

Full Length Research

Utilization of Nigerian Daily Newspapers as source of obtaining information among educated people in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Newspapers are not only mere sources of information, but also an essential store house of information. This paper examines the extent of the utilization of newspapers as both sources of information and store house of information among the literates in Ilorin metropolis, Nigeria. The paper also discusses the sources where the newspapers are being accessed as well as the means of accessing the information. This paper spelt out different columns available in the newspapers and explains the extent to which they attract readers. The opinions of respondents were analyzed alongside gender differences or sensitivity in the readership of Nigeria newspapers. The study went further to determine the newspaper that has the highest readership based on the various available sources. The data for this study was collected through questionnaire. The paper concludes by giving some suggestions aimed at improving Nigeria daily news to further satisfy and meet the information needs of readers at various levels.

Keywords: Educated people, Newspaper, Information Utilization

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper according to Wikipedia is most commonly published daily, or twice daily, weekly, fortnightly, or on a specific day or the week or month. It was stress further that in most cases are meant to deliver news and other information in an up-to-date, factual manner without bias. Accordingly, newspapers overtime develop loyal audiences and are often identified with the stereotypical attitude of the key demographics of their audience. Newspaper often includes features, editorials articles, opinion pieces and social commentary on current events which may reflect the target audience or the political/social bias of the newspaper.

Generally, newspapers bring to the limelight

information on national and international events. Among issues that usually form part of the information printed in newspapers are: personalities, crime, business, entertainment, society and sports. Others include politics, agriculture, science, technology and many more.

Newspapers in any society help to inform members of the society about current happenings. For example, in the society, there are innovations every day. Scientists are discovering new drugs and many other happenings in other facets of life in the society. It is also imperative to know that information required by people are diverse in nature. Hence it is certain that any categories of readers will benefit no matter how little the information might be.

Some of the published information is paid for while other information are being obtained by journalists who work for different newspaper publishing houses. Every minute of every day, something newsworthy is happening somewhere in the world, hence the relevance of newspapers as a source of accessing information about prevailing issues in the society cannot be over emphasized.

In most Nigeria cities and towns, newspaper sellers who are usually called vendors, sell newspapers to people mostly in the early part of the day. People who can read and write in English language, which is the official language that most Nigerian newspapers are written, subscribe individually to newspapers of their choices. Some buy theirs on their way to the office in the morning, while the vendors deliver it in some offices based on agreements between the parties. The libraries and internet are other sources where many people get the newspapers to read in order to obtain the desired information every day. Other groups of people usually cluster around the vendor's stands that are usually located in different parts of Nigerian cities and towns to quickly glance the front page of the newspapers which are displayed to prospective buyers.

Historically, Ilorin, which is the city where the respondents for the study were selected, is an ancient city and has been the state capital of Kwara state since inception. It is located between the northern and southern region of Nigeria. In view of its strategic location and importance, the city has several presences of federal, state, and local government establishments. The city also attracts the attention of newspaper publishers, who deposits their newspapers with their agents every day. Hence, it is a usual thing to notice newspaper vendors at the major roads in the city selling the newspapers every day.

Reading and understanding of the content of any piece of information is easily attainable if the readers understand the language in which the information is written. This opinion makes the researchers believe that only those who understand English language can successfully acquire information from the daily newspapers on their own, since they are all published in English language which is the official language in Nigeria. In Nigeria, people that can speak and write in English language are conventionally referred to as being educated while; those that cannot write and read English language are usually called illiterate. This is because the official language for all official transactions in schools, offices, court of law is English language as it is enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The study revealed the relative importance of newspapers as a source of obtaining desired information among people who are literate in English language. It also showed how the newspapers are patronized for the

purpose of accessing information. The areas of interest of respondents were also revealed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Nigerian press law, as stated by Uche (1990), a newspaper is any paper containing public news, intelligence or any remarkable or observation therein printed anywhere in Nigeria for sale and published in Nigeria or printed elsewhere and circulating in Nigeria periodically. The newspapers are printed in parts or in number at intervals not exceeding twenty-six days between the publication of any two such papers, parts or numbers and includes any paper printed in order to be disposed and made public weekly, or more often or at intervals not exceeding twenty-six days containing only or principally advertisements.

While expressing his view on the concept of a newspaper, Arahana (2013) explains that some people feel that, when we think of newspapers, we think of them as bringing us news, also when people think of news, they think of what is happening currently around them. He argued that newspapers are not only source of information but also an essential store house of information. It is true, in his opinion to associate news dissemination as the first function of a newspaper. He however further reveal that news from newspapers are not just news about the day's happenings, rather newspapers disseminate selection of news around the world, which could be local or international, good or bad. The news also covers areas like health, politics, sport, education entertainment etc.

In an On-line discussion on whether, newspapers are considered a primary source or secondary source, Murphy (2011) expresses that it is a grey area. He noted that different people and institutions think differently about it. This he thinks depends to a great extent on the content of the newspaper article. Some newspaper articles are clearly primary source. For example, a reporter's account of something that he or she witnessed firsthand is a primary source. Similarly, an opinion piece in a newspaper is primary source. He further notes that some newspaper articles could be secondary source, because most newspaper stories are written by reporters who have gathered information from a witness or participants in a newsworthy event.

Newspapers have been linked to sustain good governance, particularly in a democratic set up. This is the opinion of Yarbrough (2013), when he in his column that their product is information and in a democracy it is information that keeps us free. He further stated and I quote "When we think if newspaper, we think of them as bringing us news". When we think of what is happening around us. This is a totally inadequate description of news as well as newspaper. The same author also said

and I quote "our-government will go extraordinary length to hide information from us". "Information that we have a right to see because it is our hard earned money they are spending. But the newspapers are there to see that conducting the business behind closed door is the exceptional and out of the rule". This author explained the role of newspapers in shaping governance with an adage which he narrated thus:

"If I know something and don't tell you, I have power; if I tell you, I transfer that power to you".

Newspapers, according to him, transfer power from the powerful to the people. To corroborate this opinion Stephen (2013) in history of newspaper is quoted to have said. "Where it is left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspaper or newspaper without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

It is certain that newspapers empower the people by providing necessary information that allow for good decision and assessment of a particular situation. A further look at the advantage of newspapers revealed that the newspaper archives are acknowledged as a widely used source in all types of libraries.

This thought is supported by Mill (1981) when he reports that indeed newspaper is often the only source of information on the social, economic, and political development of a nation, region or community. This view is elaborated further by Hamilton (1992), when he says that newspapers are the first draft of history and that through their reporting and commentaries, they influence politics make or break public career and even decide the fate of government.

In line with this view, Aiyepoku (1989) when writing on information utilization by policy makers in Nigeria, report that newspapers and magazines are among the five most used sources of information by policy makers. The findings of Igbeka and Ola (2010) also confirm the importance of newspapers as a widely read by people of all ages and walks of life in the community.

With all the advantages of newspapers given by different authors, a major disadvantage of newspapers was analyzed by Alley (2013). He explains that though newspapers bring us news, the author realized that they can be bias as the reporter or analyst may present his/her view of a situation. This reduces the value of the newspaper as a source of information. Alley (2013) further explain that many newspapers can be politically inclined or controlled by the government in some countries and the newspapers just print the good things and hide the adverse aspects.

Another issue that Alley highlights as shortcomings of newspapers was that they are becoming more and more commercially based. They give more space to advertisements which is not the primary purpose of a

newspaper.

Generally, whatever advantage or disadvantage may be associated to newspapers, it is certain that newspaper serve the role of providing daily information. However, beyond this general purpose attributed to newspapers, Hamilton (1992) identifies five ways of classifying what newspapers reading means to different people. These include: unwind from stress or as a tension reliever; develop public opinion; reveal prevailing issues in the society; and promoting entertainment as well as socialization.

NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

In Nigeria, publication of daily newspaper, is as old as 1903. According to Uche (1990), the first newspaper in Nigeria was "Iwe Iroyin". It is a newspaper written in Yoruba language, one of the major languages spoken among Nigerians. After that, several other newspapers emerged, but they were published in English language and presently there are over 50 newspapers being published in Nigeria. Most of them are written in English Language, while a few write their information in some of the Nigerian dialect. It is done to satisfy the desire of illiterates who may want to have access to information circulated in newspapers but cannot read the version published in English language. It is noteworthy that the language of publication of many Nigerian newspapers, which is English language, restricted the readership to those who are literate in English language and these groups of people in Ilorin metropolis form the focus of this research work. Nigerian newspapers circulated either locally or internationally and can also be accessed on the internet through their various website.

Objective of the Study

It is certain that newspapers are a readily available source of information to those people who are educated in Nigerian society. Based on this observation, this research is conducted to find out how newspapers are utilized to obtain desired information among people who are educated at the different sectors of Ilorin metropolis.

Therefore, objective of the study are formulated to include the following:

1. To determine the extent the newspapers are used as a source of obtaining Information.
2. To find out the source where the newspapers are accessed.
3. To determine the frequency of utilization of each of the newspapers to obtain information.
4. To determine the point of attraction or influence of the respondent to a particular newspaper.
5. To find out the column of the newspaper that

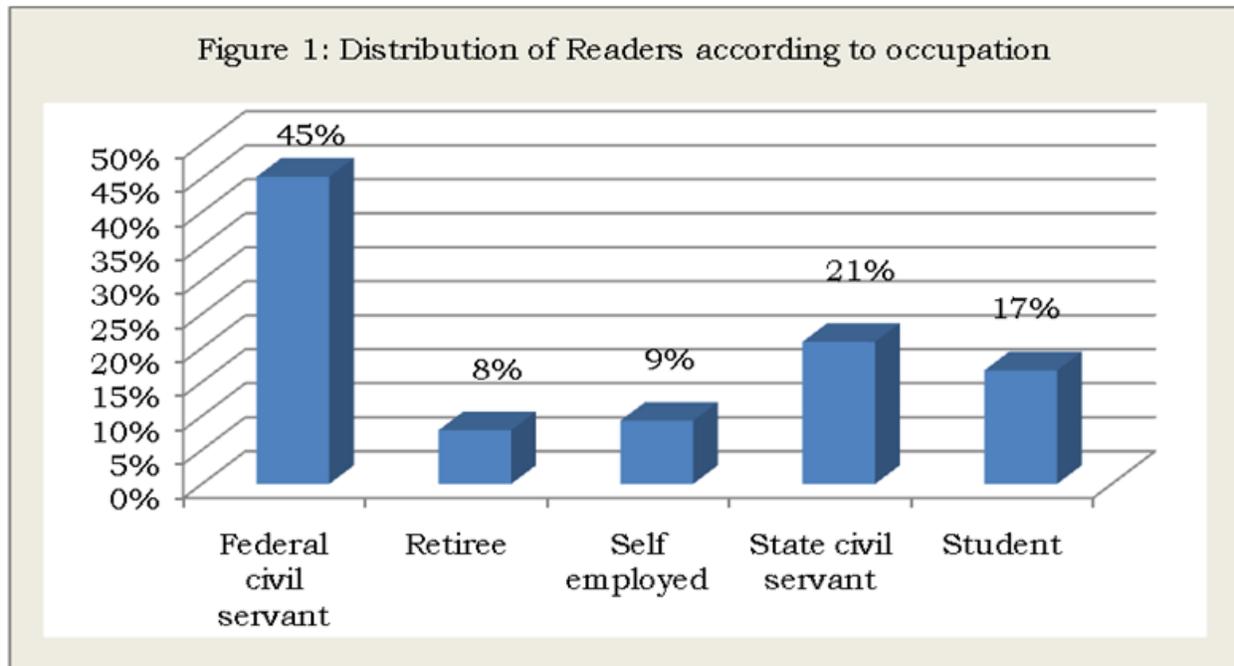


Figure 1. Distribution of Readers according to occupation

attracts respondent's most and why.

6. To find out if the daily newspapers meet the information needs of the targeted readers.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was collected through questionnaire. Because of the heterogeneity of the study area, a stratified random sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaire among the targeted people in Ilorin metropolis. The questionnaire was distributed to different establishments and among people of different cadre in the civil service of both State and Federal Government establishments located in Ilorin metropolis. Also the questionnaire was distributed among self-employed people who are literate in English language.

The questionnaire has two sections which captured the bio data of the respondents, as well as their opinions on various issues relating to access and utilization of newspapers to obtain desired information.

The respondents were requested to tick the options that are applicable to them and also express how they think information dissemination in Nigerian Newspapers can be improved.

The questionnaires were distributed through both personal contact and the use of contact persons. Five hundred questionnaires were distributed out of which four hundred and thirty one (431) were received back and subjected to analysis using the simple statistical

methods like percentages and Chi-square test of independence to explain the tables and figures generated by the researchers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This section presents the result of the analysis of the study and the discussions.

A. Distribution of respondents according to place of employment

Figure 1 shows the sampling frame where the respondents were drawn. Federal civil servants were the majority (45% of the total population sampled). 21% of the populations were from the state civil service while 17% were from the student category. The self employed and the retired (senior citizen) were also included in the sampling frame-forming about 9% and 8% of the total population for study respectively. It can be inferred from figure 1 that federal and state civil servants are inclined to source information from daily newspapers than retirees, students and self employed categories.

B. Extent of Paper Read

The rating of the extent of paper read shows that 48% Federal civil servants indicate high patronage (Figure 2).

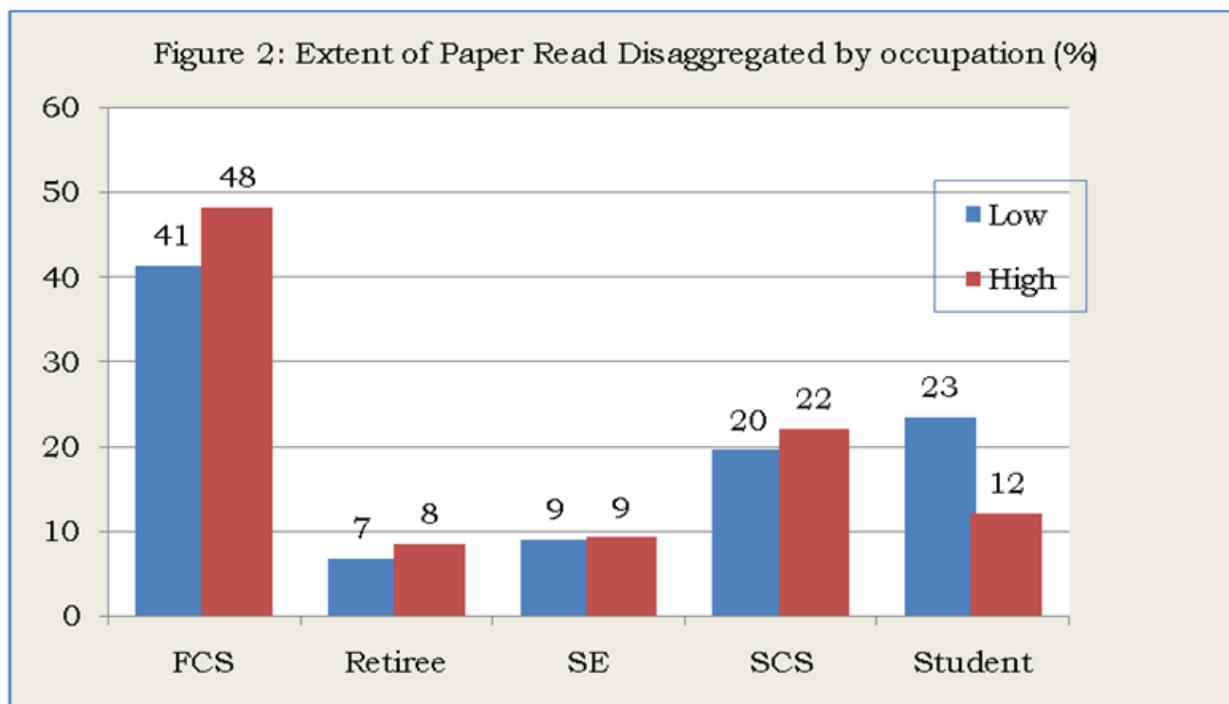


Figure 2. Extent of Paper Read Disaggregated by occupation (%)

The student and the State civil servants also had higher patronage as compared to the other categories. This may suggest that daily news papers, internet facilities, mobiles phones and other source of information media are more readily available to these categories of respondents. Records show that in most public service offices (both state and federal), daily newspapers are purchased on regular bases and made available to staff in libraries and /or information centre. This may be the reason why the state and federal civil servants account for the large percentage of daily newspaper patronage. On the other hand students readily patronize newspapers online through their mobile phones, iPods, palmtop etc.

B. Gender versus extent of paper read

Figure 3 described the extent of paper read by the study population in relation to gender. The results showed that higher percentage of the populations (81%) patronizing daily newspapers were of the male category, while the female folks have less patronage of dailies in sourcing information. This may be due to the fact that female generally are preoccupied with responsibilities of caring for homestead and other challenging task emanating from either the home or office. Understandably, the males also face similar problem especially when it comes to caring for family and other task, but the bulk of the task goes to the female folks as a result of the society

assigned roles in gender issues especially in African countries like Nigeria.

The chi-square test of independency show that the extent of paper read truly depends on gender. This test as shown in Table 1 is significant at 5% level. The null hypothesis of equal patronage dailies between male and female is rejected. This means that the population of male patronizing dailies in sourcing information is significantly higher compare to the proportion of the female patronage.

C. Academic Qualification versus Extent of Paper Read

The study also attempted to establish relationship between the extents of paper read and academic qualifications. Figure 4 suggest that 47% of B. Sc. holders indicated high patronage of daily newspapers while 37% OND/HND holders indicated high patronage as well. The M. Sc and Ph. D holders appear to have lower patronage. This could be attributed to the fact that these categories of respondent constitute the bulk of the unemployed or underemployed populations in the study area. It can be inferred that these unemployed graduates spend much time searching for job advertisement and/ or job vacancies on pages of newspapers and other information medium. Unlike respondents with lower school certificates, the M.Sc/MA and the Ph. D categories

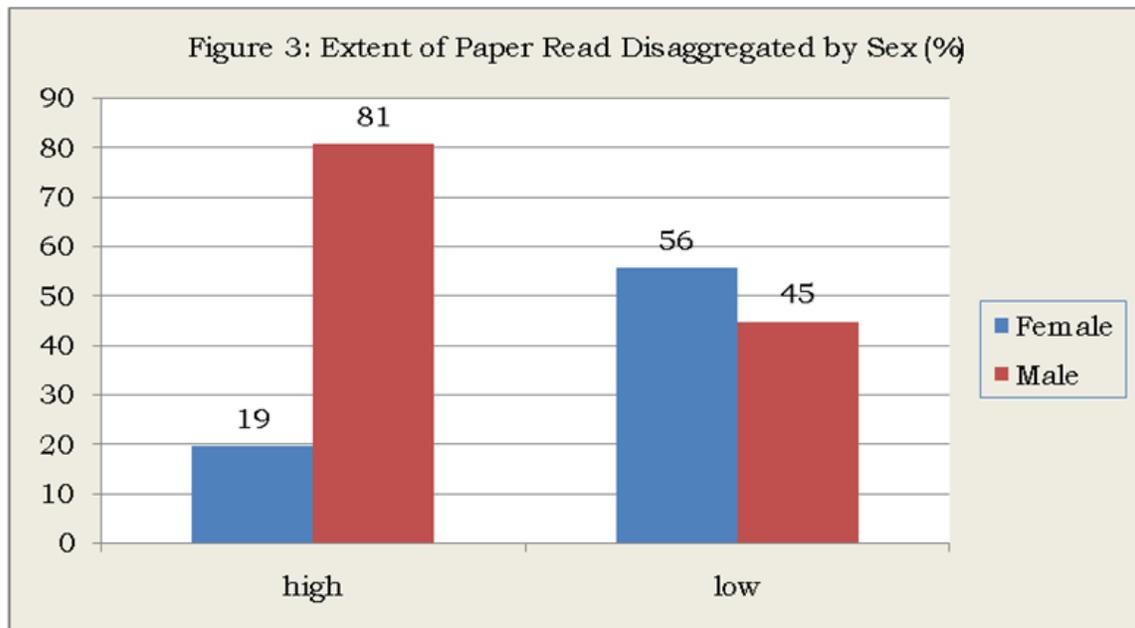


Figure 3. Extent of Paper Read Disaggregated by Sex (%)

Table 1. Chi-Square Test for Sex versus Extent of Newspaper Read

	Sex	
	Female	Male
High	49	203
Extent of paper read Low	84	66
chi-square 18.76 (1)*		

*significant at 5% level

Table 2. Chi-Square Test for Qualification and Extent of Paper Read.

	Qualifications			
	B Sc/BA	M Sc/MA	OND/HND	PhD
High	104	49	76	10
Extent of paper read Low	76	37	74	3
Chi-square 32.92 (3)*				

*Significant at 5% level

spent less time sourcing information from the dailies since they are preoccupied with research and other related task especially for those in the research work force.

The chi-square test on qualifications and extent of paper read was significant at 5% level. The hypothesis of

equal patronage between the various respondent irrespective of their academic qualification is rejected. This suggest that extent of paper read/patronage is dependent on qualifications of an individual reader. Table 2 implied that B.Sc/BA and HND/ND are more likely to source information through dailies compare to those with

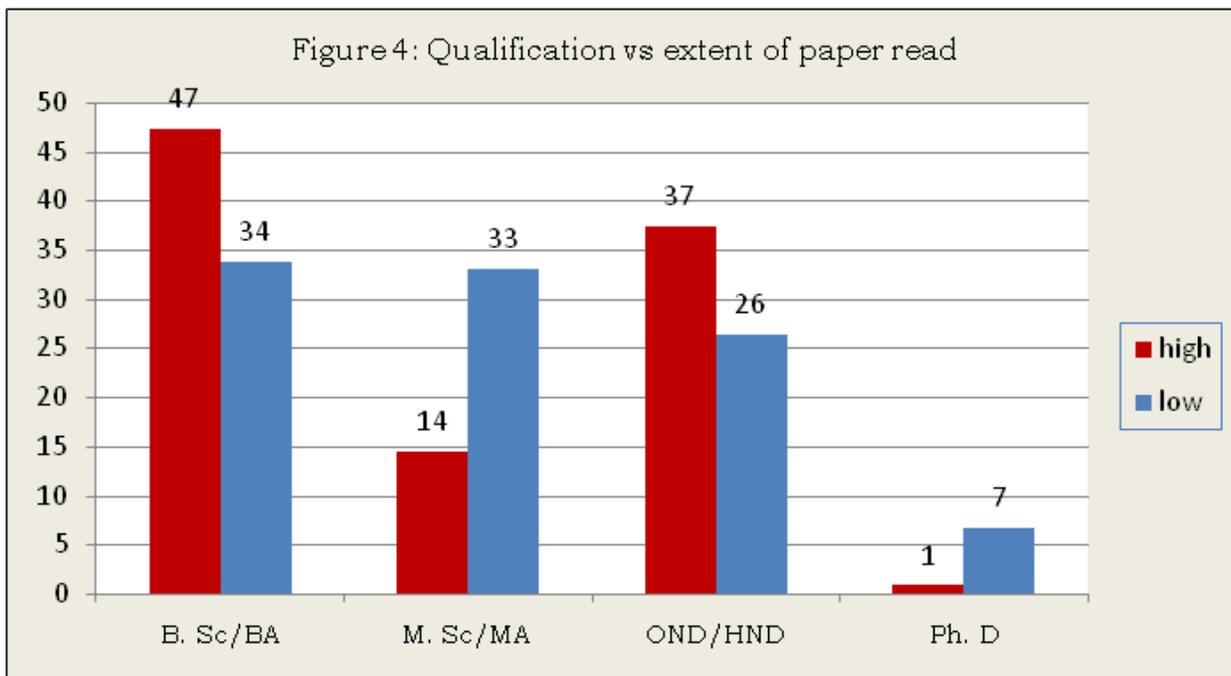


Figure 4. Qualification vs extent of paper read

Table 3. Chi-Square Test for Years of experience versus extent of paper read

	Years of experience			
	0-10	11-20	21-30	>30
High	117	53	47	11
Low	97	47	22	8
chi-square 42.04(16)ns				

M.Sc/MA and PhD. The reasons behind these findings are as earlier mentioned.

D. Years of Experience versus Extent of Paper Read

This section seeks to address whether years of experience of an individual has bearing with the extent at which such an individual patronize the newspaper media. The result of this investigation as represented in Figure 5 showed that respondents with fewer years in service/work appears to source information from media more than those who have stayed relatively longer in service. For example 60% of the respondents below 11 years in the work force indicate high patronage of daily newspaper while about 32% of responded ages between 11 to 20 years indicate high patronage of the national

dailies. This may be so because those in the academic and research cadres are usually preoccupied with either their research work or administrative work, and therefore may not spend much time in surfing or sourcing information on the dailies.

In testing the hypothesis of equal patronage irrespective of years of experience of the individual newspaper reader, the null hypothesis was rejected at %% level of significance. This means that the extent to which one a particular of paper depended largely on years of experience. Inferences from Table 3 implied that those with fewer years of experience have more affinity to reading/patronizing daily newspaper. This again gives credence to the fact earlier established in Figure 5'

E. Reliable Source of Newspaper Supply

The internet with 26.9% appears to be the most readily

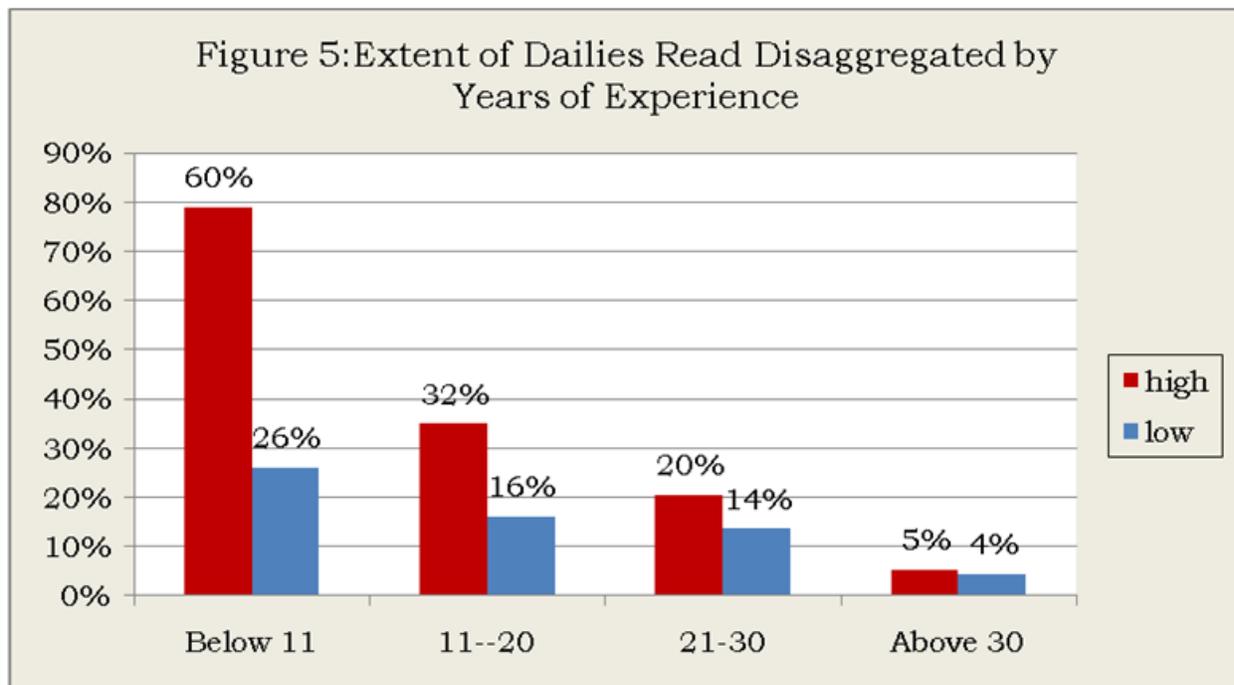


Figure 5. Extent of Dailies Read Disaggregated by Years of Experience

available source of information to most respondents. This is followed by office supply (20.1%) and libraries (17.0%), personal purchase score about 13.8%, newspaper vendor or stands score 9.8%, and friends/family members (9.6%). Over the years the internet has proved to be a powerful tool for sourcing information of any kind and more recently, most newspapers houses like every individual have taken advantage of the internet to publish news article and columns. The cost of doing this is very cheap compared to the cost of printing newspapers in the printing press. It also saves time, energy and transportation/ distribution costs. For the educated general populace, the use of mobile phones and computer with internet connectively has proved to be cheaper source of news platform compared to the buying of newspapers from the vendors. Interestingly, some individuals source their information through the so called newspaper stand/vendor. Under this arrangement, an individual pays as low as ₦20 to ₦50 and can read as many paper as available at the newspaper stands/vendors. Figure 6

F. Attraction Criteria

The style of news presentation by most news media appears to be the most powerful attraction criteria. The study confirmed this assertion since approximately 37% of the respondents implied to have preferred particular

dailies due to their style of news presentation.

The availability of newspaper is also another attraction criterion that can spur an individual into buying and/ or reading a particular newspaper. This is so because some news media houses are readily published/ available in other part of the country and as such do not have a wide coverage. An average reader is therefore left with little or no choice to make in this regard.

Another very important attraction criterion is coverage of profession. About 22% of the respondents prefer some newspaper over the other due to the coverage of information related to their profession or chosen career. Figure 7

G. Frequency of Patronage versus Different Dailies

Figure 8 shows that 22% and 21% of the respondents respectively preferred the Tribune and the Guardian newspaper followed by the Nation (14%), the Sun (10%) and the Vanguard (8%). The high patronage observed for the Tribune and the Guardian newspaper may be due to availability and style of news presentation earlier discussed. Figure 8 gives detailed information of other newspaper and their level of patronage. It can be inferred that those newspapers with local coverage recorded lower patronage.

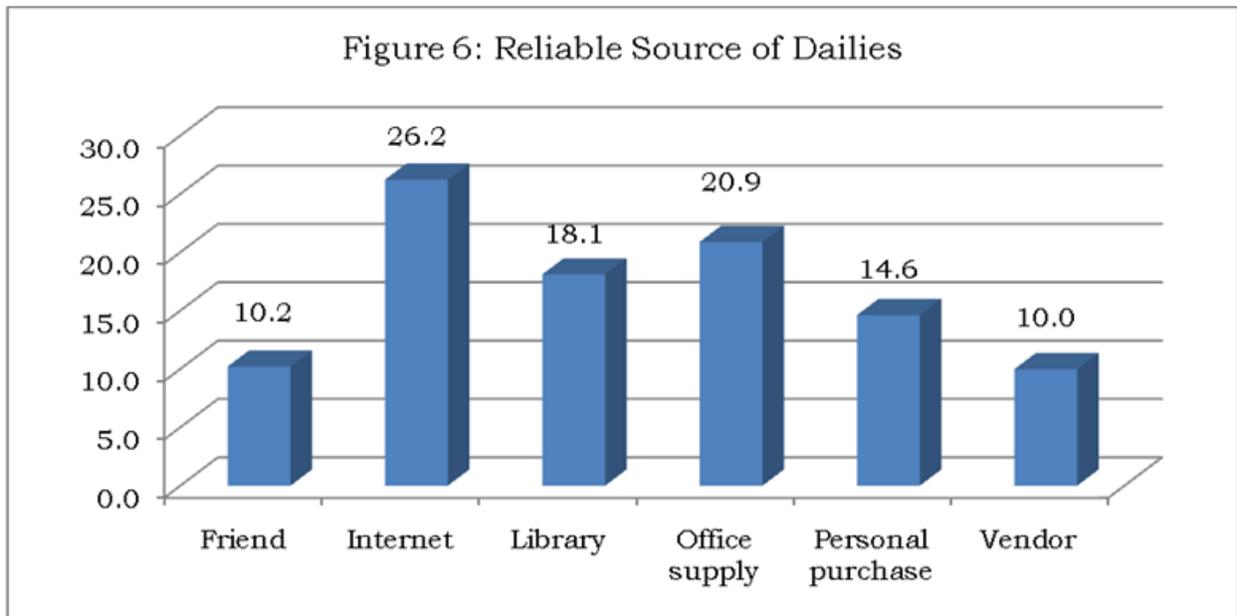


Figure 6. Reliable Source of Dailies

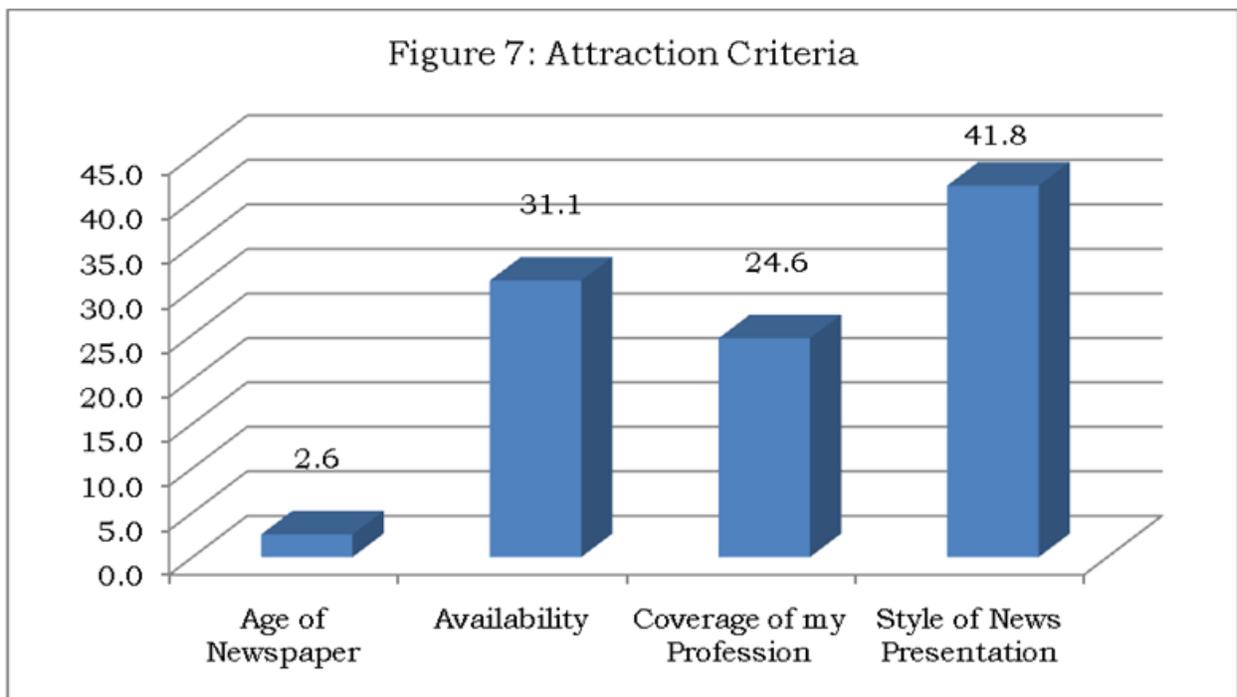


Figure 7. Attraction Criteria

H. Column Attraction

For the majority of the respondents (16%), the front page

of a newspaper appears to drive them into patronizing the newspaper. Other factors that can arouse reader's interest include education (11.7%), health (11%), politics

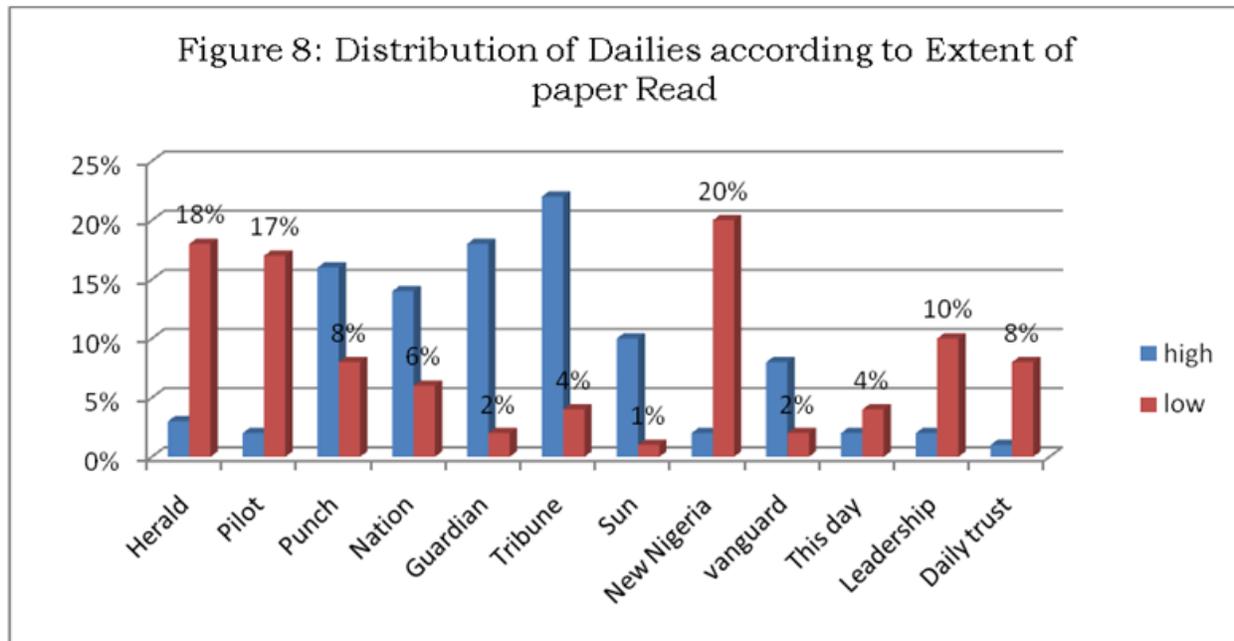


Figure 8. Distribution of Dailies according to Extent of paper Read

(10.7%), security and religion (9.4% each) and crime (9.1%)

I. Desired Level of Information

The major aim of patronizing newspaper is to source information at any point in time. Therefore it was reasonable to find out the level of desired information sourced by each respondent. Figure 9 show that 71.8% of the respondents got the desired information. In other words the majority of the respondents are to a high extent satisfied with the current level of information gotten from the newspapers available to them. Only 22% rated the news media as low when it comes to the level of desired information sourced. This analysis is represented in a Figure 9.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

National dailies are mostly patronize by Federal and State Civil Servants due to the fact that those dailies are being purchased on regular basis and made available to staff. The extent of newspaper reading was found to be gender dependent. The paper found that number of male patronage of the daily newspapers differs significantly when compare to the female folks in the study areas.

The study has established a relationship between academic qualification and extent of paper read. It was

found that those with first degree (Bachelor of science/art) had the highest patronage of daily newspapers compared to those with higher academic qualifications.

The unemployed members of the study population were found to mostly utilize the national dailies with a view to searching for job advert placement.

Furthermore, for the work class category, those with fewer years in service are more likely to patronize the national dailies compare to those who have stayed longer in service. The most reliable source of national dailies identified by the study population includes the internet, office supply, library and personal purchased.

Majority of the respondents were attracted to most of the national dailies by the summary of news items found on the front page and finally more than 70% of respondents were contented with the level of the information provided by the national dailies.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that daily Newspaper is universally utilized as a source of obtaining information by all categories of the respondents used for the research. It was also be observed from the finding that constant availability of daily newspapers to the respondents particularly those that work in offices and those that access through their mobile phone encouraged the reliability of using newspapers as a source of obtaining

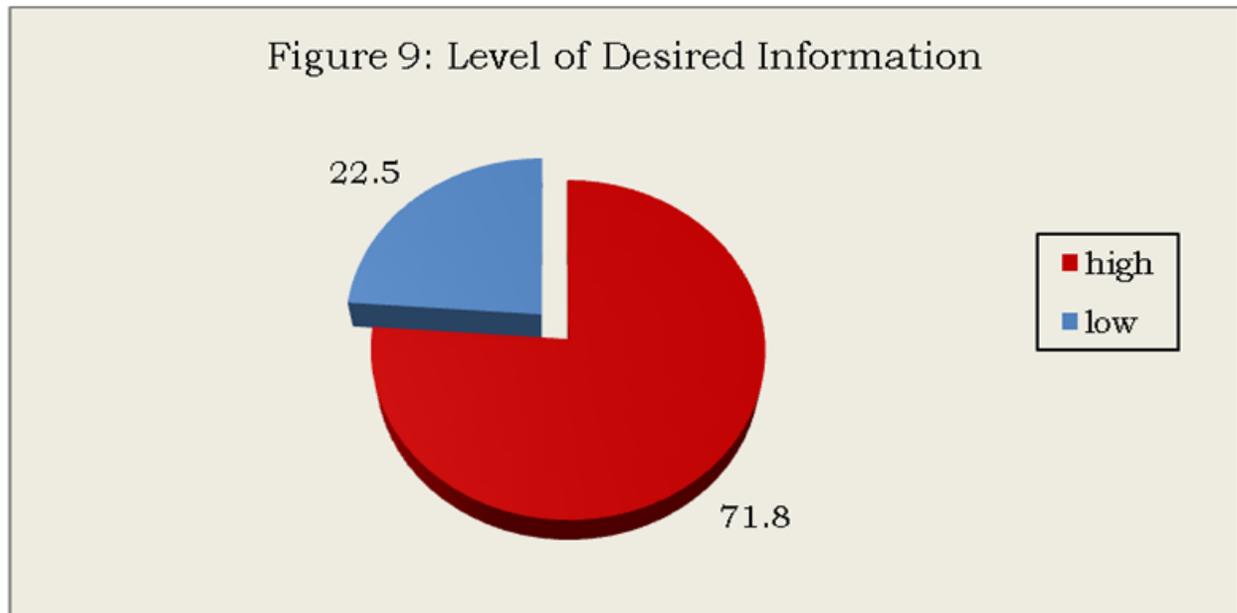


Figure 9. Level of Desired Information

information.

Similarly, the study also revealed that men are more enticed to reading newspapers for information than female counterparts. It also revealed that utilization of daily newspapers as source of obtaining information is not promoted by possession of high level of education like Master and doctorate degrees rather it is based on need of individual to access information.

From the study, it is certain that the usage of ICT is becoming popular among educated Nigerians, because many of the respondents accessed the newspaper through the internet.

Generally, the readership of Guardian, Tribune, the Nation and Punch newspapers are very prominent in Ilorin metropolis while information on issues like Education, Politics, Health, Agriculture and Security prevailed most in the mind of the readers of newspapers in Ilorin metropolis.

Finally, very high percentage of the respondents expressed that the daily newspapers they do read meets their information desire.

Recommendations

In his publication on using newspapers to satisfy the information needs of readers at the Federal Polytechnic Library, Nekede, Onn (2005) refers to information as the oil that greases the wheel of governance, programmes and activities of the government, organization and individuals, based on this, Ogunrombi et al (2009) affirmed that the need for adequate, timely and current

information in taking both personal and cooperate decisions cannot be over-emphasized.

To make newspapers effectively utilized as a source of obtaining information, the following recommendations are made.

Publishers of daily newspapers should always be conscious of the kind of information they print out for people to read. The information must always be correct, comprehensive and reliable, so that individual who reads them could utilize them their needs.

Issues confirmed by respondents in this research as being their area of information they read most in newspaper include: Agriculture, health, security, education and crime. This, also conform to the finding of Ogunrombi et al (2009), the authors also confirmed that policy makers at Akoko-Edo Local Government of Edo State, Nigeria desire information in areas of Agriculture, Health and Education. In view of this, it is suggested that Agricultural Research Institutes, Agricultural Development Project offices in all States in Nigeria and Educational Institutions that their research work is agricultural based, should on continuous bases educate the people by writing some tips about their research findings in different Nigerian newspapers so that people can benefit from their research work and improve their lots. The law column is prominent in many Nigerian newspapers and some people are educated through them. The same should go for health and education; regular information should be disseminated through the newspapers to readers on different areas of health and education in Nigeria and beyond.

Since the front page of the newspapers is the most

read portion of the newspaper, it is suggested that the editorial staff of Nigerian newspapers should always endeavor to put news that touches on the development of citizens at the front page. Also the front page should not be used for sensational information alone, which in most cases are meant to attract readers to buy the newspapers.

The Non-formal Educational Agency institutions should further intensify their effort to reduce the number of illiterate in the society, so that more people can read newspapers.

Having recognized the important role daily newspaper plays in information dissemination among educated people, it is important that libraries, particularly public libraries, should be built in each political ward and newspapers should be made available there to inform the people on different issues that will benefit their lives. The government, donor agencies and individuals must support the building of a public library in each political ward in the country. As Ogunrombi et al (2009) put it "If we accept information as valuable resource, it is imperative that we must look at the supply and demand for information, the part it plays in our national output, the utility of information and the role of information in governance. To fulfill this objective, the public library should lend ready support.

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