



Digital Journalism and Revenue Sustainability of Print Media Organisations in Nigeria

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Abstract: The expansion of digital technologies, internet connectivity, and smartphone usage has significantly transformed the Nigerian newspaper industry, altering traditional patterns of news production, distribution, consumption, and audience engagement. The emergence of digital newspapers has created new opportunities for media organisations to reach wider audiences and deliver timely, interactive, and multimedia content, while simultaneously posing significant economic and operational challenges to conventional print media outfits. This study examines the impact of digital newspapers on print media organisations in Nigeria, with particular attention to changes in readership patterns, revenue generation, newsroom operations, production and distribution practices, and organisational sustainability. The study adopts a qualitative research approach and relies on secondary data obtained from relevant scholarly journal articles, books, published studies, industry reports, and other documentary sources relating to digital journalism and the Nigerian newspaper industry. The data were reviewed and thematically analysed to identify major trends and patterns associated with the digital transformation of print media. Anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the study demonstrates that digital migration has encouraged Nigerian print media organisations to adopt online platforms, multimedia production, social media engagement, audience analytics, and alternative revenue models. However, the transition has also contributed to declining print readership, reduced advertising income, rising competitive pressures, and concerns about the long-term sustainability of traditional print operations. The study concludes that the survival and relevance of print media organisations in Nigeria increasingly depend on strategic digital transformation, innovative revenue diversification, technological adaptation, and the ability to maintain journalistic credibility while responding to changing audience expectations.

Keywords: Digital Newspapers; Print Media; Digital Migration; Newspaper Readership; Diffusion of Innovations Theory.

I. Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the structure, operation and economic foundations of the contemporary news media industry. The emergence of the internet, social media platforms, mobile technologies and digital publishing has altered how news is produced, distributed, accessed and consumed. Traditionally, print media organisations relied heavily on newspaper sales, subscriptions, classified advertisements and display advertising as their major sources of revenue (Vitalis et al., 2023). However, the migration of audiences from printed newspapers to digital platforms has disrupted these conventional revenue streams and compelled newspaper organisations to reconsider their operational and business models. Digital journalism has consequently emerged not only as an alternative channel for news distribution but also as an important component of the survival and sustainability strategies of contemporary print media organisations (Vitalis et al., 2025).

In Nigeria, the transformation has been particularly significant as newspapers that historically operated within a predominantly print-based environment increasingly maintain online editions, news websites, mobile platforms and social media accounts. Digital platforms enable newspapers to reach audiences beyond geographical boundaries, publish news continuously and interact directly with readers. They also provide opportunities for organisations to develop alternative revenue sources through digital advertising, sponsored content, subscriptions, memberships, partnerships, branded content and other forms of online monetisation. Oreoluwa et al., (2024) observed that the integration of digital journalism into traditional newspaper operations therefore represents an important strategic response to changing patterns of media consumption and the growing competition for audience attention in Nigeria's increasingly fragmented media environment.

The world media has experienced a dramatic change during the last 10-20 years due to the emergence of digital technologies and the blistering spreading of the internet. Such technological developments have facilitated the emergence of new forms of producing, distributing, and consuming information that have radically changed the nature of journalism and mass communication (Adeyemi et al., 2023; Saint et al., 2024). One of the most obvious examples of this change is the development of the digital newspapers that have reinvented the work processes, business model, and patterns of audience interaction in traditional print media (Omenugha, 2019). The trend towards the digital consumption of news in Nigeria has been especially significant because of the rise in internet connection, the use of smartphones, and the need of real-time, engaging and easy to access news information (Okon et al., 2022).

Traditionally, print media has been at the centre of the shaping of the socio-political and economic situation in Nigeria. It was through newspapers like *The Guardian*, *Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Daily Times*, and *ThisDay* that increased awareness among the population, political agenda-setting, and democratic transitions, as well as playing a watchdog role of governance (Idiong et al., 2018). The print newspapers were quite often regarded as credible sources of information and had fairly secure financial sustainability in terms of sales, subscription fees and advertising earnings. Nevertheless, the historical hegemony of print media started being shaken since the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s due to the introduction of the digital platform and the liberalisation of internet services (Hassan, 2018).

Increased development of mobile telecommunication services and low cost of smartphones also helped in increasing the rate of transitioning to digital media in Nigeria. The internet penetration in Nigeria, according to industry estimates, grew to more than 50 percent in 2020, after being less than 1 percent in the year 2000, forming an enormous target market to online news operators (Aondover et al., 2022). The media houses saw the potential of the digital platforms soon and started creating online editions of their newspapers. This saw the rise of popular online news media like *Premium Times*, *Sahara Reporters*, *The Cable*, *Pulse Nigeria* and online editions of the traditional newspapers like *Punch online* and *Vanguard online*. These digital news sources were fast, interactive, could integrate multimedia, and convenient, which the traditional print newspapers could hardly emulate (Oladosu et al., 2021)

Digital newspapers have brought about other patterns of audience behaviour as well. The modern news readers and especially the young Nigerians now use digital news due to its immediate nature, accessibility on various platforms, and the fact that it allows them to share the news with social media networks (Ashong and Ogaraku, 2017). This has been slowly decreasing readership of print newspapers and the resultant effect is a decrease in circulation

and a decrease in revenue brought by print advertisement and a general decrease in the financial viability of the print media organisations. As an example, numerous advertisers are moving away as they switched their selection to the digital form because of the expansive reach, the capacity to target demographics, and the ability to acquire real-time analytics (Targema & Suntai, 2017; Maiwada et al., 2025).

Moreover, online newspapers have dissimilar cost structures unlike print media. Whereas print newspapers have high production costs of printing, newsprint acquiring and distribution, and logistics, the production and distribution costs of digital newspapers are relatively low (Ademosu et al., 2025). This has been able to transform digital platforms to introduce competitive approaches like providing free news content, which has further affected the economic sustainability of print newspapers, which are generally dependent on the level of sales. Also, on the digital platform, immediacy and constant news feeds are possible, whereas print newspapers are limited by the daily production of printed news and the distribution process (Aondover & Ademosu, 2025).

The emergence of social media networks including Facebook, Twitter (since renamed X), Instagram, WhatsApp, and Tik Tok has made the media ecosystem even more difficult. These websites have turned out to be alternative sources of news, allowing user generated content and citizen journalism. This has complemented and competed with the traditional print media (Mohammed & Aondover, 2025). The digital newspapers have been displaced by social media as many Nigerians get to know about the breaking news before attempting to get more information. This has necessitated the print media to be compelled to implement multi-platform strategies in order to stay relevant in such a digitalised society (Okon et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, in Nigeria, print newspapers still play an important role in the media landscape, especially among older readers, professionals, policymakers, and institutions where print types of publications, in particular, are viewed as especially credible and long-term (Hassan, 2018). However, sustainability of print media is a growing concern that has raised issues of job losses, quality editorial being cut short because of economic reasons and the prospects of print journalism surviving in the long run. Journalistic practices have also changed because of the transition to digital, where speed over depth, multimedia abilities, search engine optimization (SEO), and data-based audience analytics have become more prominent (Oladosu et al., 2021).

This paper aims to investigate the impact of online newspapers on the newspaper organisations in Nigeria, in terms of its operational, economic, and readership consequences of the digitalisation process. These changes hold significant importance to media scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to help them steer through the digital age challenge and opportunities.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical Underpinning

The Diffusion of innovations (DOI) theory, which was formulated by Everett Rogers in 1962 gives us a broad understanding of how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technologies are diffused within a social system. The theory has been used extensively in many fields such as communication studies, sociology, marketing, education, and media studies to understand the embracement of innovations, such as digital technologies, new media platforms, and organizational practices (Shad et al., 2025). Fundamentally, the theory states that the spread of innovations is a process where knowledge, persuasion, decision-making, implementation, and confirmation will be used in a combination to alter adoption behaviour of individuals or organisations. The DOI theory in the media industry, specifically in Nigeria, is relevant in describing how the digital newspapers were adopted and consequently affected the print media outfits (Maharati & Entezarian, 2023).

Rogers defines innovation as idea, practice or object that is considered to be new by an individual or other adoption unit. The novelty perception has been deemed vital given that the adoption process depends not on the objective newness of the innovation but on the attitude of potential adopters. Digital newspapers are one such innovation in the media industry, which provides the features and functionalities that traditional print media do not have (Mbatha, 2024). These comprise real-time news distribution, multimedia, interactivity, analytic-based audience understanding and the capability to interact with readers on various online platforms at the same time. According to the DOI theory, the perceived attributes of an innovation, communication channels used, social system, and the nature of adopters determine the success of an innovation (Gregg, 2021).

There are five major attributes of innovations which based on Rogers define the rate of adoption of an innovation. The initial characteristic is relative advantage which can be said to be the extent to which an innovation is believed to be superior to a practice that it replaces. The digital newspapers provide a definite comparative advantage with the print media, mostly in terms of speed, convenience, accessibility, and the ability to reach audiences worldwide (Yu, 2022). The second quality, compatibility refers to how well the innovation is aligned with existing values, experiences and needs of the potential adopters. Digital newspapers in Nigeria are very favorable to the lifestyle of the urban population, particularly the younger readers who are digitally trained, socially networked, and who are used to consuming information through mobile. The compatibility is also applicable to the organizational readiness where print media outfits which already have in place some technological infrastructure can integrate easier to the digital plans (Hatami & Azimi, 2025).

The third attribute is complexity, which deals with the challenge encountered in understanding and use of the innovation. The complexity of digital newspaper lies in the fact that though simple online access can be easily available to the majority of consumers, more advanced content management systems, digital analytics, and multimedia production tools might demand some technical skills (Shad et al., 2025). This complication affects the rate of adoption by the media practitioners and the audience. The fourth characteristic is known as trialability which is the degree of experimenting an innovation on a small scale. In the case of digital newspapers, the concept of trialability can be expressed through the possibility to read online content freely, subscribe to a trial period, or use demo platforms, so that the users can first assess the innovation and then proceed with its full adoption. Lastly, there is observability, which is connected to the benefit of the innovation being visible to others. The

popularization of such platforms as Premium Times, Sahara Reporters, and The Cable in the Nigerian context can also be seen as a positive indicator of the power of digital newspapers, which in turn stimulates the use of digital newspapers by competitors, journalists, and readers (Maharati & Entezarian, 2023).

The DOI theory by Rogers also outlines the five types of adopters which are innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. The earliest to adopt an innovation is the innovators, which may be driven by curiosity, and risk-taking among others (Aondover et al., 2025). Early adopters are opinion leaders and shape even wider social acceptance of the innovation. The initial majority is those who follow once they have seen the implementation is working, and the latter is more doubtful and reserved (Mbatha, 2024). The laggards are also slow to adapt to the change, they usually follow the old ways until they are forced to change because of external forces. The innovators in the Nigerian media ecosystem are usually start-up digital media houses or technologically sophisticated print houses that are trying out online versions. The early adopters consist of established newspapers that introduce online portals to supplement their print edits with the early and late majority being other media organizations that are slowly adopting digital strategies in reaction to the competitive pressures. Laggards continue to be print-based companies that have not completely switched into digital migration (Gregg, 2021).

The communication channels are central to diffusion to help in transferring knowledge about the innovation there. Rogers differentiates between mass media channels, which are able to reach large groups of people quickly, and interpersonal channels, which can determine people to adopt through the channel of social network and opinion leaders (Garba & Msaughter, 2023a). Both channels are applicable in Nigeria since the mass media, including television and radio, are used to create awareness about digital news sites, whereas interpersonal networks, including professional bodies such as the Nigeria Union of Journalists and word-of-mouth among readers, are used to create credibility and promote adoption. The process of adoption is also a product of the social system, which consists of the norms of society, organizations, and cultural practices. The media organisations are firms that are being carried out in competitive and regulatory settings in which digital innovation has been both stimulated and restricted by economic, infrastructural, and sociocultural considerations (Yu, 2022).

Lastly, the DOI theory focuses on the innovation-decision process stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. The potential adopters get informed about the existence of digital newspapers, and their capabilities in the knowledge stage. Persuasion is the process of developing attitude towards adoption, which is based on perceived benefits and peer evaluation. Decision involves making a decision to either accept or reject the innovation. Implementation refers to putting the innovation into practice, and confirmation is the assessment of results and strengthening the decision (Hatami & Azimi, 2025). The staged method is especially helpful in the comprehension of how the print media in Nigeria cope with digital migration determining the organizational preparedness, resource distribution, employee training, and the audience reaction.

III. Research Methods

3.1 Conceptualising of Digital Newspapers

Digital newspapers are those news publications that are produced, distributed, and consumed using electronic platforms, which is mainly the internet. They reflect a radical change in the old paradigm of printed news to a technologically driven ecosystem in which information is being spread via websites, mobile apps, email newsletters, and social media networks (Hassan et al., 2021). Digital newspapers were created as a reaction to the blistering development of the information and communication technologies (ICTs), especially the extension of the high-speed internet, the rising affordability of smartphones, and the worldwide shift towards consuming digital content. Since viewers and readers were moving more towards online sources of real-time information, media organisations responded by creating digital editions of their publications in order to stay competitive and relevant (Kuiken et al., 2017).

Digital newspapers is not just about the direct transfer of the printed material to digital media. It entails the complex combination of multimedia capabilities, including images, videos, infographics, podcasts, and hyperlinks that enhance the process of telling stories and provide a more interactive user experience (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2021). Digital newspapers can be updated at once unlike print newspapers which operate under a fixed layout and daily production cycles so that journalists can publish breaking news as the stories go on. This immediacy has already turned out to be one of the greatest strengths of digital newspapers, particularly in a rush-paced information space, where consumers require timely and precise information (Karimi and Walter, 2021).

The digital newspapers are also marked by their interactivity, as the users can comment on the articles, share them on social media, take part in online polls, and also directly communicate with journalists and editors (Oberbichler et al., 2022). This kind of interactive features forms a more participatory kind of journalism as opposed to the one way communication model that is characteristic of a print media. Besides that, digital newspapers employ algorithms and analytics to monitor user behaviour, which allows the content to be suggested personally and can be targeted with advertising. Such practices make digital platforms commercially viable and evidence the intersection of journalism and digital marketing approaches (Thurman et al., 2018).

Digital newspapers have emerged very fast in the Nigerian context because of the high penetration of mobile internet and the rising inclination towards the use of digital content by youth population (Garba & Msaughter, 2023b). Premium Times, Sahara Reporters, The Cable, Pulse Nigeria, online offshoots of older newspapers like Vanguard Online and Punch Online, and others have become significant figures in the media industry (Lehtisaari et al., 2018). The sites provide real time news on politics, entertainment, business, sport and social matters, which appeal to a wide audience in Nigeria and also internationally. Most of these digital newspapers use the free-access model that only expands their readership even more than the print newspapers which must be bought physically (Maradun & Aondover, 2025).

The other important feature of online newspapers is the affordability. The cost of production is lower on digital platforms compared to print newspapers that demand a lot of resources such as newsprint, printing, and distribution systems, and workforce (Kurata et al., 2017). This is an economic benefit that enables the digital newspapers to provide content without charge or at very minimal subscription costs which further propel their uptake by the

audiences. Nevertheless, the editorial practice is also influenced by this cost model as online outlets usually depend on advertisement revenue, sponsored content, and data analytics (Sorescu & Schreier, 2021).

Digital newspapers are also a contributor to media ecosystem diversification. They permit entry of fresh media players, which might lack the funds to start the traditional print outfits. Such democratisation of the production of media increases the number of voices, ideas and opinions that can be shared with the masses. Still, it also leads to the issue of spreading unverified news, clickbait journalism, and media regulation problems (Signer, 2017; Idris & Msughter, 2022).

3.2 The Concept of Print Media

Print media is the ancient mode of sharing information, or spreading information through the physical means of printing and this is commonly done through newspapers, magazines, brochures and newsletters. Print media is a term used in the context of the journalism and mass communication industry specifically to refer to the newspapers and periodicals that are published on paper and distributed in the traditional manner via the vendors, subscription services and libraries, and through the organisational outlets (Cheng & Foley, 2018). Traditionally, print media has been used to establish the basis of sharing information, enlightening the masses, mobilising political participation, and transmitting culture in all societies. Until the emergence of radio, television, and then digital technologies, the print newspapers served as a primary source of news and analysis to the majority of citizens (Aondover, 2024).

Aondover et al. (2025) observed that print media is defined by physical form, editorial organization, gate keeping mechanisms and periodicity of production. Compared to digital platforms that offer up to date news, print newspapers have a rigid publishing schedule, daily, weekly and/or bi-weekly according to the policy of the organisation. It is a structured production cycle that consists of the news gathering, editing, typesetting, proofreading, printing, and distribution stages (Aroles et al., 2020). These processes underscores the labour intensive and resource based nature of the print journalism. They are also associated with credibility and reliability of the print media since the material is subject to formal editorial examination before it is delivered to the audience (Wevers & Smits, 2020).

Print media is the medium that has in the past played a critical role in socio-political development in Nigeria (Kuchi & Msughter, 2023). The West African Pilot, Nigerian Tribune, Daily Times, The Punch, and The Guardian are the examples of newspapers that contributed greatly to the anti-colonial movements, democracies, and public accountability (Myllylahti, 2017). These newspapers became reliable sources of information and deliver investigative journalism, editorial commentary, and extensive reportage. The print media organizations thereby turned into not only the sources of the news but also the venues of the civil discourse and the national identity development (Ferrucci and Vos, 2017).

Print media is economically dependent on circulation (sales and subscriptions) and advertising which are the two primary revenue sources. The advertisers, in particular, have traditionally been the foundation of financial sustainability of the print newspapers (Hassan et al., 2021). The reason why businesses favored print advertising is due to its perceived credibility, segmentation of buyers and its physical nature. Nevertheless, the growing trend to digital platforms disturbed this pattern, and the advertisers currently prefer the online media

with a wider range and targeted marketing opportunities (Kuiken et al., 2017; Usman et al., 2022).

The print media have still maintained special benefits over their electronic competitors despite the threat of competition of digital newspapers. The fact of its tangibility, permanence, and perceived reliability are attractive to specific demographics, in particular, older readers, professionals, academic institutions, and policymakers (Bengtsson and Johansson, 2021). Print newspapers are less vulnerable to the aggression of fake news spread easily over the internet because they are subject to a more strict editorial filtering process. Moreover, the lengthiness and the level of analysis that are prevalent in print publications are appreciated by a lot of readers, unlike the succinctness and rapidity of online news (Karimi & Walter, 2021).

Nevertheless, print media suffers a lot of challenges in the modern times. The increase in the production costs, fluctuations in the supply chain of newsprint materials, falling readership, and decreasing advertising revenues have put a financial burden on the newspapers organisations (Oberbichler et al., 2022). Circulation is further restricted by distribution problems, particularly in rural and insecure regions. Since the Nigerian population is becoming more digitalized, the position of print media is also under additional threat, and many traditional newspapers have shifted to hybrid formats of combining print and online content (Thurman et al., 2018).

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Digital Migration in the Media Industry

Digital migration of the media industry involves the way media organisations are changing their analogue or print-based production and distribution methods to digital ones, facilitated by the latest information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Lehtisaari et al., 2018). It is a structural change that occurred due to the spread of digital technologies all over the world, the growth of internet availability, and the change in tastes of the audience to more immediate and interactive news consumption. Digital migration is not just a change of distribution pathways, but it implies a profound restructuring of editorial mechanisms, business formulas, practices in newsrooms, and approaches to engage audiences (Hayes, 2024).

The internet migration is based on the embracing of online publishing sources like websites, mobile applications, social media platforms, and digital archives. These platforms provide the media organisations with the potential to reach a wider audience globally, publish real time breaking news, integrate multimedia features, and get immediate response of the readers. This is contrary to the linear and lagging information flow that is characteristic of the production of print media, this model is a multidimensional approach to communication. In that way, digital migration is a paradigm shift, transforming the time, space, and interactivity of the journalism (Sorescu & Schreier, 2021).

The trend of digital migration in Nigeria has been rapidly growing in the last ten years because of the enhanced mobile broadband connection, a high number of smart phones, and the youthful population structure. The competition of the demand side of the news market due to the introduction of low-cost internet data packages and large-scale use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, X, Instagram, and WhatsApp has increased the use of the online news (Kurata et al., 2017). Most of the already established Nigerian print newspapers such as The Punch, Vanguard, The Nation and Nigerian Tribune have introduced

digital versions to complement the print editions. At the same time, local digital media like Premium Times, Sahara Reporters, and The Cable have become powerful actors, taking advantage of the opportunities of digital technologies and giving instant and various news coverage (Signer, 2017).

Economic implications involved in digital migration are large-scale. The conventional print media organisations have been having increased cost of production particularly in newsprint, ink, labour, and distribution logistics. At the same time, digital publishing makes those operations much less costly so that media houses can invest more in content production and technology (Cheng and Foley, 2018). Moreover, the advertisers are progressively shifting to the digital sphere as it has a universal coverage, the possibility of targeted advertising, and other quantifiable criteria like clicks, impressions and the rate of engagement. This change in the advertising revenue also pushes organisations in the print media industry to switch to the digital realm to continue existing financially (Perreault & Bell, 2022).

Adewale et al (2025) maintained that newsroom culture and professional practices are also altered due to digital migration. Multimedia skills include video editing, social media management, data journalism, and optimization of online content are now mandatory requirements of journalists (Aroles et al., 2020). Newsrooms implement digital content management system (CMS) to promote cross-departmental collaboration, production process streamlining, etc. Moreover, the digital transformation enhances the implementation of citizen journalism, in which the audience-created content is involved in the news creation and distribution (Wevers and Smits, 2020). Although there are advantages, there are some challenges of digital migration. Greater threat of misinformation, cyber insecurity, and constant technological investment are major issues of concern to the media organisations in the digital environment due to increased competition there. The print media houses, specifically, find it hard to balance the digital growth and the quality and integrity that comes with traditional journalism (Perreault & Bell, 2022).

4.2 Changing Readership Patterns

The readership patterns have also changed drastically within the last twenty years mainly because of the significant changes in technology, the shift in the sociocultural environment and the diversification of the information-consumption platforms. Old reading behaviors that were initially based on newspapers, magazines, books, and scholarly texts, have gradually been replaced by digital, multi-modal, and interactive engagements. This change is part of the general trends in media use, literacy, and attention in the world (Kim et al., 2022).

The rapid increases of digital technologies is one of the key factors that are contributing to the emerging trends of readership. The popularity of smartphones, tablets, e-readers, and cheap internet connectivity have increased the number of forms of reading that can be made available to people. People are now extensively using online news portals, blogs and social media feeds as well as digital libraries, which have replaced long and text-intensive documents with short and visually mediated information (Akter et al., 2022). Therefore, reading has been discontinued: people read in small blocks, usually involving various platforms and non-linearly. The hyperlinks, multimedia contents, and the content suggestions offered by algorithms have altered the way individuals find, process, and store information (Ayobolu, 2024).

Also, modern readership is characterized by the change towards the participatory rather than passive reading. Readers and content creators are no longer separated by the

platform (Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok), which have drawn a thin border between them (Gambo & Macham, 2025). Users do not only read the texts but also react, remix, critique and redistribute them, which generates a response loop that has an effect on what becomes visible. This has been complemented by a participatory culture that fosters a more dialogic position to texts particularly amongst younger readers who prefer interactive and collaborative learning spaces (Benneth et al., 2024).

Demographic shifts are also the causes of the change in readership. The younger generations, which are also called digital natives, were more inclined to consider convenience, speed, and visual attractiveness more significantly in their reading preferences (Oladosu et al., 2021). They are better motivated to use visual and audio materials that include podcasts, video essays, and infographics, which provides succinct explanation of complicated issues. On the other hand, older readers might still want to use print but are embracing digital medium because of convenience and the erosion of traditional print readership. Moreover, in a large number of societies, literacy practices have been transformed into multilingual and multimodal as an aspect that serves the variety of reading styles and preferences (Sijuade & Adebayo, 2025).

There is an added influence of economic and social factors. This has decreased the supply of newspapers and magazines in most parts of the world, especially in rural or under-resourced societies with the decline of traditional print media industries (Rufai et al., 2022). Meanwhile, digital media, most of which are free or cheap to access, have expanded access to information among marginalized groups. Nonetheless, this transition leads to the issues of digital divides, information overload, misinformation, and the reduced attention span of modern readers (Oginni and Mizpah, 2025).

4.3 Economic Implications for Print Media

The overwhelming movement towards the digital consumption of information has radically changed the economic landscape of the print media. The financial pressures of the traditional media organizations have been caused by declining readership, decreased advertising revenue, shifting consumer interests and the cost of running print production is high. With the migration of the audiences to the online platforms, print media companies are getting more challenged in maintaining the revenue bases that had previously been used to operate the businesses (Salawu & Adeyeye, 2025; Okunade et al., 2025).

The economic impact that is most drastic is the fall in the advertisement revenues. In the past, magazines and newspapers depended on the sales of advertising as the major source of finances (Kim et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the advertisers have also started to move their funds to online sources like Google, Facebook, and Instagram where they are now able to target particular demographics more perfectly and be able to gauge the level of audience connectivity. The shift of revenue has forced print outlets to fight to survive in a market that is now filled with models of advertisement driven by algorithms with lower cost-per-click and wider range (Akter et al., 2022).

There is also a decrease in circulation revenue as more consumers tend to get instant access to information which is made available to them through digital devices. According to Teniola et al. (2025), online news can be so convenient and often free of charge, and it is this that makes print subscriptions less appealing (Ayobolu, 2024). This transformation weakens the conventional form of subscription of print organizations and forces them to implement hybrid options, as in the creation of digital editions, or paywalls. Nevertheless, these moves

have had mixed outcomes and several organizations are struggling to replicate their print readership into viable digital income (Gambo & Macham, 2025).

The economic pressures on the print media are also worsened by the operational costs. The cost of printing, paper, ink, distribution, and labour are still high. Following a decline in circulation numbers, economies of scale decrease as well, and the cost of production in units increases (Benneth et al., 2024). An overwhelming number of print media have had to limit the number of publications, lay off their staff, or merge with other media organisations to survive. Higher newsprint import prices and volatile economic situations in certain places especially in developing nations aggravate the economic strain among publishers (Oladosu et al., 2021).

The economic consequences of the same are not just to media organizations. Shrinking of print media has led to loss of jobs in various industries, such as journalism, printing, advertisement, and distribution logistics (Rufai et al., 2022). It has also played a role in the deterioration of local newspapers which were a traditional contributor to the economic activity of the community level in the advancement of small businesses, distribution of local advertisement and informed citizenry. This decrease in the availability of print media could undermine such local economic ecosystems and increase the information disparities in underserved communities (Sijuade and Adebayo, 2025).

To address such challenges, the print media organizations are considering new forms of revenue like content syndication, membership, branded content, events, and multimedia production (Salawu & Adeyeye, 2025). Others have adopted digital transformation through investing in online platforms, mobile applications and social media engagement to reach more people and diversify their sources of income. However, the process is still complicated and resource-heavy, and its success is not universal due to the ability of the organization, the audience demographics, and market conditions (Oginni & Mizpah, 2025).

4.4 Operational Adjustments by Print Media

The development and the swift growth of digital newspapers has forced print media organisations to make serious operational changes so as to be relevant and competitive in the technological-driven communication scene (Kim et al., 2022). These are both strategic and structural changes that represent a larger re-balancing of newsroom operations, production processes, business models, and audience engagement processes. As the consumers became more and more insistent on immediacy, accessibility, and interactivity, the print media have been compelled to reorganize their operations to accommodate the realities of digital news consumption (Akter et al., 2022).

Among the most important changes in operations is the change of integrating digital technologies into the traditional newsroom operation. Most print media houses have moved away in using analogue processes to digital-first models of production where the news is conceptualized, collected and edited with the online platforms as the main channel of delivery (Gambo & Macham, 2025). This change has also brought about the use of content management systems (CMS), multimedia reporting systems and real-time publishing software that allow organisations to share information more quickly and in a wider variety of forms e.g. videos, infographics, podcasts and live updates. Combination of print and digital processes has also promoted cross-functional cooperation among journalists, editors, web designers and social media strategists (Benneth et al., 2024).

The other significant change has been the diversification of the revenue sources due to the negative growth in print sales and advertisement revenues. The print media organisations are warming up to paywalls, online subscription, sponsored content, and membership models (Oladosu et al., 2021). Others have also diversified into digital advertising platforms, and provide customised online advertising, native advertising or search engine optimization (SEO)-enhanced content opportunities. These inventions enable organisations to acquire a portion of online advertising sector in order to fill the vacuum produced by the depletion of the traditional print advertising income (Sijuade Adebayo, 2025).

The print media have been forced to undertake major organisational restructuring decisions too. Survival strategies are now viewed as downsizing, outsourcing, and cost rationalisation. The organisations have laid off a lot of employees especially in jobs that are directly related to the printing process, e.g., printing technicians, circulation staff, and delivery persons (Rufai et al., 2024). Other companies have implemented hybrid or fully remote working practices, which allow greater flexibility and lower overheads related to having a large physical newsroom. Print outlets have in other instances combined or entered strategic partnerships to share resources and enhance their competitiveness in the digital market (Oginni & Mizpah, 2025).

Moreover, print media companies have also reinvented content production and interactivity policies. As a participatory digital environment, they currently employ interactive interfaces like social media, mobile applications, and reader analytics to get insight into the preferences of the audience and customise content to these (Salawu and Adeyeye, 2025). The interactive capabilities such as commenting, live messages, polls, and newsletters allow the relationships between the audience to be more dynamic, thus making them more loyal and reaching more people. Print organisations are turning to data analytics to measure the metrics of engagement, optimize the performance of their content, and editorial decision-making, which is a break with the previous system of intuitive journalism and its data-driven equivalent (Wang & Malthouse, 2022).

Production and distribution systems have also been included in the list of operations that are altered. Most print sources have cut down on publishing, either daily to weekly or bi-weekly, to cut down on printing expenses, and paid greater attention to digital updates (Onayinka et al., 2022). Others have contracted printing services to third parties or invested in more energy saving printing technologies as part of ensuring further cost reduction. Also, the distribution channels have become simplified, and organisations are increasingly using digital duplicates, e-papers, and mobile friendly versions to substitute or supplement physical circulation (Zeba et al., 2022).

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, digital journalism has become an essential component of the transformation and survival of print media organisations in Nigeria, providing opportunities to expand audience reach, diversify content and develop alternative revenue streams through digital advertising, subscriptions, sponsored content and other online business models. However, the shift from print to digital has also created significant economic challenges, including declining circulation, intense competition for online advertising, audience reluctance to pay for digital news and the dominance of global technology platforms. The sustainability of Nigerian print media organisations therefore depends not merely on establishing digital platforms but on their ability to develop innovative and context-specific monetisation strategies, invest in digital skills and infrastructure, strengthen audience engagement and maintain journalistic credibility. A strategic integration of editorial innovation, technological adaptation and sustainable revenue generation is consequently necessary for ensuring that digital journalism becomes a viable pathway for the long-term survival and economic sustainability of Nigeria's print media industry.

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