

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' READERSHIP OF SPORTS STORIES ON  
PRINT MEDIA**

**BY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY.**

**APRIL, 2024.**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS  
COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
BENIN CITY EDO STATE, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A)  
DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

**APRIL, 2024.**

## **DECLARATION**

This Project work is based on a study undertaken by me, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Dr. Ene Obaje. All ideas, views, findings and analyses in this study are the product of my research and where the views of others have been used and expressed, they have been duly acknowledged.

---

**OJUEMI IZONBERASORIDE HARRY**  
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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this research was carried out by Ojuemi Izonberasoride Harry, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin. It is approved by the undersigned on behalf of the department, having met the requirements in partial fulfilment for the award of a Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A) in Mass Communication.

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**DR. ENE OBAJE**  
*Project Supervisor*

**DATE**

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**DR. DANIEL O. EKHAREAFO**  
*Head of Department*

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty the source of all wisdom and knowledge and to my lovely parents, Mr. and Mrs. Japias Ojuemi and my lovely elder sister Ojuemi Jubilee for their unconditional love, relentless support and encouragement both financially and morally especially during the period of this study.

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the assessment of Students' readership of sports stories in print media. The goal was to ascertain the newspapers that students of the University of Benin, Benin City mostly read, to determine how regular students of the University of Benin, Benin City read sport stories in the newspapers, to find out the effective strategies for engaging and maintaining the interest of the University of Benin students in sports stories published in newspapers, and to determine the ways through which students of the University of Benin, Benin City, obtain the newspapers they read. To provide a theoretical framework, the study was anchored on Uses and Gratification Theory and Media Dependency Theory: A survey research design was adopted with a sample size of 402, and a questionnaire as the primary instrument of data collection. Findings from the analysis of the data gathered showed that University of Benin students show a clear inclination towards digital means for accessing newspapers. Data generated also indicates awareness of Daily Trust was identified as the most widely read newspaper, reflecting the students' inclination towards print media. The data indicates that 33.9% of the total population prefers Daily Trust Newspaper over any other publication. Also, there was a significant presence of weekly readership in sports stories, with 43.8% of the student population consistently engaging with sports content. Hence, this study recommends that Sports Journalists should acknowledge the importance of in-depth analysis and quality writing in sustaining interest, especially in sports stories. They should also prioritize delivering well-crafted, informative, and engaging content to meet the preferences of the student audience. Also, given the importance of timeliness and relevance in sustaining interest, Sports journalists should prioritize delivering up-to-date and contextually relevant information. Regularly update content to align with current events and trends.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Traditional print media has served as a significant means of disseminating news and information to a broad audience (Nwosu & Okunna, 2018). Within the field of sports journalism, newspapers and magazines have traditionally played a vital role in furnishing sports enthusiasts with comprehensive coverage of their preferred teams, athletes, and events (Wenner, 2010). Nevertheless, the act of reading holds paramount importance in the field of learning, particularly within formal educational settings like the university system. Engaging in reading enhances one's understanding and contemplation of a specific subject, benefiting both individual knowledge and societal awareness (Faizli, 2012). Onwubiko (2015) posits that there are four primary motivations for reading: reading for pleasure and relaxation, reading for acquiring information, reading for knowledge, and a combination of these intentions. Additionally, he emphasizes the abundance of reading materials available to readers, citing newspapers as a prominent source.

A newspaper serves as a mass medium that delivers timely information periodically. Functioning as a mass medium, newspapers serve various purposes, including education, information dissemination, recreation, relaxation, and entertainment. Ola and Ojo (2007) emphasize the importance of newspapers, highlighting their role in providing current information and keeping readers abreast of events within and beyond their immediate surroundings. Okunna (1999) supports this notion, stating that newspapers play a crucial role as disseminators of up-to-date information and news. Obaid (2014) agrees, characterizing newspapers as educational tools that offer current information on local, state, national, and global affairs, along with the latest analyses and criticisms of executive and legislative decision-making, as well as updates in music, theatre, television, fine arts, and humor through columns and comics. Babalola (2002) contends that newspapers contribute to literacy empowerment by fostering critical thinking, information retention, problem-solving skills, and the ability to question information sources. Additionally, Igwe (2013) asserts that reading newspapers cultivates civic-conscious values, tolerance, and a sense of community closeness.

The significance of newspapers, particularly for students, cannot be overstated. Students are expected to be the most engaged consumers of newspapers due to the enduring nature of print media, such as newspapers. This durability allows

information to be recalled, preventing its fleeting and ephemeral nature. Consequently, the audience, particularly students, can utilize the content for academic and various other purposes (Ezeh, Chukwuma & Enwereuzo, 2015). Onwubiko (2005) asserts that newspapers hold a distinct advantage for students, serving as "external teachers" beyond the confines of the classroom. This is attributed to the formal language and standard forms used in newspapers, aiding students in developing their language skills. Moreover, newspapers, as described by Onwubiko, act as valuable sources of information, covering university admissions, job opportunities, and government incentives that prove beneficial for students. Elmadwi (2014) further emphasizes the encouragement of reading newspaper articles for students, highlighting those newspapers offer a diverse range of reading and visual materials that contribute significantly to the learning experience.

Despite the significant role that newspaper readership plays in the lives of students, a substantial body of empirical literature suggests a decline in newspaper reading among youths. For instance, Dominick (2002) highlights a consistent decrease in newspaper readership over the past few years. Udie (2002) reports that the frequency of newspaper readership among Nigerian students is now below 50%. Biagi (2003) notes a decline in the overall number of newspapers since the 1970s, attributing it to decreased readership. Business Essay (2009, p. 2) also observes a

downward trend in newspaper readership across various countries, including Europe and America, over the past few decades. Afrobarometer conducted a survey in 12 African countries, including Nigeria, in 2003, revealing that only 13% of the sampled population claimed to read a daily newspaper (Afrobarometer, 2003). According to a 2010 study by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) nationwide, the daily sales figure for all newspapers was less than 300,000, indicating that only one in every 470 Nigerians purchases newspapers daily (Ekeng, 2010). To contextualize this, Popoola (2010) points out that the combined circulation figure of all newspapers in Nigeria today is significantly less than 500,000 copies per day, compared to 1980 when the population of Nigeria was approximately half of its current size.

Undoubtedly, traditional newspapers are currently facing unprecedented challenges, primarily due to the rise of the Internet. The Internet offers a range of online functionalities and possibilities that surpass what conventional newspapers can provide. Notably, it delivers instantaneous and cost-effective access to news and information, incorporating interactive and multimedia features. This accessibility extends to simple handheld technologies like mobile phones and personal computers, as emphasized by Afrobarometer in 2007. Varian (2013) contends that the Internet represents a superior means of distributing and consuming news and information.

Rajendran and Thesinghraj (2014) aptly agree that new media and social media present a formidable challenge to printed newspapers. They observe a shift in readership habits as users increasingly turn to the internet for free news and information. The immediacy of social media and online news has become an attractive option for global consumers. This scenario inadvertently poses a threat to traditional mass communication channels, including newspapers, in their traditional role within the news business, compelling them to tap into the vast resources of the internet.

Presently, newspapers have embraced digital platforms, aligning with other mass media, to disseminate their content electronically. However, there is a concern that the surge in online content consumption may lead to a decline in readership for traditional print newspapers (Aliagan, 2011). There is an increasing body of evidence indicating the widespread use of online platforms for news and information among college and university students globally (Ani, 2010; Adekunmisi, Ajala, & Iyoro, 2013; Shadrach & Abugu, 2019, etc.). Therefore, it becomes crucial to investigate whether this trend has indeed impacted the readership of traditional newspapers among students. Additionally, the reading habits of the audience play a pivotal role in determining the survival or decline of the conventional newspaper industry in Nigeria and many other countries.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to assess newspaper readership among University of Benin students a demographic that is often a primary target for sports content (Ballew & Chadwick, 2017).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Print media has served as a significant channel for distributing news and information widely (Nwosu & Okunna, 2018). However, recent research indicates a decline in newspaper readership, largely attributed to the increasing competition from electronic media, especially radio. A national survey in Ghana by the Centre for Democratic Development's Afro Barometer Round Two Survey in 2002 revealed a preference for electronic media over newspapers for political information, with 60 percent of respondents opting for radio news compared to 40 percent who claimed to read newspapers daily. The majority, 58 percent, admitted to never reading newspapers, while only 14 percent claimed to never listen to radio news, emphasizing a preference for radio over newspapers.

The shift in news consumption habits includes online sources and cable television, with some individuals abandoning traditional news outlets. Many now read newspapers occasionally rather than daily, focusing on readership metrics for

advertisers. Notably, a concerning trend involves the decline in newspaper readership among individuals aged 34 to 64, a demographic crucial for civic engagement and leadership roles (The State of the News Media 2004).

Meijer (2006) observes a trend among young adults who prefer instant news consumption, termed "snacking news," indicating a desire to stay updated without committing to fixed news moments. While they may not prioritize being fully informed citizens, there is a regular urge to monitor news and current affairs (Graber, 2003; Zaller, 2003). However, in the business of sports journalism, newspapers and magazines have traditionally played a vital role in offering comprehensive coverage of favorite teams, athletes, and events (Wenner, 2010). As sports stories cater for enthusiasts, understanding readership patterns in print media becomes crucial for media organizations, advertisers, and content creators (Evans, 2020).

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the Students' readership of sports stories in print media.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to assess the readership of sports stories in print media using undergraduates at the University of Benin, while the following specific objectives are;

1. To ascertain the newspapers that students of the University of Benin, Benin City mostly read.
2. To determine how regular students of the University of Benin, Benin City read sport stories in the newspapers.
3. To find out the effective strategies for engaging and maintaining the interest of University of Benin students in sports stories published in newspapers.
4. To determine the ways through which students of the University of Benin, Benin City, obtain the newspapers they read.

#### **1.4 Research Questions:**

The following research questions were stated for the Study:

1. What Newspapers do University of Benin students mostly read?
2. How regularly do the University of Benin students read sports stories in the newspapers?
3. What are the effective strategies for engaging and maintaining the interest of University of Benin students in sports stories published in newspapers?
4. What are the ways through which students of the University of Benin, Benin City, obtain the newspapers they read?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study:**

This study would hopefully be significant in the sense that it can help newspapers and others in the media understand how students at the University of Benin read sports news. It can also provide useful information for teachers and advertisers. This body of work will also help to encourage print media houses to improve on the level of coverage they give to sports stories.

This study will also add to existing research on newspaper readership in Nigeria because such studies are rather limited. Results derived from this study will facilitate comparisons among other readership studies. Finally, this study will guide policymakers and newspaper organizations on what people look out for in reading particular newspaper content

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on the assessment of the readership of sports stories in print media. The scope of this study is however limited to the University of Benin students in Edo state, Nigeria. The study is primarily focusing on undergraduate students in the campus. It specifically looks at how these students read and prefer sports stories in traditional print media like newspapers and magazines within a set time frame.

## **1.7 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Print Media:** This refers to newspapers and magazines, the kinds of media where sports stories are printed on paper.

**Readership:** This means how students at the University of Benin read and enjoy sports stories in newspapers and magazines.

**Sports Stories:** These are stories, articles, and reports about different sports, athletes, teams, and events that you find in newspapers and magazines.

**University of Benin Students:** These are the undergraduate students currently studying at the University of Benin in Nigeria,

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, the researcher presents a conceptual review of necessary literature beginning with a historical review, past works on this discourse, and the communication theories that support this work to provide modern knowledge and insightful findings. It is explained under the following subheadings:

- Historical overview of Sports in Nigeria
- History of Print Media in Nigeria
- History of the University of Benin
- Conceptual Review of Print Media (Overview)
- Concept of Readership
- Concept of Sports
- Sport Stories and Print Media
- University Students' exposure to Print Media (Newspaper)
- Ways University Students Access Newspapers.
- Challenges against Newspaper readership among university Students.
- Empirical Review of Related Literature

- Theoretical Framework
- Summary

## **2.1 Historical Review**

### **2.1.1 History of Sports in Nigeria**

According to Oye (2015), the roots of sports can be traced back to villages and their respective ethnic groups. Initially, serving as a humble form of entertainment and recreation, sports eventually evolved into a significant phenomenon that played a crucial role in the socio-political and economic life of the nation. The introduction of formal sports in Nigeria can be credited to missionaries, leading to the establishment of management structures such as Sports Federations, Sports Councils, and, at the apex, the National Sports Commission. The formal organization of sports in Nigeria began around 1910 with the inception of Empire Day competitions, organized on an inter-school basis. The development of sports was further facilitated by the establishment of Mission schools across Nigeria, introducing both traditional and new sports. Despite being unfamiliar to Nigerians initially, these sports were embraced as they served common purposes such as recreation, entertainment, social mobilization, and the promotion of unity in diversity.

Nigeria's first international sports participation took place in 1934, with the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe representing the country in the 440 yards (400m) at the Commonwealth Games and Empire Day competitions in London. Subsequent participation included the 1950 Commonwealth Games in Hamilton, Canada, the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, Finland, and the inaugural All Africa Games in 1965, in Libreville, Congo. Nigeria has consistently taken part in these events, with exceptions during the 1976 Olympics, the 1986 Commonwealth Games, and the 1998 Commonwealth Games due to political reasons, including the African boycott and suspension by the Commonwealth.

Sports administration and practice in Nigeria have transformed into a significant commercial venture and employer of labour. In response to the dominance of the sporting world by the Russians and their allies, the Nigerian government intervened, leading to the establishment of the National Sports Council in 1962. The administrative structure involves Sports Councils at the State level and the National Sports Commission at the National level. The National Sports Commission, formalized by Decree 34 of 1971, was later elevated to ministerial status in 1975. However, subsequent legal changes, such as Decree 7 of 1991, saw the Commission becoming a parastatal under the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The National Sports Commission was briefly abolished in 1995, leading to an oscillation

between ministerial and commission administration, hindering the desired growth of sports in Nigeria. The re-establishment of the National Sports Commission in December 2006 aimed to address this issue.

Football, introduced by missionaries, gained popularity in schools and among traders, leading to the formation of clubs. The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) was established in 1945, gaining legal backing and parastatal status through Decree 101 of 1991. The growth of football activities in Nigeria led to the creation of the Nigeria Premier League Board to oversee professional club-level football. Additionally, the National Institute of Sports (NIS) was established in 1974, achieving parastatal status in 1992, focusing on training and research in all aspects of sports.

### **2.1.2 Brief History of Print Media in Nigeria**

The evolution of print media, spanning several centuries, is a complex journey that cannot be fully appreciated without acknowledging the means of communication that preceded it, as emphasized by Odorume (2012). The history of print media in Nigeria commenced in 1859 with the publication of the first newspaper, *Iwe Irohin*, by European missionary Rev. Henry Townsend. The success of *Iwe Irohin* paved the way for subsequent newspapers, including the *Anglo-African* newspaper by Robert Campbell between 1863-65. Nigerian publishers gradually entered the newspaper

business, contributing to the emergence of titles such as *The Nigeria Pioneer* (1914-1937) by Kitoye Ajasa, *African Messenger* (1921) by Ernest Ikoli, *Lagos Daily Mirror* (1927) founded by Obademi and popularized by Herbert Macaulay, and *The West African Pilot* by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Omu, 1978; Okafor, 2002).

In the present day, Nigeria boasts over 250 newspapers (national, regional, and local) and magazine titles, playing a significant role in national development through news reporting, analysis, and interpretation (Aliede, 2010:129). Prominent newspapers include *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Champion*, *the Sun*, *The Nation*, *This Day*, *New Nigerian*, and *Tribune*. Magazines like *New Swatch*, *Tell*, *Insider*, *The Week*, *The News*, and *Ovation* also contribute substantially to national discourse. The Nigerian print media industry has experienced substantial growth, with an abundance of national, regional, and local titles circulating throughout the country. Notably, most newspapers and magazines are published in full color, a trend initiated by *Sunray* newspaper in the mid-1990s, enhancing the visual appeal of publications. The industry has also witnessed a shift towards digital printing, improving layout aesthetics and providing readers with a visually comfortable experience. Furthermore, there has been a remarkable improvement in the language level and quality of stories, aligning with acceptable international standards.

One enduring strength of the Nigerian print media lies in investigative journalism, demonstrated through cases like Salisu Buhari and Senator Evan Enwerem, where the media played a pivotal role in exposing false claims regarding their certificates and age. This commitment to investigative journalism highlights the resilience and integrity of the Nigerian print media in scrutinizing and uncovering important truths.

### **2.1.3 History of the University of Benin**

The University of Benin, commonly known as UNIBEN, is a prominent public research institution located in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Established in 1970, UNIBEN is part of the first generation of federal universities in the country and holds official recognition and approval from the National Universities Commission (NUC), aligning with the standards set for universities across Nigeria. Providing a wide range of academic programs, including postgraduate, doctoral, master's, and bachelor's degrees, UNIBEN has the authority to confer higher education degrees and offers diverse courses across various disciplines.

Originally founded as a technological institute, UNIBEN gained full university status on July 1, 1971, following accreditation by the NUC. In April 1972, the institution underwent a name change from the Institute of Technology to the University of Benin, a decision announced by Samuel Ogbemudia, the former

military governor of Mid-Western State. Notably, during the same year, the Faculty of Science introduced an optometry program under the leadership of Paul Ogbuehi from the Department of Physics.

The faculty responsible for the newly introduced optometry program includes licensed doctors from Canada, the United States, and England, and it has attracted a significant number of students from the College of Medicine and the Medical Sciences. In response to a request from the State government, the federal government of Nigeria took over the institution, officially designating it as a federal university.

Presently, the University of Benin (UNIBEN) boasts a diverse range of faculties, reflecting its growth and expansion over the years which include;

- Arts
- Agriculture
- Education `
- Engineering
- Law
- Life science pharmacy
- Physical Science

- Social Science
- College of Medical Sciences (Made up of three Schools: Dentistry and Medicine;
- Institute of Child Health; and Basic Medical Sciences).

UNIBEN holds the distinction of being the pioneer university to appoint its first female Vice-Chancellor, Grace Alele-Williams, who served from 1985 to 1991. Presently, the university is led by another female Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lilian Salami. Offering a comprehensive range of educational programs, UNIBEN provides certificate, diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate courses. The student body consists of over 70,000 individuals, including both full-time and part-time students.

## **2.2 Conceptual Review**

### **2.2.1 Concept of Print Media**

According to Eilders (2016), print media refers to traditional mass media publications on paper, encompassing not only the published products but also the organizational context influencing journalistic routines and norms in their creation. Print media, being the oldest and most widespread form of mass media, includes newspapers and magazines, distinguishing itself from electronic media due to its less

intricate technical requirements for users. Newspapers primarily focus on information, particularly political issues and current events, while news magazines also serve an informational role. Other magazines tend to lean towards entertainment and leisure, covering a diverse spectrum from lifestyle to special interests. The advent of online communication has placed significant economic pressure on print newspapers and magazines.

According to Emudiaga (2019), print media constitutes printed publications like newspapers and magazines, encompassing newspapers, community newsletters, wire services, and various other publications. Within this realm, there are two main divisions of labor: reporting and editing. Reporters investigate newsworthy events and interesting stories, and editors play a crucial role in shaping the final product. Print media reaches a broad daily readership, with reporters and editors continually seeking compelling and newsworthy stories. Gaining media attention can enhance influence and name recognition within target communities. Print media, involving newspapers and magazines, represents the printed form of news dissemination, a stark contrast to the handwritten materials used before the widespread adoption of printing presses. Miek (2009) traces the evolution of news dissemination, from being chiselled in stone to handwritten scrolls, eventually progressing to the production of daily news sheets by the ancient Roman government as early as 131 B.C. Over time,

print media expanded its scope beyond news to include entertainment, educational content, and more.

According to Asemah (2022), people's perception of the world, including sports, is shaped by their repeated exposure to media content. Print media serves as a means of relaxation and escape from daily problems, allowing audiences to release emotions vicariously through the roles portrayed in the media scene. Some individuals, lacking interest in sports, may not engage with sports news, contributing to the spiral of silence. The common thread among print media is the use of ink on paper, with special machines employing type plates and blocks to imprint letters, numbers, lines, and pictures on passing papers.

### **2.2.2 Concept of Readership**

The Print Media revolves around the central concept of readership, which is an abstract idea encapsulating the act of reading. Though challenging to precisely define, readership is commonly linked to newspapers, magazines, and various periodicals. In essence, readership refers to the number of individuals who peruse a specific newspaper or magazine (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010). A UK-based agency, Bottle PR, founded in 2004, characterizes readership as a broad term encompassing both the purchaser of a publication and others who have read it (Bottle PR, 8th February 2011). The Huntsville Time website (8th February 2011)

defines readership as the count of adults (18+) in a designated geographic area who "read or looked into the publication yesterday," as cited in Obaid (2013).

Reading is the fundamental process underpinning readership, involving the extraction of ideas from printed or written materials. It serves as a means of acquiring knowledge, tapping into insights from superior minds (Oyeyemi, 2005). The term "reading" denotes an interaction where the meaning encoded by an author in visual stimuli is interpreted by the reader, encompassing the recognition of printed symbols leading to the recall of meaning through intellectual manipulation. The resultant meanings are then organized into a thinking process, influencing modified thought or behavior and contributing to personal or social development.

Viewed differently, Ogbonna (2014) defines reading as the capacity to identify and comprehend characters or spoken words that may be printed or written on paper and various formats used to record human knowledge. According to Burhan (2012:9), reading is a physical and mental activity that unveils the meaning embedded in written texts, involving a process of understanding letters. Reading is also defined as the vocalization of words in a given passage and the process of ascribing meaning to materials, particularly during reading aloud, commonly practiced by beginners. However, vocalization in silent reading can impede reading pace, and for effective reading, a good speed is essential. Reading speed is quantified by the number of

characters or words read per minute. Johnson (1999) discerns two types of reading: reading aloud, involving audible vocalization suitable for young learners and public speeches, and silent reading, where the reader internalizes the content. Silent reading is crucial for developing reading habits, enhancing reading effectiveness, and fostering a profound understanding of literary and technical texts.

### **2.2.3 Concept of Sports**

Sport encompasses any physical activity or organized game, often competitive in nature, aimed at utilizing, maintaining, or enhancing physical abilities and skills while providing enjoyment for participants and entertainment for spectators. Participation in sports, whether casual or organized, contributes to the improvement of participants' physical health. There is a wide array of sports, ranging from individual contests to those with numerous participants, either in teams or competing individually. Some sports involve multiple contestants vying simultaneously or consecutively for a single victory, while others feature contests between two sides attempting to outperform each other. Various sports allow for ties or draws, while others employ tie-breaking methods to determine a single winner. Tournaments with multiple contests may be organized to produce an ultimate champion, and sports

leagues often crown an annual champion through regular season games and playoffs (Wikipedia, 2024).

Sport is generally acknowledged as a system of activities grounded in physical athleticism or dexterity, with major competitions like the Olympic Games admitting only activities meeting this physical definition. Organizations such as the Council of Europe exclude activities without a physical component from being classified as sports. However, some competitive non-physical activities claim recognition as mind sports. The International Olympic Committee recognizes chess and bridge as legitimate sports, and Sport Accord acknowledges five non-physical sports: bridge, chess, draughts (checkers), Go, and xiangqi, limiting the number of mind games classified as sports.

Sports are typically governed by rules or customs ensuring fair competition and consistent adjudication of winners. Victory can be determined by physical events, such as scoring goals or crossing a finish line, or by judges scoring aspects of the sporting performance, encompassing objective or subjective measures like technical proficiency or artistic impression. Performance records are often maintained, widely announced, or reported in sports news for popular sports. Additionally, sports serve as a major source of entertainment for non-participants, drawing large crowds to venues and reaching broader audiences through broadcasting. Sport betting, in some

cases, is closely regulated and plays a central role in certain sports. According to consultancy firm A.T. Kearney, the global sports industry was valued at up to \$620 billion as of 2013. Running stands as the world's most accessible and practiced sport, while association football holds the title as the most popular spectator sport.

## **2.3 Opinion Review**

### **2.3.1 Sports Stories and Print Media**

In Nigeria, the print media serves a crucial role in covering, promoting, and preserving indigenous sports, contributing significantly to their recognition and sustainability within the country's cultural fabric. Despite the rise of social media and other instant information channels, such as television and digital media, the importance of print media in sports promotion and development remains substantial (Adenle, 2017). It is noteworthy that football holds the position of the most popular sport in Nigeria, West Africa, and the entire African continent. Therefore, Nigerian newspaper outlets, in fulfilling their role in covering indigenous sports, must prioritize the reporting of sports events.

The responsibilities of print media outlets in Nigeria concerning sports event coverage encompass various aspects, as outlined by Ibrahim (2017). These responsibilities include:

- 1. News and Updates:** Print newspapers should consistently provide news coverage, keeping readers informed about sports developments, team news, managerial changes, and other relevant updates. This is crucial in meeting the informational needs of sports fans.
- 2. Match Reporting:** Print media outlets are expected to publish detailed match reports for sports events like football and basketball. These reports should include comprehensive accounts of events, highlights, key moments, and player performances.
- 3. Analysis and Commentary:** This involves the publication of statistics, standings, and sports columns dedicated to analysis. Sports journalists and pundits should offer commentary on player and team performances, helping fans track the progress of teams and individual players.
- 4. Player Profiling and Interviews:** Print newspapers should feature player profiles, shedding light on their backgrounds, achievements, and contributions

to their teams. Interviews with players, coaches, and team officials provide readers with insights into the dynamics of the league.

**5. Promotion of Fan Engagement:** Contributing to the promotion of sports events and covering fan culture and engagement is essential. This helps build a sense of community among sports enthusiasts, particularly in football.

**6. Community Impact and Documentation:** Print media should cover sports events that directly impact communities, fostering a sense of belonging, acceptance, and pride among local fans. Additionally, the print media is responsible for documenting historical records, key moments, milestones, and achievements in sports events (Ibrahim, 2017).

In summary, the print media in Nigeria plays a multifaceted role in covering sports activities, serving as a primary source of information, analysis, and engagement for sports enthusiasts and the broader community.

### **2.3.2 University Students' Exposure to Print Media (Newspaper)**

The exposure of young Nigerians to newspapers is reported to be limited, particularly among students in tertiary institutions such as universities in the country (Abdulraheem, Adisa, and La'aro, 2012). Alianga (2011) expresses the view that contemporary Nigerian university students generally do not pay much attention to

newspapers. According to him, students primarily turn to newspapers when there is an urgent need, such as an assigned task or essential information available in a particular edition. Cooper (2009) contends that newspaper readership is currently at its lowest point, with a massive shift of readers to online sources. Ashog and Henry (2013) agree that the changing dynamics in the media industry, especially for newspapers, indicate a shift in paradigm. The advent of online newspapers appears to challenge the traditional dominance of print newspapers, as more readers are opting for online platforms.

A report by Daily Trust (2012) highlights concerns raised by newspaper vendors across Nigeria, who complain about a decline in newspaper readership, particularly among young college students. The report suggests that contemporary college students are less inclined to purchase and read newspapers. The National Population Commission of Nigeria, as cited in Aliagan (2011), also indicates that a significant portion of Nigerians neither buy nor has access to newspapers, contributing to a generally low readership in all regions of the country. Cheney, Knapp, Alan, and Czaplá (2006) specifically note a poor attitude toward newspaper readership among students in tertiary institutions, attributing it to the growing availability of news on the Internet, radio, television, etc. Nevertheless, they argue that conventional newspapers can still play a crucial role in the academic community.

They advocate for libraries to offer unrestricted access to newspapers for all library users as a means to enhance newspaper readership among college-age students.

### **2.3.3 Ways University Students Access Newspapers**

Access to newspapers is varied and can be obtained through various means. Newspapers can be acquired directly by purchasing them from roadside vendors, opting for monthly subscriptions for regular delivery to one's home or office, or finding them available in public offices, hostels, and libraries. It's crucial to note that the evolution of new media has led to the creation of online newspapers, allowing readers to access content directly through their smartphones (Talabi, 2016). However, this study specifically focuses on conventional print media like hardcopy newspapers.

Reports suggest that students primarily access traditional newspapers through direct purchases and by utilizing library resources (Ashong & Henry, 2017). Despite a generally indifferent attitude among students towards accessing newspapers, libraries have consistently played a significant role in providing newspapers for students and the university community. Layefa, Johnson, and Taiwo (2016) assert that the prevalent pattern of newspaper access among many people, especially young adults in college, involves "borrowing" and participation in free reading groups. They argue that young newspaper readers often hesitate to allocate resources for

purchasing newspapers and, instead, prefer borrowing them for a short period or engaging with free reading groups close.

#### **2.3.4 Challenges against Newspaper readership among university Students**

Challenges to the readership of newspapers among university students are not uncommon. While newspaper readership in general faces various obstacles, this study, focusing on students' newspaper reading culture, identifies specific challenges that hinder their engagement with newspapers. According to Talabi (2016), students' newspaper reading habits are constrained by the widespread use of new media technologies, such as smartphones, through which students access online stories for free and invest time in social media. Ashong and Henry (2017) add that newspapers may not appeal to students, given the attractiveness of new media technologies and the convergence process, which allows students to access multiple newspapers on a single, cost-effective device.

Aliagan (2011) associates the decline in newspaper reading among students with socio-economic factors. He argues that the cost of each newspaper edition, priced at Two Hundred Naira (N200), implies that a student would need to allocate at least One Thousand Naira (N1,000) weekly to obtain a week's editions of just one newspaper brand. According to him, this is impractical given the challenging economic conditions faced by Nigerians today. Another hindrance to students' access

to newspapers is the insufficient supply of newspapers in many university libraries. Salaam (2002) notes that a consistent supply of newspapers in most Nigerian libraries is lacking due to issues of under-funding, a problem exacerbated in schools or universities where poor funding has been a persistent issue. Consequently, the management may struggle to provide newspapers for consistent readership among students.

## **2.4 Empirical Studies**

Ajisegbede, T. A. (2010) conducted a study on Sports Newspaper Readership among Female Students of Redeemer's University, incorporating relevant literature reviews and adopting the theories of selective perception and uses and gratification. The research findings indicated that a majority of the respondents tended to pay more attention to other print materials like magazines and novels, as these materials appeared to better meet their needs and interests compared to sports newspapers. Similarly, the majority expressed a lack of attraction to sports newspapers due to a general lack of interest. Surprisingly, 86% of the female students at Redeemer's University admitted to not reading sports newspapers.

Based on these research findings, it is recommended that efforts be made to educate females on the importance of reading sports newspapers. This could involve incorporating materials that specifically stimulate the interest of females in sports

newspapers. Recognizing the significance of understanding audience preferences, the theoretical base of this research emphasized the importance of catering to the personal needs and aspirations of the audience. Therefore, editors, armed with knowledge of what the female audience desires, can tailor content to increase readership of sports newspapers in society. Additionally, the male counterpart is encouraged to promote sports newspaper reading among females, allowing them to engage with and contribute to discussions about local and international events.

However, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding audience preferences and creating content to meet the needs and interests of readers. It suggests that efforts should be made to educate and stimulate interest in sports newspapers, particularly among females. This recommendation aligns with the goal of assessing readership preferences among University of Benin students and tailoring content to increase engagement.

A Latin American Kids study conducted in 1998 on newspaper readership among Latin American kids revealed that only 20.8% of children aged 7-11 read a weekday newspaper, and 18.1% read a Sunday newspaper. This research provides substantial evidence, grounded in empirical data, indicating a decline in newspaper readership of various content either sport or other related content among individuals of different age groups. Specifically, there is notable research-based evidence

pointing to the fact that young people, including youths, show a reluctance to read newspapers. It is noteworthy, however, that newspapers are currently available in both traditional hard copy and electronic forms, accessible through the Internet using various devices that are readily available to young individuals, particularly students. These innovations are introduced to enhance newspaper readership and attract a younger audience.

The study indicates a decline in newspaper readership among children aged 7-11, highlighting a trend of reluctance among young people to read newspapers. This information could be relevant to understanding potential challenges in attracting younger readers at the university level and exploring strategies to enhance readership among students.

Aliagan (2011) examined the trends in newspaper readership within the Ilorin metropolis through a survey involving 150 respondents. The findings revealed that an average of 4,800 newspapers are sold daily in Ilorin, with some publications selling as few as 80 copies. This presents a concerning scenario for a city with a population of half a million people. Such findings hold that the widely held perception of low newspaper patronage and readership across the country. The study identified the economic challenges faced by most individuals in Ilorin as a significant factor influencing newspaper patronage negatively. Additionally, the

limited coverage of local events in the metropolis was cited as a reason for the low newspaper patronage. A majority of newspapers were observed to focus more on reporting national news rather than providing comprehensive coverage of local readers and their activities.

The research on newspaper readership in Ilorin points out economic challenges as a significant factor influencing low patronage. This finding is relevant to this study, considering economic factors that may affect students' willingness to buy or engage with sports newspapers.

In another study, Amankwah, and Adwoa Sikayena (2010) carried out a study on the newspaper reading habits of residents in the Adenta Flats, Adenta, Accra, they investigated the specific newspapers preferred by residents, the subjects they deemed most significant in a newspaper, and the factors influencing their newspaper reading. The research also studied residents' perceptions of the credibility of certain newspapers and examined whether credibility correlated with the level of readership for those selected newspapers. The findings revealed that most respondents either purchased the newspapers they read or accessed them through sources such as work, public libraries, universities, colleges, co-tenants, and friends, primarily because they considered these sources to be informative and credible. The study indicated a clear

tendency for respondents to buy newspapers they perceived as credible and less of those regarded as lacking credibility. Additionally, the research uncovered that physical attributes, including headlines, well-written stories, and newspaper review programs, played a significant role in enhancing newspaper reading.

The study highlights the importance of credibility and physical attributes (headlines, well-written stories) in enhancing newspaper reading. These factors could be considered in assessing the readership of sports stories among University of Benin students, emphasizing the need for credible and appealing content.

Similarly, Akanda and Haque (2013) surveyed the newspaper reading habits of graduate students in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Rajshahi in Bangladesh. The findings of the study indicate that a significant majority of the graduate students engage in reading both Bengali and English newspapers. Additionally, the research unveils that the international section of the newspaper is the most favored among the surveyed students. The paper emphasizes that a substantial portion of respondents prefer utilizing the hall library for reading printed newspapers, while a considerable number opt for the computer center in the university's central library for accessing online newspapers. The study also sheds light on the obstacles faced by students and proposes suggestions to overcome challenges associated with reading both printed and online newspapers. While this

study portrays a positive inclination towards newspaper readership among students in Bangladesh, it is important to note that the situation in other locations, such as Taraba State in Nigeria, may differ.

This Study investigates into newspaper reading habits among graduate students in Bangladesh which offers insights into the preferences of students in a different cultural context. While specific to Bangladesh, some findings related to obstacles and preferences might resonate with the challenges faced by students in Nigeria.

Consistent with the aforementioned results, Edegoh, Ezeh, and Samson (2015) investigated the newspaper reading habits of young individuals in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study employed a quantitative research approach with a sample size of 300 youths purposefully selected from Awka, Onitsha, and Nnewi. Grounded in the Uses and Gratification theory of mass media, the survey utilizes the simple percentage method and frequency tables for analysis. The study's outcomes indicate that youths in Anambra State exhibit a considerable interest in reading newspapers, with The Sun, The Guardian, Complete Sports, and The Vanguard being the most preferred newspapers. Additionally, the findings reveal that sports, political, and economic news are the primary stories that capture the attention of the youth. The study further highlights that these individuals obtain the newspapers they read primarily through methods such as visiting newspaper stands (to read without

payment), browsing newspapers on their cell phones, borrowing from friends and neighbors, and visiting the public library.

This study shows a considerable interest in reading newspapers among young individuals. Understanding the preferences for specific newspapers and news topics among youths could be valuable for your research on University of Benin students.

In a more recent investigation conducted by Isyaku and Azmi (2018), the study aimed to assess the preferences for readership between print and online newspapers in north-western Nigeria, focusing on Daily Trust, the largest circulating newspaper in the region. Employing a quantitative approach, the study utilized a descriptive survey method to collect and analyze data from both print and online newspaper readers in the study area. A structured questionnaire was used as the data-gathering instrument, distributed to a sample of 330 newspaper readers through simple random sampling. The findings revealed that a moderate (Mean=3.38) preference among readers for the online version of the newspaper compared to its print counterpart. Further analysis indicated that a majority of readers (Mean=3.49) read fewer print copies due to their access to the free online versions. Despite the availability of the online counterpart, the majority of readers (Mean=3.37) expressed their intention to continue reading the print version. Additionally, a majority of readers (Mean=3.08) reported spending less time reading the print copy owing to the availability of the

online versions. However, confidence in the newspaper's continued survival was expressed by the majority of readers (Mean=3.51), even with the existence of free online alternatives. These findings suggest a decline in newspaper readership in the study area.

This study suggests a moderate preference for online versions. While not directly focused on sports stories, it highlights the evolvement of newspaper consumption, with implications for investigation into print media readership among University of Benin students.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.5.1 Uses and Gratification Theory**

The Uses and Gratification Theory, formulated by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974, was developed to elucidate why audiences actively seek out content that provides them with the knowledge they desire, need, and can make use of, instead of passively waiting for mass media messages. This theory, serves as the framework that best explains the context of this study. The Uses and Gratifications approach reminds us that individuals engage with media for diverse reasons. Given the increasing array of choices available to media users, this approach directs our attention toward the audience. The underlying assumptions of

the Uses and Gratifications theory, as outlined by Katz et al. and cited in Roberts (2010), form the basis of this perspective.

1. The audience is active;
2. The audience member chooses the media;
3. All media compete with other sources of need/goal fulfillment;
4. Mass media goals can be found in the message of the source; and
5. Cultural value judgments should not be taken into account as the audience explores their own opinions.

According to Sheldon (2008, p. 40), the uses and gratification theory, being audience-centric, posits that different consumers employ the same media messages for varying purposes, depending on their individual needs and objectives. Asemah (2022, p. 155) further explicates that the theory revolves around a reciprocal relationship between the media and media consumers. The media serves a purpose in society, and reciprocally, the society serves a purpose for the media, hence the term uses and gratifications theory. It originated as a reaction theory, emerging as a response to the question of why certain topics were emphasized (effects) while others were overlooked (uses). The study finds the Uses and Gratification theory applicable, in that, it aids in understanding students' selection of newspapers and

content, shedding light on the benefits or gratification they seek from these sources. In a broader context, the theory assists in elucidating the notion that students are passive in their media (newspaper) selection, elucidating the factors influencing their choices.

### **2.5.2 Media Dependency Theory**

Another theory that helps explain the basis of this study, is the Media Dependency Theory of audience-media-society relations, which was formulated by DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1975). This theory posits that the interconnected relationship among the audience, media, and society serves as the foundation for individuals to achieve their objectives. It asserts that this relationship relies on the information resources offered by the media system.

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1975) say there are many ways in which people are dependent on the media to satisfy information needs. These include dependency based on the need:

1. to understand one's social world.
2. to act meaningfully and effectively in the world.
3. for fantasy and escape from daily problems and tensions.

Vivian (2003) suggests that individuals utilize the media as a means of breaking away from their everyday routines, engaging in activities such as watching soap operas, murder mysteries, or listening to pop music to experience stimulation, relaxation, and emotional release. The higher the need and dependence on such activities, the more likely the information provided will influence various aspects of audience attitudes, feelings, and behavior. In line with this perspective, DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1975, p. 262) emphasize that as societies become more intricate and media technology improves, the media take on increasingly distinct roles. They function as a Fourth Estate by delivering information about government actions, act as a primary signaling system during emergencies, constituting a principal source for citizens' understanding of national and global events, and offering substantial entertainment information for escapism.

Therefore, individuals and society are inclined to favor a medium that serves a central and specific information delivery function, as suggested by these perspectives. Pan et al. (1994) note that some studies utilizing this theory gauge dependency by having respondents rank various media channels as information sources, treating media dependency as a distinct dimension from behavioral measures of actual exposure. In accordance with Pan et al. (1994), several studies employing the concept of media dependency reveal that greater information gains

are achieved through newspaper reading compared to television viewing. These two discussed theories offer a suitable framework for understanding the literature on newspaper readership.

## **2.6 Summary of the Review**

This chapter focuses on the literature review for the research. Various topics were examined, including the history of Print Media, Sport, and University of Benin as well as an overview of core concepts related to the study. An opinion review was conducted to gather perspectives from previous authors regarding Sports Stories and Print Media, University Students' exposure to Print Media (Newspaper), Ways University Students Access Newspapers, Challenges against Newspaper readership among university Students. Etc. The empirical foundation was established by reviewing previous studies conducted by researchers on related subjects. The study is theoretically guided by the Uses and Gratification Theory and Media Dependency Theory

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter focuses and discuss the method and procedures that is used for the purpose of generating relevant and accurate data, which will be used to fulfil research objectives and to answer the study's research questions. To this end, this chapter is presented and discussed under the following subheading;

- Research design
- Population of the study

- Sample size
- Sampling procedure
- Instrument of data collection
- Validity of Study
- Reliability of instrument
- Methods of Data collection
- Method of data analysis

### **3.1 Research Design**

The researcher has chosen the survey research method to evaluate the readership of sports stories in print media, with the University of Benin students as the focal point. According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo, and Okpanachi (2017), a survey is an empirical investigation utilizing a questionnaire or interview to uncover descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon. The Oxford Handbook of Survey Methodology (2008) defines survey research as "a systematic investigation of experiences, opinions, attitudes, or behavior through the collection of data from a sample of individuals using standardized procedures."

Berger (2000), as cited in Asemah et al. (2017), asserts that surveys are employed to determine people's knowledge, thoughts, possessions, actions, plans, attitudes, tastes, beliefs, and values. The survey research method is a systematic

approach employed to gather information from a sample of individuals using standardized procedures like self-administered questionnaires or personal interviews (Nwaoboli, 2023).

Given that this research aims to assess the readership of sports stories in print media using University of Benin students as the case study, the survey research method, and the questionnaire as a tool are deemed appropriate for conducting this research. The survey research method was chosen because it facilitated the collection of substantial data quickly and at a lower cost compared to other methods.

### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The study population comprises undergraduate students at the University of Benin. Based on information from Unirank review, the University of Benin is reported to have approximately 77,000 students. Hence, the population for this research is considered to be 77,000 students.

### **3.3 Sample Size**

Sample size pertains to the quantity of observations or individuals incorporated in a sample for a research investigation or survey. It signifies the subset of the

population chosen to collect data and make inferences about the broader population (Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022). In this study, the sample size is determined to be 402. This calculation is based on the Crochan sample size determination formula devised by Crochan in 1977, given that the population is greater than 5%.

Formula:  $N = \text{estimated sample} / (1 + \text{estimated sample} / \text{population})$

$N = 400 / (1 + (400 / 77000)) = 214.2$ .

$N = 400 / (1 + 0.005)$

$N = 400 / 1.005$

$N = 398$

$N = 398 / 0.99$  (Response rate) = 402

Therefore, the sample size used for this research is 402.

### **3.4d Sampling Technique**

This study employed the multi-stage sampling technique to determine the samples. This approach was deemed suitable as respondents were selected through three stages utilizing the simple random, stratified, and simple sampling procedures.

The initial stage encompassed a random sample of three faculties (Arts, Education, and Engineering) from the total of 15 faculties within the University of Benin. The existing faculties are Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Science, Law, Life Science, Management Science, Pharmacy,

Physical Science, Social Science, College of Medicine, College of Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine.

In the second stage, 15 departments (Mass Communication, Theatre Art, English and Literature, Linguistics, International Studies and Diplomacy, Early Childhood Education, Adult Education, Chemistry Education, Physics Education, Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, Civil Engineering, and Petroleum Engineering) were selected from the departments in the three faculties using purposive sampling.

In the third stage, the researcher then employed simple random sampling techniques to unbiasedly select respondents.

<b>Departments</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
Mass Communication	44
Theatre Arts	18
English and Literature	42
Linguistics	36
International Studies and Diplomacy	33
Early Childhood Education	24
Adult Education	12
Chemistry Education	15
Physics Education	23

Mechanical Engineering	43
Chemical Engineering	27
Electrical Engineering	19
Agricultural Engineering	30
Civil Engineering	22
Petroleum Engineering	14

### **3.5 Instrument of Data Collection**

The data collection tool chosen for this research was a questionnaire. According to Asemah et al. (2012), a questionnaire is a set of inquiries designed to investigate a specific subject. Researchers widely employ questionnaires to gather information on past, present, and anticipated events, conditions, and practices, as well as to inquire about attitudes and opinions. The questionnaire utilized in this study was structured into two segments: the demographic and psychographic sections. The demographic part aimed to gather details about the respondents' personal information, while the psychographic section was tailored to address the research questions and gather pertinent responses for analysis.

### **3.6 Validity of the Study**

Validity is stated by Mytton (2007, p. 72) as the characteristic of a questionnaire that guarantees that what is measured or described accurately

represents reality. Validity checks, including content and face validity, were performed on the questionnaire copies by two experts from the Mass Communication Department, one of whom was the Project Supervisor. The methodology, research instrument's relevance and adequacy, as well as language understanding and topic appropriateness of each item were thoroughly examined and evaluated. Feedback, comments, and necessary corrections provided by these experts were seamlessly integrated into the ultimate version of the questionnaire.

### **3.7 Reliability of the Instrument**

Gregory (2007) defines reliability as the quality of results that are consistent when measured using a research instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire as the data collection tool in achieving the aims of this research and addressing the study's research questions was confirmed through a pilot study. During this preliminary investigation, 20 questionnaire copies were distributed to respondents.

### **3.8. Method of Data Collection**

The researcher gathered relevant data for the research study from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data source involved administering questionnaire directly to the respondents in a manner facilitating easy retrieval. The

data collection spanned one week. The questionnaire contained pertinent questions categorized into demographic and psychographic sections.

### **3.9 Method of Data Analysis**

Statistical analysis methods, including frequency tables and basic percentages, were employed to analyze the quantitative aspects of the research study using the data obtained from the designed questionnaire. Frequency tables were utilized to simplify intricate data through easily interpretable figures, while simple percentages, with a default value of 100 percent, facilitated the comprehension of data statistics by indicating the number of responses and corresponding percentages. Additionally, explanatory notes were provided beneath each table to enhance straightforward comprehension.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter presents and analyses the data that were collected through the questionnaire. They were collected and analyzed by using the simple percentage method. A total of 402 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 7 were not properly filled, making the valid copies a total of 395, after the questionnaire has been administered, which accounts for 98% return and 2% loss. Therefore, it is

logical for 395 respondents to represent 100% of the sample size being studied. The items in the questionnaire are analyzed below using frequencies, percentages, and tables for the presentation of data.

#### 4.1 Data Presentation

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18 – 28	343	86.8%
29 – 38	44	11.1%
39 – 48	8	2.0%
49 – older	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 1 reveals the age distribution of respondents. Specifically, respondents aged 18-28 years had the highest frequency, totaling 343 respondents (86.8%) of the total respondents. The 29-38 age group follows with a count of 44 respondents, representing 11.1% of the total population. The 39-48 age group is next, which reveals 8 respondents (2.0%) of the total. Notably, there were no respondents aged 49 and above. However, this implies that a greater proportion of the respondents are between 18-28 years old.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
<b>Percentage</b>		
Female	284	71.9%
Male	111	28.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 2 indicates the gender distribution of respondents. The table highlights a majority of female respondents in the surveyed population, comprising 71.9%.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Religion**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Christianity	374	94.7%
Islam	21	5.3%
Others	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 3 above shows that the research cut through religious differences, drawing respondents from different religious affiliations, although most respondents were Christians as seen above.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Faculty**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Arts	232	58.7%
Engineering	112	28.4%
Education	51	12.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 4 above reveals that the research cut across various faculties, drawing respondents from academic fields. The data reveals that 58.7% of the total population in the study emanated from the Faculty of Arts. This reflects the availability and participation of respondents from the Faculty of Arts.

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Study**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
100 Level	108	27.3%
200 Level	110	27.8%
300Level	78	19.7%
400Level	69	17.5%
500Level	30	7.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 5 demonstrates the distribution of respondents based on their level of study. The results from the table indicate that 27.3% of the respondents are in the 100 level, 200 level with 27.8%. Additionally, the 300-level had 19.7% of respondents, while the 400-level and 500-level comprised 17.5% and 7.6%, respectively. This shows that the 200-level students were more represented in this survey.

**Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single	379	96.2%
Married	16	4.1%
Divorced	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents by marital status. From the table, it is evident that 96.2% of the respondents identified as single, with a total of 379 respondents. On the other hand, the married respondents constituted 4.1%, representing 16 respondents. The data underscores the fact that Single respondents were actively involved in the research.

**Table 7: Readership of print Media**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	298	75.4%
No	97	24.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 7 above reveals the readership of print media among the respondents. The data shows that 298 (75.4%) of the respondents engage in print media readership. Conversely, 97 (24.6%) of respondents, do not engage in readership of print media.

**Table 8: The regularity of students of readership of newspaper**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	144	36.5%
Once in a while	195	49.4%
Rarely	36	9.1%
Not at all	20	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 8 depicts the regularity of students' readership of newspapers. The data reveals that 36.5% of the respondents read newspapers frequently. Additionally, a considerable percentage of 49.4% (195 respondents) indicated reading newspapers once in a while. A smaller percentage, constituting 9.1% (36 respondents), are rare readers of newspapers. Notably, 5.1% of respondents (20 respondents) stated that they do not read newspapers at all.

**Table 9: The Newspaper Students mostly read**

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<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Daily Trust	134	33.9%
Vanguard	89	22.5%
This Day	58	14.7%
The Sun	96	24.3%
Others	18	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

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**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 9 depicts the newspapers students mostly read. Notably, 33.9% of respondents (134 respondents) prefer Daily Trust, while, 22.5% (89 respondents), indicated Vanguard as their preferred newspaper. Additionally, 14.7% of respondents (58 respondents) prefer This Day, and 24.3% (96 respondents) mostly read The Sun. A smaller percentage, comprising 4.6% of respondents (18 respondents), mentioned other newspapers as their preference.

**Table 10: Regularity of Students' readership of their preferred newspaper**

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<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Everyday	115	29.1%
Once in a week	173	43.8%

Monthly	58	14.7%
Occasionally	49	12.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 10 shows the regularity of students' readership of their preferred newspaper. The data in the table reveals that 29.1% of the respondents read their preferred newspaper every day. Additionally, a significant percentage of 43.8% (173 respondents) indicated reading their preferred newspaper once a week. A notable portion, 14.7% (58 respondents), have a monthly reading habit of their preferred newspaper. Furthermore, 12.4% of respondents (49 respondents) occasionally read their preferred newspaper.

**Table 11: Number of sports stories found in their preferred newspaper.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Many	203	51.4%
Few	152	38.5%
Undecided	40	10.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 11 depicts the number of sports stories found in students' preferred newspapers. According to the data represented in the table, 51.4% of the respondents find many sports stories, while a majority, 38.5% (152 respondents) indicated finding few sports stories in their preferred newspaper. Additionally, 10.1% of respondents (40 respondents) were undecided about the number of sports stories found in their preferred newspaper.

**Table 12: Method of obtaining Newspaper**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Newspaper Stand	193	48.9%
Online Library	90	22.8%
borrow from a friend	87	22.0%
All of the above.	25	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 12 illustrates the methods students use to obtain newspapers. According to the data provided in the table, 48.9% of the respondents indicated obtaining newspapers from a newspaper stand. Additionally, 22.8% (90 respondents) indicated obtaining newspapers from an online library, while 22.0% (87 respondents) reported borrowing newspapers from a friend. A smaller percentage, 6.3% of respondents (25 respondents), mentioned utilizing all the mentioned methods above.

**Table 13: Contents of most hardcopy newspapers are responsible for poor reading habits.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	75	19.0%
Agree	101	25.6%
Undecided	58	14.7%
Disagree	79	20.0%
Strongly Disagree	82	20.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 13 depicts the perceptions regarding whether the contents of most hardcopy newspapers are responsible for poor reading habits. According to the data provided, 19.0% of the respondents strongly agree with the notion, while a larger percentage, 25.6% (101 respondents), agree with it. Additionally, 14.7% (58 respondents) indicated being undecided on the matter. On the contrary, 20.0% (79 respondents) disagree with the idea that the contents of hardcopy newspapers contribute to poor reading habits. Another 20.8% (82 respondents) strongly disagree with this notion.

**Table 14: Number of hours spent on reading sports stories on newspapers.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 30mins	100	25.3%
About an hour	220	55.7%
Above an hour	75	19.0%

<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100%</b>
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**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 14 reveals the number of hours respondents spend reading sports stories in newspapers. According to the data provided, 25.3% of the respondents spend less than 30 minutes, while a majority, 55.7% (220 respondents) indicated spending about an hour reading sports stories. Additionally, 19.0% of respondents spend more than an hour reading sports stories.

**Table 15: Most engaging elements of sport stories published in newspapers**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
In-depth analysis and Statistics 30.4%	120	
Players Interviews and BTS Coverage 22.8%	90	
Photographs and Infographics 15.2%	60	
Personal narratives and human-interest angles 20.3%	80	
All of the above. 30.4%	45	
<b>Total</b> <b>100%</b>		<b>395</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 15 shows the most engaging elements of sports stories published in newspapers. According to the data provided, 30.4% of the respondents find in-depth analysis and statistics to be the most engaging element. Additionally, 22.8% of

respondents indicated that players' interviews and behind-the-scenes coverage are the most engaging. Photographs and infographics were chosen by 15.2% of respondents as the most engaging elements, while 20.3% find personal narratives and human-interest angles to be engaging. A smaller percentage, 11.4% of respondents, indicated "All of the above" as the most engaging element.

**Table 16: Factors that contribute to your sustained interest in sports stories from newspapers**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Timeliness and relevance of content	100	25.3%
Quality of writing and storytelling	120	30.4%
Inclusion of Diverse sports and athletes	70	17.7%
Interactive features like quizzes or reader polls	50	12.7%
All of the above.	55	13.9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>395</b>
<b>100%</b>		

**Source: Field Survey 2024**

Table 16 reveals the factors that contribute to sustained interest in sports stories from newspapers. According to the data provided in the table above, 25.3% of the respondents identified the timeliness and relevance of content as a key factor. The majority, 30.4% of the respondents, highlighted the quality of writing and storytelling as a significant factor contributing to their sustained interest. In addition,

17.7% of the respondents pointed to the inclusion of diverse sports and athletes as a factor that sustains their interest. Furthermore, 12.7% of the respondents find interactive features like quizzes or reader polls to be contributors to their sustained interest. A smaller percentage, 13.9% of the respondents, selected "All of the above" as factors contributing to their sustained interest in sports stories from newspapers.

## **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

### **4.2.1 Research Question One: What Newspapers do University of Benin students mostly read?**

To answer this research question, data presented in Table 9 will be used. In trying to ascertain the newspapers UNIBEN Students mostly read, The findings suggest that Daily Trust is the most popular newspaper among the University of Benin students, as it has the highest percentage of respondents selecting it as their preferred newspaper. Accordingly, Table 9 revealed, that the newspaper that University of Benin students mostly read is Daily Trust, with 33.9% of respondents indicating it as their preferred newspaper. Following Daily Trust, The Sun is the second most preferred newspaper with 24.3% of respondents, followed by Vanguard at 22.5%.

The findings support the assertion of Jibril (2015) which holds that the *Daily Trust* and the Sun newspaper are among the top read newspapers in the country. He

added that the newspapers have over the years enjoyed massive followership among young and adult readers across the nation.

This is also in line with the Selective Perception theory, which suggests that individuals tend to expose themselves to information that aligns with their existing beliefs, attitudes, and preferences. In this context, students, by predominantly choosing Daily Trust, demonstrate a selective exposure to this particular newspaper, indicating a preference for its content over other options.

#### **4.2.2 Research Question Two: How regularly do the University of Benin students read sports stories in the newspapers?**

Table 10 is considered suitable to answer this research question.

The findings shows that a considerable number of University of Benin students regularly read sports stories, with a weekly frequency being the most obvious pattern. Accordingly, from the data provided in Table 10, it is evident that University of Benin students exhibit diverse regularities in reading sports stories in newspapers. However, a significant proportion of respondents, 43.8%, read sports stories once a week, depicting a predominant weekly engagement with sports content. Additionally, 29.1% of respondents read sports stories every day, demonstrating a substantial daily readership. A smaller portion, 14.7%, read sports stories every month, while 12.4% read sports stories occasionally.

This aligns with Ajisegbede's Study on Sports Newspaper Readership Among Female Students (2010) which emphasizes the importance of understanding audience preferences and tailoring content to meet their needs.

Also, the "Uses and Gratifications Theory" aligns with the observed patterns in Table 10, which shows the regularity of the University of Benin students in reading sports stories in newspapers. The Uses and Gratifications Theory posits that individuals actively choose media content based on their needs, interests, and gratifications. In this context, students are selecting and engaging with sports stories in newspapers to fulfill specific needs or gratifications.

#### **4.2.3 Research question three: What are the effective strategies for engaging and maintaining the interest of University of Benin students in sports stories published in newspapers?**

Tables 15 and 16 will be used in answering this question.

This finding shows that effective strategies for engaging and maintaining the interest of University of Benin students in sports stories published in newspapers involve incorporating a mix of engaging elements such as in-depth analysis, interviews, visuals, and personal narratives. Additionally, factors like timely and relevant content, high-quality writing, diversity in sports coverage, and interactive features contribute to sustaining their interest. The varied preferences highlight the need for a comprehensive and diverse approach to sports storytelling.

Based on the data provided in Table 15 and Table 16, it is apparent that University of Benin students identify specific elements and factors that contribute to the engagement and sustained interest in sports stories published in newspapers.

Table 15 reveals that students find in-depth analysis and statistics (30.4%), players' interviews and behind-the-scenes coverage (22.8%), photographs and infographics (15.2%), and personal narratives and human-interest angles (20.3%) to be the most engaging elements. Additionally, 11.4% of respondents selected "All of the above" as engaging elements.

In Table 16, factors contributing to sustained interest include the timeliness and relevance of content (25.3%), quality of writing and storytelling (30.4%), inclusion of diverse sports and athletes (17.7%), and interactive features like quizzes or reader polls (12.7%). Furthermore, 13.9% of respondents chose "All of the above" as factors contributing to sustained interest.

#### **4.2.4 Research question four: What are the ways through which students of the University of Benin, Benin City, obtain the newspapers they read?**

This data reveals that University of Benin students adopt a mix of traditional and digital methods to obtain newspapers, incorporating both physical and online channels, as well as social interactions in the form of borrowing from friends.

According to the data provided in Table 12, it is evident that University of Benin students employ various methods to obtain the newspapers they read. The majority of respondents, 48.9%, obtain newspapers from newspaper stands, indicating a reliance on physical newspaper vendors. Additionally, 22.8% of respondents access newspapers through online libraries, showcasing a digital approach to obtaining news content. Another substantial portion, 22.0%, borrows newspapers from friends, reflecting a social and interpersonal means of access. A smaller but notable group, constituting 6.3% of respondents, utilizes all of the mentioned methods, indicating a diversified approach to newspaper acquisition.

This aligns with the "Diffusion of Innovations Theory" with the observed patterns in Table 12 regarding the ways University of Benin students obtain newspapers. This theory explains how new ideas, practices, or technologies spread and are adopted within a social system. The Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains the coexistence of traditional and modern methods in obtaining newspapers, emphasizing the role of communication channels and interpersonal influence in the adoption of these practices.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was aimed at investigating the Readership of Sports Stories in Print Media (University of Benin Student as Case Study). The researcher employed the survey method using structured questionnaires as an instrument for data collection to gather data from the respondents. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents adequately. Data gathered were properly analyzed which provided the findings of the study and based on thorough investigation, the research has shown that;

1. University of Benin students show a clear inclination towards digital means for accessing newspapers. A study indicated that 22.8% favor obtaining newspapers digitally, with a substantial reliance on newspapers stands at 48.9%, alongside a noteworthy engagement in online readership.
2. Daily Trust was identified as the most widely read newspaper, reflecting the students' inclination towards print media. The data indicates that 33.9% of the total population prefer Daily Trust Newspaper over any other publication.

3. There was a significant presence of weekly readership in sports stories, with 43.8% of the student population consistently engaging with sports content.
4. The majority of UNIBEN students, comprising 30.4%, consider the in-depth analysis and high-quality writing essential for maintaining interest in sports stories, indicating a preference for well-crafted and informative content.
5. Majority of UNIBEN students, specifically 75.4% of the surveyed population, are involved with print media, demonstrating the ongoing relevance and readership of traditional print newspapers among this group of students.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This study aimed to investigate the Readership of Sports Stories on Print Media (University of Benin Student as Case Study). The preference for print media, especially newspaper stands, shows that traditional methods of information dissemination still hold significance. However, the presence of online readership indicates a growing acceptance of digital platforms. Weekly readership patterns for sports stories, along with preferences for in-depth analysis and quality writing, emphasize the importance of delivering content that is both informative and well-crafted. The frequency of weekly and daily readership of sports stories reflects a consistent interest in sports content among the surveyed students. This presents

opportunities for sports-related content providers and advertisers to engage with this audience regularly.

The factors contributing to sustained interest, such as quality writing and timeliness, underscore the importance of delivering sports content that is not only well-presented but also relevant and up-to-date. The varied methods of obtaining newspapers, including traditional means like newspaper stands and modern approaches like online libraries, highlight the diverse channels through which students access news. Content providers should consider a multi-platform approach to reach a broader audience. Social interactions, such as borrowing newspapers from friends, play a role in news consumption, indicating the influence of interpersonal communication in shaping reading habits. To effectively reach University of Benin students, content creators, and advertisers should leverage both traditional and digital channels, acknowledging the importance of physical newspapers while embracing online platforms. Tailoring content to align with the preferred newspaper (Daily Trust) and incorporating engaging elements, such as in-depth analysis and quality writing, can enhance readership and sustained interest. Recognizing the diverse academic backgrounds and interests across faculties allows for more targeted and relevant content creation.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. Since *Daily Trust* is the most preferred newspaper, sports journalists should align their offerings with this common source. Understanding the content style and themes that resonate with Daily Trust readers can enhance the effectiveness of communication strategies.
2. Sports Journalists should acknowledge the importance of in-depth analysis and quality writing in sustaining interest, especially in sports stories. They should also prioritize delivering well-crafted, informative, and engaging content to meet the preferences of the student audience.
3. Respondents indicated an interest in interactive features like quizzes or polls. Incorporating such elements in both print and digital content can enhance engagement and provide an interactive experience for readers.
4. Given the importance of timeliness and relevance in sustaining interest, Sports journalists should prioritize delivering up-to-date and contextually relevant information. Regularly update content to align with current events and trends.
5. Newspaper organizations should recognize the growing importance of online platforms and invest in creating a strong digital presence. This includes optimizing sports content for online readership, leveraging social media, and

exploring innovative digital strategies to reach the tech-savvy student population.

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## APPENDIX

Department Of Mass Communication,  
University of Benin,  
Ekehuan campus,  
Benin City.

7th February, 2024.

Dear Respondent,

### REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Benin pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Mass communication. I am currently researching the *Assessment of Students' readership of sport stories in print media*. This research study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Arts degree in mass communication.

I will be very glad if you assist me in providing relevant and useful answers by completing the questionnaire below. I assure you that your responses will be treated with confidentiality and the information given will be used strictly for this academic work.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

**Ojuemi Izonberasoride Harry,  
Researcher.**

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

This section includes general questions about the respondent; Please tick {√} in the appropriate box.

### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. What is your age? 18 to 28 { } 29 to 38 { } 39 to 48 { } 49 or older { }
2. Gender: Male { } Female { }
3. What is your Religion? Christianity { } Islam { } others { }
4. What is your faculty? Arts { } Engineering { } Education { }
5. Level of Study: 100{ } 200{ } 300{ } 400{ } 500{ }
- Marital Status: Married { } Single { } Divorced{ }

### **SECTION B: PSYCHOGRAPHIC DATA**

6. Do you read newspaper? (a) Yes { } (b) No { }

7. How often do read newspaper? (a). Frequently { } (b). Once in a while { }  
(c). Rarely { } (d). Not at all { }
8. Which of the Newspapers do you prefer to read? (a). Daily Trust { } b.  
The Sun { } b. Guardian { } c. Vanguard { } d. This day { }  
e. Others { }
9. How frequent do you read your preferred newspaper? (a). Every day { } (b). At  
least once a week { } (c). Monthly { } (d). Occasionally { }
10. How many sports stories do you find in your preferred print media? (a) Many { }  
(b) Few { } (c) undecided { }
11. How often do you read sports stories on your preferred newspaper? (a). Every  
day { } (b). At least once a week { } (c). Monthly { } (d). Occasionally { }
12. Method of obtaining Newspaper. (a) Newspaper stand{ } (b) online Library{ }  
(c) borrow from a friend{ } (d). all of the above{ } .
13. Contents of most hardcopy newspaper are responsible for poor newspaper  
reading habit among students. (a) Strongly agree{ } (b) Agree{ } (c)  
Undecided{ } (c) Disagree{ } (d) Strongly disagree{ } .

14. How many hours do you think you often spend reading sport stories on newspaper?
- (a). Less than 30 minutes { } (b). About an hour { } (c). Above one Hour { }
15. Which elements of sports stories published in newspapers do you find most engaging and interesting? (a) In-depth analysis and statistics { } (b) Player interviews and behind-the-scenes coverage { } (c) Visual elements such as photographs and infographics { } (d) Personal narratives and human-interest angles { }
16. What factors contribute to your sustained interest in sports stories from newspapers? (a) Timeliness and relevance of content { } (b) Quality of writing and storytelling { } (c) Inclusion of diverse sports and athletes { } (d) Interactive features like quizzes or reader polls { }

