**NEWSPAPER READERSHIP AND PREFERENCE AMONG RESIDENTS OF ABAK URBAN**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Background of the Study**

Newspaper have derived great relevance as a medium of communication, for their roles as carriers of current information.

This relevance according to sandman (2009) is attached to newspapers because of its contents on the television or elsewhere. This is why publishers consider it very important, if not obligatory, to make the newspaper attractive to potential readers. Getting out newspaper is ration on newspaper has been the most important form of communication in the conduct of human affairs, and that over the years face o f the more dramatic radio, television and now the internet.

Apart from news and current affairs for potential readers, publisher strives to make provision for other items on the newspaper for reader. Batta (2007) shares this view as he sees newspaper as a journal of record where all points of view are recorded. Udoakah (1994) also posits that a newspaper has a wide varity of material published in it which includes editorial opinion, criticism, entertainment features.

It is important t to note that news, as well as other items on a newspaper are arranged in a manner pleasing to the eyes. This makes heavier the job of putting out a newspaper.

First of all, as posited by Akpan (2009), the goal of every news reporter is to communicate the day’s information to as many people as would constitute their readers. Therefore, newspaper in trying to ensure understanding, readability and preference make use of same layout concept. These layout concept help facilitate reading and makes for orderliness. The most effective tool for readability and preference of newspaper is packaging also called layout or design.

So many things go in before a proper layout or design is achieved for a newspaper. Newspaper design gives an identify to a newspaper, makes for attractiveness, and ensured that the paper stands out from other newspaper on news stand. This is called packaging, newspapers layout is taking to the way manufactures package their product. Producers of newspapers take design as very important, this is because it attracts readers, which in turn builds readers strength to a newspaper. In other words, design plus readership strength makes for advertiser’s fund.

Newspaper design and layout if not for anything, has objectives. Wesley and chriuna (1991) posit that design helps reader most importantly to find, read and understand the news with minimum effort. These layout objectives the newspaper strives to achieve knowing that, as Udoakah (1992) posits, the way information is presented would make a publication to be seen as a serious or sensational one. The physical character is concerned with the format, design and specifications. Some newspaper look dramatic, others dignified, and still others may look dramatic and dignified. The posture chosen should reflect the totality of the content of the newspaper which aids preference to some extent.

But in recent times, even though newspaper is reader oriented, certain factors influence choice, read ship and preference, this Nwamadi (2000) explains as being preference due to sociological concept of differences in individuals. Furthermore, Seymour- Ure (1998) argues that editorial policy in a wider sense influence newspaper readership and preference, in other words people want to read about opinions expressed in leading articles of newspaper, their comments and suggestions on issues of the day, all involving value judgment. However, these opinions are based on facts, considering that sometimes newspaper are designed and laid out properly but does not still stand as the preferred choice for some readers.

Therefore, to epically determine newspaper readership and preference among Abak residents, this study examines reasons for reader’s preference of a particular newspaper over the other. This study seeks to serve as a guide to aid newspaper production.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This is an assumption that design layout and packaging aids read ability and preference of newspaper.

Studies have also suggested that a newspaper may carry along with it an effective layout design, but does not still be proffered by a customer.

Other studies have also in addition opined that layout and design aids newspaper preference and readability. That readers are attracted and influenced to choose a newspaper that is effectively designed and well laid out over a clumsily designed one.

While other studies suggest, sociological concept of difference in individual and not necessarily design and layout, that make for newspaper preference.

In spite of the foregoing assumption, these still exist that paucity between design, layout packaging and preference. The major question that this work attempts to answer is: what newspaper do residents o f Abak urban prefer to read, and why do they prefer those newspaper.

**1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this research work is as follows.

1. To find out what type of newspaper Abak Urban reader prefer.
2. To ascertain Abak Urban readers criteria for choosing a newspaper.
3. To determines how frequent residents of Abak Urban read their preferred newspaper.
4. To find out which demographic groups read newspaper the most among residents of Abak Urban.

**1.4 Research Questions**

1. What type of newspapers do residents of Abak Urban prefer?
2. What are the Abak Urban readers criteria for choosing a newspaper?
3. How frequent do Abak Urban residents read their preffered newspaper?
4. Which demographic group in Abak Urban reads the most newspaper?

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

Many researchers have been conducted on newspaper, its contents and readers content readers, preference perception of newspaper content as well as readers perception of newspaper as a medium of communication. But fewer study have been carried out about newspaper readership and preference.

In spite of this plethora of work done, there still exist a publicity of information and gap left to be filled.

Therefore, this study will be a qualitative input which would be of relevance to newspaper manufactures as well as researchers in this area.

It will serve as a veritable tool in the hands of newspaper manufacturers and major actors in the newspaper publishing industry, those goal is to create a lasting identify for the publication so as to attract readership and preference continually.

This work set out to fill the gap and create enough information, by taking a look at the criteria for choosing a newspaper at the news stand by a reader.

The result of this work it’s hoped will produce information of importance and will be of immense help to newspaper manufacturers.

**1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study was delimited to newspaper readership and preference among residents of Abak Urban. The study also considers Abak residents criteria for choosing a newspaper.

**1.7 Limitation of the Study**

In the course of carry out this study, the researcher encountered some constraints. This included reluctance by respondent to give out information, there was also scanty number of respondents on designated area o f population.

These constraints limited the researcher to gather data fewer in some streets than other streets.

**1.8 Definition of Terms**

**Newspaper:** This refers to publication that disseminates news and current information, which is sold either daily, weekly or bye weekly.

**News Stories:** This refers to information carried by the newspaper, which forms part of its contents, which likely attracts readers of Abak Urban to such newspaper.

**Readership:** This refers to the number of people in Abak local government area read Newspaper on a fairly regular basis.

**Residents:**  Dwellers in Abak town not necessarily indigenes of Abak, but read newspaper of their choice sold in Abak, their town of residence

**Urban:** this represents the city or town different from the rural area e.g Abak, with people of different back ground who make particular dailies their preferred.