

**EBSU JOURNAL OF
MASS COMMUNICATION**

Vol. 6, Issue 1, October 2019

ISSN:2449-0369

Influence of the Internet on Media Reach and Credibility on Minna Residents of Niger State, Nigeria

Abdulhameed Kayode AGBOOLA, & Maimuna BASHIR,

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of the Internet in media reach and credibility on Minna residents. The study employed a survey questionnaire, which was administered on 384 respondents. The response rate was 0.94. Overall findings revealed that all the 360 respondents claimed that they were aware and listened to Search FM, while, 99.4% of them agreed that the Internet has considerable influence on the reach and credibility of a medium. In addition, the majority 75% of the respondents found the Station's programmes to be credible, while considerable number 69.4% of them claimed that they contribute to the Station's programmes. However, to improve on the Station's programmes, 45% of the respondents suggested that the Station should employ professionals in the field. The study concludes that the Internet has both positive and negative influence on the reach and credibility of media organisations. It is therefore at the discretion of any media outlet to explore positive potentials of the Internet, while trying hard to minimize its negative aspects. Finally, the study recommends that media organisations should always exercise cautions by ensuring the accuracy of the information whenever they source for information online.

Keywords: Internet, media reach, credibility, social media, media house, feedback mechanism

Introduction

For any society to exist and function well there must exist a functional media. This fact has been established in the different earliest societies that make up the entity Nigeria. The various traditional communication channels like, the *Town Crier*, the *Aroko* and the *Drum beat* emphasize the role of information and communication between and among people, (Asekun-Olarinmoye, Sanusi, Johnson & Oloyede, 2014). The Media therefore have shaped and will continue to condition everyday lives of people, politics and cultural activities to a greater degree than ever before. Our present society relies on the media for information and communication that guides our daily activities like work, education, entertainment, news, Health care, personal relationships, travelling and any other thing else. To buttress this point further, Dominick (2002) opines that the role of mass communication in society can be better appreciated if we imagine it never existed but the mass media is an indispensable part of us (cited in Asekun-Olarinmoye *et al.* 2014).

messag
is the n
impera
extent t
(as cite
comes t
whatev
that whe
vice-ver
especial
informat
informat
Edogor
credibilit
Based on
media rea
to be disse

E
it is a pers
view, crea
or a messag
an inform
definition
(cited in M
unrelentin
(Chukwu,
norm, part
generation
mainstream
practice is a
Nigeria wh
mainstream
Cor
into having
disseminate
Through thi
phenomenon
Therefore, th
members. Th
the credibilit
audiences.

Search FM:
As a

**1 and Credibility on
e, Nigeria**

imuna BASHIR,

Internet in media
study employed a
stered on 384
Overall findings
that they were
of them agreed
the reach and
ity 75% of the
e credible, while
they contribute
improve on the
ggested that the
eld. The study
and negative
rganisations. It is
xplore positive
o minimize its
ids that media
y ensuring the
y source for

ia, media house, feedback

e must exist a functional
iest societies that make up
n channels like, the *Town*
role of information and
un-Olarinmoye, Sanusi,
aped and will continue to
tivities to a greater degree
edia for information and
education, entertainment,
any other thing else. To
that the role of mass
imagine it never existed,
sekun-Olarinmoye *et al.*,

However, the medium of every communication is as important as the message itself. This may account for why McLuhan (1964) stated that "the medium is the message". Possibly, this assertion more than any other thing underscores the imperativeness of a medium of communication. The import of it is that, to a greater extent the medium is the yardstick to measure the communication coming from it (as cited in Edogor, Jonah & Ojo, 2015, p.1). Chiakwelu (2015) notes that, when it comes to western media, the prevailing norm in Nigeria and indeed Africa is that whatever emanates from the BBC is nothing but the truth. This therefore implies that when the medium is trustworthy then the message from it would be trusted and vice-versa. Audience members pursue information for different purposes, especially, for comfort, empowerment, and knowledge to act. But not all information is credible and applicable to them. Then they filter out impractical information and keeping only that which is usable and believable (as cited in Edogor *et al.*, 2015). This is why Mehrabi, Hassan and Ali (2009) assert that credibility therefore, is one of the criteria used to filter unbelievable information. Based on this notion, this study seeks to analyze the influence of the Internet on media reach and credibility of information obtained from it by media organisation to be disseminated to their audiences.

Eisend (2006) refers to credible information as believable information, and it is a person's perception of the truth of a piece of information. From a wider point of view, credibility by way of definition presupposes judgments made by a perceiver or a message recipient concerning the believability of a communicator or sender of an information or message. Furthermore, Gass and Seiter (2007) believe that this definition should also include institutions as well as persons as communicators (cited in Mehrabi, *et al.*, 2009). This has initiated and sustained a global trend of unrelenting resort to the Internet as a means of news and information dissemination (Chukwu, 2014). The computer usage and capacity to go online has become a norm, particularly among young people, who are now referred to as the *net generation*. A trend of this nature has consequently had a baneful effect on the mainstream media, and a positive one on online journalism. This evolution in media practice is also unequivocally evident in the developing countries of Africa such as Nigeria where the onset of online journalism is gradually putting the demand of mainstream news on the hold.

Consequently, media organisations (Print and Broadcast) are now pushed into having an online component where contents are being generated, processed and disseminated online in order to arrest the attention of the audience members. Through this, news organisations are able to reach more and more audience, a phenomenon believed to be a welcome development in the media industry. Therefore, this raises the question as to the credibility of online news to the audience members. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of the Internet on the credibility of information sources that media organisation disseminate to their audiences.

Search FM: A Brief History

As a Campus radio station licensed to cater for the information need of the

University Community, Search FM came to lime light precisely in 2008 with a test run broadcast of 4 hours per day, which starts from 6pm-10pm at the Federal University of Technology, Bosso Campus, Minna. The station became fully operational in 2010 when it launched a 12 hours broadcasting from 6am-10pm and subsequently 18 hours which run from 6am-12am midnight and it has maintained the tempo till date. So far, the station can boast of only four permanent staff while all other people working for the station are volunteer staff drawn from different departments and faculties of the institution and others from its host community. Even though the station is yet to have an established audience size, Search FM is being heard from all looks and crannies within Minna metropolis and immediate environment. In terms of online broadcasting, the station's content and other information can be accessed on the station's website www.searchfm923.com. Similarly, Search FM has been able to incorporate other social media platforms into its programming such as Face book, Twitter, Whatsapp and Instagram using the address @searchfm923mx. Also, in 2015, the station launched the Search FM Mobile App which can be downloaded from Google play store to enable its audience have access to its live streaming programming using their mobile phones, Personal Computers and other devices.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Deuze and Dimoudi (2002), new media has redefined the workings of journalism where audiences are connected and become active participant as a result of new technologies, which has empowered people and democratize the relationships between consumers and producers of content. Thus, the emergence of new technologies particularly the Internet and social media have created a variety of opportunities of reaching international audiences. Although, social media started out as a platform where friends and families can connect and socialize, today, sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, MySpace, Flicker, Netlog, and Slideshare, are connecting broadcast audiences to the newsroom in new and exciting ways that will not only boost the news and event coverage of both local and international broadcast stations, but also impact positively on the society

Therefore, the emergence of the Internet and its possible application in media practice is no doubt a welcome development. This is evident in its ability to salvage both professionals and their organisations in their activities of generating, processing and dissemination of contents to their widely dispersed audience within the shortest possible time and with very little stress. This forms the crux of this study to investigate the influence of the Internet on media reach and credibility in Nigeria using the *Search FM* as a case study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to investigate the influence of the Internet technology on *Search FM* in reaching its dispersed audience and the issue of credibility that is attached to the programmes it disseminates to its audiences. Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the level of awareness of Minna residents to *Search FM* and whether they listen to the station.
2. To determine which *Search FM* station's programmes are preferred and followed online by its audiences in Minna.
3. To investigate whether *Search FM* listeners use and contribute to the Station's programmes through usage of its mobile application.
4. To find out the level of credibility of *Search FM* listeners to the radio Station's online information
5. To determine ways through which *Search FM* can improve on the quality of its programmes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet and Media Reach

The New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as the Internet has brought into limelight the phenomenon of the new (online) media. The online media is otherwise known as the new media because it is a departure from the old or conventional media of radio, TV, newspaper and magazine. The Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) have been a very important segment of journalism since at least 1994. Today, the Mass media are increasingly common. Virtually everywhere that people go, malls, airports, restaurants, hotels, and other public places, television sets are on even though people do not seek or ask for them. Just as radio too is heard in elevators and public transportations, it is also undeniable that computers and Internet cafes are springing up on daily basis, a development that has continually availed media organisations to reach out to a larger audience members across time and space. Because of the cheap and easy access to these media, more and more people are using these platforms to communicate and, also to get information than ever before (Alejandro, 2010).

Reach: Connotes the coverage or the ability to expose a large number of people to a given mass media message within a given period. Also, reach is the "number of target audience individuals exposed to the advertising or promotion in an advertising circle" (Rossiter, 1997, p. 447). However, frequencies restrict the reach of radio and television media to a limited region or territory, but the advent of the Internet boundless waves or satellite orbits has enabled these media in their reachness. The circulation of print newspapers and magazines depend on manual distribution. This is a strong limitation as newspapers from Nigeria, for example, cannot reach people in even the neighbouring countries through such vehicle – assisted distribution system. But when enhanced on the Internet, the online version has no boundaries. An electronic newspaper can be accessed from any part of the world where there is an Internet network (cited in Ohiagu, 2011).

Alejandro (2010) points out that news consumption in contemporary times is not business as usual especially during the pre-satellite news era when people waited for their morning papers or sat down at an appointed time for the evening

news on television, same way as it used to be during the pre-internet era when people tune in to watch events happening around the world through 24-hour television news channels. More recently, a growing number of readers, viewers and listeners are going online for their news. Television, newspapers and radio are still here but there is a growing competition from interactive online media. He explained further that the older media like publishing used to require a printing press. Circulation was limited to a fraction of a geographical location.

Internet and Media Credibility

Media credibility, due to the deep penetration of the Internet, it has received renewed attention in recent years. Audience members seek information for various purpose, especially, for comfort, empowerment, learning, and knowledge to act (Mehrabi, *et al*, 2009). But all information is not useful and credible to them. Then they filter out useless information and retaining only that which is useful and believable. For Wathen and Burkell (2002) credibility is one of the criteria used to filter unbelievable information. O'Keefe (1990) defines credibility as "judgments made by a perceiver (e.g., a message recipient) concerning the believability of a communicator" (as cited in Mehrabi, *et al.*, 2009, p.137).

For many years, journalism has played and is still playing a key role in democratic societies. These include informing the public and exercising independent scrutiny over institutions such as the parliament, business and the justice system, as well as over the functions of government such as education, health and welfare (O'Donnell, McKnight & Este, 2012). The news media has been a forum for commentary and conversation about social and cultural issues. To the best of its ability, journalism has been a professional practice that has done all these things ethically and fairly. Until recently, the traditional mass media as Newspaper, Television and Radio have been the central institution through which these functions of journalism have operated.

People regularly stay glue to their television and radio set, for information and flock the newspaper and magazine stands for same purpose. Even, in a situation where information is spread around in a society; it does not carry any iota of credibility until such information is confirmed by the media. For several decades, the mass media especially television, radio, newspaper and magazines have been a major source of information dissemination such that it assumed the pivotal role of the 'fourth estate of the realm' and also, a societal watchdog. This fact is further stressed that people are bombarded with a lot of information that tend to persuade and influence them in their process of decision making and shaping their perceptions of events and happenings around them. People make meaning out of their lives as a result of information that is disseminated to them by the mass media (Adeyanju, 2015).

However, journalism today is in a deepening crisis virtually the world over and this crisis arises from so many interests, and of recent, the disruption that the digital technology has on the conventional mode of the profession. The news content of the media especially in developing countries

he pre-internet era when world through 24-hour of readers, viewers and papers and radio are still line media. He explained require a printing press. tion.

Internet, it has received information for various, and knowledge to act credible to them. Then at which is useful and ne of the criteria used to redibility as "judgments ing the believability of a

ll playing a key role in public and exercising ment, business and the uch as education, health ews media has been a ltural issues. To the best that has done all these ss media as Newspaper, through which these

dio set, for information use. Even, in a situation not carry any iota of 1. For several decades, magazines have been a ned the pivotal role of g. This fact is further i that tend to persuade g and shaping their make meaning out of em by the mass media

crisis virtually the s, and of recent, the tional mode of the eveloping countries

like Nigeria where the government at both state and federal levels dominates ownership has been trailed by questions like whether the news content is accurate and true or just a reflection of the government position. Similarly, the private media organisations do not fair any better as market compulsions and profit making objectives raise such pertinent questions like whether the media should be accountable to private interests or the society. This has continued to generate controversies and arguments about what distinguishes news and views, news and advertisements and propaganda and information. Again, profit motives and ownership often influence news managers to manipulate content (Bakshi & Mishra, 2010, cited in Adeyanju, 2015). This therefore makes the credibility of media contents a concern especially with the mass of information that is available daily for consumption. Every day, millions of readers search among the countless pages of online media of information because they are open and available 24 hours a day, and provide answers to our ever embarrassing questions in life. But as fascinating as the wealth of information and services on the Internet or web may be, there is still the question as to how recipients rate their quality and reliability. As recipients cannot judge whether a piece of information is true or not, they often have to trust in its source (Schweiger, 2000).

Old Media in New Media (Online Journalism)

Simply put, Online journalism is journalism as it is practiced online. Defining the concept more broadly, digital journalism also known as online journalism is a contemporary form of journalism where editorial content is distributed via the Internet as opposed to publishing via print or broadcast. What constitutes digital journalism is debated by scholars. However the primary product of journalism, which is news and features on current affairs, is presented solely or in combination as text, audio, video and some interactive forms, and disseminated through digital media platforms. Fewer barriers to entry, lowered distribution costs, and diverse computer networking technologies have led to the widespread practice of this type of journalism. It has democratized the flow of information that was previously controlled by traditional media including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Some have asserted that greater degree of creativity can be exercised with digital journalism when compared to traditional journalism and traditional media. The digital aspect may be central to the journalistic message and remains, to some extent, within the creative control of the writer, editor, and or publisher (Adegbilero-Iwari & Ikenwa, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the theories of technological determinism theory posited by Marshal McLuhan in 1964 and source credibility theory propounded in 1953 by Hovland, C., Janis, I., and Kelly, H.

Technological Determinism

The theory was formulated by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. The basic premise of the technological determinism theory according to Marshall McLuhan is that the media are an extension of the human body. The theory holds that the media not only alter their environment but the very message they convey. What this implies is that the media bring new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. The theory states that technology, especially the media, decisively shape how individuals thinking, feelings and action and how societies organize themselves and operate. The medium determines the content of communication. The medium has the power to manipulate our perceptions of the world. Marshall McLuhan said that "inventions in technology invariably cause cultural change" (cited in Asema, 2011, p.215).

McLuhan traced the emergence of Western Civilization in stages, tied to the media available for human communication namely; tribal age, literate age, print age and the electronic age. Each age brought new era with it.

- **The Tribal Age:** This was the age where man's perception of his environment was multi-sensory and his mode of communication was oral. Society was largely a recollection of the past.
- **The Literate Age:** In this stage, McLuhan wrote that the phonetic alphabets fell into the acoustic world like a bombshell, installing sight ahead of the other senses. People who could read exchanged an ear for an eye. Literacy brought people out of collective tribal involvement into civilized private detachment. Literacy marked a step away from the tribal age and leaves the tribe without being cut off from the flow of information. The age of literacy made visual dependence possible.
- **The Print Age:** If the age of literacy made visual dependence possible, the print age made it widespread. Because the print age demonstrated mass production of identical product, McLuhan called it the forerunner of the industrial revolution.
- **The Electronic Age:** This age is the ICT era. This is the stage at which communication now transcend, not only national, but even planetary barriers. This could also be referred to as the age of cyberspace or superhighway. With the satellite stationed in geo-synchronous orbits. This stage overlaps the print age.

Each stage in McLuhan's theory marked an improvement in the communication process. The electronic age has altered the broadcast media, radio precisely. This effect can be seen in the mode of newsgathering and dissemination ICT brought with it. The major strength of the Technological Determinism theory in this study is that the theory is successful at analyzing what happened in the past and what is happening now with regards to modes of communication.

Source Credibility Theory

Propounded in 1953 by Hovland, C., Janis, I., and Kelly, H., source

credibility theory is an established theory that explains how communication's persuasiveness is affected by the perceived credibility of the source of the communication. The credibility of all communication, regardless of format, has been found to be heavily influenced by the *perceived* credibility of the source of that communication. The idea of credibility was first derived from Aristotle who argued that the speaker's reliability must be built and established in speech and that what the speaker did or said before such a speech was not of importance. Aristotle divided the aspects of persuasion into three categories: ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion) and logos (logic). As credibility refers to people believing who they trust, emotion and logic indicate a person's emotional connection and means of reasoning to convince one of a particular argument and/or speech.

There are several dimensions of credibility that affect how an audience will perceive the speaker: competence, extraversion, composure, character, and sociability. These characteristics can affect each other as well as the speaker's transactional credibility. One dimension may strengthen the speaker's credibility if he/she struggles in another. The audience can perceive these attributes through certain behaviors in which the speaker delivers results, if he is concise and direct with the audience members. If a speaker displays characteristics of honesty, integrity, sincerity, and can show that they are trustworthy and ethical, the audience will be more inclined to believe the message being communicated to them, even if they do not remember every aspect of the interaction. They will, however, recall how the presenter made them feel, how they took in the information and what they may share with others once the presentation has concluded. Source credibility theory has been commended for its ability to deal with attitude change in practical ways and indeed much of the research is still relevant today and can be seen in advertising, speech writing and even in news broadcast, a quality which that has been termed as "Real world application".

The justification for anchoring this study on this theory lies in the fact that it helps to explain what credibility in communication means and how important it is for any media organisation to have a measure of believability in its programming to command a larger and loyal audience members.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a survey questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. The population of the study is the residents of Minna where *Search FM* is located and covers Minna metropolis. Minna comprises of two local governments, namely; Bosso local government and Chanchaga local government. According to 2006 census (NPC, 2006), the population of Minna is put at 2,919,05 people. The researchers relied on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining an appropriate sample size to draw a corresponding sample of 384 from a population of Two Million Nine Hundred and Nineteen Thousand and Five (2,919,05).

The instrument of the study was a self-developed questionnaire, which was given to experts in the area for validation and their comments, views and opinions were incorporated into the instrument, while reliability was established thorough

Alpha Cronbach with 0.80% coefficient. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents, who are audiences of *Search FM* 92.3, FUT, Minna. The respondents were purposively selected based on availability. Finally, the data collected were analyzed statistically using SPSS statistical package for social sciences, and the results were interpreted based on percentile and frequency tables.

FINDINGS

Out of a total of three hundred and eighty four (384) questionnaire, 360 were correctly filled and returned to the researchers, while 24 questionnaire were wrongly filled and were not used in the analyses. However, in terms of the respondents demographic characteristics, findings show that the majority 61.1% of the respondents were males, while females were totaled 38.9%. This shows that males dominated the respondents more than female ones. The majority 33.3% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 21-55 years old, followed by 20.8% within the age range of 31-35, and 18.1% of them were within the age range of 26-30 years. While, 12.2% of the respondents aged between 18-20 years and 12.5% of them within 36-40 years old respectively.

Regarding the educational attainment of the respondents, the majority 41.7% are B.Sc. certificate holders, ND/HND holders 21.4%, while M.Sc. certificate holders were 16.7% respectively. The majority 55% of the respondents were students. This could be as a result of the fact that the radio station used as a case study in this research is a Campus radio and operates in an academic environment that houses thousands of students. While, civil servants were 29.7% and housewives were 10.8% respectively.

Table 1: Respondents' Awareness of Search FM

	Freq.	%
Items: Are you aware of Search FM?		
Yes	360	100
No	-	-
Item: Do you listen to the station?		
Yes	360	100
No	-	-
Items: If yes, how often do you listen to the station?		
Often	100	27.8
Frequently	100	27.8
Most frequently	160	44.4
Total	360	100

Data from the Table 1 (above) has revealed that all the research respondents do listen to Search FM, the Campus radio of the Federal University of Technology, Gidan Kwano, Minna, Niger State. Also, the Table displays the majority 44.4% of the respondents listen to the station most frequently, while those who frequently and often listen to the radio station amounts to 27.8% each.

Table 2: Search FM Preferred Programmes that the Audience followed on Online

Item	Freq	%
Morning Ride	50	13.9
Select	20	5.6
Pidgin Night	35	9.7
Ladies Night	15	4.2
Thankgod Its Friday	110	30.6
News	50	13.9
Others	80	22.2
Item: Do you follow the station on any of its social media platform?		
No	90	25.0
Yes	270	75.0
Item: If yes, which do you follow most?		
Facebook	90	25
Twitter	60	16.7
Instagram	80	22.2
Whatsapp	130	36.1
Total	360	100.0

As for the preferred programmes that the Audience followed on online, Table 2 (above) highlights that the majority 30.% of the respondents preferred the programme titled "Thank God its Friday, while an overwhelming majority 75% of them followed the station on its social media platform and through Whatsapp 36.1%,

Table 3: Listeners' Usage and Contributions to Search FM Radio Programmes

	Freq.	%
Item: Do you have the Search FM mobile app?		
No	210	58.3
Yes	150	41.7
Item: Do you contribute to the stations programme by way of commenting on the social media?		
No	110	30.6
Yes	250	69.4
Total	360	100

In terms of use and contribution of listeners to Search FM programmes,

Table 3 (above) reveals that the majority 58.3% of the respondents do not have the Search FM online application, while only 41.7% claimed that they have the Station's online application. Also, 69.4% of the respondents claimed that use and contribute to the station's programmes via the various social media platforms, while 30.6% of them claimed that they do not contribute to the stations programs via the social media.

Table 4: Audience Responses on Search FM Programmes Credibility and Believability

	Freq.	%
Item: Do you believe whatever information you see on the station's website or social media platform?		
No	90	25
Yes	270	75
Item: If yes, state why and If no, state why?		
Because Information On The Internet Or Social Media Can Be Misleading	90	25
Because They Are Reliable	270	75
Total	360	100

Regarding the respondents' believability of Search FM online information, Table 4 (above) shows the majority 75% of the respondents believed whatever information they see on the station's website or social media handle like twitter and Facebook, while 25% said that they do not for the station online information believable. Those who believe claimed that they do so simply because the station is reliable and credible, while others said they do not believe because information on the Internet could be misleading some times.

Table 5

Item: T
think th
prograi
By em
Throug
More e
Item: I
station
No
Yes
Item: F
progra
Poor
Fair
Good
Excell
Total

Table 5
achieve
professi
dissemi
more ec
program
of the st
as to kee

majority
who rate
as fair. C
of the re
in reach
strive ha

DISCU

credibili
research

Table 5: Improvement on the Quality of Search FM Programmes

	Freq	%
Item: Through which of the following ways do you think the station can improve on the quality of its programming?		
By employing professional hands	163	45.3
Through retraining of staff	95	26.4
More educational programmes	102	28.3
Item: Do you think the Internet has helped the station achieve wider audience coverage?		
No	2	0.6
Yes	358	99.4
Item: How would you rate the stations programming?		
Poor	30	8.3
Fair	80	22.2
Good	160	44.4
Excellent	90	25
Total	360	100

As for ways through which Search FM can improve on its programmes, Table 5 (above) reveals that the majority 45.3% of the respondents believe that to achieve a better programming, the management of the station needs to employ professional hands to handle the process of sourcing, processing, packaging and dissemination of contents. While, 28.3% the respondents believe that the addition of more educational based programs will go a long way in enhancing the station's programmes. Whereas, 26.4% believed that, for better programming, in house staff of the station need to be retrained from time to time, in form of capacity building so as to keep to trends and global best practices in broadcasting.

Finally, Table 5 (above) highlights on rating the station's performance. The majority 44.4% of the respondents rated the station as good then followed by those who rated the station's performance as excellent totaled 25.0%, while 22.2% rated it as fair. Only 8.3% rated the station as poor. This finding has shown that the majority of the respondents believed that the Internet technology has helped the radio station in reaching a wider audience, a very important aspect every broadcast medium must strive hard to achieve.

DISCUSSIONS

This study investigated the influence of the Internet in media reach and credibility on Minna residents. Finding has shown that the majority 99.4% of the research respondents believed that the Internet technology has helped the *Search*

FM station achieved wider audience coverage, a development which is laudable and commendable. Likewise, the Internet technology has its negative impact on *Search FM* station under study because the respondents suggest that not all information they see on *Search FM* station's website or social media platform are believable and their justification was that, some of these information might be misleading. But in all, it is evident that the Internet has helped the station in no small ways both in terms of enhancing its credibility as well as audience reach. Going by the number of respondents from this research that have the *Search FM* mobile App and those who follow the station on its various social media platforms, it is obvious that the Internet as a new media of mass communication helps broadcast medium to achieve wider audience coverage.

This study has analyzed the impact of internet technology on media reach and credibility in Nigeria with special emphasis on *Search FM 92.3 Campus radio* of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State. As shown by findings in this research study, it has been established that the Internet has a huge impact on the reach and credibility of a medium. Reach in the sense that, it helps a medium to get a wider coverage and its programmes heard over a longer distance compared to the traditional analog broadcasting. This finding has been supported by Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1953) who claimed that, **source credibility theory** is an established theory that explains how communication's persuasiveness is affected by the perceived credibility of the source of the communication. The credibility of all communication, regardless of format, has been found to be heavily influenced by the *perceived* credibility of the source of that communication.

Similarly, the Internet technology present itself as a fountain of news and information to a Media house, while also serving as a feedback mechanism where listeners or audience participate actively in any Programme that is on air, a very important achievement that helps in making such Programmes even more interesting and appealing. This is made possible by having an online component where users log on to various media sites of their choices to either read, listen and watch news Programmes, respond and or contribute to those Programmes instantly, all of which add to the overall development of such a medium. This report has been corroborated by Adeyanju (2015, p.69) who highlighted that, "everyday people receive information that is far more than they can possibly use. Information from the mass media, friends, books and lately the Internet influences people in their decision making process and their perceptions of event and happenings around them. The mass media particularly has become an important organ through which people make meaning out of their lives, social activities and issues within the society".

Finally, in spite of all the above benefits of the Internet to media houses, it was observed in the course of this research that, media houses stand to lose their credibility especially when such a medium wholly or partly rely on the Internet as its only source of information which it then feeds to the public. This happens most of the time as a result of so many web blogs being operated by desperate individuals whose major aim is to be the first to upload latest happenings on the social media not minding other ethical considerations which should serve as guideline for doing so.

Base
impa
discr
to mi
REC
Base
1
so
sc
sc
2.
3.

REFE
Adegt

Adeyar

Alejanc

Chukwu

Deuze, M
Towards

ich is laudable and
 impact on Search
 ot all information
 are believable and
 misleading. But in
 ways both in terms
 by the number of
 App and those who
 us that the Internet
 n to achieve wider

gy on media reach
 2.3. Campus radio
 shown by findings
 s a huge impact on
 helps a medium to
 stance compared to
 orted by Hovland,
 lity theory is an
 eness is affected by
 he credibility of all
 ivily influenced by

untain of news and
 mechanism where
 at is on air, a very
 mmes even more
 online component
 her read, listen and
 grammes instantly,
 his report has been
 , "everyday people
 iformation from the
 es people in their
 happenings around
 rgan through which
 d issues within the

to media houses, it
 s stand to lose their
 on the Internet as its
 his happens most of
 desperate individuals
 the social media not
 deline for doing so.

Based on the above, we can conclude that the Internet has both positive and negative impacts on the reach and credibility of a media organisation. It is therefore at the discretion of such a medium to explore its positive potentials while also trying hard to minimize if not do away with its negativities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendations are made;

1. That media organisations should always exercise caution whenever they source for information online by linking or attributing this information to their sources appropriately and making sure that issues are verified from their sources before disseminating such to the public.
2. That traditional media organisations like Search FM should endeavor to employ capable hands to handle its online components.
3. That Net Service Providers should strive to provide good network for organisations to have value for the huge resources they invest in this regard.

REFERENCES

- Adegbilero – Iwari, I. & Ikenwa, J.I., (2014). New Media in Old Media: The Nigerian Case. A paper presented at the *International Federation of Libraries Associations (IFLA)*, International Newspapers Conference 2014, 4-5 February 2014, Family Search Headquarters, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1 - 13. Retrieved from https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/newspapers/SLC/2014_ifla_slc_adegbilero-iwari_ikenwe_-_new_media_in_old_media.pdf
- Adeyanju, A., (2015). Comparative Study of Social Media, Television, and Newspapers' Credibility. A paper presented at the International Conference on Communication, Media, Technology and Design, 16 - 18 May 2015 Dubai – United Arab Emirates, 69. Retrieved from www.cmdconf.net/2015/pdf/7.pdf
- Alejandro, J., (2010). *Journalism in the Age of Social Media*. In: Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper. USA: University of Oxford.
- Asekun-Olarinmoye, O.S., Sanusi, B.O., Johnson, J., & Oloyede, D.B. (2014). Imperatives of Internet and Social Media on Broadcast Journalism in Nigeria. *New Media and Mass Communication*. Vol.23, 8-15. Retrieved from <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/NMMC/article/view/11666/12011>
- Chukwu, C., O. (2014). Online Journalism and the Changing Nature of Traditional Media in Nigeria. *Internal Journal of African Society, Cultures and Traditions*. 2(3), 1-9. Retrieved from <http://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Online-Journalism-and-the-Changing-Nature-of-Traditional-Media-in-Nigeria.pdf>
- Deuze, M. & Dimoudi, C. (2002). Online Journalists in the Netherlands: Towards a Profile of a New Profession, *Journalism*, 3(1), 103–18.

- Edogor, I., O., Jonah, A.A., & Ojo, L.I. (2015). Nigerian Users Evaluation of Credibility of Social Media Sites. *New Media and Mass Communication*. Vol. 40, 139-150. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a179/81100ae03b816541723311de166c713f0890.pdf>
- Eisend, M. (2006). Source Credibility Dimensions in Marketing Communication – A generalized Solution. *Journal of Empirical Generalizations in Marketing Science*, 10(1), 1-33.
- Gass, R. H., and Seiter, J. S. (2007). Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Johnson, T.J. & Kim, D. (2009). A Shift in Media Credibility: Comparing Internet News Sources in South Korea. *International Communication Gazette*, 71(4), 283-302. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/296807/A_shift_in_media_credibility
- Mehrabi, D., Hassan, M.A., & Ali, M.S.S. (2009). News Media Credibility of the Internet and Television. *European Journal of Social Sciences*. 11(1), 136-148. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228679972_News_media_credibility_of_the_internet_and_television
- O'Donnell, P., McKnight, D. & Este, J. (2012). Journalism at the Speed of Bytes: *Australian Newspaper in the 21st Century*. Sydney: Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance.
- Ohiagu, O. P. (2011). The Internet: The Medium of the Mass Media. *Kiabara Journal of Humanities*, 16(2), 225-232. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284733552_The_Internet_The_Medium_of_the_Mass_Media
- Okoro, N. (2001). *Mass Communication Research: Issues and Methodology*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publication Ltd.
- Patton, M.O. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. London: Sage Publication.
- Rossiter J.R (1997). Advertising communications & promotions management. Boston: McGraw Hill Irwin.
- Schweiger, W., (2000). Media Credibility- Experiences or Image? A Survey on the Credibility of the World Wide Web in Germany in Comparison to Other Media. *European Journal of Communication*, 15(1), 37-59. Retrieved from DOI: 10.1177/0267323100015001002