

An Analysis of the Pattern of Media Use by Teachers in a Nigerian Education District

by Hilary C. Ozoh*

Abstract

This is a case study of usage of two print media — newspapers and magazines — by secondary school teachers in an educational district of Nigeria. Using a survey design, the study found varying levels of significance of usage of the media for functional purposes, i.e. entertainment, personal identity, information, integration and social interaction.

*Mr. Hilary C. Ozoh teaches in the Department of Mass Communication, Anambra State University of Technology, Enugu, Nigeria.

Une Analyse de la Façon dont les Médias Sont Utilisés par des Enseignants dans un Département de l'Education au Nigéria

Résumé

Cet article traite d'une étude comparative de l'usage de deux types de presse écrite dans un contexte nigérian; il s'agit des journaux et des magazines. Après une enquête approfondie, l'étude a constaté des niveaux variables d'utilité dans l'usage de chacune des deux formes des médias a des fins telles que l'animation, l'identification personnelle , l'information, l'intégration et l'interaction sociale.

Introduction

Research into the uses of and gratifications derived from the mass media can be summarized into three categories (McQuail, 1971): (a) those pertaining to satisfactions derived or looked for from mass media materials; (b) those that concentrated on the origin of the underlying needs and predispositions; and (c) those that show evidence of the origins and consequences of the gratifications sought from the mass media.

In countries where serious attention has been paid to investigations into the 'active nature' of the audience of mass communication, research has moved from the largely descriptive phenomenon associated with the first category to the more analytical second and third categories. In Africa research on uses and gratifications is still sparse. The most important thing at this stage is to employ the uses and gratifications paradigm to determine if the African audience patterns are similar to those of their western counterparts (See Okigbo, forthcoming).

Uses of the Mass Media

McQuail (1987) has suggested a typology that can be used to describe the uses of the mass media by audiences. These uses are for information, personal identity, integration, social interaction, and entertainment. Further categories of media use can be determined from these general clusters.

Mass media usage is especially relevant in developing countries where a stated aim is that people should use the mass media positively to enhance socio-economic development, cultural identity, political unity and stability, and social integration. Media usage of specific social groups or categories is of particular interest to communication researchers.

Among such groups in Nigeria are teachers, especially those in secondary schools (high schools) who have the responsibility of equipping the "leaders of tomorrow" academically and morally for the task of nation-building. A part of the influence they exert is presumably derived from their contact with the mass media.

This study aims at ascertaining the extent to which high school teachers use the mass media as a source of information, personal identity, integration and social interaction and entertainment. Using the scheme drawn up by McQuail (1987), attempts will be made to find out the extent and purpose for the usage of each of the main print media of mass communication — newspapers and magazines.

While studies that aim at discovering the social and psychological origins of most needs of the audience may not be very many, the literature describing the uses or gratifications which many social categories or groups look for or derive from the media abounds.

Among the pioneering studies is that by Herzog (1953) who studied the gratification women derived from listening to day-time serials on radio. The women were found to derive emotional release and some vicarious compensation for their own hardships by

finding scapegoats in story characters. Listening to the radio serials also served some personal identity purposes as Warner and Henry (1948) found in their study. The serials helped reduce women's sense of futility and increased both their feelings of security and acceptance of their positions in the society. In the same fashion, Fiske and Wolf (1949) found that comics served personal identity purposes for children in terms of providing invincible heroes as role models, as well as informational function by providing information on the real world.

More recent studies have similarly provided description of mass media usage patterns. The area of political communication has been one of the most fertile in this regard (Becker, 1976; Blumler and Katz, 1976). Research has also been done on the uses of the media by British television viewers (Greenberg, 1974).

The same current of findings have been found in the use of the mass media in Nigeria. Osadolor *et al.* (1985) found that urban youths in Nigeria use the mass media more for current affairs (informational purpose) than for entertainment. Uche (1984) found that African leaders use the mass media more extensively during crises for guidance, assurance, awareness, and for surveillance of the political environment.

Most uses and gratifications studies have described the kind of use to which audiences put the mass media, but they have largely left unanswered the question of the frequency or extent of use of the mass media for each of the identifiable purposes. This study attempts to move further from this trend of just listing or identifying the uses to an examination of the degree or frequency of their usage. It also compares the extent to which each of the two media is used for the identified purposes.

Methodology

The population for this study was the teachers in the Enugu urban education district of Anambra State. Schools in Enugu were selected for convenience but also because teachers working and living in Enugu have full access to all kinds of media fare. Their media behaviour would, therefore, have extrapolative value for other areas and cities in the Anambra State of Nigeria.

A method of stratified sampling was used. The teachers in the Enugu urban district were stratified using school location. From each school, using the teaching staff list as a sampling frame, one-tenth of the population was sampled. Since most of the schools have roughly about the same number of teachers, it was evident that an equal selection from each school would be representative of the whole population of teachers. The systematic method employed in the selection makes room for representation of all key variables such as seniority, qualification and length of service. All together, 258 teachers were sampled from 20 secondary schools in Enugu.

The sampled teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to determine the extent to which they use newspapers and magazines for the following purposes: information, entertainment, personal identity and integration, and social interaction. Each of these uses was first broken into its many dimensions using the McQuail (1987) typology. The listing was as follows:

Information

1. Finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world.
2. Seeking advice on practical matters or opinions and decision choices.
3. Satisfying curiosity and general interest.
4. Learning and self-education.
5. Gaining a sense of security through knowledge.

Personal identity

1. Finding reinforcement for personal values.
2. Finding models of behaviour.
3. Identifying with valued others (in the media).
4. Gaining insight into one's self.

Integration and social interaction

1. Gaining insight into circumstances of others: social empathy.
2. Identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging.
3. Finding a basis for conversation and social interaction.
4. Having a substitute for real-life companionship.
5. Helping to carry out social roles.
6. Enabling one to connect with family, friends and societies.

Entertainment

1. Escaping or being diverted from problems.
2. Relaxing.
3. Getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment.
4. Filling time.
5. Emotional release.
6. Sexual arousal.

While this listing may not fully cover the vast kinds of uses to which audience put the mass media, it is nonetheless fairly comprehensive and offers the individual members enough breadth to explicitly describe the nature of his/her media use.

The respondents simply described on a continuum ranging from 'Do not use' to 'Always use' each of the media for each kind of use. One problem that usually crops up in studies of mass media usage is the inability of respondents to describe precisely

the nature of their media use. The comprehensive listing of the different aspects of the functional purposes helped minimize this problem.

Due to the fact that the different expressions of degrees of usage were not equal, different weights were assigned to the different degrees of usage in such a way as to make the higher ones have weights superior to the lower ones; thus .5 was assigned to always, .3 to most of the time, and .2 to sometimes.

Results

Overall usage of the print media for each of the functional purposes was quite high (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. *Weighted Usage of Magazines for Functional Purposes*

Functional Purpose	Degree of Usage		
	Always	Most of the time	Sometime
Information	127.0	86.7	64.6
Integration	122.0	80.7	60.6
Entertainment	170.5	104.1	72.2
Personal identity	113.5	67.5	48.2

Table 2. *Weighted Usage of Newspapers for Functional Purposes*

Functional Purpose	Degree of Usage		
	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes
Integration	116	80.4	71.0
Entertainment	139	100.5	80.4
Information	129	96.0	73.4
Personal identity	88	72.9	54.8

Since we are interested in their comparative uses, comparisons of the weight attached to the use of each of the media for the different purposes were made. Newspapers were overall weighted more for informational purposes than magazines (298.4 to 278.3). One-way analysis of variance provided significant support for the assumption that newspapers were used more for finding out about relevant events in the environment than for other informational purposes (ANOVA = 2.8, $F(2,12)$ ($p < .01$). A contrasting finding, however, was obtained for magazines. Tests of the variations in the scores on the information purposes yielded no significant result (ANOVA = 28.89, $F(2,12)$. (See Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. *Weighted Usage of Newspapers for Informational Purposes*

Informational Purposes	Degree of Usage		
	Always	Most of the time	Sometime
Finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world.	24.0	20.4	15.6
Seeking advice on practical matters or opinions and decision choices.	23.0	18.3	16.8
Satisfying curiosity and general interest.	27.0	18.9	14.0
Learning, self-education.	26.5	21.6	13.0
Gaining a sense of security through knowledge.	28.5	16.8	14.0

Table 4. *Weighted Usage of Magazines for Informational Purposes*

Informational Purposes	Degree of Usage		
	Always	Most of the time	Sometime
Finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world.	21	15.9	16.6
Seeking advice on practical matters or opinions and decision choices.	23	16.8	13.4
Satisfying curiosity and general interest.	26	17.7	12.8
Learning, self-education.	29	19.5	11.4
Gaining a sense of security through knowledge.	28	16.8	10.4

However, the overall trend was different when the total of all functional purposes were considered. For both media, when their usage for information was compared to uses for entertainment, integration and social interaction, and personal identity, one way analysis of variance produced a statistically significant variation among the uses of magazines. Magazines were found to be used more for informational than other purposes (ANOVA = 0.70, $F(2.9) p < .05$). The same assumption, however, was not significant for newspapers.

A more direct comparison of the use of the two media for entertainment purposes was made. (See Table 5). Among these sets of functional purposes, relaxation received more cumulative weight than others for both magazines and newspapers. Sexual arousal was also weighted least in both media. However, magazines received more overall weighting for usage for entertainment purposes than newspapers. Magazines, generally, were weighted more on all the entertainment purposes than newspapers except in 'getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment.' One way ANOVA test indicated the statistical significance of these variations at .01 level of significance (ANOVA = 3.62, $F(2.15) p < .01$); thus supporting the assumption that our respondents use magazines more for entertainment purposes than newspapers.

Table 5. Weighted Usage of Newspapers and Magazines for Entertainment Purposes

Entertainment Purposes	Medium	
	Newspaper	Magazine
1. Escaping from your problems	53.8	55.2
2. Relaxation	64.2	69.4
3. Getting intrinsic or aesthetic enjoyment	55.3	51.9
4. Filling time	57.1	60.2
5. Emotional release	39.4	49.8
6. Sexual arousal	50.2	57.9

For integration purposes, magazines received consistently higher weighting in usage for each of the integration purposes except 'in enabling one to connect with family, friends and society' where newspapers received a higher score (See Table 6). This higher rating on the individual dimensions of integration did not, however, result in overall superiority on this category of use by magazines over newspapers. A test of the variations did not produce a statistically significant result (ANOVA = 2.49, $F(2.12) p > .01$).

Table 6. Weighted Usage of Newspapers and Magazines for Integration and Social Interaction Purposes

Integration Purposes	Medium	
	Newspaper	Magazine
1. Identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging	56.0	56.9
2. Finding a basis for conversation and social interaction	54.9	55.7
3. Having a substitute for real-life companionship	49.0	53.9
4. Helping to carry out social roles	55.5	49.5
5. Enabling one to connect with family, friends and society	58.0	47.7

Discussion

The results of this study provide significant insights into the behaviour of secondary school teachers vis-à-vis some traditional perceptions of the role of the print media in society. Newspapers, to a large extent, and magazines have been perceived largely as informational media, designed to give the news of the day. Traditional journalistic perception of their function is usually highly geared in this direction — provision of news. But our results here point to a departure from this over-riding perception among secondary school teachers. Giving the traditional perception, the expectation was a pre-eminence of information over other functional purposes. But as our results show, newspapers were not used by teachers more for informational than other purposes.

A plausible explanation for this trend could be seen in the demographic distribution of urban secondary school teachers in Nigeria, particularly in state capitals like Enugu. The largest percentage of these teachers are female. A widely held notion is that females consider newspapers 'too serious' and are poor readers of them. They also tend to prefer light content to hard news which form the predominant content of newspapers.

Yet, the primacy of this function of newspapers of providing the day's news was amply revealed when the informational purposes as a unit was considered. Respondents use newspapers more for finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world. This pattern was, however, not replicated in magazines. For this medium, rather important to female teachers, the most important of the functional purposes turned out to be information. But this information is not manifested in the desire to find out relevant events and conditions in the immediate surrounding.

This study further reveals that magazines have more functional value for easing of tensions and relaxation in society. They were valued more as an entertainment medium than newspapers. But, on the other hand, our results seem to run counter to the widely

held notion that magazines have more functional value for social relations than newspapers. A central concern has always been which among the media binds the individual more to his society and to others within the society. Because of the more specific focus of some magazines on people, one would imagine that they would turn out to have more integrative values than newspapers. The implication of this for media strategy in campaigns in developing countries like Nigeria is enormous.

Summary and Conclusion

This study has examined in a comparative manner the usage of two print media — newspapers and magazines — by secondary school teachers. Our findings indicate varying levels of significance of each of them for the identified functional purposes of personal identity, information, entertainment, and integration and social interaction.

In examining these usage patterns, the study focused on the experiences of an easily identifiable group within the society — secondary school teachers. While there may be many variations within and between groups, it is hoped that our findings here will have strong extrapolative values for other groups within the society.

References

- Becker, Lee (1976). 'Two Tests of Media Gratification: Watergate and the 1974 Election,' *Journalism Quarterly*, 53, pp. 28-33.
- Blumler, Jay and Elihu Katz (1974). *The Uses of Mass Communication*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Fiske, M. and K.M. Wolf (1949). 'Why They Read Comics.' In P. Lazarfeld and F. Stanton (eds.) *Communication Research*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Greenberg, B.S. (1974). 'Gratifications of Television Viewing and Their Correlates For British Children.' In J. Blumler and E. Katz (eds.) *The Uses of Mass Communications*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Herzog, H. (1953). 'What Do We Really Know About Day-Time Serial Listeners.' In B. Berelen (ed.) *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication*. Glencoe: Free Press, pp. 352-365.
- McQuail, Dennis (1971). *Towards a Sociology of Mass Communication*. London: Collier - Macmillan.
- McQuail, Dennis (1987). *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* (Second Edition), Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage.
- Okigbo, Charles (Forthcoming). 'Modern Mass Communication Theories in the Context of African Communication.' In Onyoro Mgbejume (ed.), *Mass Communication in Nigeria: Some Fundamental Issues*. Jos: IMCT Press.
- Osadolor, Kingsley, Saheed Sanyadu and Victoria Okpoko (1985). 'Media Use Among Urban Youths,' Unpublished Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Uche, Luke (1984). 'Functional Uses of Mass Media Messages in Periods of Critical Events,' *African Communication Review*, pp. 40 - 46.
- Warner, W.L. and W.E. Henry (1948). 'The Radio Day Time Serial: A Symbolic Analysis,' *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 37, pp. 7 - 13 and 55 - 64.