



NEWSPAPER READERSHIP PATTERN AMONG UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA AND PRINCE AUDU ABUBAKAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study analyses the newspaper reading pattern among university students. It explores the frequency, format preferences, influencing factors, and obstacles of newspaper readership among University of Abuja and Prince Audu Abubakar University, Anyigba. The study was anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory which submits that audience are active selector of media to meet their need and gratification. A quantitative survey design was used to collect data from 322 students in the University of Abuja and Prince Audu Abubakar University, Anyigba. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents, and the answers were assessed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics using a benchmark mean of 3.00. Results indicate that daily readership is not that high, although weekly readership usage are high for academic purpose. The digital forms, especially the mobile phones and the social media links, are gaining a huge following among students, and the traditional print newspapers are becoming less relevant. The availability of the internet, political, academic needs and economic realities are the key determinants that dictate readership patterns, with very little role played by the family and cultural background. The barriers that were cited as the significant obstacles to regular readership encompassed the cost of the print newspapers, internet data cost, credibility, academic workload, and social media distractions. The research is consistent with the trends in the world where youths are reading less print material, and the research established the role of newspapers in educational and civic life., the study concludes that Nigerian university students are actively choosing newspapers, mostly in digital format, to satisfy their informational, educational, and social requirements. The research suggests the use of newspapers in academic endeavours, better utilisation of the digital platform, subsidising the internet, and enhancing the credibility and usability of newspaper sources.

Keywords: Newspaper Readership, University Students, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Media Consumption and North Central Nigeria.

Introduction

Newspapers have historically been at the centre stage of influencing the opinion of people, spreading information and promoting literacy among societies. In spite of the emergence of digital media, newspapers still play a very important role in providing credible information to the world, especially in scholarly institutions where individuals depend on newspapers to acquire information and be aware of what is going on around them. The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA, 2018) states that the total number of copies distributed in newspapers worldwide is more than 540 million copies every

day, which proves that even in the era of digital technologies, print media remains significant. Nevertheless, the trend towards digital platforms has caused people to read news on the Internet more often and those who are younger to read the news in online form more frequently, compared to traditional papers (Newman, Fletcher, Schulz&Nielsen,2021). This change in generations begs the question of the participation of university students in the present-day media environment as one of the most important demographics using newspapers (Abid, Aslam, Alghamdi & Kumar,2023; Amenaghawon & Olawole, 2024).

University students in most parts of the world are regarded as significant news consumers due to their level of education and the amount of different sources of information they are exposed to. According to Tandoc (2020), the level of newspaper readership among students depends on the availability of such options, their affordability, and the degree to which such newspapers are perceived to be more credible than social media. To provide an example, a Malaysian survey found that 62 per cent of university students continue to read newspapers weekly, albeit in digital form (Apuke and Omar, 2020). On the same note, in the United Kingdom, it was found by Ofcom (2020) that even though online news was favoured by 74% of young adults, newspapers were still essential in academic tasks and research. These results emphasise the dynamic yet consistent role of newspapers with the student population globally.

The newspaper industry in Africa still experiences the predicament of dwindling print sales and being dominated by online sources. Yakubu and Mohammed (2020) indicates that newspapers still provide a reliable source of information, but young people are reading less because of the affordability of the mobile internet and the success of social media like Facebook and Twitter. Philip (2025) submits that newspaper readership among students at universities is so low that only 28 per cent of university students read newspapers, most of them access online blogs and social media updates. It is part of a wider trend in the continent, in which the traditional print media is finding it difficult to maintain young people's readership despite the newspaper being considered as having more credibility and comprehensive coverage over the digital versions (Otieno, 2018).

The newspaper media in Nigeria alone is among the most desirable ones in Africa, and over thirty national newspapers exist, together with many regional ones. However, with the changes in technology and socio-economic conditions, the reading habits of young audiences, especially university students, seem to change. The rising internet penetration, popularity of smartphones, and the advancement of social media sites have dramatically changed how students access news and information. The Nigerian Communications Commission (2024) states that there are more than 172 million active internet subscriptions in Nigeria, which implies that digital media consumption has penetrated the daily communication pattern.

In this light, a critical question arises as to whether the traditional newspaper, to the extent of the Nigerian university students, is still a relevant aspect in modern times. Although existing literature indicates a growing trend in the use of digital sources of news, very little data exists on empirical measures of whether the culture of reading newspapers in higher learning institutions is diminishing or simply redefining itself through digital versions of the culture. The given process can be explained by the necessity to analyse how the newspapers can play an increasing role in the lives of students as academic and civic subjects in the context of the quickly changing media environment.

The students of the university in Nigeria are a special audience due to their exposure to both the academic requirements and digital technology. Investigation revealed that students tend to read newspapers to keep track of the issues in the country, political news, and the development of education, with the level of readership varying significantly among students (Ukozor, 2020). One such case is that some students will use print newspapers as they are more credible, whilst some use the digital ones as they are more convenient and immediate. This break has highlighted the fact that there is currently a need to consider readership trends in a holistic manner with respect to both traditional and online levels.

Though various studies have been done on newspaper readership among students, most of them are limited to readership of the print or the digital news and not the combination of the two forms. In addition, the majority of past research tends to give cross-sectional perspectives of media habits, and seldom interferes with the readership trends in definite institutional settings where newspapers can still be found physically through the university libraries. Thus, this study aims at evaluating the trends of newspaper readership among university students in Nigeria with special reference to their knowledge, attitude, and practices towards reading the newspaper. Therefore, the objectives of this study are;

1. To investigate the frequency of newspaper reading among Nigerian university students.
2. To determine the format preferences of newspaper reading among Nigerian university students
3. To examine the factors that determine the trend of newspaper reading among students of Nigerian universities.
4. Assess the obstacles that affect newspaper readership in the context of Nigerian university students.

Conceptual Framework

Newspaper readership covers a multidimensional feature that entails the frequency, format, motivation and socio-demographic factors of newspaper consumption among individuals. This can be done in various ways, either by reading the printed newspapers, reading the digital newspapers via the official websites or reading the newspaper articles using the social media platforms which are linked with the news organisations. Accessibility, affordability, credibility, and relevance of content to the audience are conceptually the factors that can influence the patterns of readership (Amenaghawon & Olawole, 2024). In Nigeria, the spread of mobile internet services has seen students access news more easily online without necessarily buying the printed newspapers. Very similar to this is the ownership of mobile devices, especially smartphones, which will allow students to get the content of the newspaper via websites, mobile applications, and social media (Nigerian Communications Commission [NCC], 2024; Newman, Fletcher, Robertson, Eddy, & Nielsen, 2023).

In term of newspaper readership behaviour, Apuke and Omar (2020) submit that there are factors that impact on university students as they comprise specific demographic, and additionally, their needs are academic, and they are exposed to innovations in digital formats. They claim that convenience and cost mediate the decisions that students make when they read newspapers to fulfil informational, educational, and social needs. Here, students are seen as active consumers, and they choose media according to the way they perceive utility, and this is why digital newspapers are becoming a popular choice among younger cohorts. In this, the pattern of readiness among the students of the Nigerian universities can be seen as a trade-off between satisfaction as a result of plausible information and comfort as a result of the accessibility of the digital substitute. This reflects the significance of analysing print and digital modes when it comes to the evaluation of readership.

Although the rate of internet penetration in Nigeria has been increasing, with more than 172 million active users currently (as of 2024), comprising more than 80 per cent of the population, there are still inequalities in terms of affordability and digital literacy (NCC, 2024). Such differences affect the use of newspapers in print or online formats by the students. According to Philip (2025), the trends of readership are not homogenous but determined by socio-economic realities, such as income, gender, and academic discipline. In this way, the position incorporates the issues of the digital divide to describe differences in readership among Nigerian university students.

Academic requirements are another major determinant of readership in newspapers. Newspapers are often used by university students to get information about assignments, research projects, classroom discussions, and debates. This makes reading newspapers in such cases an academic activity as opposed to

a habitual one. There are also political and national events that can arouse interest among students in reading newspapers to keep up with socio-political events in the country (Ukozor, 2020; Apuke and Omar, 2020). The economic factors are also important in determining the readership patterns of the newspapers. Students may be constrained in accessing the news content by the cost of print newspapers and the cost of information on the internet, because not all students have adequate funds to access internet data. Students will resort to using free online alternatives in the form of social media networks or newspaper websites that are offered at no cost when print newspapers become too expensive or inaccessible (Newman et al., 2023).

To these influencing factors, there are also a number of barriers or constraints that will deter the use of newspapers among university students. Such barriers are the high prices of newspapers, inaccessibility of newspapers in university libraries, academic work, and the disruption of social media sites. Specifically, the social media platforms attract the attention of the students, competing with the traditional newspapers due to the ability to receive the news updates both instantly and easily accessible and often at no cost (Philip, 2025) and Bebawi, 2019; Newman et al., 2023).

The theoretical framework consequently presupposes that the factors of accessibility of the newspaper, the factors of motivations of reading newspapers by the university students, and the structural constraints interact with each other to influence the extent of the newspaper readership. The factors of accessibility are the availability of the internet and owning a mobile device; the motivational factors are the need for academic material and interest in events in the country; and the structural constraints are the economic constraints and the competition with digital media platforms. Thus, in this context, the current study looks at the overall impact of these factors that determine whether college students continue the traditional reading newspaper culture or move more towards the digital news consumption channels.

Empirical Review

On empirical examination, there are some studies that have studied newspaper readership in university students in various contexts Nweze, Ekwunife, Chidi-Oda and Ucha (2024) analysed the reading habits of newspaper readers among the Mass Communication students at the Ebonyi State University. The researchers conducted a survey on a sample size of 291 students and discovered that newspaper readership among students was quite low, although newspapers had academic significance among students. The research study revealed that students favoured mainstream national newspapers like The Sun and Daily Trust mostly because of news about politics and sports, among other information. Nevertheless, economic factors, insufficient supply of newspapers in college libraries and the presence of online news media had a significant adverse effect on regular readership among college students. The researchers suggested that enhanced access to newspapers in university settings would revive the reading cultures among the students. Okioya, Adedowole, Sule, and Sulaiman, who examined how the students of Adeyemi College of Education and Wesley University in Ondo State read newspapers. The research design was that of survey research, and the results discovered that the demographic factors that played a significant role in determining newspaper readership among students were the level of education and financial capacity. The researchers revealed that students, in most cases, accepted the importance of newspapers in academic progress and overall awareness, but a large number of students did not read newspapers daily because of financial limitations and altered media consumption patterns. The research suggested that more awareness should be created to promote the reading of newspapers among students as an academic and intellectual growth endeavour (Okioya et al., 2022).

Later studies have paid more attention to the effect of digital media on newspaper readership among Nigerian students. As an example, Adikuru analysed the newspaper reading habits of Mass Communication students at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra state. The research study, which was carried out on a sample of 192 students with the use of a descriptive survey, found that the reading of newspapers among the students had turned into more of an occasional than a habitual behaviour. Although

some students continued to read the traditional print newspapers, a large percentage were more inclined to use the online versions of the newspapers because of convenience, accessibility and simplicity of navigation. It is also in the research that the social media sites were found to have tremendous effects on the news consumption behaviour of students, where most of the students were getting news updates via social media as opposed to direct newspaper sources (Adikuru, 2025).

In addition to the campus-specific research, the impact of demographic and technological factors has also been brought out in previous research on newspaper readership in Nigeria. Olumuji studied the factors that determine newspaper readership among the populace in Lagos State and discovered that demographic factors like age, education, and access to the internet played a significant role in determining the pattern of newspaper readership. The paper also reported that the increasing use of internet technologies has motivated most readers, such as students, to abandon print newspapers and adopt online news to read. However, newspapers have remained noteworthy in delivering reasonable information and facilitating scholarly and civic consciousness (Olumuji, 2024).

Collectively, these studies in Nigeria demonstrate some consistent trends. To begin with, newspaper reading among the students is not high in most cases, and is usually sporadic. Second, economic barriers and the inability to access print newspapers make people not read the publications regularly. Third, the online media sources, especially the social media and websites of online newspapers, have emerged as primary news sources among the students. Lastly, the importance of newspapers as a credible source of information, especially in the academic field and civic education, notwithstanding the decline in print readership, is still deemed significant.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative survey research design to investigate the readership pattern of university students in the newspapers. It was deemed to be suitable since it helps the researchers to get systematic data on a large number of respondents on their attitudes, behaviour and media consumption patterns within a given period. The sampling was carried out in two purposively selected universities in North Central Nigeria, namely; the University of Abuja and Prince Audu Abubakar University, Anyigba. These universities were intentionally chosen based on the geographical as well as institutional grounds. Both educational institutions are large state universities in the North Central area and have students of various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Secondly, both universities have operating campus libraries and media resource centres, where newspapers are available to students, thus creating the right context in which the behaviour of newspaper readership can be examined. Thirdly, the two institutions have enjoyed more internet connections and the availability of Wi-Fi on campus in recent years, and that has exposed the students to more digital news platforms. The availability of both traditional means of accessing the newspaper, with increasing digital accessibility, makes the two universities ideal environments in which to study how students choose between traditional and digital means of newspaper reading.

The study population comprised the undergraduate students in the University of Abuja (20,856) (<https://uniabuja.edu.ng/uniabuja-statistics>) and Kogi State University (7,161), with a population of 28,017 in total. Institutional records made available by the Student Affairs departments of the respective universities were used to get the population data. The records were used to determine the students who could be involved in the study.

A sample of 322 undergraduate students was identified comprised of 180 participants of the University of Abuja and 142 participants of Prince Audu Abubakar University. The respondents were also selected using a simple random sampling method. This method guaranteed that all students in the sampling frame were given an equal opportunity to be picked to take part in the research, hence reducing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

The questionnaire used was used collect the data based on structured questions that were aimed at gathering data on the reading patterns of the newspaper, the preferred format, things that affect the readership of newspapers, and impediments to the readership of newspapers. A five-point Likert rating scale was used to measure items in the questionnaire, i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. This rating instrument was applied in the form of a Likert scale to determine the perceptions and attitudes of respondents regarding the variables of newspaper readership.

In order to maintain the correctness and validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was first tested on a small sample of the students in Kogi State University, Kabba, who were not the main participants in the study. The results of the pre-test provided feedback that aided in refining questions that were unclear and enhancing the clarity of the instrument before the actual administration.

The collected data on the respondents were analysed in terms of the descriptive statistics, namely frequency distribution, mean scores and the standard deviation. These descriptive statistics summarised and interpreted the trends in readership of the newspapers among the students. In the Likert scale questions, the actual benchmark average score of 3.00 was utilised as the threshold in deciphering the answers. Mean scores of 3.00 or higher pointed to agreement with a statement, and mean scores less than 3.00 pointed to disagreement.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Newspaper Readership among Nigerian university students (N = 322)

Frequency of newspaper reading	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1. I read newspapers daily.	58	92	41	76	55	2.94	1.34	Reject
2. I read newspapers at least three times a week.	72	101	37	64	48	3.16	1.33	Accept
3. I read newspapers weekly.	84	115	29	52	42	3.33	1.29	Accept
4. My newspaper reading increased in the past year.	41	78	63	79	61	2.72	1.32	Reject
5. I spend more than 20 minutes per session reading newspapers.	69	88	47	68	50	3.02	1.36	Accept
6. I read newspapers when it is needful for my continuous assessment or examination.	76	96	38	62	50	3.14	1.35	Accept
7. I read newspapers to stay updated on national issues regularly.	98	112	26	50	36	3.48	1.29	Accept
Format preferences of newspaper reading	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1. I prefer digital newspapers over print.	124	96	28	44	30	3.79	1.23	Accept
2. I read newspapers primarily on mobile phones.	118	102	25	40	37	3.72	1.27	Accept
3. I use social media links to access newspaper content.	106	98	36	44	38	3.52	1.31	Accept
4. I prefer print newspapers to digital versions.	39	64	58	92	69	2.44	1.29	Reject
5. I subscribe to at least one digital newspaper.	62	81	51	74	54	2.92	1.33	Reject
6. I visit official newspaper websites regularly.	77	95	40	60	50	3.12	1.33	Accept
7. I use tablets or laptops more than phones to read newspapers.	44	72	63	80	63	2.65	1.30	Reject
Factors determining the trend of newspaper reading	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Availability of internet access influences my newspaper reading.	102	108	34	44	34	3.61	1.27	Accept
2. Peer influence determines how often I read newspapers.	74	92	51	58	47	3.09	1.34	Accept

3. Academic requirements increase my newspaper reading frequency.	88	99	40	52	43	3.29	1.32	Accept
4. Political events motivate me to read newspapers more often.	96	104	36	48	38	3.41	1.31	Accept
5. Family background and upbringing influence my newspaper habits.	52	78	61	72	59	2.74	1.35	Reject
6. Exposure to social media trends affects my newspaper reading.	91	102	39	50	40	3.31	1.32	Accept
Obstacles of newspaper reading	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Cost of print newspapers discourages regular reading.	94	104	32	52	40	3.44	1.30	Accept
2. Internet data cost affects my digital newspaper reading.	88	99	35	56	44	3.32	1.32	Accept
3. Credibility concerns influence my choice of newspaper.	102	110	28	44	38	3.58	1.28	Accept
4. Academic workload reduces my newspaper reading time.	96	100	36	50	40	3.45	1.30	Accept
5. Campus library access increases my newspaper reading.	61	84	57	68	52	2.94	1.34	Reject
6. Social media distracts me from reading full newspaper articles.	85	93	40	58	46	3.25	1.33	Accept
7. Poor user experience on newspaper websites reduces my reading.	70	88	51	64	49	3.02	1.34	Accept

Discussion of Findings

In line with objective one on frequency of newspaper reading, the study revealed that the frequency of reading newspapers is relatively low, with a mean of 2.94, which was rejected. This shows that the students are not used to reading newspapers daily. Nonetheless, the weekly readership and reading three or more times a week were accepted with the mean scores of 3.33 and 3.16, respectively. This implies that newspaper reading is not a routine but rather an occasional phenomenon. This equally supports the notion that students read newspapers when they are inspired by an academic or national problem and not as a daily practice. This finding is in line with Nweze et al. (2024), who observed that newspapers were not habitually read by students. This is equally consistent with Adikuru(2025), whose results indicated that the reading habits of students are occasional reading. This confirms the occasional nature of readership among students. The finding also shows that the amount of time that students take per session to read newspapers is 3.02, and that national issues are factors that provide motivation to read regularly, with a mean of 3.48. This is in line with Ukozor (2020), who noted that students tend to read newspapers in order to be aware of the political and educational changes. The congruency between the current research and previous studies proves that the number of students reading newspapers daily is minimal. Nevertheless, the disregard of the statement that the reading of the newspaper has grown over the last year, with the mean equal to 2.72, indicates the negative change in the habitual readership that contradicts Apuke and Omar (2020) reporting that academic necessities had promoted the weekly consumption of newspapers among Nigerian students. This diversion indicates the increasing competition posed by digital and social media, which is likely to decrease the number of times traditional newspapers are used, even when they remain relevant. Also, the finding validates the fact that Nigerian university students are infrequent newspaper readers and would read them more when there is an academic concern that needs addressing than when it is a daily practise. The concurrence with previous studies about low readership and dependency on newspapers in academic

activity reinforces the finding that newspapers are not as hegemonic in the media lives of the students. Therefore, the finding posits that the Nigerian students have low print use.

The second finding of the study, which examined the preferences of newspaper reading by students of Nigerian universities, demonstrates that digital media are predominantly used by the students compared to traditional print. The finding shows that students are predominantly inclined toward digital newspapers, with the average result of 3.79, and the majority of the students use them via mobile phones (mean 3.72) or via social media connections (mean 3.52). This is consistent with Apuke and Omar (2020), who noted that Nigerian students tend to use digital versions more because of convenience and easy access. This is also consistent with Adikuru(2025), who found that online versions became more popular among students than print. The lack of print preference (mean 2.44) is another sure sign of the falling relevance of traditional newspapers, which resonates with Odunlami and Bankole (2024), who reported that young Africans are forsaking print in favour of online sources.

It is also found that the number of visits to official newspaper websites is relatively high (mean 3.12), but the number of online subscriptions to digital newspapers is lower (mean 2.92), which indicates that free access to the newspaper information via social media and open web-based services is more attractive than the paid service. This partially concurs with Philip (2025), who reported the affordability as a major predictor of readership, but disagrees with Apuke and Omar (2020), who noted that the credibility of the print newspapers was one of the reasons why Kenyan students continued to use them. Credibility seems not to be effective in maintaining the print readership in this study, as the students give priority to accessibility and free digital alternatives. The fact that tablets and laptops were rejected as the main devices (mean 2.65) also shows the role of mobile phones in determining consumption patterns, which are also in line with the work of Newman et al. (2021), who found that younger audiences worldwide prefer mobile-based consumption of news. On the whole, these results substantiate the assumption that the Nigerian university students are deeply integrated into the culture of digital news, and mobile phones and social media become their main access to newspaper information. This points to the generational move towards online publishing, but also local economic conditions that prevent the desire to pay subscriptions and print copies. In such a way, the study places the Nigerian students in a wider context of digital readership, mobile-based accessibility and dependency on free web resources.

The findings of the third objective, which analysed the variables that determine the trend of newspaper reading among Nigerian university students, indicate that access to the internet is a significant factor with a mean score of 3.61, which means that the readership of newspapers depends heavily on the availability of digital platforms. Academic requirements also became one of the critical factors (mean 3.29), which confirms Nweze et al. (2024) and Apuke and Omar (2020), that students frequently use newspapers as a source of assignments and research. Another motivator was political events (mean 3.41), and it was consistent with Ukozor (2020), who observed that students read newspapers to have information on the national issues. The influence of peers (mean 3.09) and exposure to social media trends (mean 3.31) were also accepted, which indicated that the social and digital environment influences the reading habits. Nonetheless, family background was dismissed (mean 2.74), which indicates that cultural upbringing is not a significant factor. This fact points to the significance of academic and political demands as drivers of readership of newspapers, which are tools for civic and educational interaction, even though their daily use is decreasing. The high status of internet penetration is also a strong argument in favour of Yakubu and Mohammed (2020), who claimed that access to mobile internet has moved the younger generation towards digital consumption. Concurrently, institutional and technological factors primarily influence the behaviour of the Nigerian students rather than their cultural upbringing. The trends of social media further substantiate Odunlami and Bankole(2024), who noted that students are increasingly using social media sources such as Facebook and Twitter to update on news at the peril of traditional newspapers. In all, the findings show that the Nigerian university students choose to read newspapers based on the major influences of academic demands, political activities, and access to digital information, with little influence of family and cultural

orientation. This supports the position that the newspaper reading trend among students is dynamic, selective and heavily mediated by the digital availability as well as social environments.

The findings obtained on the fourth objective, which evaluated the barriers that affect the reading of newspapers among Nigerian university students, indicate that cost was found as one of the most deterrents, with a mean of 3.44, and so was the internet data cost, with a mean of 3.32, where both traditional and online formats are limited by economic factors. Issues of credibility were highly acceptable (mean 3.58), showing that students are aware of the reliability of newspaper sources, which is consistent with Tandoc (2020) and Yakubu and Mohammed (2020), who identified credibility as a major criterion in choosing to read the newspaper. The other significant barrier was academic workload (mean 3.45), which is an indication of the increased demands on the time of students, which prevents them from having time to read newspapers regularly, and this was similar to Nweze et al. (2024), who also reported the same in Ebonyi State University. Other barriers identified in the findings include the distraction of social media (mean 3.25) and adverse user experience on newspaper websites (mean 3.02), which are supported by Philip (2025), who observed that social media platforms are the competition to newspapers because they provide instant and readily accessible information. Nonetheless, the library access was denied (mean 2.94), indicating that the access to newspapers in libraries did not have a significant effect on populations' reading newspapers, which is contrary to Okioya et al. (2022), who submitted that the rise in reading culture in a university environment could be restored through the enhancement of access to a library. This point of contention points to the move towards a digital consumption where the physical location comes second to other factors such as price and convenience. Conversely, the findings establish that the main barriers to newspaper readership among Nigerian university students are the economic constraints, issues of credibility, academic load, and smartphone distractions. The findings show affordability as a major barrier, though the availability of libraries is found to vary, with other studies indicating that institutional availability may not be enough to support readership.

Conclusion

The study examined that the newspaper reading pattern of the Nigerian university students is not a habitual but an occasional habit, whereby the frequency of reading the newspapers was found to be weekly. Digital platforms, especially mobile phones and social media links, are the dominant factors in consumption trends, and print newspapers are becoming increasingly unused. Internet availability, academic necessity, and political events are the most determining factors of readership, with the family background having minimal influence. Key barriers that were realised included the print newspaper prices, internet information charges, integrity fears, scholarly burden, and social media distractions. In conclusion, the study submits that students are active yet irregular readers, choosing convenience, affordability, and academic utility over regular consumption, putting them in the context of world trends of a drop in print and an increase in digital usage.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings:

1. Data fees for internet on education should be subsidised by the Government and Telecommunication Providers to eliminate obstacles to online reading of newspapers.
2. The newspaper Publishers are advised to ensure that their websites and mobile applications are user-friendly and designed to ensure improved user experience and appeal to the student readers.
3. In order to remain relevant in academic life, Academic Departments should promote the use of newspapers in coursework and research projects.
4. Awareness should be created by the Student Associations and Campus Media Clubs regarding the significance of newspapers in acquiring civic skills and in academic development.

5. Government Agencies should embrace the initiatives that make print and digital access equal so that the students in regions with low internet accessibility are not left behind.

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