



Gender Differentials in Newspaper Readership Pattern among Residents of Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates newspaper readership pattern among residents of Enugu State within the lenses of gender. Specifically, attention was paid to the most preferred version (between online and print), the duration and purpose of reading newspaper. The survey research design was used for the study while the sample was made up of 192 male and 192 female (totaling 384). The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Simple percentages were used for the research objectives while the chi-square test of independence was used to test the three hypotheses raised. The result showed that gender significantly influences the most preferred version of newspaper read, the duration of reading newspaper and the purpose of reading newspaper. The implications of these results on the uses and gratification theory have been explored. Based on the outcome of this study, the researcher recommends, among others, that policymakers should consider the newspaper readership patterns of readers in a bid to communicate essential policies to them.

Keywords: Gender; Differentials; Online; Print; Newspaper; Readership; Pattern

Introduction

Gender is one of the social constructs that has attracted the attention of researchers from different disciplines. This could be as a result of the critical role that gender plays in influencing behavior change. Gender describes the social roles that society ascribes to both males and females. Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, [1] says that gender is the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in the families, the larger societies and cultures. Casimir, et al. [2] defined gender as socio-cultural, political, economic constructs made by society that define the roles, responsibilities and general societal expectations for both men

and women. UNESCO adds that the concept of gender equally includes the expectations held by the characteristics, attitudes and expected behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Suffice it to say that gender is created by the society and for the society, then it follows logically that people's gender is likely to influence their behavior.

Gender is regarded as a critical determinant that influences human behavior. The way male and female behavior has been found to differ. Anwar, et al. [3] conducted a study to determine gender differences in workplace deviant behavior of university teachers and modification techniques and reported that there is gender differences in the abnormal behavior of both male and female as male teaching staff of University of Sargodha were found to be more deviant at workplace as compared to female teaching staff. One of one critical decision that both male and female will have to make is the information consumption pattern. This is primarily because of the importance of information to the survival of any society. Bankole [4] corroborates that information is an important element in every sector of life, be it social, economic, political, educational, industrial and technical development. Bankole adds that in the present world, information is a precious commodity that flows through the various media, radio, television, newspaper, internet, information on a wide range of events gets to the public, and as such the mass media have considerable influence on public perception.

In the context of this study, information consumption pattern refers how information is sought with specific attention to channel, time of consumption and the degree of consumption among others. The newspaper is of particular interest to the current study.

Even though it has been predicted that newspapers will fizzle out as a result of advancements in technology and the emergence of new media, newspapers remain prominent sources of information. Meyer, [5] recalls that the early 1920s saw the newspaper industry peak with a household penetration (average daily circulation measured as a percent of households) of 130% (and started to show a steady decline ever since. Wolff, [6] holds that another landmark decline in

circulation is experienced in the early 1950s when household penetration first went under 100%. The emergence of radio and TV equally had adverse effects on newspaper. Lucena [7] says that newspaper performance suffers immediately following the advent of Radio and TV at the beginning of those two decades. Tyner [8] avers that newspapers will never be fizzled out because of five fundamental reasons which are: newspaper is still great for local community news; they are embracing more platforms, they are mining online demographic data to their advantage the newspaper industry is gradually figuring out pay walls, print will be seen as a valued extra. Newspapers have made significant modifications that require a new direction in the study of newspaper readership pattern. In the past, studies on newspaper readership pattern were more concerned with the frequency of readership, time of readers, media genres most read. But in contemporary newspapering, newspapers have online presence where both audio and visual contents are shared. This is called media convergence. Alejandro [9] corroborates that new-media technology has a significant influence because of its impact on established journalism. Alejandro adds that the way that the vast majority of public and commercial media is changing is more important than the emergence of citizen journalism. Therefore, in studying newspaper readership pattern in the 21st century, it will be instructive to examine the readership pattern with consideration to the online newspaper versions. Consequently, this study examined gender differentials in newspaper readership pattern among residents of Enugu State with particular attention to both the print and online versions.

Statement of the Problem

There is an overwhelming interest in understanding how gender significantly influences human behavior. This partly explains why gender is one of the hottest areas of research. People of different regions find gender worth investigating. Media studies have also been conducted to determine the place of gender in communication and how this influences media reception. One of such areas is newspaper readership. Although newspaper readership has attracted the attention of different scholars [10-12] more studies are yet to focus on gender and examine the consumption pattern with emphasis on both print and online newspapers. Understanding gender differentials in newspapers readership pattern could be beneficial to marketers, newspaper journalists, communication teachers and researchers exploring newspaper readership and indeed, media consumption pattern in a developing country such as Nigeria, hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the Study

This study sought to achieve the following:

- To determine the gender differentials in the preference of print and online newspaper versions among residents of Enugu State.

- To determine the gender differentials in the duration of consumption of online and print newspapers among residents of Enugu State.
- To examine the gender differentials in the purpose of consumption of online and print newspapers among residents of Enugu State.

Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following questions:

- What is the gender differentials in the preference of print and online newspaper versions among residents of Enugu State?
- What is the gender differentials in the duration of consumption of online and print newspapers among residents of Enugu State?
- What is the gender differentials in the purpose of consumption of online and print newspapers among residents of Enugu State?

Research Hypotheses

This study tested the following hypotheses:

Ho1: The gender does not significantly predict preference of print and online newspaper versions among residents of Enugu State.

Ho3: Gender does not significantly predict the duration of consumption of online and print newspapers among residents of Enugu State.

Ho4: Gender does not significantly predict the frequency of consumption of online and print newspapers among residents of Enugu State.

The Newspaper as Sources of Information

Newspapers are known to be essential sources of information for different people. As sources of information, newspapers provide people with both current and historical information. Newspapers have the advantages of permanence as information contained in newspapers could be stored even after many years. Gever [13] in his media matrix argues that newspaper messages can be stored and retrieved at any time deemed appropriate. Newspapers serve as real sources of information for researchers. Tanacković, Krtalić and Lacović [14] did a study to determine newspaper as a scientific research source in the humanities and reported that almost half of the respondents use newspapers (print or online) as a primary research source and that the majority of respondents still prefer to consult print newspapers over electronic. Many researchers have found the contents of newspapers as useful for data gathering especially where the focus is to gather data on media coverage or framing.

Newspapers provide veritable information for readers. Ogbiten [15] says reading newspapers has become a habit to

most people. Ogbiten adds that to such people, the newspaper is both for the eyes and ears. They believe whatever and anything they read as the gospel truth [15]. Ogbiten adds further that the belief in the newspaper is so strong that they do not question anything that they read in the papers [15]. Layefa et al. [16] say that with the blackmailing type of news reporting, inaccurate news dissemination that is observable in some of the dailies, the belief may gradually be eroding; even though readers still find the newspaper useful in one area or the other. Layefa et al. examined Ekiti residents' newspaper readership pattern and found that a greater percentage of Ekiti residents (94.73%) read newspapers and they do so for education and information. Other scholars [17-20] reported a similar result. The evidence in literature revealing high newspaper readership implies that the death-wish for newspapers may be far from coming into reality. Rather, newspapers have expanded their scope by including online versions wherein they carry sound, video and texts.

Online vs. Print Newspapers

Online newspapers are the print versions. The Internet is a critical factor in the use of online newspapers. Without Internet facilities, accessing online newspapers could be challenging, if not impossible. On the other hand, print versions of newspapers require that readers either buy copies or read same freely at the newsstand or get copies from families and friends. Mbachu [21] says that the marriage between the newspaper industry and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has made many, if not all, national newspapers in Nigeria to have online versions. Adedina et al. [22] say that more people read online versions of a newspaper than its hard copy in Nigeria. Ashong and Ogaraku [23] in a study found that 80% of the respondents read both versions of newspapers, and that content is immaterial as a determinant of preferred version (76%). Instead, availability accounts for the version attended to per time. Ordinarily, both print and online newspapers are expected to carry the same contents. However, it is somehow challenging as online news contents are often updated at regular intervals. While printed versions of newspapers will have to wait the next day, online versions can be updated as the events unfold. Also, it takes a shorter time to circulate online contents than the print counterparts. Smith [24] examined online newspaper and print contents and reported that 85% of print stories were published with at least one contextual element, but only 58% of online stories had at least one such element. About a third of the sample had at least one contextual element in common between print and online versions of a story, while about 20% of the sample had unique sets of contextual elements in print and online. Smith also reported that newspapers are no more likely to publish additional contextual elements with local stories than any other type of content. This effort focused on storytelling components; it examined whether print and Web editions of newspapers tell stories differently-whether they are complementary or competitive. The results of Smith imply that there is a slice difference in context between print and online newspaper contents. Memon and Pahore [12] in a study

reported that a typical reader reads online newspaper from 1 to 3 days a week. Further, he mostly reads on Sunday because on that particular day he finds more time to read. Moreover, in the context of time, a typical online newspaper reader on average reads the online paper for an hour and prefers mostly to read during a daytime. D'haenen et al. [11] in a study on how readers consume and recall news presented in online and print versions of two newspapers in the Netherlands reported few differences between the online and print versions regarding news supply. The result also showed that reader attention to the news stories varies, depending on the newspaper and news category. No consistent reading pattern was evident, and the print version readers were found not to read more than the online version readers. News Consumption seemed to be more dependent on the news category, reader gender and interest in a particular topic than on whether the news appears in print or online. The importance of D'haenen et al. study is that it has added gender to its research. Tewari [10] found that majority of the online news consumers (90 per cent) were still reading printed newspapers. The researcher reports further that online newspapers have not much affected the print newspaper circulation. But print has started losing young readers. The result also revealed that readers had reduced their interest to read print newspapers; they prefer to read online newspapers. Concerning gender, the result showed that young male (15-20) readers had reduced interest on print media more than women readers, 21 per cent by male and 14 percent by women readers. Fleming and Steffens [25] in a study reported that gender was negatively and significantly related to reading of local newspapers ($\beta = -.12$, $p \leq .05$), showing that women read local newspapers more than men. From the studies reviewed so far, there are conflicting accounts of the influence of gender on newspaper readership pattern.

Theoretical Framework

This study found expression on the uses and gratification theory. The theory was propounded in 1974 by Blumler and Katz to explain the motivation for media use. Nonetheless, it has been found helpful for studying media use patterns. Finn [26] avers that the "most critical" components of Uses & Gratification theory are

- (a) The social and psychological origins of audience needs,
- (b) The different patterns of media exposure that purportedly result, and
- (c) The differential engagement in other activities.

Campbell and Kwak [27] are of the view that although most application of the theory focuses on the ways motivations predicts media use behavior, the framework also posits that usage patterns play an important role in shaping social outcomes. Therefore, this theory was found applicable to the current study because it provides the framework for understanding newspaper readership patterns within the lenses of gender.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design to achieve to execute this study. The study was conducted in Enugu State, South-East Nigeria. The target population of this study was all the residents of Enugu State. The total number of residents of Enugu State which the National Bureau of Statistics 2012, forecast up to 2016 is 4,411,119.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was made up of 384 residents of Enugu State, Nigeria. They were 192 males and 192 females. The Cochran formula was used to derive the sample size. The study was a combination of cluster, purposive and simple random sampling techniques in the select of the individual respondents. Therefore, the cluster technique was applied to consider the three senatorial zones in Enugu State as clusters.

These Senatorial zones are Enugu North, Enugu West and Enugu East. Secondly, the researcher purposively selected Enugu East. This was because Enugu-East comprises Enugu city and people from capital cities are more likely to read newspapers than those from other areas. There is also more Internet access in cities than in local areas.

Therefore, the three local government areas that makeup Enugu city were studied. They are Enugu East, Enugu North and Enugu South. To select the individual respondents, the

researcher visited residential houses in this areas to cover both the employed and unemployed population. In each household visited, all the literate members of the household were selected.

Altogether, a total of 108 (36 from each local government area) residential houses were purposively selected from the three local government areas. The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers to elicit data for the study.

In the analysis of data for this study, the researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics. Among the descriptive statistics, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation were used while among the inferential statistics, Chi-Square analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results were presented in tables.

Results

The sample was 50% male and 50% female. The mean age of the sample was 34 (range 22 and 46). Also, 56% of the sample was employed while 44% were unemployed.

Regarding the returned rate, among the 384 copies of the questionnaire that were administered, 368 (186 male and 182 female) representing 96% were returned and found useful. The result of the research questions is presented in the following tables.

Table 1: Gender and the newspaper version most read.

			Version most read			Total
			online version	Print version	both	
Gender	Male	Count	42	132	12	186
		% of Total	11.40%	35.90%	3.30%	50.50%
	Female	Count	151	20	11	182
		% of Total	41.00%	5.40%	3.00%	49.50%
Total	Count	193	152	23	368	
	% of Total	52.40%	41.30%	6.20%		

The Table 1 above sought to determine the influence of gender if there is a gender difference in the version of the newspaper most read among resident of Enugu State.

The result of the cross tabulation showed that while female respondents reported reading online version most, male respondents reported reading printed version most.

However, more male read both versions than female. This difference is marginal. To determine duration in reading newspaper, the following table was computed.

Table 2: Gender and Duration of newspaper readership.

			Duration			Total
			0-2 hours	2-4 hours	5 hours and above	
Gender	Male	Count	128	34	24	186

		% of Total	34.80%	9.20%	6.50%	50.50%
	Female	Count	53	112	17	182
		% of Total	14.40%	30.40%	4.60%	49.50%
Total		Count	181	146	41	368
		% of Total	49.20%	39.70%	11.10%	100.00%

Table 2 above sought to gender differentials. The result showed that while most males read newspapers between 0-2 hours, most female respondents reported reading newspapers between 2-4 hours.

The versions of newspapers may have influenced this result read as most males read printed copies while female read online versions. To ascertain the purpose of reading newspaper, the following table was computed.

Table 3: Purpose of Newspaper Readership.

			Purpose				Total
			Information on current issues	Education	Adverts	Entertainment	
Gender	Male	Count	104	58	11	13	186
		% of Total	28.30%	15.80%	3.00%	3.50%	50.50%
	Female	Count	18	27	70	67	182
		% of Total	4.90%	7.30%	19.00%	18.20%	49.50%
Total		Count	122	85	81	80	368
		% of Total	33.20%	23.10%	22.00%	21.70%	100.00%

Table 3 above sought to determine the purpose of newspaper readership among residents of Enugu State. The result showed that while male read newspapers mainly for information on current issues, female do so for adverts and entertainments. Cumulatively, most of the respondents read newspapers for information on current issues.

Test of Hypotheses

A total of three hypotheses were tested for this study. The Chi-square test of independence was used to determine the association between gender and newspaper readership patterns based on three dependent variables namely the version of the newspaper most read, the duration of readership and the purpose of reading. The result of the chi-square analysis in table one showed that the result yielded Chi-square $X^2=1.441$ and the p-value of 0.001 at 1 df. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the researcher concludes that gender significantly determines the version of the newspaper read among residents of Enugu States. The results of the second null hypothesis yielded $X^2=73.909$ with the p-value of 0.001 and 2 df. Consequently, the second null hypothesis was also rejected and the researcher concludes that gender significantly influences the duration of newspaper readership. Finally, the result of the third null hypothesis yield $X^2=1.513$ and p-value of 0.001 at 3 df. The researcher concludes that gender significantly influences the purpose of newspaper readership among residents of Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated newspaper readership pattern of residents from Enugu State within the lenses of gender. The result showed that gender influences the choice of newspaper version because while female respondents preferred online versions, male preferred printed version. The result of the hypothesis testing also showed a significant relationship between gender and the version of newspaper most read. This result of this study is contrary to that of Tewari [10] who found that males read the online newspaper more than their female counterparts. This result could be because females may not be disposed to buy printed copies of newspapers like their male counterparts. Female also engage in online related activities more than their male counterparts as such, may read more online versions of newspapers.

The result of this study also showed that gender significantly influences the duration of newspaper use among residents of Enugu State. Specifically, the result showed that females spend more time reading the newspaper (online version) than their men counterparts. The result of the hypothesis testing also showed a significant relationship between gender and the duration of newspaper readership. The result of the current study is consistent with that of Fleming and Steffens [25] who found that gender significantly influence the duration of newspaper readership with women reading more of local newspapers. The current study, however, extends from the study of Fleming and Steffens [25] by examining both online and print newspaper versions. The long duration of reading

newspaper among women may be because they read mostly the online versions and often log to the Internet many times in a day. Finally, the result of this study showed that gender significantly determine the purpose of reading newspaper. Specifically, the result showed that while male read newspapers for current information and education, female read newspapers for adverts and entertainment messages. This result confirms postulations of the uses and gratification theory which holds that media use pattern is geared towards meeting some needs. Finn [26] in his analysis of the uses and gratification theory holds that media use pattern is determined on meeting some social and psychological needs. Consequently, the researcher relied on the uses and gratification theory to argue that the newspaper readership pattern among residents of Enugu State is based on the gratification they seek to achieve. This begins with the choice of versions of newspapers to read as well as the duration of reading and it then graduates to the purpose. For instance, online newspaper versions have more varieties as they combine texts and video. They also contain more adverts and are more entertaining. A person could watch a video adverts placed in an online version of a newspaper but that option is not available in printed versions. On the other hand, a person who seeks current information on issues of public importance more be more interested in printed stories that have contextual elements than the online version. Smith [24] in a study found that print 85% of print stories were published with at least one contextual element, but only 58% of online stories had at least one such element. Overall, this result has implications on the uses and gratification theory because it shows that the gratification people seek will determine their duration of media consumption.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Based on the result of this study, the researcher concludes that gender significantly determines newspaper readership patterns among residents of Enugu State. This study has theoretical, scholarly and practical contributions. Theoretically, the result contributes to our understanding of the uses and gratification theory by providing empirical evidence on how the needs sought could influence the version of the newspaper read and the duration of reading. In today's digital world characterised by media convergence, this information has provided another dimension in the application of the uses and gratification theory in communication researcher. Overall, the result confirms the postulations of the uses and gratification hypothesis. Also, the result of this study has contributed to scholarship, especially literature on newspaper readership by incorporating both print and online versions. Finally, this study has practical contributions because it has provided evidenced-based understanding on the role of gender in newspaper readership patterns. This information could be useful for policy communication, adverts placements and media campaigns. Based on these conclusions, the researcher recommends that policymakers wishing to reach the general public through newspapers should be guided by their newspaper readership patterns. In the second place, the researcher suggests that communication merchandising

should be done with the consideration of the newspaper readership patterns of the target receivers. Finally, further studies are recommended to include other traditional media like radio TV and magazine for better understanding.

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