

Influence of Demographics of Age and Educational Attainments on Online Newspaper Readership among Civil Servants in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria



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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of demographics of age and educational attainments on the readership of online newspapers among civil servants in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It adopted a survey as research design, and a questionnaire as data-gathering instrument. Its major objectives included finding out the level of awareness of online newspapers among civil servants in Akwa Ibom State; determining whether age differentials and educational qualifications influence the exposure and usage of online newspapers among the study population; and establishing the motivations for consuming online newspapers among the study population. The study deployed the Uses and Gratifications and Technological Determinism media theories as its theoretical framework. The study had a population of 11,643 senior civil servants on salary grade levels 07-17, working in the state's Pooling Ministries, Departments and Agencies (PMDAs). From this, the researcher, deploying proportionate and purposive sampling techniques, selected a sample size of 375 respondents based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size recommendation. The researcher worked with 357 (95.2%) retrieved copies of the questionnaire, which were found usable. Data gathered from the field were collated and computed into tables and analysed into simple percentages. Findings showed, among others, that the awareness of online newspapers among the study population was very high at 186(52.1%); the extent of educational influence on readership of the newspapers was equally very high at 310(86.8%). The extent of the influence of the demographic of age on online newspaper readership was also high at 187(52.4%). On whether persons with higher educational attainments read online newspapers more than those with lower educational attainments, the result showed the majority of 332(93%) agreed that this was the case, while those who disagreed were

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11(3%). And on the question of whether older civil servants consumed more online newspapers than their younger counterparts, the finding was that 197(55.2%) agreed to this while 134(37.5%) disagreed, even as the rest were undecided. The study concluded that there is a correlation between online newspaper readership and the demographics of age and educational attainments among the study population. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that operators of online newspapers in Akwa Ibom State should leverage on the high awareness level of their products among civil servants to seek business patronage by way of subscription from them; online newspaper operators should use easily comprehensible language in their publishing efforts to attract more readership from those with lower educational attainments, while retaining the interest of the more educated ones. Also, online newspaper operators should create content that would be appealing to readers across the age groups.

Keywords: Age, Educational attainment, Online Newspapers, Readership

Introduction

The newspaper is a mass media organ devoted to publishing news, advertisements, and entertainment. Turow (2017) posits that newspapers are printed products created on a regular (weekly or daily) basis and released in multiple copies. As a medium of mass communication, the newspaper is produced to provide readers with information, education, entertainment, and persuasion (Hasan, 2013), corroborating the above assertion, Akpan and Bassey (2018) explain that “the basic functions of the media in any society included the provision of information and education,” (p. 41). But newspaper readership has much to do with literacy and age. Until one reaches a certain age, it may not be possible for one to read newspapers, just as it requires a certain level of literacy. According to Boulianne and Shehata (2021, p.3), age is a critical factor in “news consumption in today’s high-choice media environments.” Similarly, Anderson (2018) explains that age is a factor in newspaper readership. This fact is also relevant to web newspaper readership. Web newspapers are newspapers published on the Internet. According to Turow (2017), creating online “papers” sometimes means preparing a photographic or videographic version of the written material involving writing a weblog or blog, which is a sort of diary or journal of the event.

The advent of online newspapers has elasticised the borders of newspaper readership. While some consumers prefer to read only legacy newspapers, others prefer to read only web versions, while yet some others read both genres. In a study by Ashong and Henry (2017), 80% of the respondents read both versions (hard and online) of the newspaper. But other studies show younger readers prefer web newspapers (Tewari, 2016; Boulianne & Shehata, 2021).

Experimentation with online newspapers in Nigeria began between 2003 and 2010 when *Gamji.com*, *Elombah.com*, and others came on stream (Ibrahim, 2021). Six of the 19 registered newspapers in Akwa Ibom State, operate both online and offline (Researcher’s interview with the Head of Branch, National Library of Nigeria, Uyo Office, on 20 September 2024).

Although digital newspapers were gaining popularity globally, it was uncertain if civil servants in Akwa Ibom State were even aware of them, and if they were, do age and education attainments influence their exposure and utilisation of this medium of mass communication? It is against a backdrop that this study is anchored.

Statement of the Problem

In 1996, *Post Express* became the first Nigerian newspaper to migrate online (Kperogi 2012). Ever since, more newspapers have followed suit. By 2022, there were some 125 online newspapers in Nigeria (*onlinenewspapers.com*), made up of hybrid forms and e-versions. Civil servants in Akwa Ibom State are employees of the State Government who usually go on training and re-training programmes to equip themselves for the demands of their routine duties. Many of them are highly educated and their ages range from 18 to 60 years.

It is assumed that the civil servants are on regular income and have access to the internet on smart phones at home and in the office given the current drive of most state governments at the digitalisation of the civil service. It is against this background that this study investigated the level of awareness of online newspapers among the civil servants in Akwa Ibom State and also ascertained the influence of age and educational attainments of civil servants on their exposure and readership of online newspapers.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the level of awareness of the existence of online newspapers among civil servants in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Ascertain whether the ages of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State influence their exposure to online newspapers.
3. Find out whether the educational attainments of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State have influenced their exposure and use of online newspapers.
4. Determine the motivations for reading online newspapers among civil servants in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are civil servants in Akwa Ibom State aware of the existence of online newspapers?
2. How do the ages of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State influence their exposure to online newspapers?
3. Do educational attainments of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State influence their exposure and use of online newspapers?
4. What are the motivations for the consumption of online newspapers among Akwa Ibom State civil servants?

Literature Review

Newspapers as Organ of Mass Communication

Newspapers are mass media that carry messages to a large number of people simultaneously. They are organs of the print media that convey messages through printed words. Other members of the print media are magazines, journals, books, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, handbills, flyers, and leaflets. Pavlik and McIntosh (2011) note that newspapers consist largely of words, pictures, and graphics printed on lightweight, inexpensive paper stock. They explain that newspapers are printed either daily or weekly, and although they are called "newspapers", most newspapers consist mostly of advertising. According to Pavlik and McIntosh (2011), the most important function of newspapers in modern society is surveillance or to inform the public of

important events taking place. Bassey (2016, p.219) posits that “one primary function of the mass media in human society is surveillance of the environment. This function, which was conceptualized by Harold Lasswell in 1948, aptly tallies with the watchdog function of the press.” The author explains that the press does the work of surveillance of the environment through creative reportage of socio-economic and political events in society, which is about providing information on the processes, issues, events, and developments in society.

Other functions of the newspapers are those of correlation and entertainment. Newspapers have served communities bounded by geographic, political, cultural, and economic borders. They are generally organized into sections often defined by geography, including local, national, and international news; and topics, including business, culture, health, science, sports, and technology (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2011). According to Ngonso *et al.* (2023, p.100), “the number of newspapers available in our present-day society, and newspaper subscription by individuals, government, and non-governmental bodies all attest to the important roles the medium plays in our society.” Given the ever-changing state of technological improvements, the newspapers in their current printed form, may become less important as primary sources of news; many local dailies may face a very questionable future unless they adapt to the digital online world (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2011). These authors assert that only a handful of newspapers, mostly in small markets, have stopped print versions of the paper and gone entirely to the Web, attributing this delay to economic and customer issues.

Online Newspapers and the Future of the Newspaper Industry

The emergence of online newspapers has raised readership issues vis-a-vis their print version counterparts among various demographics. Some studies have shown that they have precipitated a decrease in the readership of print versions (Duru, 2016; Ashong & Henry, 2017); Oladosu *et al.* (2021). Other studies have, on the other hand, shown that despite the growing interest in online newspapers, especially among the younger generations, hard copies are not substantially affected (Oladosu & Radosinska, 2017; Tewari, 2015).

Online newspapers have virtually unlimited space (Ashong & Henry, 2017). They do not require big capital for hiring office spaces or procuring printing machines, among others. They have a global audience, and with an active Internet network and relevant devices, can be accessed virtually anywhere in real-time. However, the costs of data and requisite devices are relatively high in Nigeria. By 2022, Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report, launched on November 17, 2022, revealed that 63% (133 million Nigerians) were poor, with 73% of them living in the rural areas, and 42% of them in the urban areas (www.nigerianstat.gov.ng, visited 3rd September 2024). Such people would find it difficult to procure Internet-enabled gadgets and data to access online newspapers.

In an era where the Internet has become a major source of information for many, there is a greater risk of being exposed to fake news without realising it (Watson, 2024; “False news worldwide - statistics & facts”, www.statista.com). This is partly attributable to the growing phenomenon of citizen journalism, which often panders towards sensationalism as opposed to factual reporting.

Online newspaper consumers may not easily distinguish between legacy journalism and its citizen genre. This throws up credibility issues. When such happens, source credibility and consumer trust are at stake.

Age and Online Newspaper Readership

Studies have shown that younger newspaper readers are more inclined to read the web newspapers than legacy newspapers (Tewari, 2016; Ashong & Henry, 2017)). This is basically because "the digital media have become the inherent part of modern society and have posed a challenge to the print media" (Tewari, 2016, p.1). Goyanes (2014) notes that with dwindling interest in print newspapers, many media outlets are turning to the Internet to reach younger readers.

Boulianne and Shehata (2021) posit that research findings have shown that age is the most important socio-demographic factor behind news consumption in the days of the Internet. They cite Newman *et al* (2020), as positing that there is a generational divide in traditional news consumption: the youth prefer news from online media outlets, while elders tend to prefer legacy media.

Although online newspapers are challenging their offline counterparts for readership, Hassan and Azmi (2018) observe that the latter are still relevant. In an empirical study, Tewari (2016) concludes that 90% of the respondents still preferred the consumption of offline newspapers to online ones. This may not be unconnected with the fact that under mediamorphosis, online newspapers still utilise features of their legacy counterparts, even as online media still have credibility issues to contend with (Apuke & Omar, 2021).

The findings from a study by Tewari (2016) revealed that 90% of Indian newspaper readers still preferred print newspapers. However, he noted that 82% of readers aged 15-20 preferred reading online newspapers, while 88% of the respondents mostly in the age bracket of 20-30 years, read both print and online newspapers. 92% of those in the age bracket of 30-40 years; 97% of those aged 40-50 while 100% of respondents in the bracket age of 50 and above, read both genres of newspapers. He then recommended that newspapers should publish maximally youth-related news; reporters should write short news, pay attention to what is trending on social media, and keep pace with current issues. In another study by Ashong and Henry (2017) to ascertain readership of online and offline newspapers, the majority of respondents, 104(26%) belonged to the age bracket of 26 - 33 years; seconded by 101(26%) the age range of 34- 41 years. From the foregoing, it is obvious that the majority of people in the Middle Ages read mostly online versions of newspapers.

Educational Attainment and Online Newspaper Readership

The mass media generally perform the crucial function of educating the citizens. Bassey (2021, p. 57) explains that "under education function, the mass media have the advantage of a great reach and are capable of providing information meant for instruction and teaching." It, however, takes literacy to read newspapers to gain more education from the newspapers as an organ of the mass media. Pavlik and McIntosh (2011) assert that newspaper readership was largely limited to society's elite, well-educated, and other advantaged groups. Baran (2013) posits that only media-literate people are aware of the impact newspapers have on individuals and society and how newspaper contents offer

insights into contemporary culture. There is a positive correlation between education and newspaper readership among the reading public.

Most empirical studies on media exposure show that the majority of the respondents are always well educated. Corroborating this, Ismail (2018, p.36) notes that “educational attainment” is “an important predictor of both Internet usage and online newspaper reading.” For instance, in the study by Ubogu (2017), out of the 400 sample size, 250 (62.5%) were university students and 100(25%) civil servants. The others 50(12.5%) were business people and ‘other’, implying that a majority of the respondents were highly educated. Similarly, of 200 members of their sample size, Maku and Rasheed (2019) report that 163(81.5%), were graduates of tertiary education; 36(18%) had secondary school education, while only 1(5%) was illiterate. These are indicative of the influence of education on media consumption.

Ashong and Henry (2017) surveyed 392 online and offline newspaper readers in Imo State, Nigeria. Of the 392 respondents, the majority, 148(38%), were holders of HND and bachelor degrees; 85(22%) were OND holders, 106(27%) holders of ‘O’ Level, and the least number 22(5%) were First School Leaving Certificate holders. All these indicated that education, especially at a higher level, impacted the readership of online and offline newspapers.

This study is anchored on the theories of Technological Determinism and Uses and Gratifications. Uses and gratifications theory was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974 (Anaeto *et al.*, 2008; Hassan & Amzi, 2018). It posits that people use the media for self-gratifying reasons. Other assumptions of the theory are that media audiences are not monolithic or passive, and individually select which media to consume. Audiences can also influence media content (Anaeto *et al.*, 2008). The theory notes that media audience members are not passive, and their decisions on media products depend on the value they attach to the media or their content. Thus, this theory answers the question: why do audiences use the media? (Anaeto *et al.*, 2008). In his exposition of this theory, Bassey (2020, p. 149) notes “Media users come with diverse social backgrounds, have different needs and experiential background such as different levels of education, upbringing, socio-economic and political affiliation, which influence the way media contents appeal to them and how they use them.” The author explains further that the uses and gratifications theory remains one of the most appropriate perspectives for assessing why audience members choose to be exposed to different media channels. Since this study focused on the preference and readership of online newspapers, the theory is relevant to this study.

The Technological Determinism Theory was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. The basic assumption of the theory is that the media bring new perceptual habits; while their technologies create new environments with the implication that whatever predominates the media contents influences human beings and, thus affects the way they perceive the world. Bassey and Ufot (2023, p. 54) explain that technological determinism theory is concerned with “how technology, especially the media, shapes the way individuals think, feel, and act as well as how societies organise themselves and operate.” According to Asemah (2011), the theory of technological determinism posits that changes in the modes of communication invariably influence human experiences. In their exposition of the theory, Anaeto *et al.*, (2008) assert that technology is the proponent factor in development; that technology is an inexorable, irresistible, and overwhelming force, which is a message in its own right. They argue that technology can transform any

environment and in a communication sense, media technology can be both a channel and a message at the same time. Citing Ezea *et al* (2013), Bassey and Ufot (2023, p. 54) note that "new media technologies have radically changed the way people use their five senses, the way they react to things, and therefore, their entire lives and entire society." According to Iwok, Umoh and Bassey (2024, p.18), "technological determinism is a reductionist theory that assumes that a society's technology progresses by following its internal logic of efficiency." The theory of technological determinism is appropriate for this study because it brings to the fore how new media technologies have shaped human communication in recent times, and indeed newspaper readership and utilisation.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey as a research design and a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The population of the study stood at 11,643 and the sample size was 375 selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample guide. Proportionate and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select the sample. The respondents were senior civil servants placed on salary grade levels 07 - 17, drawn from the Civil Service's Pooling Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (PMDAs) as documented in the 2020 Annual Report of the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service Commission.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data from the field survey were collected, sorted, and tabulated into frequency tables and simple percentages. Out of the 375 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 357 were adequately filled and returned while 18 copies could not be retrieved. The return rate was 95.2 percent. The computation was done based on the 357 retrieved copies of the questionnaire.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Sex distribution of respondents

Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	171	47.9
Female	186	52.1
Total	357	100

The above Table 1 shows that 171 respondents were male, representing 47.9% of the sample population while 186 respondents were female, accounting for 52.1% of the sample population.

Table 2: Age distribution of respondents

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18- 25	12	3.4
26- 33	70	19.6
34- 41	123	34.5
42- 49	104	29.1
50 and above	48	13.4
Total	357	100

Information in Table 2 indicates that 12 respondents accounting for 3.4% were in the age range of 18-25 years while those within the age range of 26- 33 years were 70 respondents representing 19.6%. Those within the age range of 34- 41 years were 123 respondents, accounting for 34.5%; those within the range of 42- 49 years were 104 respondents representing 29.1%, while 48 respondents representing 13.4% were in the age range of 50 and above.

Table 3: Educational attainment of respondents

Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
WASCE	25	7
HSC/AL	3	0.8
HND/OND	109	30.5
BA/BSc	172	48.2
MA/MSc	36	10.1
Others	12	3.4
Total	357	100

Table 3 above shows that 25 respondents representing seven percent were holders of WASCE; three respondents accounting for 0.8% had HSC/AL; 109 respondents, representing 30.5%, were holders of OND/HND. A total of 172 respondents representing 48.2% had BA/BSc; 36 respondents accounting for 10.1% were holders of MA/MSc, while ‘others’ were 12 respondents representing 3.4%.

Findings

RQ1: To what extent are civil servants in Akwa Ibom State aware of the existence of online newspapers?

Table 4: Extent of online newspaper awareness among civil servants in Akwa Ibom State.

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	186	52.1
High	146	40.9
Low	7	2.0
Very Low	7	2.0
Not at All	11	3.0
Total	357	100

Source: Field Work (2024)

Table 4 shows that the majority 186(52.1%) respondents reported that their awareness of the existence of online newspapers was very high; 146(40.9%) said that the awareness was high, while those who reported that it was low was only 7(2%), just as those who reported very low were also 7(2%). The implication of this is that online newspapers were fast becoming the medium of choice among the respondents.

RQ2: How do the ages of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State Influence their exposure to online newspapers?

Table 5: Respondents' answers to whether age influences online newspaper readership among Akwa Ibom State civil servants

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	187	52.4
No	127	35.6
Undecided	43	12.0
Total	357	100

Source: Field Work (2024)

Table 5 above indicates that most of the respondents, 187(52.4%), said that age influenced online newspaper readership among Akwa Ibom State civil servants; 127(35.6%) said that was not the case, while 43(12.0) were undecided. This implies that age was seen as a major factor in the readership of online newspapers by the respondents.

Table 6: Respondents' answers to whether older civil servants in Akwa Ibom State read online newspapers more than the younger ones.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	197	55.2
No	134	37.5
Undecided	26	7.3
Total	357	100

Source: Field Work (2024)

The computation in above Table 6 indicates that the majority of the respondents, 197(55.2%), said that older civil servants in the Akwa Ibom State civil service read online newspapers more than the younger ones did, while 134(37.5%) said otherwise, even as 26(7.3%) were undecided.

RQ3: Do educational attainments of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State influence their exposure and use of online newspapers?

Table 7: Respondents' answers to whether educational attainments influence online newspaper readership among Akwa Ibom State civil servants

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	310	86.8
No	40	11.2
Undecided	7	2.0
Total	357	100

Source: Field Work (2024)

The computation above shows that the majority of respondents, 310(86.8%), reported that educational attainments influenced the reading of online newspapers among Akwa Ibom

State civil servants. On the other hand, 40(11.2%) said that this was not the case, while 7(2.0%) were undecided.

Table 8: Respondents’ answers to whether persons with higher educational attainments read online newspapers more than those with lower educational attainments among Akwa Ibom State civil servants

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	332	93.0
No	11	3.0
Undecided	14	4.0
Total	357	100

Source: Field Work (2024)

Table 8 indicates that 332(93%) of the responses were that those with higher levels of educational attainments consumed online newspapers more than those with lower levels of educational attainments. The inference from here is that the more educated a person is, the more likely they are to make greater use of online newspapers, apparently to better understand their environment and stay informed.

RQ4: What are the motivations for the consumption of online newspapers among Akwa Ibom civil servants?

Table 9: Respondents’ answers to whether policy issues, staff welfare, education, sports/entertainment, and economic news are motivations for online newspaper readership among civil servants in Akwa Ibom State

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	277	77.6
No	47	13.2
Undecided	33	9.2
Total	357	100

Source: Field Work (2024)

The above Table reveals that 277(77.6%) respondents agreed that civil servants in Akwa Ibom State civil service were motivated to read online newspapers for purposes of accessing information on policy issues, staff welfare, education, economy, as well as sports and entertainment. On the other hand, 33(9.2%) of them could not decide on this.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the influence of the demographics of age and educational attainment on online newspaper readership among civil servants in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Based on the research questions raised and findings made therefrom, the following discussions were made.

RQ1: To what extent are civil servants in Akwa Ibom State aware of the existence of online newspapers?

The answer to this question is obtainable from Table 4. Results therein showed that the number of respondents who said that the awareness of the medium was very high stood at 186(52.1%). Those who said that this was high were 146(40.9%). Put together, they were 332(93%), leaving only 7% short of 100%. This indicates that the readership of online newspapers among the study population was quite significant. The inference is that the deployment of the media technological determination theory, which postulates that the dominant technology of an era is a major driver of development in society, in this study, is justified. The finding tallies with that of the study by Maku and Rasheed (2019), as well as Anyim (2021), which revealed that the consumption of online newspapers was becoming very popular among Nigerian readers.

RQ2: How do the ages of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State Influence their Exposure to Online Newspapers?

Tables 5 and 6 convey answers to this question. For Table 5, the majority of 187(52.4%) respondents agreed that age influenced the consumption of online newspapers among the study population; whereas 127(25.6%) disagreed, and 43(12.0%) remained undecided. This finding aligns with the one by Ashong and Henry (2017), which showed that age differences among online newspaper consumers affected their use of the medium. Table 6 reveals that the majority of the respondents, 197(55.2%), agreed that persons who belong to the older generations consume more online newspapers than their younger counterparts. However, 134(37.5%) disagreed, while 26(7.3%) did not make up their minds on the matter. This finding did not tally with the ones by Talabi (2014) that showed that younger persons consumed more online newspapers than their older counterparts. The explanation for this seems to be that since there were more elderly persons than younger ones among the respondents in the study, their answers to the question of generational influence on online newspaper readership went the way revealed in this study.

RQ3: Do Educational Attainments of Civil Servants in Akwa Ibom State Influence Their Exposure and Use of Online Newspapers?

Tables 7 and 8 provide answers to this question. The computation in Table 7 shows that 310(86.8%) of the respondents agreed that educational attainments play a leading role in the consumption of online newspapers. Those who disagreed were 40(11.2%), and those who were undecided were 7(2.0%). What is deducible from this is that education is a significant factor in the readership of online newspapers. This finding is in agreement with a similar one in a study by Anderson (2018), which showed that there was a strong correlation between educational attainments and online newspaper consumption. Table 8 provides an answer to the question of whether being more educated was a factor in the use of online newspapers. The majority of the respondents, 332(93%), reported that to be the case. By implication, therefore, education, as Ismail (2018, p.36) notes, "is predictably a required factor in ... newspaper reading generally." Anderson (2018) corroborates this by stating that education "is a predictor of media behaviour" (p.2). On the other hand, 14(4.0%) respondents were undecided, while 11(3.0%) disagreed with the proposition.

The inference from this is that persons with higher education tend to have a higher predisposition towards reading online newspapers than those with lower educational attainments.

RQ4: What are the motivations for the consumption of online newspapers among Akwa Ibom State civil servants?

The results revealed that 277(77.6%) respondents agreed that they were motivated to read online newspapers for purposes of getting information on policy issues, education, the economy, staff welfare, entertainment, and sports. On the other hand, 47(13.2%) disagreed, while 33(9.2%) were undecided. The implication of this is that in line with the media theory of Uses and Gratifications, the study population was deliberate in their choice of this channel of communication, more so as there is an alternative in legacy newspapers. The finding aligns with the position canvassed by Okonofua (2016) that the effect that the consumption of online newspapers was motivated by a multiplicity of factors seeking information on sports, and business, among others.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that civil servants in Akwa Ibom State have a high level of awareness of online newspapers, which implies that the new media technology is becoming pervasive in a society that had been accustomed to their legacy newspapers for more than a millennium. Also, it is concluded that age and educational attainments are major determinants that influence online newspaper consumption among the study population.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. To enlarge their readership, operators of online newspapers should explore subscription opportunities with civil servants following the revelation in the study that there is significant awareness of the existence of their product among this group of consumers.
2. Owners of web newspapers should create content that takes into consideration the interests of the various ages of their readers to sustain their interest in the consumption of online newspapers
3. Since the higher the educational attainments readers have, the higher their tendency to consume digital newspapers, operators of the newspapers should package their products in simple communication codes to attract more readership from those with relatively lower educational attainments, while also retaining the reading interests of those with higher educational attainments.

Online newspaper operators should constantly strive to develop content that would gratify the growing interests of consumers who are becoming choosy in the face of modern competing channels of information dissemination.

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