

Preference of Research Areas and Methods among Mass Communication Students in Selected Universities in Nigeria

UKONU, Michael O., *Ph.D.*

Department of Mass Communication
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

WOGU, Joseph Oluchukwu, *Ph.D.*

Department of Mass Communication
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

ANYADIKE, Dominic

School of General Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

AJALA, Mobolaji

Department of Mass Communication
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

There have been ongoing debates on the identity of mass communication (research) as a field in the humanities, arts and/or the social sciences. Is mass communication one of these or all at the same time? This has affected research teaching, literature and practice across universities. This study is one effort to locate the directions of scholarship in mass communication through the prism of research areas and methods. With a mixture of simple random, stratified and quota sampling, the study used the content analysis of documentary evidence in 400 research projects cutting across undergraduate, Masters and PhD in four universities. The study aimed to ascertain the methods adopted in mass communication research as well as the variables and areas of interest in students' researches. The study found that quantitative method was the most adopted method by communication researchers and that qualitative method was not employed alone for analysis by researchers. Mass communication research in the four universities was still tailored more to the social scientific techniques. The selected universities showed remarkable similarity in subject matter areas, type of variables studied and analytical tools employed. The study recommends that universities should steer students' attention to qualitative analysis as core analytical methods.

Research teaching should be sub-divided into more courses, such as quantitative research, qualitative research and data analysis.

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