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ISSUES IN PUBLISHING NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract *This article discusses various elements associated with publishing newspapers and magazines in Nigeria. It presents conceptual analyses of newspapers and magazines, their similarities and differences, newspaper/magazine outfit (departments and their establishment), production process, and the influence of ICT on print media industry. The challenges of publishing newspapers and magazines in Nigeria are also explored.*

Keyword: *ICT, Newspapers, Magazines, Media Houses, Information Needs, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Newspapers and magazines belong to a category of information materials known as serial publications. This is in addition to journals, newsletters, and other periodic publications, which are released/published at intervals (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannually, annually, etc), and made accessible to different categories of individuals and the general public for satisfaction of their information needs.

Newspapers and magazines carry nascent thought contents on exploratory, social, educational, professional, and business related information. Both serial publications possess an inherent element in the wake of social revolution or reformation leading to a healthy social order. Newspaper and magazine readership has witnessed a significant rise due to rapid rise in the literacy level and the desire of people to know. In particular, newspaper publishing houses have already adopted tricky marketing policies for attracting the interest of the clientele, often with attention-grabbing cover titles, and various burning research findings from different sectors of the society. Increasingly, the general public, researchers, professional, students, traders, academicians, and even workers are finding a treasure trove in newspapers and magazines.

Newspapers and magazines have played the most integral part in bringing out the problems, facts, and various events from every nook and corner of the world through written communication that are of high importance to the common people by being the textual evidence to students, teachers, researchers, lawyers, physicians, businessmen and people from all walks of life. Moreover, they are regarded as the

prime sources of information upon which students, teachers, research scholars, and administrators largely depend on. In all fairness, newspapers and magazines act as the life blood of modern society.

Issues and themes in publishing cut across both print and electronic information materials. Newspapers and magazine are usually referred to as print media. Meanwhile, with the emergence of digital versions, such as e-newspapers and e-magazines, can they still be tagged print media or probably referred to as hybrid media? This is a question for educators and practitioners in the information, media and communication studies to address. Meanwhile, this article is an attempt to x-ray basic issues and associated elements involved in publishing newspapers and magazines in Nigeria.

NEWSPAPERS: MEANING, FEATURES AND CLASSIFICATION

Newspaper is an unbound periodical publication that is printed on a newsprint paper contains news relating to political events, socio, cultural, economic, technological, and educational issues, and such other up to date information catering to the information needs of all sections of the society. Thus, a typical newspaper carries necessary items like, feature articles, commentaries, editorials, commercial advertisements, and all micro happenings from different parts of the world. In other words, a newspaper holds necessary news, information and advertisements, usually printed on recycled paper for producing economy to the cost of marketing newspapers. It can be specialized newspapers in areas like sports, education and entertainment among others. Moreover, newspapers are known by various characteristics

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and attributes. They are periodical publications, provide timely and current news on issues of public importance, contain multifarious content, and are accessible to the general public.

Newspaper is the only viable medium of mass communication found all across the world. It performs many important functions in the society. They include keeping readers informed, entertaining readers, informing government authorities of the needs of the public, educating readers, channels for advertising, and helping readers to live more comfortably (Esimokha, 2011). Other basic functions of newspapers are to inform, to interpret the news, to provide a service to readers, and to entertain. According to Abdulraheem et al (2012), “newspapers help readers become informed citizens and make better decisions by providing lots of facts. Hard news stories, vital statistics, weather, sports stories and scores, and event calendars are examples of items that help inform readers. Some newspaper articles help interpret, or explain, the meaning of news to readers. These stories often include the opinion of the writer or newspaper management. Editorials, opinion columns, news analysis, and reviews are some examples. Newspaper stories provide information that helps readers solve their business, home, recreation, and daily living problems. Adverts assist in informing readers about products and services. Hard news stories, feature stories, classified adverts, and display adverts are items that provide a service. Some items in the newspaper are designed to amuse or provide enjoyment to readers. Feature stories, comics, puzzles, and humor columns are entertainment items. At the risk of generalization, newspapers will normally contain a mixture of hard news and features including sport, finance, foreign affairs, opinion, analysis, reviews, leaders, among others” (Abdulraheem, Adisa & Laaro, 2012).

There are different types of newspapers, and their classification. We have general newspapers and subject/special newspapers. There are also daily newspapers, non-daily newspapers (weekly, fortnightly, monthly), local/community newspapers, regional newspapers, ethnic newspapers, national newspapers, and international newspapers. We may classify newspapers as per the following criteria:

- Publication by specific time: In this category, we have morning edition, mid-day and
- Publication by frequency: We can categorize newspaper by frequency of publications viz, daily, weekly, fortnightly, and monthly.
- Publication by Geography: This implies the jurisdiction of the newspaper publication that could again be regional, national or international.
- Publication by size/format: Broadly speaking, we can have either tabloid size or broadsheet size of newspapers. Interestingly, all published newspapers from Nigeria are found in tabloid size.
- Technology of Publication: Here we have print newspaper and online newspapers.
- Ownership: Here we have government-owned (federal/state) and privately-owned.
- Publication by domain: Newspapers can be published in specific and specialized domains intended for specific group of people like, sports, business, technology, politics, and the likes.
- Publication by language: Newspapers could be published in English or any other regional/local languages.

MAGAZINES: MEANING, FEATURES AND CLASSIFICATION

Magazines carry information on varied fields of knowledge generally found in bound form. Magazines are normally published either weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannually and annually. Magazines resemble the characteristics of newspapers, however, they carry much precise information, feature articles and research articles as well. Other characteristics of magazines are - they are produced with high quality papers, the covers have full colour separation on glossy paper or card, have audience segmentation (few general interest magazines, many others are targeted at specialized audience), carries lots of advertisement placement, have longer life span than newspapers, provide detailed treatment of issues, among others.

Like newspapers, magazines can also be classified using various criteria such as nature of the target audience (Ladies Corner, Men’s World), the subject matter (health, sports, education), technology of publication (print, online magazines), size or format (life size – 10 ½ x 13 inches; time size – 8 ½ x 11 inches; readers digest size – 5 ½ x 7 ½ ; online magazine), area of coverage/circulation, and ownership. Esimokha (2011) gave magazines three broad classifications as consumer, professional and company/industry magazines:

- consumer magazines – This is targeted at the general public, with the primary purpose of providing information and entertainment (infotainment) to them. They are readily available at newsstand, and may be sold off to the customers on subscription.
- technical, business, and trade magazines – These are specialized interest magazines, designed primarily for a segmented audience. They are usually couched in a specialized language that is easily understood by members of the group. They are usually mailed to the target audience, and sometimes available at newsstand.
- company/industry magazines – These are in-house publication of big companies and establishments targeted at their internal or external (or both) public for the exchange of information. Company publications

such as newsletters, brochures, booklets, manuals, books and calendar do not belong to this category.

From the three broad classes of magazines, various types can be identified. They are general interest or mass magazines, news magazines, sports magazines, opinion magazines, men's magazines, women's magazines, gossip magazines, humour magazines, picture magazines, health magazines, fashion magazines, sex magazines and bizarre magazines. Others are children's magazines, family magazines, religious magazines, youth magazines, intellectual magazines, among others.

Magazine performs a lot of functions, which depends on its type and philosophy. It provides in-depth analysis of events, serve as channel for advertising, provide entertainment, provide specialized information, serve as a link between an organization and its publics, provide a forum for diverse views, and contribute to the body of knowledge.

GENESIS OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES IN NIGERIA

The first ever newspaper namely, "*Iwe Irohim fun awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba*" was established by the then Anglican Priest Henry Townsend. The translated version of the newspaper meant "Newspaper for the Egba-speaking people and Yorubas". Initially the motto of newspaper was to spread divine message and the gospel and arousing sense of literacy among common people of Nigeria. It also bought out issue political, social and cultural interest.

Nwodu (n.d.) states that, "the first newspaper in Nigerian soil in 1859 was a religious publication, titled *Iwe Irohin*, but enjoyed limited audience as a result of certain factors". He pointed out those factors as:

- "The earlier editions were published in vernacular - precisely Yoruba. This limited audience exposure to only those who were literate in Yoruba language".
- "The contents were limited to religious issues. Since the mission was to help propagate the Christian faith and by extension, enhance missionary work".
- "At its inception, the paper was starved of advert revenue which made its production costly".

Besides, "*Iwe Irohin*" could not survive for a longer period because of rapid expulsion of Europeans and subsequent destruction of printing presses from different parts of Nigeria in 1860s.

Nevertheless, in 1937, Nigerian printing press got a renaissance with the birth of the most popular newspaper namely, "*West African Pilot*" that became a reliable channel of bringing facts, news, events from every nook and corner of Nigeria with huge popularity among people of Nigeria.

As stated by Nwabueze (2011), "Unlike the newspapers that made early impact in Nigeria's political history, magazines did not enjoy early prominence. It was not until early 1970s that magazines began to achieve reckoning in the media industry". According to Nwabueze (2011), "some of the early magazines include *The Nigeria Gazette* established in 1900, *The Nigerian magazine* established in 1927, *The African Challenge* established in 1947, *The Drum* established in 1964, the *African Mirror* established in 1960, *Spear* established in 1961, *Lagos Life* established in 1972, *New Breed* established in 1972, *Times International* established in 1974 among others".

Agbanu (2014) candidly remarks that, "some of these magazines were short lived and did not make much impact. The emergence of *Newswatch* in 1984 marked a turning point in magazine publishing in Nigeria. The magazine published by a team of Nigerian journalists led by late Dele Giwa blazed the trail for cutting edge investigative journalism. Today, people look forward to the publication of weekly magazines for news behind the news and in-depth analysis of issues and events (Agbanu, 2014)".

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

On the similarities,

- both newspapers and magazines belong to print media (though e-versions are emerging);
- both can be bought at newsstand or by subscription;
- both perform conventional function of mass communication via provision of information, education, entertainment and interpretation;
- both are veritable tools of expressing opinion;
- they provide employment opportunities;
- both contain considerable amount of advertisements, which constitute a major source of revenue; and
- both are sources of information, that can be cited and referenced in scholarly writing, communication and publishing.

On the differences, we consider factors like:

- (a) Frequency of Publication: Newspapers are mostly published daily, whereas magazines are weekly, fortnightly or monthly publications.
- (b) Timeliness: Newspaper report mostly recent and current events/news, whereas magazines interpret the news and provide further in-depth analysis.
- (c) Illustration and Paper Quality: Magazines generally make use of more illustrations, graphics and pictures

on quality paper (mostly glossy), whereas newspapers use less illustrations which are printed on newsprint.

- (d) Audience: Newspapers are generally intended for the general public, while magazines cater to the needs of specific audience.
- (e) Style of Writing: Generally in newspapers news and feature articles are presented in formal style, whereas magazines are written in informal and relaxed style than news-stories. Magazines use specialised language and terminologies for target audience, whereas the languages used in newspapers are relatively simple intended for the general public (Esimokha, 2011).

NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE OUTFIT

Newspaper/Magazine outfit here refers to the publishing house or organisation that is responsible for the creation, production and marketing of the serial publications. In such an outfit/organization, the production of a newspaper or magazine involve a number of highly skilled staff such as artists, reporters, writers, advert executives, editors, printers, machine operators, accountants, personnel managers, and production personnel.

Departments in a Newspaper/Magazine Outfit

A typical newspaper or magazine outfit should have the following departments:

- (a) Administrative Department: This department determines and executes policies, and coordinates the activities of other departments. Sub-units here include office of the managing director/chief executive officer (the publisher), personnel management and welfare, finance and accounts, public relations and legal services.
- (b) Editorial Department: This department is responsible for generating news, stories, and other editorial contents for the newspaper or magazine. It is headed by the editor in chief. Other staffs in this department are the news editor, sub editor/ copy editor, reporter, editorial page editor, features editor, photo editor, sports editor, librarian, arts editor, layout editor, and the proofreader.
- (c) Advertisement Department: This department is headed by the advertising manager and assisted by the advert executives, and it generates revenue for the media outfit by selling the newspaper/magazine advertising space. Sections or units under this department are classified advert section, and the displayed advert section. Classified advert is often short and contains no picture of the product. The rates (charges) are mostly based on the number of words or lines the advert occupies. Examples include change of name, and vacancies. The displayed advert on the other hand includes copy, illustrations (pictures and photographs) and other visual components.
- (d) Production Department: This department handles the actual printing of newspapers and magazines. In the case of magazines, it is also responsible for binding.
- (e) Circulation Department: This department is headed by the circulation manager, and it is responsible for making the published newspaper/magazine to get to the final consumers. Circulation methods involve use of established vendors, through distribution vans, by postal services for subscriptions, and through the use of aircrafts and trains.

Establishing a Newspaper/Magazine Outfit

According to Esimokha (2011), establishing a newspaper/magazine outfit requires a lot of initial background work. For whatever reason the publication exists (i.e. to make profit, propagate ideas, execute public relations, or advance a cause), there are some initial steps that must be carefully considered if the outfit is to flourish. The following steps must be taken before a newspaper/magazine outfit can be established:

- Carry out feasibility study – Before bringing out a certain newspaper, it is very much essential to study the market requirements, social and educational background of the people, socio-economic status of the society for which the targeted paper is intended, and many such issues through survey methods, and in some cases through personal interviews. Above all, the profitability analysis is a must.
- Name and registration of the newspaper/magazine – registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and newspaper registration board, can be done as sole proprietorship, partnership, joint venture or a limited liability company.
- Determine the mission and philosophy of the newspaper/magazine.
- Constitute the editorial board.
- Draft the editorial policy of the newspaper/magazine outfit.
- Secure funds for the newspaper/magazine.
- Establish a befitting and strategically located office.
- Staff recruitment.
- Procurement of equipment and facilities.

STAGES IN NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES PRODUCTION

As noted by Esimokha (2011), print production process is the systematic process a layout for newspaper/magazine goes through from conception to final printing. It is a stage by stage process. The steps involved in the production of newspapers and magazines are as follows: gathering the news, editing the news, typesetting/composition/proofreading, make up/design of pages, filming and plating, printing, packaging and circulation.

- (a) **Gathering the news:** Newsgathering is the process of collecting news and other information for the production of newspaper/magazine. Methods of gathering news include news beats, news conference, documents, news agencies/wire services, interviews and correspondents. News beats are special interest areas or places where reporters are assigned to for the purpose of continuous coverage. Major news beats in Nigeria are police/crime, judiciary, government house correspondent, parliament/legislature, science and technology, agriculture, education, sports, etc.
- (b) **Editing the news:** Editing involves eliminating unwanted details of a copy for smooth reading and quick understanding. It is a painstaking job which involves removing irrelevant or unwanted portions of a story including making corrections, rewriting portions of the story, and ensuring that the house style (accepted way of presenting stories by an establishment) is adhered to (Nwabueze, 2011). This is the responsibility of various editors in the publishing outfit, such as copy editors, editorial assistants, sub editors, photo editors, and the like. Editing also involves the consideration of ethics, legal issues, ownership and advertisers' interests. Since media houses have dual mandate, one to the society and the other to the owners, the editors and management team try to balance these two mandates in their daily operation. An editor must be a master of his/her publication's stylebook, know the rules of grammar, spellings, punctuation and the use of titles. He/she should also master the use of editing symbols.
- (c) **Typesetting/Composition/ Proofreading:** Typesetting is the process of arranging type for printing. Then proofreading is to ensure that it tallies with edited manuscript (copy). If errors and omissions are detected, they will be corrected before final printing.
- (d) **Make up/ Design of Pages:** Make up is the layout and designing of newspaper/magazine pages. Page make-up is the arrangement of types, the type and style of headlines, the number and length of stories, the number and size of pictures etc, with a view to attracting the attention of the readers. It generally involves the arrangement of different elements on the page and the relationship to each other. This make up elements are headlines, sub-heads, body text, pictures, illustrations, colour, graphics and adverts.
- (e) **Lithography (Filming and Plating):** This stage involves filming (making the negatives) and plate making. The camera ready artwork is converted into a negative (i.e. filmed). We now have from computer to film, film to plate and plate to printing machine; from computer to plate, plate to printing machine; and from computer to printing machine. In plate making, the developed negative is converted to a plate making machine. The plate can also be burnt using modern technology, from computer to plate machine.
- (f) **Printing:** The printing process involves placing the printing plate on a printing press, and inked with the proper colour, the printing plate transfers the images it carries to the printing surface, and the pages are rolled out.
- (g) **Packaging and Circulation:** Packaging involves paper folding, binding (for magazines), finishing, trimming, and then circulation.

In the production process for newspapers and magazines, there are legal and ethical issues which editors contend with. Among these considerations are accuracy, truthfulness, objectivity, libel, sedition, contempt of court, and right of privacy.

ICT AND NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE PUBLISHING IN NIGERIA

ICT is an acronym for information and communication technologies. It is an aggregate of computing systems, telecommunication gadgets, multimedia systems, and associated technologies that are used in information management processes. Other ICT components that are used in the publishing industries are the global system for mobile communication (GSM), satellite technology, fax machines and facsimile, the Internet and its associated services like e-mail, WWW, and the likes.

Meanwhile, it can be stated that information and communication technologies are affecting all facets of newspaper and magazine publishing. The use of ICT in newspaper and magazine publishing has enabled more cost effectiveness in gathering and disseminating information, made the whole process easier, improves the quality of published materials and also reduces cost of production (Anaeto, Anaeto & Tejumaiye, 2008). Some of the advantages of ICT use in newspaper and magazine publishing are: improved print production; increased quality reporting; cost efficiency/savings in news gathering and dissemination; makes production process easier; reduced cost of production; facilitates digital printing – a printing

technology which allows printed materials to be produced without printing plates, film, screening or scanning; access to information quickly, efficiently and with relative ease (Esimokha, 2011).

With the improvement in printing technology including other gamut information and communication Technologies (ICTs), newspaper and magazine production in Nigeria is becoming a lot easier and faster with high aesthetics value. The print media industry is flourishing in contemporary time to the extent over 250 newspapers (national, regional and local) circulate in Nigeria. Nwodu (n.d) reinforces this where he writes that the print media industry in Nigeria is a burgeoning one which has recorded and continues to record remarkable improvements in the quality of printing among others. Newspapers titles like the *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Champion*, *Vanguard* and *This Day* are now read online even as they compete favourably in international standard. These newspaper and magazine publishing houses now have websites through which they publish the e-version of their information. Even with handsets, they also collaborate with service providers to ensure that readers receive newspaper and magazines in their handheld devices after subscription.

The influence of social media is also not left out. Social media platforms like facebook, twitter, blogs, wikis, youtube, and others are used in disseminating information published in newspapers and magazines. Sahara Reporters is a good example of a newspaper that is making waves in the online environment. Today, there is frequent practice of citizen journalism across Nigeria. Citizens use various online media platforms to post information on the web.

Challenges of Publishing Newspapers and Magazines in Nigeria

There are many challenges facing the print media industry (newspapers and magazines) in Nigeria. These challenges are socio-economic, political and legal challenges that at times hinder the production and circulation of the products. Some of the major challenges are:

- Low literacy level and poverty;
- Poor reading habits in the country;
- Circulation and distribution challenges;
- Financial constraints and increasing cost of production;
- Inadequate advert support;
- Emergence of information and communication technologies;
- Poor patronage of newspapers and magazines;
- Oppressive/repressive press laws and political influence

CONCLUSION

Newspaper and magazine industry in Nigeria has witnessed a progressive trend over the last few decades, be it quality of production, contents of the papers or public circulation and the communication has been a lot easier and faster with high aesthetics value. Newspapers titles like the *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Champion*, *Vanguard* and *This Day* are now read online even as they compete favourably in international standard. These newspaper and magazine publishing houses now have websites through which they publish the e-version of their information. Even with handsets, they also collaborate with service providers to ensure that readers receive newspaper and magazines in their handheld devices after subscription. Sahara Reporters is a good example of a newspaper that is making waves in the online environment. Today, there is frequent practice of citizen journalism across Nigeria. Citizens use various online media platforms to post information on the web.

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