

## Influence of Photography and Graphic Design on the Maintenance of Sales in the Nation and the Sun Newspapers in Osun State

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### Abstract

*Photographic design plays an essential role in raising awareness towards the sales of newspaper and maintaining the high volume of newspaper sales. This study investigates the influence of photography and graphic design on the maintenance of sales of two newspapers, The Nation and The Sun newspapers in Osun State. Focus group discussion was adopted to investigate the study while pleasure theory, perception theory were used as the theoretical framework. The study focuses on buyers of The Nation and Sun newspapers with a total of 75 respondents in Ede Osun State. Taro Yamane formula sampling technique was used to select 109 readers. Based on the findings, the study recommended that media outlets should review the literature to know the reasons for low patronage and lack of sales so that they can improve on newspaper production to ensure that readers are attracted to newspaper buying. The study recommends that prominence should be given to picture usage on the front page of newspapers because it is the first page that passers-by see to determine the newspaper purchase.*

**Keywords:** *Design, Graphics, Newspapers, Photography, Sales.*

### Introduction

The market for press photography experienced growth following the introduction of mechanically printed photographs in newspapers. In contrast to aesthetic considerations, photographs were primarily captured with a focus on their action and subject matter. Photography is employed within the realm of journalism to not only serve as a means of retrospection but also to effectively disseminate, instruct, and enlighten readers with regard to contemporary occurrences. The inclusion of photographs in newspapers enhances the overall credibility of the story (Talabi, 2019; Talabi et al, 2016). In addition to depicting actuality, they also serve to corroborate the authenticity of a news article or the historical precision of an event.

The utilisation of aesthetic qualities in a photograph serves as a strategic approach to capturing the reader's attention and alleviating the monotony inherent in news articles. Consequently, photographs enhance and adorn the pages of newspapers. The inclusion of a photo caption in a newspaper conveys a wealth of information that surpasses the capacity of a mere thousand words. The ability to understand an image is not contingent upon possessing a formal education. Hence, visual imagery can effectively convey a message even in the absence of literacy skills (Ogundeji and Talabi, 2012; Okpara et al, 2021; Zannu et al, 2024).

According to Oluwatobi (2012), graphics are a visual component employed for branding, conveying information, representing objects, and providing entertainment on various surfaces such as canvas, computer screens, paper, and stone, among others. The speaker further elucidates their point through the use of various illustrative elements, such as images, lines, colours, graphics, symbols, maps, drawings, callouts, and flowcharts.

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Photos serve as valuable components of graphic aids, offering immediate assistance. To capture the interest of readers. If a photograph possesses a sufficient level of intrigue, it is likely to captivate the reader's attention, prompting them to pause and engage with the accompanying caption. If the content is sufficiently captivating, individuals may exhibit a slight inclination to peruse the headlines and narratives of the articles. Moreover, if the introductory section of the article is sufficiently captivating, it is likely to engage the reader's attention throughout the entirety of the text (Febisola, 2021; Talabi, 2015).

In an attempt to attract new readers and retain existing ones, numerous Nigerian newspapers have undertaken a visual revamp of their publications. Research on publication design has been conducted for a considerable period. However, there is currently a growing emphasis on comprehending the significance of visuals in the sustenance and growth of newspapers.

Previously, the primary focus was on providing timely and accurate coverage of the significant news stories of the day. Newspaper publishers have utilised first hand reporting as a means to attract readership and enhance circulation, as noted by Hartley (1990).

Akinrosoye, (2021) posits that visual communication is a time-honoured and effective method for transmitting messages. According to (10, p. 11), there exists an ancient Chinese proverb that asserts that "One picture is worth a thousand words." In contrast to verbal communication, visual representations are more readily retained in memory.

The credibility of pictures surpasses that of words due to their ability to elicit sensations of authenticity and genuineness. Consequently, the adage "actions speak louder than words" holds. According to Akinrosoye, (2021), when there is a disruption in visual communication, viewers' attention becomes captivated and sustained by graphic art, which is an integral element of visual communication. In addition to assisting with page layout, enhancing the visual appeal, and attracting readers' attention, photography plays a significant role in newspaper design. The photojournalist employs the medium of photography to depict and convey various situations and events, replacing verbal descriptions with visually impactful images.

Visuals can capture the attention of a viewer. Images can convey emotions such as drama, passion, and realism in a manner that written text alone cannot achieve. Visual representations have the advantage of being both realistic and easier for the brain to process compared to more complex cognitive and reasoning tasks. As a result, they have the potential to bypass or expedite these cognitive processes.

A news photograph can captivate the viewer and immerse them in a narrative that cannot be achieved through text alone (Katherine, 2018). The use of visual elements has the potential to convey dramatic information that may not always be effectively conveyed or integrated through textual means alone. According to Ekeng (2010), a significant number of discussants reached the consensus that the print media industry may face the risk of obsolescence if it fails to effectively respond to the challenges presented by emerging media platforms.

Within this context, the researchers sought to analyse the impact of photography and the graphical elements of *The Sun and The Nation* publications, as well as the preferences for their readership. The objectives of the study are to determine the extent to which readers expose themselves to *The Sun* and *The Nation Newspapers'* photographs and graphics, examine if photography and graphics influence the purchasing behaviour of the readers and investigate the extent to which the quality of the photography and graphic design of *The Sun* and *The Nation Newspaper* influences the sales of Newspaper sales in Osun State.

A newspaper is a printed publication that contains news, articles, and other informative content. A newspaper is a regularly published periodical that provides information on contemporary events, educational articles, engaging features, and promotional materials. Ewuola (2004) presents a collection of print media graphics as illustrative instances such as a variety of typographical styles, nameplates, the subject of discussion pertaining to a visual representation commonly referred to as a logo, the use of a folio layout, cartoons, the topic of discussion pertains to the design and arrangement of pages, numerous satirical imitations of widely recognised personalities, the subject matter of this discourse pertains to visual

representations, commonly referred to as pictures, various visual representations such as diagrams, graphs, and charts, this document provides instructions and specifications for formatting columns and various pages within an academic context, the topic of discussion pertains to over-lines or captions, the table of contents, the utilisation of colour and the utilisation of boxes and borders.

The topic of makeup and design in the context of is of significant academic interest. The visual presentation of a newspaper plays a crucial role in attracting readers. According to Akinrosoye (2011), newspapers and magazines possess distinct personalities. The personality of a magazine or newspaper can be partially deduced based on the type and quality of its content. The composition of various printed elements, including headlines, text, images, white space, and rules, is commonly known as makeup. The editor assists the reader by arranging the contents in a manner that enhances readability and comprehension. The ultimate visual presentation of a layout is influenced by principles of design aesthetics. Occasionally, news articles possess such distinctive and captivating qualities that readers are willing to tolerate the subpar design of the magazine. However, such occurrences are infrequent. Many readers exhibit a decline in interest after perusing the initial page until they encounter the subsequent captivating section. The primary goal of a packaging editor is to enhance the readability and comprehensibility of textual content across all pages, thereby facilitating faster reading and improved information absorption by readers.

Arowosegebe (2006) asserts that the distinct personality of a magazine is attributed to its design and layout. Hence, the field of magazine design and layout focuses on the deliberate arrangement and juxtaposition of various elements comprising newspaper or magazine pages. The elements encompassed within this context are diverse, encompassing news articles, features, and editorials, as well as various visual components such as headlines, subheads, rules, line boxes, borders, pictures, cartoons, maps, and colour. It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive, as there may be additional elements that fall within this category.

Daramola and Akinsuli (2011) emphasised the significance of graphic communication and design in the development of newspapers and magazines. They argued that newspapers and magazines extensively employ graphic arts and design to effectively engage readers, particularly by utilising graphics to elucidate complex and technical ideas. Akinrosoye (2011) further suggests that newspapers and magazines possess distinct personalities. To some extent, the personality of a magazine or newspaper can be deduced based on the type and quality of its content. The composition of various printed elements, including headlines, text, images, white space, and rules, is commonly known as makeup. Many readers exhibit a decline in interest after perusing the initial page until they encounter the subsequent captivating section. The primary aim of an editor, with regards to packaging, is to facilitate enhanced reading comprehension and efficiency for readers. Arowosegebe (2006) explains that the distinct personality of a magazine is attributed to its layout and composition. Hence, the field of magazine design and layout focuses on the deliberate arrangement and juxtaposition of various elements comprising the pages of magazines and newspapers. The elements encompassed within this context comprise various forms of written content, such as news articles, features, and editorials. Additionally, visual elements such as headings, subheads, rules, line boxes, and borders are employed, along with visual aids like pictures, cartoons, maps, and colour.

There is no doubt regarding the universality of the concept of aesthetics and the experience of aesthetics. In contemporary times, the notion of aesthetic experience has garnered significant scholarly and professional interest, extending beyond the confines of traditional philosophical discourse. Zettl (2009) demonstrates the ubiquity of aesthetics by highlighting fundamental perceptual and aesthetic behaviours, such as the act of selecting attire, arranging personal spaces in an orderly manner, choosing floral arrangements for a dining set, and even evaluating the relative velocity of one's vehicle in comparison to others while driving. The narrative appears to have remained consistent within the realm of media. When individuals who engage in the act of reading newspapers possess an aesthetic perspective or a deep understanding of media appreciation or criticism, they are engaging in the act of making an aesthetic statement when they offer critiques or comments regarding the presentation of news, features, or other subjects within the newspaper. The central focus of aesthetics lies in the examination and evaluation of the broader concept of beauty. Akpan et al (2013) see aesthetics as the scholarly examination of taste, encompassing the perception of beauty or grandeur that arises from the production, interpretation, and eventual appreciation of artistic creations. According to the researchers, aesthetics pertains to how the

presentation of information within mental and cultural frameworks influences the experience of said information. This influence is deemed to be of greater significance than the impact of the individual sensitivity of the observer on the experience. According to Zettl (2009), as cited in Udoakah (2000), aesthetics pertains to the examination of specific sensory encounters and the most effective methods for elucidating, enriching, and interpreting them through various forms of media. Udoakah (2000) posits that the inclusion of aesthetic experience and form is imperative to elicit complete meaning from a communication interaction.

Nevertheless, the contemporary understanding of aesthetics can be described as "relating to or originating from the faculties of sensory perception" (Akpan and Etuk 1990). Undoubtedly, aesthetics examines the perceptual faculties of human beings and their corresponding engagements, alongside the concept of external beauty. Ozumba (2007) observes that aesthetics encompasses various significant aspects of art appreciation, criticism, judgement, creation, intention limitation, representation, irritation, realism, expression, form content intuition, appreciation, and creation. Udoh (2012) suggests that there is an element of attractiveness when a painter portrays a generally unattractive human face while emphasising the subject's unappealing features. Consequently, aesthetics encompasses the entirety of the sensory domains of cognition, namely, the faculties of vision, audition, tactility, gustation, and olfaction.

According to Olagoke (2015), newspaper proprietors are facing growing challenges in managing the abundance of new publications in the market. The speaker further asserted that despite the increase in publications and rising cover prices, the current state of the Nigerian newspaper industry is characterised by a contraction, as evidenced by the limited circulation of approximately 100,000 copies for most newspapers (Olagoke, 2015). Furthermore, there has been a persistent decline in the disposable income of Nigerians, coupled with the ongoing issue of delayed salary payments by both public and private entities. These factors have had a detrimental impact on the industry, rendering it a significant casualty. The individual attributed the industry's current state of depression to the economic conditions of *The Nation*, which have resulted in a decline in the value of *The National* currency, the naira, and a rise in the inflation rate. These factors have contributed to the rise of the *Free Reader's Association* and prompted newspaper vendors to redirect their attention from newspaper sales to the sale of Global System for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) recharge cards, which generate higher revenue.

According to Ezegwu (2016), newspapers in developing countries originate from idealistic aspirations and persist amidst a sense of disillusionment. The authors also offer a comprehensive overview of the Nigerian context. In recent years, there has been a notable rise in the quantity of taxes that publishers are required to manage. In Ekpu (2002) analysis, it is observed that there exists a competitive dynamic among federal, state, and municipal governments in terms of tax imposition, with a notable emphasis on maximising revenue without commensurate provision of essential public amenities.

The study conducted by Senam (2009) examined the role of news images in enhancing the visual appeal of print media. The study employed secondary sources of data. Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the inclusion of news photographs in print media plays a crucial role in enhancing the visual appeal and credibility of newspapers and magazines. The preceding investigation primarily concentrated on the utilisation of aesthetically pleasing photographs in printed materials, while the present study investigates the application of visually appealing print advertisements. Ehinmamen (2009) conducted a study on photojournalism, utilising content analysis as a methodological approach to investigate the utilisation of news images within the Nigerian media landscape. Nevertheless, the findings revealed that Nigerian newspapers should improve their utilisation of news images, specifically the photographs featured on the front page, to effectively communicate newsworthy messages. However, it is important to note that photographs in isolation are insufficient to independently drive newspaper sales. The front page of a newspaper is enhanced with various elements that contribute to its visual appeal, including a prominent headline, informative charts, vibrant colours, structured forms, illustrative graphs, captivating images, and textual content. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the visual components comprising the front page of a newspaper, along with their impact on the overall tone of the publication and the preferences of its readership.

The study conducted by Udoakah and Oliseh (2009) examines the perception of aesthetic components on cover page designs among consumers of Nigerian news magazines. The study employed a survey as the research methodology. It has been found that Nigerian news magazine consumers exhibit a heightened awareness of aesthetic elements present in the cover page designs of the news magazines they choose. Furthermore, it has been determined that the cover page designs of news magazines have diverse impacts on readers, encompassing heightened information retention and readership as well as influencing purchasing choices. Nwanne (2011) conducted a study exploring the impact of aesthetics on Nigerian newspapers and magazines. The researcher posits that individuals engaged in the production of newspapers, such as reporters, editors, sub-editors, and compositors, ought to prioritise aesthetics in their work due to the comprehensive nature of aesthetics in communication.

In a case study conducted by Aladedoyin (2010), the impact of a photograph featured on the cover page of *Tell* and *Ovation Magazine* was evaluated. Nevertheless, the findings of the study clearly indicate that images play a substantial role in magazines and the broader realm of print media, as they effectively capture the attention of readers and convey messages to individuals who may have limited literacy skills.

In a study, Odumakin (2011) employed the *Osun Defender Newspaper* as a case study to examine the influence of graphics on the print media. The *Osun Defender* was employed as a case study to impart knowledge on the concept of graphics and their utilisation within the context of newspapers. The study underscored the significance of graphics within the comprehensive production of a newspaper, as they possess the capacity to influence readers and incentivise their purchase of the publication. According to the findings of the study, *Osun Defender* incorporates minimal graphics, which is posited as a potential factor impacting the publication's sales. The recognition of specific visual components comprising the front page of a newspaper is essential for comprehending their impact on the overall perception of the publication and the potential influence they may have on readers' preferences for one newspaper over another.

In this study, the pleasure theory and perception theory are considered to be an appropriate theoretical framework. Reber (2004) refers to pleasure theory as aesthetics that encompass qualities, objects, or circumstances capable of eliciting profound sensations of pleasure. Reber (2004) posits that the cognitive mechanisms underlying information processing in the brain play a significant role in the experience of aesthetic enjoyment. The level of favourability of an individual's aesthetic response is positively correlated with the speed at which they can process an object. In their study, Asemah (2013) critically examines the various factors that have been identified as influential in shaping aesthetic judgements. Various factors such as figurative fluency, figure-ground contrast, stimulus repetition, symmetry, and prototypical exert influence on the speed of information processing. Consequently, the concept of beauty is intrinsically connected to the cognitive processing of the observer, influenced in part by the inherent characteristics of the stimulus. Based on the findings of the study, it is imperative for an advertisement to possess a well-crafted design to achieve effectiveness in print media, such as newspapers and magazines.

According to the scholarly work of Nelson and Quick (1997) the perception concept is how individuals perceive others is contingent upon the quantity and quality of available information, as well as their ability to accurately decipher and interpret a said information. Hence, individuals may arrive at divergent conclusions despite possessing identical information regarding a given scenario, whether individual or collective, owing to their distinct capacity to interpret the accessible data. Onafuwa (2017) posits that perception is influenced by a multitude of factors, such as a psychological disposition, past experiences, cultural expectations, and social relationships. How information is conveyed and the strategic choice of persuasive language significantly influence individuals' interpretations of media communications.

## Methodology

In this study, a qualitative research methodology was employed using a focus group discussion FGD research design. Data was collected using information acquisition, and systematic inquiries directed towards the assembled individuals at the vendor booths located at the newspaper distribution centres at *Oke Gada*,

*Orita Gbaemu, Agunbelewo, Olaiya, and Oke Baale.* The focus group discussions were centred on examining the role of photography and graphic design in sustaining sales of *The Nation* and *The Sun* Newspapers in Osun State. The population under investigation comprises individuals who patronise vendors located within the five newspaper distribution centres in the cities of Ede and Osogbo in Osun State, Nigeria. However, as of the time of conducting the research, the vendors contacted in Osogbo and Ede towns reported an average patronage of 30 daily newspaper patrons from Monday to Friday. Hence, the study's population is limited to individuals who frequently purchase and read newspapers, specifically newspaper vendors and patrons in Osogbo and Ede, Osun State. The vendors were meticulously chosen at significant intersections in Osogbo and Ede based on preliminary investigations, which subsequently led to the identification of their patrons, who were included in the study. The target discussants comprised two vendors, 30 readers and buyers at each newspaper centre.

**Table 1 Presents an Analysis of The Demographic Composition and Geographical Distribution**

Source: Field survey, 2023

S/N	Target Location	Target Respondents
01	<i>Oke Gada</i> junction, Ede, Osun State	2 vendors, 30 buyers and readers
02	<i>Orita Gbaemu</i> Newspaper Stand	2 vendors, 30 buyers and readers
03	<i>Agunbelewo</i> Newspaper stand	2 vendors, 30 buyers and readers
04	<i>Olaiya</i> Newspaper stand	2 vendors, 30 buyers and readers
05	<i>Oke Baale</i> Newspaper stand	2 vendors, 30 buyers and readers
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>150 respondents</b>

The sample size for the study consisted 109 discussants. The selection of discussants for this study was conducted through a random sampling method from the study population.

Taro Yamane formula was employed to ascertain the appropriate sample size for this study.

$$n = \left[ \frac{N}{(1+N.e^2)} \right]$$

$$n = 109$$

The sample procedure involved engaging in direct contact with a focus group to conduct a discussion. The discussants in the focus group were provided with a prepared discussion guide, which was administered by the researchers. The researchers employed a snowball sampling technique to select the sample. The vendors identified the readers that were included. The researchers conducted sessions with discussants at each designated stand and analysed the focus group discussions regarding the impact of photography and graphic designs on the sales and maintenance of *The Nation* and *The Sun* Newspapers in Osun State. The data collection instrument used in this study was a discussion guide. The data gathered were analysed thematically using the explanation-building method. A sample size of 109 discussants was chosen for the focus group discussion (FGD) out of which 75 individuals participated in the FGD. Hence, the researchers organised the focus group discussion into seven groups. In four of the sessions, 10 discussants were included in each group, two other sessions had 12 discussants while one session had 11 discussants.

## Results

Responses obtained from the open-ended question exhibit a high degree of similarity to the diverse sessions of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) carried out across different geographical areas. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of the discussants reported engaging with newspapers, with a higher preference observed for *The Sun* compared to *The Nation* Newspaper.

One participant expressed, "I regularly engage with *The Sun* Newspaper, reading it weekly." Another buyer or reader stated, "I do read both newspapers, although I tend to prioritise *The Sun* Newspaper over *The Nation* Newspaper. I typically read *The Sun* approximately five days per week." Another buyer shared, "To compare news, I make a point of reading both newspapers daily." However, it is worth noting that in many instances, I tend to prioritise my search for information in *The Sun* Newspaper before turning to *The Nation*. The buyer expresses a preference for regularly reading *The Nation* Newspaper, with a frequency of approximately once or twice per week. Meanwhile, more readers prefer reading *The Sun* regularly.

The collected responses exhibited a consistent pattern across the multiple sessions conducted. While there were variations in the responses, the majority of discussants expressed a positive perception of the visual designs and photographic aesthetics of both newspapers. One of the purchasers expressed that the graphical designs and photographic aesthetics of *The Sun* Newspaper are visually appealing and captivating. "In my assessment of the graphic designs featured in *The Sun* Newspaper, I find them aesthetically pleasing. I particularly appreciate the vibrant and diverse colour palette employed in these designs. *The Nation* Newspaper is also commendable, although it personally appears to be of average quality to me." One other purchaser expressed their disregard for the photographic and graphic designs featured in *The Nation* Newspaper. "In my personal opinion, I find it satisfactory. However, I must admit that I have not devoted significant attention to this matter. Nevertheless, upon recollection, I believe that *The Sun* Newspaper tends to captivate my interest more due to its visually appealing colour scheme, which enhances its aesthetic appeal."

Another individual expressed that "*The Sun* Newspaper is highly appealing." The initial visual stimuli, such as the images and vibrant hues, tend to capture one's attention upon encountering a newspaper. The colouration of *The Sun* newspaper, in particular, holds a significant appeal, particularly about its pages, which possess a visually captivating quality.

The discussants in the discussion identified colour, textual content, pictorial alignment, and visual imagery as the elements that draw their attention to newspapers. Additionally, they highlighted that this practice serves to enhance readability by reducing monotony. One participant expressed their preference for the arrangement of pictures, noting that it brings them a sense of ease when the pictures are properly placed and shaped. I find that a greater emphasis on visuals and fewer texts allows me to better appreciate the content I am reading."

The majority of the responses provided indicate that the purchasers take into account both the designs and the content of the newspaper, as well as the writing style. These factors are considered by many individuals before making a purchase decision.

One of the purchasers expressed, "To be entirely candid, I believe that the aesthetics significantly impact my inclination to acquire the newspaper, as I place considerable emphasis on them."

The responses provided in this context were primarily targeted at newspaper vendors, who possessed prior knowledge regarding newspaper sales. The discussants' responses exhibited a high degree of coherence, as they demonstrated a striking similarity in their answers to the given question. The researchers were unable to reach a definitive conclusion regarding the extent to which photography influences newspaper sales in Osun State. However, they acknowledged that photography does indeed play a significant role in the overall sales volume of newspapers.

As per the statement provided by a vendor, it is asserted that the impact of photographic or graphic design on newspaper sales cannot be definitively determined. The vendor expresses a preference for prioritising content over visual elements, particularly in cases where the newspaper is satisfactory in terms of design but lacks substantial content. According to one vendor, *The Sun* Newspaper outsells *The Nation*. Another vendor suggests that the sales of newspapers are influenced or triggered to some degree by their photographic designs, as many of the bestselling newspapers possess visually appealing designs. While acknowledging the significant sales of *The Sun* Newspaper, another vendor expresses uncertainty regarding whether its success can be attributed solely to its photographic designs but does acknowledge the

newspaper's aesthetically pleasing graphical design. The vendor suggests that the popularity of newspapers like *The Sun* and *The Nation* can be attributed to both their graphic designs and their content. However, it is also acknowledged that some individuals may not purchase newspapers solely based on their graphical designs but rather consider the content as well. Therefore, it can be inferred that the presence of meaningful content also plays a significant role in their assessment.

As per one buyer's statement, the graphical design of a product does play a role in their purchasing decisions, although it is not the sole determining factor. The discussant expressed a preference for visually appealing front pages of newspapers, which influences their choices. They acknowledged that the graphical design does have a significant impact, as they often decide to purchase a newspaper based on its front page, but also consider the content's ability to engage them before making a final decision.

## Discussion

Based on the comprehensive findings of the research, it can be deduced that a significant proportion of discussants were exposed to the graphical designs and photographic aesthetics employed by *The Sun* and *The Nation* Newspapers. While it is true that some discussants in the focus group discussion (FGD) may not give much consideration to the photographic and graphical elements, a significant number of buyers and readers have acknowledged their exposure to such content and designs. This study is in line with Senam (2009) that news photographs in print media play a crucial role in enhancing the visual appeal and credibility of newspapers and magazines.

The findings from the aforementioned question indicate that a majority of the discussants exhibit a preference for the graphical designs featured in *The Sun* as opposed to those found in *The Nation* Newspaper. The discussants in the discussion highlighted their appreciation for the vibrant colours, textual elements, and visual layout of the newspapers. They regarded these graphical and photographic aesthetics as significant factors that captured their attention and drew them towards the newspaper. The findings presented in this study align with the research conducted by Udoakah and Oliseh (2009) and Ehinmamen (2009) which demonstrated that the design of newspaper cover pages has a significant impact on readers. Specifically, it was found that cover page design plays a role in attracting readers, influencing their decision to purchase the newspaper, and improving their ability to retain the information presented within (Nwanne, 2011). The outcome of this study is also supported by the pleasure theory and perception theory as explained by Reber (2004) and Nelson and Quick (1997); as discussants observed that the visual elements, including the photographic and graphic designs, employed by *The Sun* Newspaper have had a significant impact on its sales. This assertion is substantiated by the testimony of buyers who have deemed it the most visually appealing publication. Additionally, the vendors' claim of higher sales in *The Sun* Newspaper compared to *The Nations* Newspaper further supports this notion. The findings of this research align with the outcomes of a previous study, as indicated by Aladedoyin (2010), who argued that a photograph cannot be considered a newspaper or magazine article but alongside the photographic element, various graphical components constitute the composition of newspapers and magazines. To effectively persuade readers, a newspaper necessitates the inclusion of various graphical elements, among which photographs are one component (Odumakin, 2011). However, it is important to note that photographs alone are insufficient to independently drive newspaper sales. The various elements such as headlines, charts, callouts, shapes, graphs, pictures, images, colours, cut lines, lines, texts, and content contribute to the composition of a newspaper and significantly contribute to its visual appeal.

## Conclusion

The outcomes of the study revealed that a significant proportion of discussants were exposed to the photographic and graphic designs featured in *The Sun* and *The Nation* Newspapers. However, it should be noted that a few discussants in the focus group discussions demonstrated infrequent engagement with the photographic and graphical elements. The graphical layouts of *The Sun* are preferred by a majority of the



respondents compared to *The Nation* Newspaper. The discussants expressed their attraction to the newspaper due to various visual elements, including the colour scheme, typography, and layout, as well as other significant graphical and photographic aspects. Additionally, the photographic and visual arrangements within the newspaper exhibit a certain influence on the quantity of copies that are purchased. The vendors acknowledged this observation, and additional readers agreed that although they may initially be drawn to a newspaper based on its visual appeal, it is ultimately the substance of its content that sustains their interest. The sales of *The Sun* Newspaper are influenced by its photographic and graphic designs, as consumers perceive them to be visually appealing. This perception is further supported by vendors' assertions that *The Sun* Newspaper outsells *The Nation* Newspaper.

Conclusively, the page colour of *The Sun* Newspaper is perceived as more visually appealing to readers in comparison to that of *The Nation*. The page layout of *The Sun* Newspaper is perceived as more visually appealing to readers compared to that of *The Nation* Newspaper. The visual content employed in *The Sun* Newspaper tends to elicit a greater degree of reader engagement compared to the visual content featured in *The Nation* Newspaper. A significant proportion of discussants exhibit a clear preference for acquiring and perusing *The Sun* as opposed to *The Nation*. The majority of discussants expressed the belief that the aesthetics and design of *Sun* Newspaper played a role in their choice to acquire and peruse *The Nation* Newspaper.

Upon the conclusion of the research study, the following recommendations are made.

Media organisations should engage in a thorough examination of the existing body of literature to identify factors that may be responsible for their declining sales as well as explore potential strategies for enhancing reader engagement with their publications. The first page, commonly referred to as the front page, holds significant importance as it serves as the initial point of contact for individuals. Consequently, it should be strategically utilised to maximise its visibility and impact. If the front page possesses elements of intrigue and visual appeal, individuals may be inclined to pause and peruse its contents, potentially leading to a decision to purchase the newspaper. Furthermore, it is recommended that newspaper publishers consider the recruitment of skilled graphic designers and grant them the freedom to showcase their artistic abilities to enhance the visual appeal of the front page of their publications. Moreover, it is imperative to allocate more resources and focus on the design aspect of a newspaper. The composition of images, the selection of typography, and other fundamental elements are all dictated by the front page design of a newspaper. To enhance the appeal of a newspaper to readers, it is imperative to allocate greater consideration and engage in meticulous planning.

**Abbreviations:** FGD: Focus Group Discussion

**Acknowledgement:** All authors whose works were cited are duly listed in the references.

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