Influence of Needs and Gratification on Readers' Choice of Newspapers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study assesses the influence of needs and gratifications on readers' choice of newspapers in Uyo. The study sought to establish why people read newspapers or choose to read one newspaper or content instead of the other. The survey research method was adopted for the study. The questionnaire was used in studying a sample of 362 respondents. The sample size which was drawn from Uyo was determined using purposive and proportionate sampling procedure. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistics were adopted to analyze data. The analysis was based on 362 returned copies of the questionnaire which represents the total number of distributed copies. The study revealed among others that there is a positive correlation between readers' needs and their choice of newspaper content. The study also showed that there is no positive correlation between the gratifications readers' obtained and the type of content they exposed themselves to in newspapers. It is concluded from the study that a reader has a certain level of expectation before exposing himself or herself to any content in the newspaper which must have value for him or her and therefore recommends that newspaper publishers should devote more attention to satisfying the expectations of their audiences.

Keywords: *Needs, Gratification, Readers' choice, Media, Uyo*

Introduction
The functions of the mass media are legion and people depend on them to satisfy their curiosity or needs. The major functions of the mass media are information provision, the transmission of culture and education, socialization of people into the nouns and mores of their culture, entertainment, and interpretation of reported events (Baran, 2009). Others include: drawing attention to unethical behaviors by individuals, groups, and institutions, watching over governments to ensure that they behave responsibly and perform the tasks for which they were elected, providing reports and mobilization of the

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citizenry (Muller, 2014). These functions appear to generate expectations from the media by people as a result of their various needs.

According to Littlejohn (2002), people tend to depend more on media that meet an appreciable number of their needs than on those that touch on only a few of their needs. Current scholarship presents more complex interactions between the media and society, with the media generating information from a network of relations and influences, coupled with individual interpretations and evaluations of the information provided. Okenwa (2002) explains that the consequences and ramifications of the mass media relate not merely to the way newsworthy events are perceived (and which are reported at all), but also to a multitude of cultural influences that operate through the media. It is through the persuasiveness of the media - television, radio, and the press that messages reach their target audiences. These media have been largely responsible for structuring people's daily lives and routines. So, why do people turn to the media? What motivates their interest? What needs do they want to gratify? How do their needs impact their preference for certain media content?

Answering these questions situates within McQuail's (2005b) Uses and Gratifications model, which places emphasis on the reasons audience members have for consuming certain media contents. McQuail notes that audiences are often formed on the basis of similarities of individual needs, interests, and tastes. Many of these appear to have social and psychological origins. As Agee, Ault, and Emery (2000) point out, social situations and psychological characteristics motivate the need for media. This development leads one to be exposed to media that would seemingly fit certain expectations, leading to an ultimate gratification. Udoakah (2006) is of the opinion that either consciously or unconsciously, those who have developed news brands seem to be attempting to satisfy Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely: physiological, safety, social esteem, and self-actualization. It is easy to notice that there are news brands that carry information about food, drink, and sex; some provide information on physical, social, and economic safety; others highlight information about making and keeping friendships, romance, affection in the family, church, places of work, business and professional circles and on how to get or how people have been given a sense of belonging.

The uses and gratification theory states that readers' choice of content in newspapers is deliberately based on their needs which motivate their selective exposure to media content that is likely to gratify their perceived needs. The availability of the newspaper as a medium of information and communication, among other uses, has spawned many inquiries about what gratifications it provides through its contents and what needs it forfeits. As stated earlier, these needs include needs for education, information, recognition, integration, entertainment, tension release, personal identity, security, and social interaction. However, a major problem in Akwa Ibom State is that those needs and their influence on readers' choice of newspapers have never been empirically verified. Moreover, the uses and gratifications research tends generally to hypothesize that readers' needs tend to correlate with gratifications. There seems to be inadequate empirical evidence, however, about newspaper readers' needs and how such needs motivate their choice of content. This study intends to fill such a gap in uses and gratifications studies, especially as it relates to readers' needs and gratifications and their influence on readers' choice of newspaper content.

Statement of the Problem

The return of democracy in Nigeria has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of newspapers in circulation. In Akwa Ibom State and particularly Uyo the state capital; there are about sixty local tabloids and national dailies in circulation (Newspaper Circulation Bureau, 2020. However, publishers of these newspapers, especially in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, are not aware of the readers' perception and or acceptance of their products. This has, inadvertently, impacted negatively on their patronage, resulting in poor sales and this has sometimes forced some media houses to fold up. Aliede (2002) laments the scarcity of empirical data on the Media use habits of Nigerians. Consequently, people tend to have relied for too long on guesses and intuition in projecting the direction of Nigerians on media use. As the access to the media continues to grow, it becomes necessary now, more than ever before for reliable and empirical data to be obtained. Uwakwe (2010) notes that communication is in a flux of breakneck change and the rules are changing rapidly. This is an era when communication technologies have made complex, what used to be a simple understanding of a communication process. Today, players in the communication sector know they need to upgrade jobs, update skills, specialize and keep a watch for dynamism on the part of the audience.

Udoakah (2006) stresses the need for media to identify their audiences. According to him, "identifying people with certain shared characteristics and grouping them according to their interest enables companies to adapt their news coverage to the audience for which it is meant. In other words, it helps the news companies to keep their coverage within the field of experience of their different groups of audiences" (p.35. It is important to conduct more studies to establish why people read newspapers or choose to read one paper or content rather than another. This, therefore, means that there is a need for empirical data establishing the influence of needs and gratifications on readers' choice of newspapers. It has also become imperative to determine whether demographic or psychographic factors motivate exposure to the newspaper and for what purpose. In this respect, one then wonders: to what extent do readers' needs and the gratifications they obtain from reading newspapers influence their choice of newspaper content in Uyo?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:
1. What are the readers' content preference in newspapers?
2. What demographic and psychographic factors are common to readers with certain needs?
3. To what extent do needs influence readers' choice of newspapers?
4. What is the influence of gratifications on readers' choice of newspapers?

Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

$H0_1$: There is no relationship between needs of readers and the newspapers they choose.

$H0_2$: There is no relationship between the gratifications obtained from reading newspapers and the contents to which readers expose themselves.

Conceptual Clarification

In contrast to traditional media effects theories which focus on "what media do to people" and assume audiences are homogeneous, the Uses and Gratification approach is more concerned with "what people do with the media" (Daramola, 2003). It explores audiences' personal needs in relation to their media use and the factors which determine the differential media use patterns. It is well accepted that communication theories have developed through the realms of psychology and sociology over the past 100 years. As a sub-tradition of media effects research, uses and gratifications approach is suggested to originate from a functionalist paradigm in the social sciences (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008).

McQuail (2011) says 1940s researchers became interested in the reasons for listening to different radio programmes, such as soap operas and quizzes, as well as the daily newspapers. Researchers discovered a list of functions served either by some specific content or by the medium itself. For instance, radio soap operas were found to satisfy their listeners with advice, support, or occasions for emotional release; rather than just offering information. Newspapers were also discovered to be important to give readers a sense of security, shared topics of conversation, and a structure to the daily routine. For these diverse dimensions of usage satisfaction, psychologist Herzog (1944) marked them with the term "gratification" (McQuail, 2011.

Ekanem (2006) cites Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973), as viewing the mass media as a means by which individuals connect or disconnect themselves with others. They found that people bend the media to their needs more readily than the media overpower them. According to Ekanem (2006, Blumler and Katz (1974) took a more humanistic approach to look at media use. They suggest that media users seek out a medium source that best fulfills the needs of the user and they have alternate choices to satisfy their needs. They observe that media serve the functions of surveillance, correlation, entertainment, and cultural transmission for both society and individuals.

The uses and gratifications approach is an influential tradition in media research. The original conception of the approach was based on the research for explaining the great appeal of certain media contents. The core question of such research is: why do people use media and what do they use them for? There exists a basic idea in this approach: audience members know media content, and which media they can use to meet their needs.

Needs of Media Audiences

Although previous studies on uses and gratifications detect diverse gratifications that attract people to the media, they did not address the connection between these gratifications. The uses and gratifications approach emphasizes motives and the self-perceived needs of audience members. Blumler and Katz (1974) cited by Ekanem (2006) opine that "different people can use the same communication message for very different purposes. The same media content may gratify different needs for different individuals. There is no only one way that people use media". This means that there are as many reasons for using the media as there are media users. Basic needs, social situation, and the individual's background, such as experience, interests, and education affect people's ideas about what they want from media and which media best meet their needs. That is, audience members are aware of and can state their own motives and gratifications for using different media. McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) documented in McQuail

(2011) proposed a model of "media-person interactions" to classify four important media gratifications: (i) diversion: escape from routine or problems; emotional release; (ii) personal relationships: companionship; social utility; (iii) personal identity: self-reference; reality exploration; value reinforcers; and (iv) surveillance (forms of information seeking).

Another subdivided version of the audience's motivation is suggested by Bovey and Hede (2001, based on a general theory of human needs. They distinguish between two types of needs: cognitive and affective and adds three dimensions: "active" versus "passive" initiative, "external" versus "internal" goal orientation, and emotional stability of "growth" and "preservation". These factors yield 16 different types of motivations which apply to media use namely: Information, Education, Guidance, Advice, Diversion, Relaxation, Social Contact, Value Reinforcement, Cultural Satisfaction, and Emotional Release. Others are Identity Formation, Confirmation, Lifestyle Expression, Security, Sexual Arousal, and Filling Time (McQuail, 2011). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch cited by McQuail (2011) identified 35 needs taken from the social and psychological functions of the mass media and put them into five categories:

i.   Cognitive needs, including acquiring information knowledge and understanding;
ii. Affective needs, including emotion, pleasure, feelings;
iii. Personal integrative needs, including credibility, stability, status;
iv. Social integrative needs, including interacting with family and friends
v.   Tension release needs, including escape and diversion

Sources of Needs
There are different sources of needs. McQuail (2005b) states that personal, social circumstances, and psychological dispositions together influence both general habits of media use as well as beliefs and expectations about the benefits offered by the media. These shape specific acts or media choice and consumption, followed by assessments of the value of the experience (with consequences for further media use) and, possible applications of benefits acquired in other areas of experience and social activity. Diddi and LaRose (2006) note that audience gratifications can be derived from three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and the social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media. McQuail (2005b) also posits that each medium seems to offer a unique combination of (a) characteristic contents (at least stereotypically perceived in that ways); (b) typical attributes (print vs broadcasting modes of transmission, iconic vs symbolic representation, reading vs audio or audio-visual modes or reception); and (c) typical exposure situations (at home vs out of home, alone vs with others; control over temporal aspects of exposure vs absence of such control)

From this standpoint, it is confirmed that needs are rooted in both social and psychological backgrounds and they bring about expectations which audiences can fulfill through the media and other sources. It follows, therefore, that since the social and psychological origins of needs vary widely among media audiences, and there is differential media exposure with results in need gratifications and other unintended consequences.

Audience Needs and Media Content Exposure

Nwabueze (2010) describes mass media exposure as a conscious activity performed by mass media audiences. It can be direct or indirect. Direct exposure is when audience members consciously select or prefer a given content to another. For example, buying a business newspaper instead of *The Guardian* or *Punch* newspaper; tuning to a sports channel instead of a news channel. Indirect exposure has to do with a third-party account of a news item or a movie he had read or watched. It occurs through people who relay the contents of the media to others. The process is prevalent among media audiences who have limited access to the contents due to financial or educational constraints (Okunna, 1999.

Studies have established that several factors are responsible for the determination of audience exposure to the mass media. Nwabueze (2010) says the major factors have been classified broadly into two: demographic and psychographic factors. Interest, nature of the content, and habit are classified as psychographic factors, while demographic factors are education, age, income, occupation, and social status. There is a third factor called environmental factor which includes: availability of the media and preferred content, familiarity with the medium, the viewer's environment and scheduling pattern of some media contents, and usage of other media.

McQuail (2011) citing Finn (1997) gives a broader categorization of the factors as: 'audience side factors' and 'media side factors'. Audience side factors include (i) personal attributes such as age, gender, family position, study and work situation, level of income and lifestyle; (ii) social background and milieu, especially as reflected in social class, education, religious, cultural, political and family environment and region or locality of residence; (iii) media related needs for such personal benefits as a company, distraction, information among others. These needs according to McQuail (2011), are widely experienced, but the particular balance between them depends on personal background and circumstances; (iv) personal tastes and preferences for the certain general habits of leisure time media use and availability to be in the audience at a particular time. Since media are used in space as well as time, availability also refers to being the appropriate place (e.g. at home, in trains, driving, etc.); (v) availability also refers to the economic potentials to be in an audience, for instance, being able and willing to pay the price of a cinema ticket, a music recording or a newspaper; (vi) awareness of the choices available and the amount and kind of information processed also play a part in audience exposure; (vii) specific context of use. This varies according to the medium, but generally refers to sociability and location of use; (viii) chance often plays a part in media exposure and its intervention reduces the ability to really explain choice or audience composition. The 'media side' factors are: (i) the media system (ii) structure of the media provision (iii) available content options (iv) publicity (v) timing and presentation.

Most of the factors identified by Nwabueze (2010) and McQuail (2011) have links with those of Cloffe and Choe (1981) who classify their factors as – technical structural factors, self-imposed factors, and environmental factors. From their explanations, these factors are brought about by an individual's location within the social structure and which are beyond his control (age, income, education, etc.); the self-imposed factors are those which reside in the individual's personality and relate to his interest in or apathy to services provided by the media. The environmental factors are those outside (the individual's personality and demographics).

Overview of Media Contents in Relation to Needs
The relationship between the mass media and their users is asymmetrical. There is always a relationship between the "unique grammar" of different media, that is, their specific technology and aesthetic attributes - and the particular requirements of audience members that they are capable, or incapable of satisfying. These, according to Charney and Greenberg (2002), are the media attributes that render some media more conducive than others to satisfy specific needs, and which elements of content help to attract the expectation for which they apparently cater. Many scholars have associated media attributes with audience needs (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010. These scholars suggest that print media for democracy for the McLuhanesque reason that favour ideas over personalities and thus cultivate emotional neutrality. According to them, political re-enforcement seekers used to rely on television because newspapers editorialize while broadcasting better serves the norm or political impartiality. They maintain that print is the best medium for transmitting family planning messages because it is consumed in private.

The characteristics of television favour time killing (easy availability) and para-social interaction (the regular appearance of attractive and friendly personalities). Mendelsohn (2009) proposes that cognitive motivation facilitates information gain and that diversion' or escape motivation facilitates audience perception of the accuracy of social portrayals in entertainment programmes.

Gratifications from Media Contents
Several studies have shown the gratifications derived from the use of media by the readers and or audiences (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004; Rubin, 2009). Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) listed entertainment, pass time, interpersonal utility, information seeking, and convenience as gratification derived from the use of the Internet. Charney and Greenberg (2002) found that most people use the internet for diversion, entertainment, peer identity, coolness; keep informed, sight and sounds as well as career. On their part, Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005), studying marketing websites found out that audiences get entertainment, social interaction, information, and convenience from the medium, while another study by Diddi and LaRose (2006), using internet news listed entertainment, escapism, habit, pass time, surveillance, news, quizzes as factors that motivate an individual to use the medium. Ekanem (2006) listed some of the Uses and Gratifications studies in Nigeria as those of Aliede (2002), Okoye (2003), Salawu (2004), Akpan (2006), Mohammed and Adamu (2010), and Nwabueze (2010).

Linking Needs to Gratifications
In the mass communication process, the Uses and Gratifications approach puts the function of linking needs gratifications and media choice clearly on the side of audience members. It suggests that people's needs influence what media they will choose, how they use certain media, and what gratifications the media give them. This approach differs from other theoretical perspectives in that it regards audiences as active media users as opposed to passive receivers of information. The uses and Gratifications approach also postulates that the media compete with other information sources for the audience's need satisfaction (Downing 2001). As traditional mass media and new media continue to provide people with a wide range of media platforms and content, it is

considered one of the most appropriate perspectives for investigating why audiences choose to be exposed to different media channels.

The approach emphasizes audiences' choice by assessing their reasons for using certain media to the disregard of others, as well as the various gratifications obtained from the media, based on individual social and psychological requirements (Severin and Tankard, 2001). As a broader perspective among communication researchers, it provides a framework for understanding the processes by which media participants seek information or content selectively, commensurate with their needs and interests (McQuail 2011). Audience members then incorporate the content to fulfill their needs or to satisfy their interests (Kitzinger 2004).

Theoretical Framework

This study draws inspiration from the Uses and Gratifications theory which, among other things, centers on the types of uses audiences put media to and what gratifications they derive from their choices of medium, content, or channel. According to Baran and Davis (2009), "The audience has never been completely absent from mass communication but the uses and gratifications approach brought it to a more central position in thinking about the media" (p.264). As Mohammed and Adamu (2010) point out the theory was first described by Katz (1959) in reaction to Berelson's (1959) claim that the communication research approach seems to be dead; Katz suggested that it was not, but if researchers would stop focusing on the questions "what do media do to people? and turn to the question what do people do with the media?" mass communication would be developed further.

McQuail (2005a) has noted early studies on this theory to include those of Herta Herzog (1941), Suchman (1942), Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1942, 1944 and 1949), Wolfe and Fiske (1949). In Nigeria, research works in this theory include Salawu (2004), Ekanem (2006), Nwabueze (2010) Mohammed and Adamu (2010) which references have been made in this study.

Ekanem (2006) observes that the major products of these efforts have been the formulation of a list of gratifications derived from media use and the factors which motivate exposure, following the pioneering work of Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974). Wimmer and Dominick (2011) define the thrust of the Uses and Gratifications Approach to media audience study thus:

> the Uses and Gratifications prerogative takes the view of the media consumer. It examines how people use the media and the gratifications they seek and receive from their media behaviours. Uses and Gratifications researchers assume that audience members are aware of and can articulate their reasons for consuming various media content.

This theory will x-ray the various needs, wishes, motives, and satisfactions readers of newspapers derive from their chosen content. These needs McQuail (2011) identifies as information and education, guidance and advice, diversion and relaxation, social contact, value re-enforcement, cultural satisfaction, emotional release, identity formation and confirmation, lifestyle expression, security, sexual arousal, and filling time. Some scholars have classified these needs as cognitive and affective.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of this study was 27,200 newspapers readers in Uyo. This figure was arrived at based on average daily newspaper sales of 13,600 according to statistics from the Newspaper Circulation Bureau in Akwa Ibom State as of October 2020. To account for free readers and group readers who do not buy newspapers and are not captured in the sales figure, therefore, due to the inability to ascertain the actual number of readers, we purposively multiplied the average circulation figure by two (13,600 x 2 = 27,200) to arrive at the population of this study.

Using purposive and proportionate stratified sampling procedures, a sample size of 377 newspaper readers was chosen. The inclusion criteria were: being 18 years and above and having read a newspaper. The 377 respondents were proportionately and purposively selected from four major streets/roads of Ikot Ekpene Road (85), Abak Road (80), Wellington Bassey Way (65) and Oron Road (87) and four newspaper's stands – Ibom Plaza (15), Mbierebe-Obio Junction (15), Aka Road roundabout (15) and State Secretariat roundabout (15). We studied every third building on each street which yielded the proportional sample indicated above.

The questionnaire was the primary instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test re-test method. Twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered first on twenty respondents at the State Secretariat Complex, Uyo, to ascertain whether the questions were simple, clear, and appropriate and also to estimate the length of time involved in answering the questions. After an interval of two weeks, the copies of the questionnaire were administered to the same group of persons. The two scores obtained from the two different administrations were then correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained, showing significant reliability of the instrument. With the help of four research assistants, copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. Out of the 377 copies of the questionnaire administered 362 were returned and found useable and results were expressed in the form of frequencies and percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlated Co-efficient was used to test the hypotheses.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The study assessed the influence of needs and gratification on 377 readers' choice of newspapers in Uyo. The results and analysis of data are presented below.

Table 1: Absolute and relative frequencies of respondents by newspaper contents

Contents	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
News	199	54.97
Features	93	25.69
Advertorial	16	4.42
Editorial	20	5.53
Entertainment items	34	9.39
Others	-	-
Total	362	100

Table 1 shows that 54.97% of the respondents are motivated by news content to read newspapers, while very few respondents 4.42% read advertorial.

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Table 2: Absolute and relative frequencies of respondents' newspaper contents by age

Age Range	News	Features	Advertorials	Editorial	Entertainment
18-28	35(9.67)	1(0.8)	1.(0.28)	-	18(4.97)
29-39	44(12.15)	8.(2.21)	9(2.49)	-	13(3.59)
40-50	82(22.65)	38(10.50)	5(1.38)	7(1.93)	1(0.28)
51-60	27(7.46)	-	7(1.93)	9(2.49)	1(0.28)
61 & above	11(3.04)	19(5.25)	-	4(1.10)	1(0.28)
Total	199(54.97)	93(25.69)	16(4.42)	20(5.52)	3418.78)

Table 2 shows that news is the most preferred contents by respondents from all ages with 54.97%. Respondents within the age bracket 40-50 accessed most of the contents with 36.74%, while those within the age bracket 61 and above accessed the least contents.

Table 3: Absolute and relative frequencies of respondents' newspaper contents by income

Contents	Income						
	Below 15,000	15,000 – 30,000	31,000 – 45,000	46,000 – 75,000	61,000 – 75,000	76,000 & above	Total
News	17(4.70)	30(8.29)	39(10.77)	77(21.27)	17(4.70)	19(5.25)	199(54.97)
Features	2(0.55)	3(0.83)	11(3.04)	52(14.36)	20(5.52)	5(1.38)	93(25.69)
Advertorial	-	3(1.10)	10(2.49)	3(0.83)	-	-	16(4.42)
Editorial	-	-	11(3.04)	5(1.38)	4(1.10)	-	2.(5.53)
Entertainment	16(4.42)	11(4.14)	5(0.28)	1(0.28)	1(0.28)	1(0.28)	34(9.39)
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	35(9.68)	47(12.98)	76(20.99)	138(38.12)	42(11.60	24(6.63)	362(100)

Table 3 shows that respondents between the income bracket of N46,000 and N60,000 accessed all the contents with 38.12% while news was the most preferred content by respondents from all the income brackets, 54.97%. Respondents in the various income brackets paid least attention to editorial, 5.53%.

Table 4: Absolute and relative frequencies of respondents' newspaper contents by occupation

Content	Occupation				
	Public servants	Businessmen/ women	Students	Others	Total
News	130(35.91)	47(12.98)	19(5.25)	3(0.83)	199(54.97)
Features	56(15.47)	15(4.14)	20(5.52)	2(0.55)	93(25.69)
Advertorial	3(0.83)	7(1.93)	3(0.83)	3(0.83)	16(4.42)
Editorial	16(4.42)	-	3(0.83)	1(0.28)	20(5.62)
Entertainment	5(1.38)	11(3.04)	15(4.14)	3(0.83)	34(9.39)
Total	210(58.01)	80(22.10)	60(16.57)	12(3.31)	362(100)

In Table 4, news content received more attention among respondents in the various occupational brackets, 54.97%. Public servants accessed the various contents more than respondents in other occupational brackets with 58.01%. Students pay more attention to feature articles (5.52%) and news (5.52%) as well as entertainment (4.14%). This is not surprising because the younger generation respondents are likely to pay more attention to entertainment contents.

Table 5: Absolute and relative frequencies of respondents' newspaper contents by educational qualification

Contents	Educational Qualification						
	FSLC	WAEC/ SSCE	OND	HND/BSc./BA	MA/MSc	PhD	TOTAL
News	4(1.1)	26(7.18)	48(13.26)	106(29.28)	10(2.76)	5(1.38)	199(54.97)
Features	4(1.1)	3(0.83)	9(2.49)	59(16.30)	12(3.31)	5(1.38)	93(25.69)
Advertorial	-	-	9(2.49)	7(2.49)	-	-	16(4.42)
Editorial	-	-	-	5(1.38)	7(1.93)	8(2.21)	20(5.52)
Entertainment	15(4.14)	15(4.14)	1(0.28)	4(1.1)	-	-	34(9.39)
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	23(6.35)	44(12.15)	67(18.51)	181(50.00)	29(8.01)	18(4.97)	362(100)

Table 5 reveals that holders of first degrees did not only pay more attention to news with 29.28%, they also accessed newspapers contents more than respondents with other educational qualifications. Entertainment was accessed more by those with lower level qualification (GCE/WAEC).

Table 6: Absolute and relative frequencies of respondents' newspaper contents by gender

Content	Gender	
	Male	Female
News	102(28.18)	97(54.9)
Features	61(16.85)	32(8.84)
Advertorial	10(2.76)	6(1.66)
Editorial	16(4.42)	4(1.10)
Entertainment	23(6.35)	11(3.04)
Others	-	-
Total	212(58.56)	150(41.44)

Table 6 shows that 28.18% male respondents preferred news content as against 26.80% female. The difference is not very significant. Male respondents preferred feature-related content 16.85% most, against female 8.84% (32). It is, yet, very striking that male respondents also prefer entertainment content most, with 6.35% against female 3.04%.

Table 7: Absolute and relative frequencies of respondents by psychographic factors

Needs	Absolute Frequencies	Relative frequencies
Information/education	180	49.72
Entertainment/relaxation	72	19.89
Companionship/overcoming boredom	5	1.38
Escape from trouble of living	5	1.38
Surveillance/gain knowledge	85	23.48
For advice on various issues	15	4.14
Others (specify)	-	-
Total	362	100

Table 7 shows that 49.72% of the respondents read newspapers for information/education, followed by 23.48% to explore their environment/gain

knowledge and 19.89% are motivated by entertainment/relaxation needs to read newspapers.

Hypothesis 1
Ho_1: There is no relationship between the needs of readers and the newspaper content they choose.

The hypothesis was tested, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Needs and Choice of Newspapers.

Table 8: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient between needs and choice of newspaper contents

X	Y	X²	Y²	XY
180	199	32400	39601	35820
72	93	5284	8649	6696
5	16	25	256	80
5	20	25	400	100
85	34	7225	1156	2890
15	0	225	0	0
N=362	N=362	45084	50062	45586

The hypothesis tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient, yielded the value of 0.959. The table value here is .7545 at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision: Since the calculated r value of 0.959 is greater than the critical table value of .7545, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is a positive correlation between readers' needs and their choice of newspaper contents.

Hypothesis 2
Ho_2: There is no relationship between the gratifications from reading newspapers and the content to which readers expose themselves.
The hypothesis was tested, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient showing the correlation between gratifications by readers and the types of content they exposed themselves to in newspapers.

Table 9: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient showing correlation between gratifications by readers and the types of contents selected in newspapers

X	Y	X²	Y²	XY
180	199	32400	39601	35820
75	93	5625	8649	6696
30	16	900	256	480
18	20	324	400	360
22	34	484	1156	748
3	0	09	-	0
8	0	64	-	0
4	0	16	-	0
5	0	25	-	0
7	0	49	-	0
N=362	N=362	$\sum X^2$ =39896	$\sum Y^2$ =50062	$\sum XY$ =44383

Table 9 shows the testing of the second hypothesis, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The result yielded the value of 0.067. The table value here is .7545 at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule: Since the calculated r value of 0.067 is less than the critical table value of .7545, the null hypothesis is upheld, while the alternate hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is no correlation between the gratifications readers obtained and the type of contents they exposed themselves to in newspapers.

Discussion of Findings

Readers' content preferences in newspapers
Table 1 presents readers' content preferences in newspapers. The table indicates that readers seek content, selectively in newspapers. The study revealed that the respondents ranked news as the most preferred content in newspapers. The ranking of news as the most preferred content in newspapers had received empirical support in other studies which had found that' news is the most widely accessed media content by the audience (Aliede, 2002; Okoye, 2003; Ekanem, 2006).

Findings from this study also show that respondents with higher qualifications seek serious media content, while those with lower qualifications access less serious content in the media. Respondents with higher qualifications such as HND/BSc/BA, MSc/MA, and PhD prefer contents like features and editorials, while those with lower qualifications such as FSLC, WASC/SSCE, and OND prefer less serious contents such as entertainment and advertorials. This result supports earlier findings by Schramm and Porter (1982) that education correlates more closely than any other variable with information intake. Earlier studies by Larzarfield and Kerudal (1948), Steiner (1963) had shown a strong relationship between education and media use.

The fact that readers seek contents in newspapers selectively had received support from earlier studies. McQuail (2011) observes that audience members prefer specific content, depending on their needs. This means that readers do not just buy newspapers or listen to the radio or view television programmes for the sake of doing so; they access the contents in relation to the gratifications they desire. The uses and gratifications theory of audience behaviour postulates that media use is selective and motivated by rational self-awareness of the individual's own needs and the expectations that these needs will be satisfied by particular types of media and content.

Demographic and Psychographic factors common to readers' needs
The demographic and psychographic variables common to readers with certain needs are presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Demographic variables included age, income, educational qualification, and gender. Psychographic variables included interest, values, social status, and beliefs. The finding of this study shows that certain demographic factors, to a large extent, influence readers' needs in newspapers. This finding corroborates Ekanem's (2006) report that there is a significant difference in the level of media exposure and content utilization between male and female teachers in Akwa Ibom State. Ekanem found that gender is an important factor in differential media exposure even within a specific profession. Nwabueze (2010) reports that there is a relationship between respondents' gender and content preferences in satellite and local television audiences.

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This finding supports Defleur and Dennis (1994) position that age is directly related to high or low media exposure. Age helps to predict the amount of media use. They revealed that children are heavy viewers of television, for example, compared to teenagers who tend to watch less than any other group.

This finding also aligns with Schramm and Porter's (1982) report that the choice of serious media content increases with education. Akpan (1987) confirms that people who are highly educated tend to prefer contents that require serious intellectual participation.

This study reveals that readers access the contents of newspapers based on various psychographic factors, including attitudes, beliefs, interests, social status, lifestyles, and individuals' backgrounds. This finding agrees with Akpan (2006), Ekanem (2006), Nwabueze (2010), and McQuail (2011 who, in their works, identify certain attributes that influence the reader's choice of newspaper contents. They include basic needs, social situation, and the individual's background, such as experience, interests, and education which affect people's ideas about what they want from the media and which of them best meets their needs. McQuail (2011) citing Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985), observe that attitudes towards media are the outcome of empirically located beliefs and also of values (and personal preference).

Influence of Readers' Needs and Choice of Newspaper
The study shows that there is a positive correlation between readers' needs and their choice of newspapers. The findings agree with the uses and gratifications theory which stipulates that the audiences are active and they access media contents that will meet their needs. A key tenet of the uses and gratifications theory of audience behaviour is that media use is selective and motivated by rational self-awareness of the individual's own needs and an expectation that those needs will be satisfied by particular types of media and contents.

Similar studies have established that several factors are responsible for the determination of audience exposure to the mass media (Akpan 2006; Ekanem 2006; Nwabueze, 2010). Such factors have been classified broadly into two: demographic and psychographic factors. Interest, nature of the content, and habit are psychographic factors while demographic factors are education, age, income, occupation, and social status. A third factor called the environmental factor includes: availability of the media and preferred contact, knowledge or usage of the medium, the viewer's environment and scheduling pattern of some media contents, and usage of other media (Nwabueze, 2010

The finding of this study corroborates McQuail's (2005b) categorization of the factors that influence audience preference of newspaper content. The factors are 'audience side factors' and 'media side factors.' Audience side factors include personal attributes such as age, gender, family position, study and work situation, level of income and lifestyle; social background and milieu, especially as reflected in social class, education, religious, cultural, political, and family environment and region or locality or residence; media-related needs for such personal benefits as a company, distraction, information, among others.

These needs, according to McQuail (2005b) are widely experienced, but the particular balance between them depends on personal background and circumstances; personal tastes and preference for certain general habits of leisure time, media use, and availability to be in the audience at a particular time. Availability refers to being in the appropriate place (e.g. at home, in trains, driving, etc.). It also refers to the economic

potentials to be in an audience, for instance, being able and willing to pay the price of a cinema ticket, a music recording, or a newspaper; awareness of the choices available and the amount and kind of information processed also play a part in audience exposure. The specific context of use varies according to the medium, but generally refers to sociability and location of use. Chance often plays a part in media exposure and its intervention reduces the ability to really explain choice or audience composition. The 'media side' factors McQuail listed are: (i) the media system (ii) structure of the media provision (iii) available content options (iv) publicity, (v) timing and presentation.

From findings in this study, these factors are brought about by an individual's location within the social structure and which are beyond his control (age, income, education, etc.); the self-imposed factors are those which reside in the individual's personality and relate to his interest in or apathy to services provided by the media. The environmental factors are those outside the individual's personality and demographics. This supports McQuail's (2005b) exposition.

Influence of Gratifications received on the Choice of Newspapers
The study reveals that there is no significant relationship between gratifications readers obtained and the type of newspapers they exposed themselves to. Meanwhile, several studies have shown the various gratifications derived from the use of media by audiences. Rubin's (2009) study found that many people view television for entertainment, pass time, escape, information and companionship. Payne, Severin, and Dozier's (1988), in their study on magazine readers, listed diversion, surveillance, and interaction as the gratifications users derive from the medium, while Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) study on the use of the Internet, listed entertainment, pass time, interpersonal utility, information-seeking, and convenience.

The finding of this study is not in support of Ferguson and Perse's (2000) study on the "World Wide Web as a Functional Alternative to Television," (TV-related web surfing), which noted entertainment, pass time, relaxation, and social information as gratifications derived from the medium, while Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade (2004), in their work on Users' Gratifications from the Use of Commercial Websites, found out that the medium provides entertainment, search factor, cognitive factors and unique factors.

It also contradicts the work of Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005) who in their study of marketing websites found out that audiences get entertainment, social interaction, information, and convenience from the medium, while another study by Diddi and LaRose (2006), using internet news, listed entertainment, escapism, habit, pass time, surveillance, news, quizzes as what motivate an individual to use the medium.

Conclusion/Recommendations
The study has confirmed that readers' exposure to newspaper content is influenced by several demographic and psychographic factors. It shows that the reader has a certain level of expectation before exposing himself or herself to any content in the newspaper which must have value for him or her. The study also confirms that there is a positive correlation between readers' needs and their choice of newspaper content. However, the relationship between gratifications and choice of newspaper content could not be established. It is recommended that media professionals should take into consideration audiences' diverse backgrounds and belief systems in the packaging of newspaper content. There should be adequate and constant training of journalists in audience

research in relation to the perceived needs of readers. Content providers should realize that apart from demographic factors, psychographic variables also motivate newspaper readers to access contents that satisfy their needs. Contents providers should pay more attention to such psychographic variables and align contents to meet such needs. Readers of newspapers have shown clearly that they seek information and other contents of educational value. This means that newspaper publishers should devote more attention to providing such content. They should shift their focus to content that helps readers gain knowledge and explore society generally.

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