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Assessment of Undergraduate of Imo State University Owerri Preference Between Podcast and Broadcast Interactive Programmes

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Abstract

The broadcast media delivery and consumption format are rapidly changing with the recent innovations in technology. This study investigated the preference of the undergraduates of Imo State University between Podcast interactive programme and the traditional broadcast interactive programmes. The general objective of this study is to investigate the preference of Undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri between podcasts and broadcast media interactive programmes. The study was anchored on the uses and gratification theory, and adopted the survey research design as its methodology. The population of the study was made up of the 26000 undergraduate students of Imo State University Owerri, while the sample size was 380 and simple random sampling technique was used. Finding from the study revealed that students of Imo State University are very knowledgeable about podcast and broadcast interactive programmes; they preferred podcast to the broadcast interactive programme and that the digital nature of podcast among other was why they preferred podcast interactive programme. The researchers concluded that young people are now more connected to podcast than they are with the traditional broadcast programmes and recommended among others that the broadcast stations should take advantage of the various digital technology to innovate so as to remain relevant in this digital age.

Keywords: Assessment, Broadcast, Interactive Programmes, Podcast



Introduction

The rise in digital media platforms is significantly reshaping media consumption patterns among young people. Before now the broadcast media of radio and television were the pride of the industry owing to their portability and immediacy attributes respectively. All these are changing recent with the proliferation of digital and streaming platforms. Prominent among these streaming or rather broadcast platforms is podcast or podcasting. Terms used to signify both the production of a discrete audio text and the produced text itself. It also signifies an audio file, audio MP3 file, an XML (Extensible Markup Language) metadata file, and an RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feed that makes distribution and listening possible (Brown, 2020).

The trend of using digital media also brings many changes in people's lives, started from media consumption patterns, media preferences, until the trend kind of producing media content independently (Hidayat, 2016). Utari et al. (2023), noted that nowadays people access digital media more often with various existing platforms, they still access the radio occasionally to fill their spare time while traveling to get information related to traffic, even though television is still the family's favourite choice but at the same time they also watch many platforms on digital media. This assertion means that the digital platforms have further amplified the argument of the proponents of the uses and gratifications theory.

Also, Novăceanu (2020) observes that the traditional radio has been challenged for more than a decade by emerging forms of electronic media that know no borders and have the capacity to empower the public to take control of information and entertainment from traditional keepers. This is as Newman and Gallo (2019) opine that recent research points out that more and more audiences are abandoning traditional broadcast media of radio and television (especially radio) in favour of new technologies and that the interest in podcasts is constantly growing.

The last decade has witnessed the emergence of numerous digital platforms having similar or even better outlook and functions with the broadcast media. These digital platforms come in both audio and audio-visual forms. Popular among them is podcast or podcasting. Youths, especially undergraduates in their search for media contents subscribe to these platforms and access the desired gratifications. In the recent time, podcast interactive programmes like the honest bunch podcast has become trending topic of discussion in other social medium like X (Formerly Twitter). The case may not be different with similar platforms. This reality seems not to be the same with radio and television interactive programmes. If this is true, it calls for serious concern.

Several attempts to understand the appearance of the podcast were made both theoretically and practically. They revolve between fascination and rejection. However, a deeper inspection of the podcasting boom is lacking or generally restricted to studies that primarily examine the history and uses of this new technology from the perspective of the audience. Other research has focused primarily on audiences, on the ones downloading podcasts, as well as on the motivations of the user. Consequently, in this research paper, the researchers analysed the preference of audience between podcasts and the traditional broadcast media interactive programmes, with a focus on the one that captures the attention of young people more, especially undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri.

Many studies have been done to determine radio listenership, TV viewership, audience perception of broadcast programmes, but not much has been done to investigate the preferences of young people,



especially university undergraduates make between podcasts and broadcast interactive programmes. It is this gap that this study sought to fill.

The general objective of this study is to investigate the preference of Undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri between podcasts and broadcast media interactive programmes, while the specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the extent to which undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri Nigeria are exposed to podcast interactive programmes.
2. Know if undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri Nigeria are knowledgeable about podcast interactive programmes.
3. Ascertain the preference of Undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri Nigeria between podcast interactive programmes and broadcast interactive programmes.

Investigate the factors that influences the preference of Undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Uses and Gratification Theory propounded by Baumler and Katz. According to (Folarin, 1998 p.65), ‘Uses and Gratifications theory is based on media consumption rather than production of media content.’ This means that the theory concentrates on media audiences rather than the media message (Littlejohn, 1992, p.364). This theory focuses on the uses to which people put media and the gratifications they seek from that use (Baran & Davis, 2003,p.256). The theory advances that media consumers influence the entire process of communication based on their selection and use of the messages according to their needs, beliefs or preferences. The Uses and Gratification theory focuses attention on individuals in the mass communication process, by providing insights into how people experience and use media content in everyday interactive process. When applied to this study, the theory is essential because it seeks to explain why staff members of the University of Ilorin use editorials to satisfy certain needs. It seeks to affirm or repudiate the assumed influence of editorials on the readers, in this case, staff members of the University of Ilorin as it views the staff as active participants of a communication process who select specific types of media that suits their leisure and gratifies their individual needs. Kaye (2007, p.129) supports this assertion when he, submitted that, “Uses and Gratifications studies investigate how the audience use the media rather than how the media use the audience.” Wimmer and Dominic (2000), cited in Asemah et al. (2017, p.68) “pointed out that uses and gratifications theory takes the view of a media consumer. It examines how people use the media and the gratifications they seek and derive from their media behaviour.”

This theory is suitable for this study because it seeks to know what motivate media consumers on the choices they make with regards to exposure to a particular channel as against the other. This is in line as the study at hand aims at checking to know if students of Imo State University still read editorials published in Nigeria Newspapers.



Method

The survey research design was chosen for this investigation. This is due to the fact that this approach enables the measurement of respondents' opinions regarding a subject (Creswell, 2018). Imo State University undergraduate students made up the study's population; according to the admission unit the population of undergraduate students of the institution is estimated to be 25,000 in 2024. The Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator was utilised to determine the study's sample size, which came out to be 382 with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. To reach every element in the sample, the researchers used a multi-stage sampling technique. The multi-stage process involves classifying the sample into phases, such: Stage 1: The researchers listed the entire faculty situated at Imo State University: agriculture and veterinary medicine, business administration, education, engineering, environmental sciences, humanities, law, biological sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, basic medical sciences, basic clinical sciences, clinical medicine and communication and media studies. Stage 2: In this stage, the researchers divided the sample of 379 among the 15 faculties in the university to give 25 respondents in each faculty. This was done for the purpose of equal representation among the faculties where the study was carried out. Stage 3: At this stage, 25 students were purposefully selected to answer the questions on the instrument. The criterion for selection was that you must be from the faculty where the instrument is being distributed. Also, the respondents consent was sought before they were asked to fill out the questionnaire. They were assured of keeping their identities hidden. Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary. A specialist in the mass communication department at Imo State University in Owerri face-validated the questionnaire used to gather the data. Likert scale was used to build the questionnaire's items: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4). For appropriate guidance, every item was organised in accordance with the research purpose. Two weeks was allotted for administering the instrument in person. Descriptive analysis was employed to examine the data obtained from the field.

Findings

This section focuses on data presentation and analysis. The presentation and analysis were done in line with the research questions. Research questions 1,2,3, and 4 were used for quantitative survey. Also, the distribution of the questionnaire as shown in the table below, 382 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. 370 (96.8%) were returned and usable, while 8 (2.2%) were not usable and then 4 (1%) were not returned. The analysis shows that the return rate is high. The



Research Question One: To what extent are undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri Nigeria are exposed to podcast interactive programmes?

Table 1: Respondents' responses on the frequency of exposure to podcast interactive programme

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very frequently	274	74
Frequently	22	6
Moderately	26	7
Rarely	26	7
Can't say	22	6
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from the above table 1 indicated that 74% of respondents show a very high exposure to podcast interactive programmes among undergraduate students of Imo State University.

Table 2: Respondents' responses on whether they are exposed to podcast interactive programme every week

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	217	59
No	15,	4
Can't say	128	34
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 2 revealed that 59% of the respondents confirmed that they are exposed to podcast interactive programmes on weekly basis.

Table 5: I access podcast interactive programmes through online platforms.

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	63		
Agree	229		
Disagree	67		
Strongly Disagree	11		
Total	370	2.9	Accept

Source: Field survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 3 above revealed that at an average of 2.9 (N=370), respondents accepted that they access podcast interactive programme through online platforms.



Research Question Two: Are undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri Nigeria are knowledgeable about podcast interactive programmes?

Table 4: Respondents' Responses on whether they know about podcast interactive programmes?

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	332	90
No	0	0
Can't say	37	10
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from the table 4 above revealed that 90% of the respondents know about podcast interactive programmes. This means that majority of the population are knowledgeable about podcast interactive programme.

Table 5: Respondents' responses on whether they know about broadcast interactive programmes.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	332	90
No	0	0
Can't say	37	10
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 5 above revealed that 90% of respondents conform that they know about broadcast interactive programme. This implies that the greater part of the students know about broadcast interactive programme.

Table 6. Respondents' responses on whether they are exposed to podcast and broadcast interactive programme?

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	333	90
No	11	3
Can't say	26	7
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 6 above revealed that 90% of respondents confirmed that they are exposed to podcast and broadcast interactive programme.



Research Questions Three: What is the preference of Undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri Nigeria between podcast interactive programmes and broadcast interactive programmes?

Table 7: I prefer podcast interactive programme to the broadcast counterpart.

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	137		
Agree	126		
Disagree	14		
Strongly Disagree	93		
Total	370	2.8	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 7 above indicated that at an average of 2.8 (N=370), respondents confirmed that they prefer podcast interactive programme to the broadcast counterpart.

Table 8: Podcast interactive programmes are more entertaining than broadcast interactive programmes

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	111		
Agree	111		
Disagree	63		
Strongly Disagree	85		
Total	370	2.6	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 8 above show that at an average of 2.6 (N=370), majority of respondents confirmed that podcast interactive programmes are more entertaining than their broadcast counterparts.



Table 9: I think podcast interactive programmes are more educative than broadcast

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	111		
Agree	96		
Disagree	89		
Strongly Disagree	74		
Total	370	2.6	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 9 above show that at an average of 2.6 (N=370), respondents accepted that MTN Nigeria communicated effectively to inform the public during the network crisis.

Table 10: I think podcast interactive programmes are more audience engaging than broadcast counterparts

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	111		
Agree	96		
Disagree	89		
Strongly Disagree	74		
Total	370	2.6	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 10 above show that at an average of 2.6 (N=370), respondents accepted that podcast interactive programmes are more audience engaging than their broadcast counterparts.

Research Questions Four: What are the factors that influences the preference of Undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria?

Table 11: I prefer podcast interactive programmes because of the quality of content

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	152		
Agree	118		
Disagree	81		
Strongly Disagree	19		
Total	370	2.0	Reject

Source: Field Survey, 2024



Available data from table 11 above shows that at an average of 2.0 (N=370), respondents rejected that they feel impressed with mtn Nigeria's crisis communication strategy.

Table 12: podcast interactive programmes speak to my content need specifically.

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	148		
Agree	107		
Disagree	26		
Strongly Disagree	89		
Total	370	2.9	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 12 above shows that at an average of 2.9 (N=370), respondents confirmed that they prefer podcast because they get their specific content needs.

Table 13: I prefer podcast because broadcast programmes are not digital and not easily accessible.

Item	Frequency	Mean	Decision
Strongly Agree	177		
Agree	126		
Disagree	40		
Strongly Disagree	27		
Total	370	3.2	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of data from table 13 above revealed that at an average of 3.2 (N=370), respondents accepted that they prefer podcast because they are digitalized and easily accessibly

Discussion

Data got from this research question reveals that with the average mean score of 2.7. respondents confirmed that there is a high level of exposure to podcast interactive programme among the undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri. This finding implies that there is a major shift from the traditional broadcast media to online or digital based broadcast contents or messages. This means that young people are more in tune with the flexibility of the medium. This finding portends danger for the traditional broadcast media as they must innovate as a matter of urgency or be taken out of the market dominance that they have enjoyed for decades now. The increased diversion of attention to digital broadcasting through the various streaming channels and other social media platforms is dealing the traditional broadcast media a serious blow that may have a lasting impact and possibly change the narrative within the media environment forever.



From the analysis of data from the items presented in the tables in the first research question, the result shows that an average of 90% of the respondents studied confirmed that they are knowledgeable about podcast and broadcast interactive programme and that they are exposed to these programmes. This finding implies that the respondents who primarily undergraduates are well informed about the podcasting in Nigeria as well as the conventional broadcasting channels which are well known and used by many. This finding also signals an increase in the reliance on podcast for information and other media use. This finding aligns with the findings of Ekambaram et al. (2021) who found that ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents used EM podcasts as an educational medium: 64% predominantly using podcasts to supplement a personal EM study program. Also, this finding further strengthens the key assumption of the uses and gratifications theory which states according to Baran and Davis, (2003, p.256) that the theory advances that media consumers influence the entire process of communication based on their selection and use of the messages according to their needs, beliefs or preferences. The Uses and Gratification theory focuses attention on individuals in the mass communication process, by providing insights into how people experience and use media content in everyday interactive process. Obviously, the shift from the conventional broadcasting to podcasting could have been influenced by the recent innovations in technology.

Data got from the items raised under the research question were used to test the preference between podcast and broadcast interactive programmes among undergraduates of Imo State University, Owerri. At a grand mean score of 2.6 (N=) result revealed that the respondents' show more preference towards podcast interactive programmes than the broadcast counterparts. The implication of this finding is that undergraduate students agreed that podcast interactive programmes are more entertaining to the youth audience than their broadcast counterparts. Their responses also revealed that podcast interactive programmes are more educative and engaging. This means that the younger generation are gradually tilting towards modern technologies and media of entertainment, education, and information dissemination. Obviously, this finding portends danger for the broadcast media industry that have dominated patronage in the media industry over decades. By these findings, the broadcast media have an urgent responsibility to innovate in order to retain the interest of media consumers or risk being relegated to the background.

Summarily, these questions under the research question were raised to test the factors that influence the preference of Undergraduate students of Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. From the responses, at a grand mean score of 2.7 (N=) showed that the certain factors like flexibility negatively influence the preference among the Undergraduates students of Imo State University are in favour of podcast interactive programmes. Respondents indicated that their preference for the podcast interactive programmes were based on its audience specificity. This implies that respondents could at any time search online and find a podcast interactive programme that address their specific media needs unlike the traditional broadcast stations that you either tune in during the programme hour, or miss out of it. Finding also pointed towards the convenient nature of podcasts as one of the major factors that attract young population towards such audiences. The implication of this finding is that podcast interactive programmes appeal more to the youth population especially those popularly known as Gen Zs.

Conclusion and Recommendations



Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that the extent to which undergraduate students of imo state university as well as other youths prefer podcast interactive programmes, they are highly exposed to these interactive programmes and as such do not pay much attention to broadcast interactive programmes; flexibility, quality of production, specific audience need are part of the factors influence the preferences among students.

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Students should self-regulate their exposure to the various media programmes to avoid information overload which could be detrimental to their academics.
2. Students should not just know about podcast and broadcast interactive programmes but should use them judiciously for self-improvement.
3. Broadcast stations should take advantage of the media digitization programmes to innovate in order to remain relevant.
4. Broadcast media stations should run interactive programmes according to the interest of young people and human-interest issues.

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