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Sustainability of Select Indigenous-Language Newspapers Through Advertising in Nigeria: Appraising the Success of *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the sustainability of select Indigenous-language newspapers through advertising, emphasising the success stories of *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* newspapers. No prior study has examined the success stories of these Indigenous-language newspapers and their sustainability through advertising. Previous studies focused mainly on examining the challenges faced by these papers but paid no attention to the successes of a few of them, thus the need for a study of this nature. The study, therefore assess the advertising techniques used in Indigenous-language newspapers to promote sustainability. Specifically, it sought to identify the advertising techniques used to promote sustainability, determine their effectiveness, and identify the challenges Indigenous-language newspapers face in promoting sustainability. A qualitative research method was used for this study. In-depth interviews were held with the advertising managers/representatives of the respective newspapers. Findings show that the newspapers employed various advertising techniques such as print, digital and social media advertising; various advertising choices are available in the newspapers, including display advertisements, classifieds, inserts, and sponsored content. They also promote people's cultural heritage through published advertising messages. Further findings showed that *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* newspapers enhance their sustainability by effectively targeting their desired readers and showing how much they care about preserving culture. The study recommends that Indigenous-language newspapers should emphasise unique cultural perspectives because they can provide a cultural perspective that mainstream media may not offer. By emphasising this cultural perspective, Indigenous-language newspapers can differentiate themselves from other media outlets and attract advertisers who want to appeal to this unique audience.

KEYWORDS

Alaroye newspapers; *Aminiya* newspapers; advertising; Indigenous languages; sustainability

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Introduction

Indigenous-language newspapers have come to stay in the print media business. Over time, they have metamorphosed and grown. However, they have faced their challenges. Some have pulled through, while others have become extinct. The failures can be attributed to poor reading culture, the rise in digitisation, the upsurge in the use of social media, and competition with mainstream media outlets (Oyedele and Hungbo 2020). Giving credence to this, Salawu (2006) and Babalola (2002) argued that a good number of Indigenous-language newspapers could not survive because of competition and neglect. They added that Indigenous-language newspapers could not survive because readership was low and patronage was not forthcoming. Other challenges are the overlapping of English as the official lingua franca, which is widely spoken and accepted, and the inability of stakeholders who are supposed to be actively responsible for the development of Indigenous-language media to do so.

However, some successes have been recorded by a few Indigenous-language newspapers. Worthy of note is the newspaper *Aminiya*, which has improved and spiced up its content with doses of entertainment, lifestyle, health stories, photographs, gender-related stories, and fashion, among others. *Alaroye* is not left out; this paper too has survived the heat of competition, serving the people with phenomenal success (Salawu 2020). The strategies adopted by the newspaper range from sales promotions, which entail pushing copies of the paper to readers, and pull strategies aimed at attracting readers' interest. The newspaper devised a method to promote the newspaper by attracting the attention of people who read the paper in which they could answer questions and win prizes. The strategy increased sales and promoted the culture of reading (Oyedele and Hungbo 2020). These two Indigenous newspapers are the basis for the present study. They have stood the test of time and are still in circulation.

Indigenous-language newspapers support cultural knowledge and preservation while giving Indigenous communities a voice. However, these publications frequently deal with serious financial difficulties, jeopardising their viability (UNPFII 2018). Due to their small readerships, Indigenous-language newspapers may find it challenging to get advertisers, and thus to raise funds to run the newspaper (Lipton and Johnson 2019). Many of these publications are underfunded; also, they may lack the knowledge and resources necessary to create successful advertising campaigns (Maher 2020).

Indigenous peoples comprise about 5% of the world's population but more than 15% of the world's poorest people, according to a report from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII 2018). These people are diverse social and cultural groups with ancestral connections to natural resources and the lands and they live on or have been displaced from. They are peculiar in several ways by virtue of the cultural heritage they share. The historical marginalisation and exclusion of Indigenous peoples from prevailing economic and political structures is a factor contributing to this inequality. By giving Indigenous populations a voice and fostering cultural knowledge and preservation, Indigenous-language publications help to overcome this marginalisation.

However, the financial difficulties that Indigenous-language newspapers encounter can make it challenging to continue publishing and carrying out their objectives. The small readership of these journals, which can make it challenging to draw in advertisers and create income, is one of the major obstacles. Many Indigenous-language newspapers

have readerships of fewer than 5 000 people, according to a study by Lipton and Johnson (2019), which makes it challenging to draw in advertisers looking for a larger audience. Another issue is that they lack the tools and knowledge to create successful advertising campaigns. Many of these newspapers have minimal resources and lack the personnel and equipment to carry out sophisticated advertising campaigns. For this reason, it can be challenging to bring in advertisers and generate money, which might endanger the newspaper's viability.

Newspapers published in Indigenous languages struggle financially, which jeopardises their long-term viability. However, these publications can create enduring advertising models that fund their operations and aid in preserving Indigenous cultures and languages by making the most of their distinctive cultural and linguistic endowments. Using current research and market trends, this report examined various methods for accessing sustainable advertising models for Indigenous-language publications.

Communication in Indigenous languages has suffered in most emerging nations because of colonisation. Tshabangu and Salawu (2022) assert that this historical event has genuinely impacted the sensitivity of those living in the third world. For instance, Indigenous languages are not given much respect because English is Nigeria's official language and the main form of communication. This mentality is a serious issue for these newspapers. The limited number of Indigenous-language media suffer from low readership and awareness (Nwabueze 2019).

Indigenous-language newspapers are an essential aspect of promoting Indigenous languages and cultures. However, their sustainability depends on various factors, including the effectiveness of advertising techniques used to promote their products and services. A paucity of research focuses on the sustainability of Indigenous-language newspapers due to academic apathy, resulting in most research focusing on mainstream media (Tshabangu and Salawu 2022). This study supports Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aims to reduce inequalities. This can be achieved by providing Indigenous-language media access to viable advertising methods. As was already established, a disproportionate number of the world's poorest people are Indigenous peoples. By providing Indigenous-language newspapers with stable funding, these publications can keep elevating the perspectives and voices of underrepresented communities, reducing disparities in media representation and information access via newspaper advertising companies (UNPFII 2018).

Scholars have examined Indigenous-language newspapers' long-term difficulties as well as the financial models of these newspapers (Salawu 2012, 2013), and the possibilities and contributions of these Indigenous papers to the development of journalism and engaging the immediate community through their content (Buthelezi 2016; Onyenankaya and Salawu 2019; Oyesomi, Onyenankaya, and Onyenankaya 2020). Additionally, researchers have noted a few difficulties facing Indigenous-language newspapers (Daramola 2013; Kperogi 2006; Onyenankaya and Salawu 2019; Salawu 2006; Yusuff and Osunuga 2018). However, no study has examined the success stories of some of these Indigenous-language newspapers and their sustainability through advertising in Nigeria. Previous research has focused mainly on examining the challenges faced by these papers but paid no attention to the successes of a few of them, thus the need for a study of this nature.

Therefore, this study aims to assess the advertising techniques used in Indigenous-language newspapers to promote sustainability. The research seeks to identify the advertising techniques used to promote sustainability, determine their effectiveness, explore the relationship between advertising for sustainability and support for Indigenous-language newspapers, and identify the challenges faced by Indigenous-language newspapers in promoting sustainability.

Brief on *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* Indigenous-language newspapers

In 1985, *Alaroye* first appeared in print. World Information Agents, a company led by Musa Alao Adedayo, released it. Adedayo, the publisher, started *Alaroye* when he was 25 and he is still employed by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Tejuosho, Lagos. *Alaroye*, today's most widely read Indigenous-language newspaper in Nigeria, is a weekly publication whose name translates to "The Explainer" in the Yoruba language (Odebiyi and Olawuyi 2023). Publication of the paper was suspended after it appeared on newsstands in 1985 due to a lack of funding, as the publisher was still managing the magazine alone. After making a comeback in 1990, the newspaper vanished once more from newsstands after only around two years. A second attempt to revive the newspaper was made in 1994, but it failed after a few issues. In 1996, it bounced back more powerfully, and over time, it grew to become the nation's most well-known and sought-after Yoruba newspaper. It became the most widely read local-language newspaper, selling about 150 000 copies weekly.

The growth of Yoruba newspapers in Nigeria underwent a sea change with the appearance of *Alaroye*. This newspaper impressed readers with its cutting-edge cover art, headline casting, page layout, and news-presenting methods. With *Alaroye* emerging as one of the few Indigenous-language newspapers in West Africa to compete with English-language publications, these remarkable innovations significantly increased newspaper readership in Nigeria.

Media Trust, a privately held Nigerian newspaper publishing company headquartered in Abuja, publishes *Aminiya*, a Hausa-language newspaper. Along with *Kilimanjaro*, the firm also produces the English-language *Weekly Trust*, *Sunday Trust*, and the *Daily Trust*. It is one of the top media firms in Nigeria. *Aminiya* is the most widely read Hausa paper in Nigeria (Ibibleye 2023). It is well liked by readers of all classes, particularly in the country's north. It can be read online as well as in hardcopy.

Indigenous languages and newspaper contents in Nigeria: a historical context

Adedeji (2015) observes that the term "Indigenous" language refers to a language spoken by individuals who belong to or relate to a particular place or area under discussion or with the place where they reside. Indigenous language refers to the vernacular or autochthonous language spoken by the members of a particular tribe, community, or region. The role of language in transmitting cultural, normative, and belief systems across generations is a crucial determinant of a nation's overall status (Nwaolikpe 2013).

Ezi-Nlerum and Ken-Maduako (2023) opine that rather than continuing to prioritise foreign language education, efforts should be made to incorporate Indigenous language

courses into teacher education programmes. This would enable teachers to teach in both foreign and Indigenous languages effectively. Benson, Anyalebechi, and Ariole (2017) observe that numerous societies encounter obstacles such as language loss, shift, or death. According to Orji and Udeze (2021), greater emphasis should be placed on the advancement and encouragement of native languages by the government, as opposed to the current prioritisation of English, French, or other foreign languages that may be unfamiliar to children for whom it is not their primary language. Jibir-Daura (2014) affirms that the utility of Indigenous languages lies not in their ability to drive development single-handedly but rather in their potential to promote positive change and progress. This is achieved by fostering greater inclusivity in linguistic diversity and expanding social opportunities for speakers of minority languages.

The contents of early Indigenous-language newspapers were distinguished by their coverage of religious and social news. The first such newspaper in Nigeria, *Iwe Irohin*, primarily disseminated news related to religion and social affairs. The reported news items included the relocation of church officials within and between districts or parishes and updates on ordinations, baptisms, confirmations, deaths, and births. The purpose of the news items was to disseminate information regarding the current situation within the organisation and at the headquarters to church workers stationed in remote areas. The publication's scope was broadened to include secular content and religious features. The district of Abeokuta was given significant coverage in the publication's pages, alongside news stories about other locations within Yoruba land and the Lagos Colony. The publication showcased various commercial activities, such as the producer prices of palm oil.

Additionally, announcements were made by local chiefs and the government of the Lagos Colony. The newspaper also provided updates on the movement of government and commercial representatives, including the arrival and departure of governors or their deputies from Lagos. Furthermore, there were exhibitions featuring agriculture and crafts and the progress made by mission schools (Mohammed 2021). An analysis of the contents of *Iwe Irohin* suggests that it functioned as a newspaper with a broad readership, catering to a diverse range of interests. Thus, it was expected that the paper would gain popularity. The newspaper refrained from disseminating information about criminal activities, nudity, morally questionable content, the promotion of alcohol, and similar topics. The primary cause of this occurrence can be attributed to the publisher's religious partiality.

Omoloso and Abdulrauf-Salau (2014) opine that the writing style of early Nigerian Indigenous newspapers, even in vernacular, was predominantly literary and often pedantic. They affirm that the lack of formal journalistic training among the proprietors and editors, primarily printers, lawyers, doctors, and unsuccessful businessmen, may have contributed to this outcome. Salawu (2004) observed that Yoruba newspapers rely on sensational and attention-grabbing headlines. The recognition of imaginativeness is pertinent in this context. Newspapers do not claim to be aligned with the interests of the public. This is evidenced by the thematic content of their published stories, which predominantly feature individuals from the general population, as well as the style in which these stories are presented, focusing on providing explanations of current events in a manner that is accessible to the average person. Additionally, the headlines employed by these publications are crafted to resonate with the ordinary reader. The headlines typically exhibit a dramatic tone.

Making an inference to Akinfeleye (1967), Salawu (2004) observes that Yoruba newspapers are predominantly published every week, and the publication exhibits a notable degree of generosity in the selection of point size for their story headlines, mainly when featured on the front or back pages. The newspapers are presented in a format that combines the features of a traditional newspaper with those of a magazine, resembling a tabloid newspaper magazine. As observed in Nigerian newspapers, the front pages are typically embellished with various news stories (ranging in number from three to five). Like magazines, newspapers feature prominent headlines in bold font, typically ranging from 72 to 120 points in size. The prominent headline on the front page of a newspaper, typically displayed in Roman or Gothic font, serves as a focal point that captures the reader's attention.

Salawu also notes that certain newspapers attempt to convey a sense of warmth and personal connection in their written pieces. Several news articles begin with proverbs, potentially serving as a rhetorical device to entice readers. However, a considerable proportion of the narratives lack interest in vividness and instead delve straight into the heart of the matter. Several featured narratives demonstrate a proclivity towards engaging in cordial salutations and pleasantries with their audience before delving into the crux of their compositions. It is worth noting that this observation may have originated in the Yoruba oral tradition, which highly values the expression of politeness. However, additional characteristics and evaluative articles exhibit a strictly formal appearance and methodology.

National-language newspapers and development

The concept of national development encompasses the expansion and advancement of various sectors within a nation, including but not limited to social, economic, human, political, infrastructure, physical, and administrative domains (Guanah, Ijeoma, and Osafire 2019). The development process is characterised by its multidimensional nature, which entails the comprehensive restructuring and realignment of the economic and social systems. The proposed changes entail not only enhancements in financial gains and productivity but also significant modifications in institutional, social, and administrative frameworks, as well as in the prevailing attitudes, customs, and beliefs of the populace. The use of national-language newspapers fosters a sense of attachment between readers and the newspapers, as the readers perceive the newspapers as representative of their own identity (Udejinta 2023). The individuals in question regard publications in their native languages as reliable sources of information. The efficacy of the primary functions of newspapers, namely information dissemination, education, and entertainment, is notably enhanced through utilising national-language newspapers. This is attributed to the fact that these newspapers convey messages in languages familiar to the populace. It is possible that individuals who read newspapers in languages other than English may not possess literacy skills in the English language. However, it is essential to note that these individuals may still possess literacy skills in their local languages, allowing them to effectively read, write, and communicate within their communities.

Developed nations recognise the significance of engaging with their populace through national media outlets, as evidenced by establishing the BBC Hausa Service,

the VOA Hausa Service, and comparable radio services by the French, Germans, and Chinese. The Americans have launched Arewa24 TV as part of their information service and counter-terrorism strategy (Umejei 2020). Similarly, the publication of newspapers in Indigenous languages has the potential to promote progress across various domains of human activity. It is noteworthy that the primary impetus behind the inception of Nigeria's inaugural national-language newspaper, *Iwe Irohin*, which was printed in Yoruba, was to disseminate information and foster enlightenment among the populace. According to available records, the newspaper's primary founding objective was to promote education. The newspaper has been documented as fulfilling its function as a medium for disseminating knowledge among the Nigerian populace. According to Akinseloyin's (2020) account, Rev. Henry Townsend, the publisher of *Iwe Irohin*, stated during the newspaper's inaugural release that he aimed to encourage literacy among the populace. Specifically, he stated that "my objective is to get people to read." The objective is to cultivate the behaviour of acquiring knowledge through perusing written material, specifically newspapers. He added that he has "initiated a programme to promote the holistic advancement of literacy within the Egba community." The newspaper *Iwe Irohin* was utilised as a form of literature to educate the expanding population on the historical and political events of the era (Akangbe 2023). This was because a minimum of 3 000 individuals in Christ Missionary School, Abeokuta, had acquired the ability to read. The newspaper played a role in introducing the first cohort of educated Africans to the values and practices integral to enlightened societies in Europe and other regions.

Newspaper contents and advertising in Nigeria

The operational mechanisms of mass media in Nigeria vividly portray the current state of Nigerian society and its institutions. It appears that they have achieved complete dominance over their newspapers. It is commonly perceived that newspaper proprietors possess financial resources but lack the necessary skills to create newspapers. At the same time, editors possess exceptional journalistic abilities but lack the financial resources to produce newspapers. This contradiction enables newspapers to maintain their viability within the market.

Akpan (2021) asserts that the challenges faced by print media in Nigeria can be attributed to their dependence on conventional revenue-generation strategies such as seasonal advertising. Akpan adds that the observed decrease in advertising budgets by an average of 30% presents a concerning issue. There appears to be a notable change in companies' allocation and utilisation of advertising expenditures and resources. Bahia and Babay (2023) note that most product and service brands tend to allocate a more significant portion of their advertising budget towards electronic media channels while neglecting the use of newspapers as a promotional tool. Emerging brands use a marketing mix emphasising public relations, social media, and digital marketing to expand their reach to a broader demographic. Evans (2019) opines that there has been a decrease in investment by brands and advertisers in print media. Instead, most advertising spending is being directed towards digital formats.

According to Razzaq, Shao, and Quach (2023), advertising serves as a method of communicating with consumers about a particular product or service. Paid communication

messages, known as advertising, are designed to inform or persuade the message's recipients. Newspapers are recognised for their role in disseminating information, providing perspectives, presenting ideas, analysing opinions, offering commentary, and providing elucidation on various subjects, including social, economic, political, educational, moral, cultural, ecological, and legal matters. Newspapers are widely regarded as a highly effective medium for advertising due to their unparalleled ability to convey powerful messages. Newspapers as a medium for advertising present several advantages, including reaching a broad audience across local, regional, and national markets. This medium also has the potential to target individuals of varying age groups and income levels while simultaneously creating a sense of urgency, frequency, and regularity. Additionally, the flexibility and cost-effectiveness of newspaper advertising make it an attractive option for businesses seeking to acquire new customers. Despite the potential benefits of newspaper advertising, it is important to acknowledge the existence of certain drawbacks. Some readers may quickly peruse newspapers and overlook advertisements without paying them due attention.

Materials and methods

A qualitative research method was used for this study. In-depth interviews were used to collect the primary data for the study. Sobowale (2008) notes that in-depth interviews enable the researcher to probe more deeply into the inner recesses of the interviewee, giving credence to the effectiveness of the in-depth interview. Thus, the interviewee can express their mind unhindered, unlike on a questionnaire, which limits responses to available options and closed spaces.

In-depth interviews were held with the advertising managers of the respective newspapers, or their representatives. This meant there were two interviewees in total from the selected newspapers. *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* were intentionally chosen due to their high visibility and popularity as a Yoruba-language newspaper and a Hausa-language newspaper within the country, as noted by Nwabueze (2019). A single key informant was interviewed from each of the selected Indigenous-language newspapers, specifically the Advertising Manager of *Alaroye* newspaper and the Advertising Manager of *Aminiya*.

As practitioners of advertising, it is believed that they have the knowledge and experience to provide answers to the questions posed for this study. The interviewees were selected based on their wealth of knowledge and the fact that they are well positioned to provide necessary detail in answering the questions since they are involved in running the day-to-day advertising activities of the newspapers.

An interview guide was used to obtain helpful information from the appropriate interviewees. A list of questions guided the researcher in the interviews and allowed some follow-up questions to probe the interviewees more deeply. Qualitative data were analysed in the form of words and narratives using the constant comparative technique (Wimmer and Dominick 2014). The respondents provided responses to interview questions. The researchers analysed and interpreted the respondents' direct and indirect speeches.

Data presentation

The first objective was to investigate the advertising techniques used in Indigenous-language newspapers to promote the sustainability of the newspaper outfit. The

advertising managers at *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* newspapers were the participants in the in-depth interviews.

A set of fundamental questions were asked, starting with the following: What advertising techniques are used by *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* newspapers to promote the sustainability of the newspaper outfit?

We employ various advertising techniques, such as print, digital, and social media advertising to reach our intended audience. Various advertising choices are available in the newspaper, including display advertisements, classifieds, inserts, and sponsored content. We also provide advertising packages to accommodate various advertisers' needs.

We also prioritise using the Yoruba language in our advertisements as much as possible to reach our target audience and show that we care about keeping our culture alive. (Representative of *Alaroye*)

Our major strategy is to identify our target audience. We did that and discovered that most of our primary audience is peasant farmers and traders, being a community news medium. Then the secondary audience is small business owners in our community, some educational institutions, and others. (Representative of *Aminiya*)

The next line of questioning was to find out how effective the advertising techniques are in promoting the sustainability of the newspaper.

Our newspaper organisation aims to enhance its sustainability by effectively targeting our desired readership and showing how much we care about preserving culture. Print advertisements effectively get the attention of the people we want to reach. Many of our readers prefer to read a written newspaper, and they actively look for our magazine as a source of news and information. By putting print advertisements in smart places in the newspaper, we can catch our audience's attention as they read exciting articles. By bringing in money through advertisements, this practice makes it easier for our newspaper to stay in business. We also use social media platforms to engage and connect with the people we want to reach. By making content that is interesting and spreads quickly, it is possible to make a brand more well-known, get more people to visit a website, and find new viewers. We also use social media advertising features that let us focus on certain types of users, which helps us make money. Using the Yoruba language in our advertisements is a crucial way to connect deeply with the people we want to reach. When a person is fluent in the language of their cultural background, it shows that we recognise and respect their cultural identity. This strategy helps us build a stronger relationship with our viewers and makes them feel like they belong to us. We are also positioning *Alaroye* as a newspaper that cares about keeping Yoruba culture alive, which could make it more appealing to a wide range of readers and advertisers, which would help the paper stay in business. So that we can meet the different needs of marketers, we offer advertising packages with a lot of options and flexibility. Our newspaper business helps the environment by attracting a more comprehensive range of advertisers and tailoring what we give to fit different budgets and goals. On the other hand, the newspaper is also re-evaluating and improving its advertising tactics to ensure they reach the right people and help the paper stay in business. (Representative of *Alaroye*)

We operate in a unique situation, being a community newspaper. I say it clearly: community newspapers like ours do not depend solely on adverts to survive. The reason is simple: as I said earlier, we do not deal with big business owners but petty businesspeople who essentially do not see the reason for advertising, unlike giant advertisements in the big cities. Therefore, in terms of the sustainability of our business, we use a simple approach, as mentioned earlier: sponsorship. Beyond this, since this is not the only newspaper by our principal,

other advertisements from other publications are used to support this. This is to encourage the services we provide for the community. This is, thereby, how we are being sustained as an industry. (Representative of *Aminiya*)

What are the challenges faced by Indigenous newspapers that contribute to their unsustainability?

One major challenge is that a significant percentage of Nigeria's populace cannot speak, read, or write in their native languages; for this reason, they cannot read the *Alaroye* newspapers and talk less about accessing the advert information embedded in them. (Representative of *Alaroye*)

There are many challenges, ranging from a terrible economy to the unavailability of big corporate advertisers that can afford to place adverts on our paper. However, the availability of other subsidiaries by the same publishers of *Daily Trust*, our sister publication, has helped in no small way. (Representative of *Aminiya*)

Discussion of findings

Advertising techniques used in Indigenous-language newspapers for sustainability

Data from the study show that to reach the intended milestone for sustainability, the newspapers employed various advertising techniques such as print, digital and social media advertising; a variety of advertising choices are available in the newspaper, including display advertisements, classifieds, inserts, and sponsored content. Depending on the needs of the advertiser, different packages are provided to accommodate the need per time. Indigenous languages are prioritised in the advertisements as much as possible since the content is to be consumed by readers of the newspapers. This promotes the people's cultural heritage, thereby relating with them in a way they understand and appreciate. This buttresses the assertion of Tshabangu and Salawu (2022) that promoting Indigenous languages and cultures must include using Indigenous-language newspapers. However, a few variables, such as the success of the advertising campaigns used to market their goods and services, affect their capacity to remain in business. Salawu (2020) also adds that the use of Indigenous languages incentivises their learning. This move would further promote Indigenous language cultures, thus improving the desire of advertisers to adopt them in their trade.

Research has shown that local activities are excellent for establishing a more substantial presence in the neighbourhood. However, it can be difficult for some business owners to publicise such activities. Newspaper advertisements in Indigenous languages are ideal for reaching a local audience. Print advertising is still one of the most efficient traditional marketing strategies for promoting regional events and limited-time specials. In addition, newspaper advertisements can inform the neighbourhood about an event or sale through posters, banners, and direct mail. Though this type of patronage may not be readily available, Indigenous-language newspapers have carved a niche for themselves despite the enormous challenges. Oyesomi, Onyenankeya and Onyenankeya (2020) argue that Indigenous-language newspapers are buffeted by a confluence of factors, such as poor funding, shrinking patronage and competition from the traditional media and social media, but they have remained resilient. They further argued that surviving

this current trend requires adopting digital technologies, including social media, to contend with the raging storm they face. Notably, *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* newspapers have adopted these methods to remain on top of the industry.

Effectiveness of advertising techniques used in Indigenous-language newspapers for sustainability

Indigenous-language newspapers contribute effectively to development and ensure sustainability. Salawu (2004) underscores the comparative effectiveness of Yoruba-language newspapers for (development) communication over English-language newspapers. Emphasising further the development role of national language newspapers, Salawu (2004) opines that without doubt, Yoruba-language and Igbo-language newspapers have been, to varying degrees, playing the roles of information, correlation, continuity, entertainment and mobilisation of the Yoruba people or nation, as espoused by McQuail. National-language newspapers also help develop and preserve local languages and prevent their extinction. This relevance is crucial for attracting and retaining advertisers, who are likelier to place advertisements in a newspaper that reaches their target audience (Lo Bianco 2010). The quality of *Alaroye's* advertising materials is an essential factor in its effectiveness. Thus, such newspapers serve as reservoirs of our cultural heritage, including the languages used in publishing them. They help transmit our cultures from one generation to the next.

Findings show that *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* enhance their sustainability by effectively targeting their desired readership and showing how much they care about preserving culture. Print advertisements have been proven successful at attracting the target audience's interest. Many readers deliberately seek out these newspapers as a source of news and information since they like to read printed newspapers. Print advertisements are placed strategically in the newspaper to draw readers' attention as they read engaging articles. This practice helps the publication stay in business by generating revenue from advertisements. To effectively engage and connect with the audience the papers aim to target, it is feasible to increase brand recognition and website traffic by creating compelling content that goes viral. Additionally, findings show that Indigenous-language newspapers utilise social media advertising tools that enable them to target user demographics to generate revenue. Making a solid connection with the audience they wish to reach requires using the Hausa and Yoruba languages in their advertisements. Oyedele and Hungbo (2020) assert that *Alaroye*, like many other newspapers, operates in an environment that makes survival difficult. They added that mainstream media competition makes this even more difficult. However, their promotion strategies, such as reduced price, non-involvement in politicking, use of digital platforms, deep and well-researched/popular content, and a network of correspondents, have helped these newspapers to live above board.

Speaking a person's native tongue with ease demonstrates our understanding of and respect for their cultural identity. This tactic gives the audience a sense of belonging and strengthens our relationship with them. Additionally, establishing *Alaroye* as a newspaper that cares about preserving Yoruba culture, and *Aminiya* as a newspaper that promotes the cultural heritage of the North, may make them more appealing to a variety of readers and advertisers, aiding the publications' ability to remain in operation. Thus,

Indigenous-language newspapers provide advertising packages with a variety of choices and flexibility so that they can satisfy the various needs of marketers. This confirms the findings of Oyesomi and Salawu (2019) and Udemmadu (2011), who assert that Indigenous language is one of the viable instruments for advertising businesses in Nigeria.

Challenges faced by Indigenous newspapers in Nigeria

There are many challenges facing Indigenous-language newspaper advertising, ranging from a very bad economy to the unavailability of big corporate advertisers that can afford to place adverts in their papers. Even though national-language newspapers have much to contribute to development, they have not been doing so for multiple reasons. A larger percentage of Nigeria's populace cannot speak, read, or write in their native languages; for this reason, they cannot read the national-language newspapers or access the information embedded in them. This is affirmed by the findings of Oyesomi and Salawu (2019), Oyedele and Hungbo (2020), Oyesomi, Onyenakeya and Onyenakeya (2020), Salawu (2020) and Onyenakeya (2022), that Indigenous-language newspapers are faced with enormous challenges which include poor circulation, stiff competition with mainstream newspapers, shrinking patronage, poor funding, and poor capitalisation, among others.

Therefore, it can be inferred that one of the reasons Nigeria has not made significant progress in the use of Indigenous language is because the potential of national language newspapers to shepherd the country into the path of meaningful progress has not been appropriately harnessed. The numerous challenges Indigenous-language newspapers face in their operations hinder them from adequately playing their expected roles in development. These challenges include the dearth of qualified staff grounded in most languages used for publication and competent hands to edit these newspapers. Also, the papers experience low patronage from advertisers; the refusal of some "elites" to buy and read them because they consider them to be "local" newspapers, problems of distribution that make it difficult for them to reach the target readers; low sales of published copies; Unarguably, such problems inform the claim of Nda-Isaiah (2017) that Indigenous-language newspapers do not do well in Nigeria because of limited circulation and the lack of advertisements to sustain them. Most of them are published weekly, and people consider them sectional newspapers; hence, they do not buy or read them.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study concludes that the newspapers in the Indigenous language employed various advertising techniques such as print, digital, and social media advertising. They also sought to promote the people's cultural heritage through published advertising messages. The newspapers *Alaroye* and *Aminiya* enhance their sustainability by effectively targeting their desired readership and showing how much they care about preserving culture. The study concludes that the challenges facing Indigenous-language newspapers are enormous.

Following the findings and conclusions of this study, these recommendations are made:

- (i) Indigenous-language newspapers should emphasise unique cultural perspectives because they can provide a cultural perspective that mainstream media may not

be able to offer. By emphasising this cultural perspective, Indigenous-language newspapers can differentiate themselves from other media outlets and attract advertisers who want to appeal to this unique audience.

- (ii) Digital marketing tools such as social media advertising, email marketing, and search engine optimisation should be emphasised to help Indigenous-language newspapers to remain relevant.
- (iii) Indigenous-language newspapers can also partner with local businesses and organisations that share their values and their commitment to sustainability. By working together, they can amplify their message and create a more substantial impact in the community.
- (iv) Indigenous-language newspapers can incorporate multimedia content into their advertising strategies. This can include videos, podcasts, and interactive graphics, which can help to engage readers and create a more memorable experience.

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