspaper, low interest in reading print newspaper contents and low satisfaction in using print newspaper were the negative effects of electronic on print newspaper.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concluded that that there is positive perception towards reading electronic newspaper and this is negatively affecting print newspaper because electronic newspaper is gradually becoming the main source of breaking and/or updating news for newspaper readers. Electronic newspaper has not replaced print newspaper which indicates that the former is complementary to the later readership in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The study recommended that Publishers should consider the publication of evening print newspaper to meet the information need faster and update newspaper readers on the latest event or breaking news and to be able to retain and gain more readership. There is also need to improve the quality of publication of print and if possible reduce the cover price of print newspaper in order to increase patronage and readership. Advertisers should also carefully decide the newspaper version to advertise (whether print or/and electronic newspapers) based on the target audience.

References

Aborisade, P. (2012). Supporting English language teaching using 21st Century ICT Tools. *ELTT Journal,* 9(1), 16-22.

Adams, W. (2007). US weekly newspaper embrace web sites. *Newspaper Research Journal,* 28(4), 36-52.

Asemah, E. S. (2011). *Principles and practice of mass communication.* Jos: Matkol Press.

Asemah, E. S. & Gambo, S. (2016). Public perception of the influence of online newspapers on the readership of traditional newspapers. *Lapai Journal of Languages, Literatures and Communication Studies,* 3(1), 1-21.

Ashong, C. S. & Ogaraku, C. H. (2017). Content preference among online and hardcopy newspaper readers in Imo State. *Journal of New Media and Mass Communication,* 4(1), 1-15.

Baran, S. (2002). *Introduction to mass communication, media literacy and culture.* New York: McGraw Hill Higher Education.

Bardoel, J. & Deuze, M. (2001). Network journalism: converging competences of media professionals and professionalism: *Australian Journalism Review,* 23(2), 91-103.

Chyi, H. & Lewis, S. (2009). Use of online newspaper sites lags behind print editions. *Newspaper Research Journal, 30(4),* 38-53.

Chyi, H., Yang, M., Lewis, S., & Zheng, N. (2010). Use of and satisfaction with newspaper sites in the local market: Exploring differences between hybrid and online users. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 87(1), 62-83.*

Cosgrove, E., & Gomaa, A. (2014). The cross-roads to digital: newspaper models and the change to an industry. *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies,* 6 (2), 36-51.

Goodluck, L., William, A. & Adebisi, T. (2016). Newspaper readership pattern in Ekiti State,

Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 21(6), 71-77.

Edegoh, L.O.N., Ezeh, N.C. & Samson, A.C. 2015. Evaluation of newspaper reading habit of youth in Anambra State, Nigeria. *Journal of New Media and Communication,* 37, 63-71.

Goyanes, M. (2014). An empirical study of factors that influence the willingness to pay for online news. *Journalism Practice,* 8 (6), 742-757, DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2014.882056

Hauer, T. (2017). Technological determinism and new media. *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science, 2(2), 1-4.*

Isyaku, H. & Mohd, N. L. (2018). Readers' preference for print and online newspapers in northwestern Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences,* 8(6), 965-974.

Lin, C. A. (2002). Perceived gratifications of online media service use among potential users. *Telematics and Informatics,* 19(1), 3–19.

McQuail, D. (2005). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (5th ed). London: Sage Publications.

Media Reach. (2017). *Media Facts: Nigeria, West and Central Africa.* Lagos: Media Reach OMD.

Nkemdilim, P. (2015). Assessment of patterns of readership of online newspapers in selected Nigerian Universities. *International Journal of Linguistics and Communication,* 3(2), 35-46.

Odorume, A. (2012). Historiography of the print media: a global-cum-Nigerian perspective. *Mgbakoigba: Journal of African Studies,* 1(1), 1-9.

Okonofua, G. A. (2014). Readership of online newspapers by users of select cyber cafés in Uyo Urban. Retrieved from http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/newspapers.pdf (July 17, 2016).

Pate, U. & Wilson, J. 2014. Interactivity and the evolving social media platform in online newspaper in Nigeria. Paper Presented at 3rd Annual Meeting of the Members of the International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication (ORBICOM) at the University of Bordeaux, Montaigne (France), November 6 & 7, 2014.

Singh, J. K. (2009). *Modern journalism issues and trends.* New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Company.

Smith, J. E. (2005). Content differences between print and online newspapers. Master of Arts Thesis, School of Mass Communications, College of Arts and Sciences University of South Florida. Retrieved, from http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/868 (March 17, 2016).

Talabi, F., Ogundeji, B. & Odewole, F. (2016). Influence of online editions on newspaper readership in South-Western Nigeria. *JMCR Journal,* 1(1), 1-15.

Tawari, P. (2016). Is print readers declining? A survey of Indian online newspaper readers. *Journal of Socialomics,* 5(4), 1-8.

Waal, E., Schonbach, K. & Lauf, E. (2004). Online

newspapers: a substitute for print newspapers and other information channels? 6th World Media Economics Conference, Montréal, Canada May 12-15, 2004.

Watson, J. (2001). How to determine sample size: Tipsheet #60, University Park. Retrieved from www.scribd.com/document/194632268 (June 20, 2018).

Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (2006). *Mass media research: an introduction.* (8th Ed.). Canada: Thomson Wardworth.