

Exposure and Believability between Cable Television News and Online News Sources in Nigeria

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Abstract:- This study examines the perception of the audience on credibility of both cable television news and on line news sources in Nigeria. The study sought to establish whether on line news has resulted in less viewing of cable television news. The study utilized survey to generate quantitative data. A sample of 300 students was selected. 300 copies of questionnaires were distributed while 288 were returned and found useful. The finding revealed that exposure to online news sources has resulted to less viewing of cable television news among the respondents. Contrary to previous studies which postulated credibility as a predictor for frequent media use, this study concludes that accessibility and user friendliness of online media devices may have been responsible for high frequency usage of online news sources compared to cable television news.

Keywords:- Credibility, Perception, News.

I. INTRODUCTION

Development in satellite communication with 24 – hours news broadcast has significantly influenced the pattern of news dissemination and consumption around the world. This revolution in communication which has engrossed itself in various aspects of human life has made it possible to bring news and programme instantly to the audience. It is evidently clear that media landscape in Nigeria which was initially an embodiment of local television and radio as well as newspaper has also witnessed these radical changes. Cable television has significantly penetrated into the Nigerian society since last two decades, offering the masses a variety of news channels.

Previous studies on source credibility showed that television is most credible source of news. Pornitakpan (2004), Self (1996) observed that initial source credibility studies showed that newspapers were the most trusted medium. Later radio was tagged as the most reliable, but television became the most credible medium in 1950.

Emergence of satellite broadcast with 24- hours news broadcast unarguably added to the credibility of television news. In recent years, the emergence of on line source of news has equally complemented the existing mass media news sources. As Salman 2010, described it “ Internet has overtaken radio as a source of information next to news paper and neck to neck or at par with television” . Internet has become one of the most significant technological

advancement in our contemporary society. The Popularity has made it possible for people to use Internet to work, study as well as for news and entertainment purposes. Media observers have claimed that the Internet has democratized the news industry, allowing the average citizen to put forth his views for public viewing and consumption. A study by the online publishers association (2004) revealed that Internet users considered the Internet (41%) along with television (41%) their most important sources of news followed by newspaper (24%) and magazine (16%). Findings from this study suggest that internet news sources are fast gaining ground among news audience but the extent of its credibility is what still remains questionable. Against this background, this study is designed to examine the perception of audience on credibility of cable news against online news sources.

➤ Theoretical frame work

This work is theoretically anchored on Marshal McLuhan’ s Technological determinism theory. The theory postulates that inventions in technology invariably cause cultural changes. McLuhan argued that it is specifically changes in mode of communication that shape human existence. According to him the way we live is largely a function of the way we process information arguing that the medium is the message, that a medium changes people more than the sum of all messages of that medium. Wolfe (1967,p.19) Summarized McLuhan’ s Theory thus” The new technologies radically alter the entire way people use their five senses, the way they react to things, and therefore, their entire lives and the entire society. It doesn’ t matter what the content of a medium like Tv is” .

➤ Objective of the research

This study has the following objectives

- (1) To determine the frequency at which the audience are exposing themselves to cable television news as well as online news sources.
- (2) To examine their motivation for using each of the two media sources.
- (3) To determine their perception on credibility of the two sources.

The study sought answers to the following research questions.

1. Does online news result in less viewing of cable television news?

2. What is the audience motivation for viewing cable television news and online news sources?
3. What is the perception of the audience on the credibility of cable television and online news?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception of media credibility has remained a recurring subject in media scholarship over the years. The source of a message is very crucial in determining the credibility of the message. What determines individual acceptance or rejection of a message largely depends on who said what.

Initial studies on source credibility as a theoretical construct were conducted by Hoveland and Weiss (1951). These researchers in their classical studies proposed that information source are evaluated on two main dimensions of credibility namely, trustworthiness and expertise. While trustworthiness is largely based on honesty and integrity of message sender, expertise refers to the ability of the speaker to eloquently make correct statement about his or her subject matter.

Various scholars in the past have examined the relationship between audience characteristics and perception of news media credibility. Ibelema and Powell (2001) in their studies revealed that television received higher trust ratings than newspapers, but the differences were attributed primarily to cable news. In other words cable television news with its 24 -hours news update soared the credibility of television news. Mingxin (2006) Studied mass media credibility perception in rural residence in China using a survey and found out that mass media credibility perception differ relatively across media channels with news paper and radio broadcasting being the most credible followed by television and magazine. The researcher also noticed that demographic and media use factors have great effect on media credibility.

However, with the emergence and introduction of internet news sites, and rising concern over the proliferation of on line news sources, researchers have compared the credibility of traditional news media to online media. Charmy (2007) in his study to measure the credibility of mediated news used three dimensions, reporter's credibility, medium credibility and the credibility of the news itself to establish the effectiveness and reliability of mass mediated messages. The study established that mass media audience securitizes news anchors or reporters both on Tv and on line. They are evaluated whether they are expert, educated, trustworthy and intelligent. The study concludes that individual reputation directly affect the believability of the mediated news. By implication, personality profile of news anchors and reporters contributes to the credibility of both television and on line news.

A study by Edogor et al (2015) to evaluate the credibility of social media and news in Nigeria revealed that 68% of the respondents believe that information from social media are credible while only 29% disagreed to that belief.

In a similar study by Hadiza (2018) to evaluate the perception of the audience on news credibility and impact between professional and social media news sources in Nigeria submits that significant number of younger Nigerians tend to source their news from social media, while the older generation supplements those sources with other sources of news they choose. On the issue of perception of credibility Hadiza highlighted that the three age groups studied hardly check the source of information retrieved from social media and cannot ascertain the credibility.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is empirical. The population of the study is students drawn from school of Basic Health Technology Umuoji a tertiary institution in Anambra State, Southeast Nigeria. Students are chosen because they are the most frequently users of Internet. The population of the students as at last academic session was 1600. Using simple random sampling method, a sample of 300 students were drawn for the research. 300 questionnaires were distributed while a total of 288 were returned and found useful for the study. The data generated was analyzed using simple percentage.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 300 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the randomly selected respondents. The purpose was to find out

1. Weather online news has resulted to less viewing of cable news.
11. To find out the motivation behind audience exposure to both online and cable news sources.
111. The perception of the audience on the credibility of cable television and online news.

Preliminary analysis of data generated from the research showed that 288 out of 300 questionnaires were returned and found useful indicating 94% return rate. Analysis of the data for research question one showed that frequency of cable television news viewing is lower 136 (27%) compared to online news 152 (53%) among the respondents. 250 (88%) of the respondents affirmed that portability (Mobile device) of online news sources added to high frequency of exposure associated with online news. On the level of frequency of usage, 152 (54%) consult online news several times daily while, 36 (46%) use online news occasionally on a daily basis. For cable television news less than 30% watch cable news occasionally on a daily basis.

With specific reference to research question one, it is evidently clear that exposure to online news sources has significantly reduced the consumption of cable television news among the respondents. Previous studies on exposure of youths to news consumption showed that youths are not avid consumers of news. This study has shown that portability of mobile on line news devices to an extent increased the frequency of youth's exposure to news consumption.

On motivation for viewing online and cable news, the study revealed that above (80%) of the respondents view online news to get information on breaking news within their immediate environments. They are motivated to watch online news for purposes of engaging in peer discussion. 70% admitted that their motivation for watching cable news is to get information about breaking news around the world.

On perception of credibility of news sources, the respondents were asked to evaluate online news and cable news on three dimensions of credibility; fairness, trustworthiness and professionalism. The data is represented thus:

	Cable news	online news
Fairness	87%	70%
Trustworthiness	82%	64%
Professionalism	86%	52%

On further assessment on credibility perception, the findings revealed that when conflicting reports emanates from cable television and online news the respondents 258 (94%) agreed they will trust the report of cable television news.

Evaluation given by respondents showed that they perceived cable television news to be more credible than online news but on line news sources receive more exposure than cable television news among the respondents. This finding is not consistent with previous postulation on media credibility and exposure. Mention 2019 postulates that when audience members perceive a specific media to be highly credible, they will depend on that media for information and this in turn will make them to be more reliant. If there is credibility of media then it will lead to greater use and reliance on it. Finding from this study showed that frequency of exposure to online news is not merely dependent on the credibility of the channel but also on the user friendliness of on line news devices. Though most audience tend to expose to another media after exposing to their preferred media choice for seeking the truthfulness and authentication of a news story (Adeyanju, 2015). This suggests a kind of Interdependency for authentication and clarification for media messages emanating from different media platform.

V. CONCLUSION

Contrary to the postulation of the previous studies that audience tends to expose themselves more to the media they consider more credible, this study postulates that there may have been shift overtime based on technological inventions in exposure to cable television and on line news among youths. Frequent use of online news does not seem to correlate with believability and trust in the medium compared to cable television, Accessibility and user friendliness of on line news platform appeared to have

contributed to the high frequency of online media exposure among the sampled population.

The findings concord with technological determinism theory upon which this study is anchored on. McLuhan postulates that invention in technology invariably cause cultural change. He argued that the medium changes people more than the sum of all messages of that medium. Dominant medium of any age dominate the people irrespective of the message content.

The study therefore recommends that a similar study be conducted among older television audience to find out the relationship between age and frequency of exposure to both online and cable television news.

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