

## **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.

**Keywords:** Preference, Research Areas, Methodology, Mass Communication, Undergraduate, Masters, PhD Students, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Research is a systematic attempt to investigate an identified problem and proffer recommendations towards resolving it. It is an area common to all the fields of learning. This is because it is the route to the discovery of knowledge, and all fields of learning are about knowledge. However, even though research across disciplines involves virtually similar replicable steps, approaches to the steps differ significantly.

Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.43) note, “regardless of how the word research is used it essentially means as attempt to discover something.” There are two main classes of research according to the use to which research is put to: basic and applied as attested to by Asika (2009, p.13), Adeleke (2010), Oluyombo (2011, p. 9) and Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.14). However, Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.14) advocate a modification to the classes to be: academic and private sector research. They argue that scholars from colleges and universities conduct public sector research for government use, while nongovernmental companies or their research consultants conduct private sector research, which is generally applied to decision making.

The study of mass communication entails the process of sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages, it is an academic discipline that deals with the processes of communication, the transmission of messages from one point or person to another through a medium of dissemination. Mass communication as a field of study overlaps with many other fields. Olson (2008) of the Department of Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington supports this by saying:

The terms communication overlap with academic programs in journalism, film and cinema, radio and television, advertising and public relations and performance studies. Communication Studies emphasizes (sic) the importance of reaching across disciplinary boundaries. By its very nature, the study of communication intersects with other scholarly traditions, such as history, linguistics, English, sociology, psychology, political science, and ethnic and gender studies. Each of these disciplines has produced theories and methods relevant to communication research. Communication studies is often considered as part of the social sciences or the humanities, but sometimes draws on other disciplines as well, including engineering, architecture, mathematics, sociology,

psychology, computer science, gender and sexuality, and economics. The vast span and interdisciplinary nature of communication studies has understandably made it difficult for students to place it within the broader educational system. Therefore, Communication Studies is an important part of the liberal arts curriculum and those majoring in it gain a meaningful education (Ukonu, 2007, p.34).

Although the difficulty in determining the identity of mass communication first comes from its overlap with other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences; the research methods adopted in mass communication are from the humanities and social sciences, especially quantitative methods. In line with this, Wilson, Esiri, and Onwubere (2008, p.8) state that scientific research methods seek to emphasise quantification, logical exposition, controlled empirical testing, replicability of findings, and inter-subjectivity. It, therefore, formally rejects the influence of authority precedent, degree of current acceptance, and other such influences that internal selective factors might have.

It is in line with the foregoing that this study seeks to investigate the choice of research areas in four universities in Nigeria. This is to ascertain whether research is tailored more to the social sciences, the arts or the humanities. This will be done by observing the subject matter of attention, variables of interest as well as research methods adopted. There is a lingering question of whether mass communication researchers are social scientists or humanists. Questions of ego arise also when some researchers ask which method is better, more precise or more impressive between quantitative and qualitative methods (Ukonu, 2009).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the identity of mass communication either as an art or a social science based on common research methods adopted by researchers in the discipline.
2. To identify the procedure, subject matter, variables of interest, techniques of data analysis and the adequacy of research procedure in mass communication.
3. To ascertain the areas of interest in terms of research among undergraduate, masters and PhD students of mass communication.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions have been developed to guide the study:

1. What is the identity of mass communication either as an art or a social science based on common research methods adopted by researchers in the discipline?
2. What are the procedure, subject matter, variables of interest, techniques of

data analysis and the adequacy of research procedures in mass communication?

3. What are the areas of interest in terms of research among undergraduate, masters and PhD students of mass communication?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study

H<sub>01</sub>: The universities do not differ significantly according to the type of quantitative research methods adopted and the University of the Researcher.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the sampling techniques adopted by researchers in mass communication and the University of the Researcher.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Mass Communication as an Interdisciplinary Field**

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011, pp.6-11), mass media research has evolved in definable steps and similar patterns have been followed in each medium's needs for research. The authors note that mass media research is in four phases. Phase I: research has interest in the medium itself. What is it? How does it work? Phase 2, research is on specific information about the uses and the users of the medium. Phase 3 includes investigations of the social, psychological, and physical effects of the medium. At the phase 4, research focuses on how the medium can be improved either in its use or through technological developments. However, it does not imply that one phase must be completed before the next one begins. All the different phases can be conducted simultaneously.

Mass communication has struggled with questions of academic identity over the years: generally, as to whether it is a humanities concern or a social science subject (Ukonu, 2009). The study of mass communication does not exist on its own but it overlaps with many disciplines in the arts and humanities even in the social sciences. As a social science, the discipline often has connections with other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, biology, political science, and economics amongst others. From the humanities perspectives, mass communication is concerned with rhetoric and persuasion. In line with the foregoing, Robert and Craig (2007, p.23) in their studies about communication as a discipline, state:

No matter how intellectually or institutionally well established the discipline of communication may become, many areas of the field will continue to be highly *interdisciplinary*. Contextually focused areas like health communication and political communication inherently straddle disciplinary boundaries. Study of the media as social institutions is unavoidably a multidisciplinary endeavour involving psychology, sociology, economics, legal and policy studies, technology studies, etc. The question is not whether

communication will continue to be an interdisciplinary field, as it certainly will do.

Some scholars say that mass communication as an academic discipline lacks a focus of humanity and focuses more on humanities. Either way, communication in one way or another is significant to other disciplines, and fields of study such as marketing and mass media. As regards methods of mass communication research to determine mass communication identity, Craigs (2011, p. 1485) states:

The notion that there could be a common method to communication research is laughable. But it is important also to laugh at the notion that there is a single common method for anthropology, economics, history, psychology, political science, or sociology. The idea that methods define disciplines is an illusion with roots in late 19th-century debates over a tendentious division between purely objective and generalizing science and knowledge based on subjective, particularizing interpretation.

Thus, since mass communication incorporates other social science disciplines, it is difficult for researchers to be restricted or limited to one method of research. This also makes it difficult to judge mass communication as an arts or social science. Social scientists argue that scientific methods guarantee objective results. Scientists generally see the scientific methods a common basis of all scientific fields and in this case, the scientific method is not restricted to a particular research technique (Craigs, 2011).

On the other hand, the humanities, according to Craigs (2011, p. 1485), often claim that each discipline should be defined by a specific method. This does not always get in the way of research or interdisciplinary collaboration, but it is misleading nearly every time it surfaces. Mass communication as a field is not likely ever to be defined by a common method; this is because there is diversity in methods adopted in conducting mass communication researches.

### **Learning Theory**

The study is hinged on the learning theory. As presented in Wogu (2008), the learning theory is based on the Stimulus-Response concept. The theory makes the following assumptions, according to Folarin (2008).

- (1) That persuasive communication becomes more effective with the use of positive or negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement involves rewarding the receiver or making an appropriate or desired response. Negative reinforcement involves not punishment (at least not initially), but the provision of an opportunity to respond in an appropriate way: an opportunity to make corrections.
- (2) That greater persuasive effect will be assured if specific reinforcements are tied to specific desired

responses, e.g. “those who vote for our party as a block will have their communities connected to the national power grid as soon as we assume power”

(3) That reinforcement provided immediately following the desired response is likely to be more effective than delayed reinforcement

(4) That timely feedback on evaluation of prior response can serve as positive or negative reinforcement in shaping subsequent behaviour.

(5) That people may transfer positive or negative response from one situation to another, e.g. a businessman who is successfully persuaded to vote for a political candidate may, without further persuasion, be willing to contribute to the candidate's campaign funds or endorse his nomination (Folarin, 1998, p.76).

In the case of this study, it is assumed that various universities will not likely differ according to research methods and areas of interest. This will be because of a reinforcement of given types of research or a preponderance of given type of researches over the years. The dominance of research methods will be a result of the reinforcement of definite types of research methods, which in turn is a reflection of the methods seen as prevalent and 'rewarding.' The learning theory is thus tailored to the hypotheses raised in this study.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted content analysis as its research method. It used secondary data for the study. This method enabled the researchers to analyse written works of students (degree, masters, and Ph.D.) from the selected mass communication departments in the selected universities. Four hundred (400) research projects in mass communication in four (4) universities were analysed. There were approximately 4000 research projects in the four universities, and 10% of the projects were selected as sample size (Nwana, 1981). The universities chosen were one state-owned university, namely, Lagos State University, Ojo; two federal universities, namely, University of Lagos, Lagos State and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State; and one private university, namely, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo.

The span ranged from 2011/2012 to 2015/2016 academic sessions. A ten-year period from 2006/2007 to 2015/2016 session was written on pieces of paper, and two sessions were selected by simple random sampling. The ten-year period was considered a point of the highest level of significance in the debate about the state of mass communication research. The projects analysed were selected through stratified and simple random methods. Stratification was done according to subject areas before simple random method was used to select the specific projects used for the study. Four universities were chosen to cover federal, state and private universities. Fifty undergraduate projects were selected for each university, while 30 projects and

20 projects were chosen for masters and PhD respectively to cater to the differences in the number of the various levels of projects. Quota sampling was however used to apportion the numbers due to the difficulty in ascertaining the actual percentage differences across universities so as to use proportionate sampling.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

In this section, secondary data from the completed researches carried out by students of the four universities were analysed and presented in simple tables, using the Research Questions as guide.

**Research Question 1: What is the identity of mass communication either as an art or a social science based on common research methods adopted by researchers in the discipline?**

**Table 1: Quantitative Methods**

<b>University</b>	<b>Experimental</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Content Analysis</b>	<b>Meta-analysis</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>UNN</b>	0 0%	64 16%	36 9%	0 0%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>UNILAG</b>	0 0%	54 13.5%	46 11.5%	0 0%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>LASU</b>	0 0%	77 19.2%	23 5.8%	0 0%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>ACU</b>	0 0%	86 21.5%	14 3.5%	0 0%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>Total</b>	0 0%	281 70.3%	119 29.7%	0 0%	<b>400</b> <b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2017**

From Table 1 above which contains the quantitative methods, Survey approach recorded the highest among research methods in mass communication in the four universities, with 281 representing 70.3% out of the 400 samples adopted. Content analysis was next with 29.7%. There were no studies with either experimental or meta-analysis designs.

**Table 2: Qualitative Methods**

University	Ethno graphy	FGD	Action research	In-depth interview	Historiography	Case studies	Textual analysis	Total (%)
UNN	0 0%	11 6.3%	0 0%	33 19%	0 0%	0 0%	14 8.1%	<b>58</b> <b>25%</b>
UNILAG	0 0%	14 8.1%	0 0%	24 13.8%	0 0%	0 0%	17 9.8%	<b>55</b> <b>25%</b>
LASU	0 0%	9 5.2%	0 0%	19 10.9%	0 0%	0 0%	9 5.2%	<b>37</b> <b>25%</b>
ACU	0 0%	4 2.3%	0 0%	12 6.9%	0 0%	0 0%	7 4.1%	<b>23</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>Total</b>	0 0%	38 21.9%	0 0%	88 50.8%	0 0%	0 0%	47 27.2%	<b>173</b> <b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2017**

Table 2 above indicates that out of 400 projects analysed, 173 researchers adopted the qualitative method, which was combined with either the survey or content analysis approach under the quantitative methodology. Also, 38 researches out of 173 adopted the focus group discussion; 88 representing 50.8% adopted depth/intensive interview approach, while 47 representing 27.2% used textual analysis approach.

**Research Question 2: What are the research procedures (subject matter, variables of interest, techniques of data analysis and the adequacy of research procedure) adopted in mass communication?**

**Table 3: Data procedures and data analysis techniques**

University	PROCEDURES				Total	TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS					Total (%)
	Probability sampling	-----	Multi-Stage Sampling	Snowball Sampling		Simple %	Chi-square	Textual analysis	Comb of Methods	Correlation Coefficient	
UNN	51 12.7%	28 7%	21 5.3%	0 0%	100 25%	55 13.7%	8 2%	6 1.5%	24 6%	7 1.8%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
UNILAG	46 11.5%	37 9.2%	17 4.3%	0 0%	100 25%	49 12.2%	7 1.7%	5 1.3%	34 8.5%	5 1.3%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
LASU	33 8.3%	48 12%	19 4.7%	0 0%	100 25%	51 12.8%	4 1%	2 0.5%	39 9.7%	4 1%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
ACU	44 11%	40 10%	16 4%	0 0%	100 25%	66 16.5%	2 0.5%	0 0%	26 6.5%	6 1.5%	<b>100</b> <b>6.2%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b> <b>43.5%</b>	<b>153</b> <b>38.3%</b>	<b>73</b> <b>18.2%</b>	<b>0</b> <b>0%</b>	<b>400</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>221</b> <b>55.2%</b>	<b>21</b> <b>5.3%</b>	<b>13</b> <b>3.3%</b>	<b>123</b> <b>30.7%</b>	<b>22</b> <b>5.5%</b>	<b>400</b> <b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2017**



As Shown on Table 3, the probability sampling technique recorded the highest of 174 representing 43.5%. This was followed by the non-probability sampling (38.3%). Multi-stage sampling had the lowest with 18.2%. For the data analysis techniques, simple percentage had the highest of 55.2%, followed by combination methods which were 30.7%. Correlation coefficient had 13% for the four universities, while textual analysis approach was observed in 3.3% of studies. Chi-square was used in 21 studies representing 5.3% of sample.

**Table 4: Subject Matter**

<b>University</b>	<b>Perception</b>	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Content Analysis</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>UNN</b>	23 5.7%	29 7.3%	31 7.8%	17 4.2%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>UNILAG</b>	28 7%	39 9.7%	19 4.8%	14 3.5%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>LASU</b>	26 20%	39 20%	28 0%	7 0%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>ACU</b>	28 7%	49 12.2%	19 4.8%	4 1%	<b>100</b> <b>25%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b> <b>26.3%</b>	<b>156</b> <b>39%</b>	<b>97</b> <b>24.2%</b>	<b>42</b> <b>10.5%</b>	<b>400</b> <b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2017**

Table 4 above indicates that awareness studies were the commonest subject matter adopted by mass communication researchers in the four universities. This is represented by 156 (39%) of the samples analysed. This was followed by perception studies with 105 (26.3%) of the samples. Influence studies recorded 97 representing 24.2%.

**Table 5: Variables**

<b>Variables of Interest</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>%</b>
Media genres	38	<b>9.5%</b>
Community awareness	14	<b>3.5%</b>
Journalistic practice	37	<b>9.4%</b>
Media ownership pattern (print & electronic)	32	<b>8%</b>

Audience/Reader perception	42	<b>10%</b>
Advertisement influence	21	<b>5.3%</b>
Brand image	18	<b>4.5%</b>
Audience awareness	38	9.5%
African communication system	19	4.7%
New media Influence	35	8.7%
Film influence	16	4%
Public relations practice	18	4.5%
Media ethics	15	3.7%
Health knowledge & media	23	5.7%
Broadcasting and rural development	34	8.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: field survey 2017**

The variables captured on Table 5 indicate that Audience/Reader perception topped the list of variables of interest in mass communication research with 42 representing 10.5%. Media genres and audience awareness each scored 38 (9.5%) of total sample variables. Journalistic practice had 37, representing 9.4%. Next was new media influence, with 35(8.7%) of the sample. Broadcasting and rural development had 34(8.5%). Media ownership pattern (print & electronic) as variable of interest had 32 (8%) while Health knowledge & media recorded 23 (5.7%). Others are as presented in Table 5 above.

**Research Question 3: What are the areas of interest in terms of research among undergraduate, masters and PhD students of mass communication?**

**Table 6: University of Nigeria: Areas of interest of research in mass communication**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>B.Sc.</b>	<b>Masters</b>	<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Print media	12 (3%)	15 (3.7%)	18 (4.5%)	<b>45</b> <b>(11.2%)</b>
Broadcast media	14 (3.5%)	19 (4.7%)	12 (3%)	<b>45</b> <b>(11.2%)</b>
Advertising	11 (2.7%)	16 (4%)	18 (4.5%)	<b>45</b> <b>(11.2%)</b>
PR	18 (4.5%)	15 (3.7%)	11 (2.7%)	<b>44</b> <b>(11%)</b>
Comm. advocacy	17 (4.2%)	13 (3.3%)	14 (3.5%)	<b>44</b> <b>(11%)</b>
DEVCOM	16 (4%)	15 (3.7%)	13 (3.3%)	<b>44</b> <b>(11%)</b>
Population comm.	13 (3.2%)	21 (5.2%)	10 (2.5%)	<b>44</b> <b>(11%)</b>
Media Mgt	14 (3.5%)	16 (4%)	15 (3.7%)	<b>45</b> <b>(11.2%)</b>
New Media	12 (3%)	18 (4.5%)	14 (3.5%)	<b>44</b> <b>(11%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b> <b>(31.8%)</b>	<b>148</b> <b>(37%)</b>	<b>125</b> <b>(31.2%)</b>	<b>400</b> <b>(100)</b>

**Source: field survey 2017**

Table 6 identified nine most popular areas in mass communication research among Nigerian university students (Degree, Masters and Ph.D.). For the undergraduate students (Degree), public relations had the highest in the University of Nigeria. Majority of the interest area for the Masters student was the Broadcast media with 19 representing 4.2% and for Ph.D. Print media and Advertising had the highest with 18 representing 4.5%

**Table 7: University of Lagos: Areas of interest of research in mass communication**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>B.Sc.</b>	<b>Masters</b>	<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Print media	17(4.2%)	25(6.2%)	18(4.5%)	<b>60(15%)</b>
Broadcast media	14(3.5%)	19(4.7%)	18(4.5%)	<b>51(12.7%)</b>
Advertising	16(4%)	16(4%)	13(3.2%)	<b>45(11.2%)</b>
PR	18(4.5%)	15(3.7%)	11(2.7%)	<b>44(11%)</b>
Comm. advocacy	12(3%)	13(3.3%)	14(3.5%)	<b>39(9.7%)</b>
DEVCOM	16(4%)	15(3.7%)	13(3.3%)	<b>44(11%)</b>
Population comm.	13(3.3%)	11(2.7%)	4(1%)	<b>28(7%)</b>
Media Mgt	14(3.5%)	16(4%)	15(3.7%)	<b>45(11.2%)</b>
New Media	12(3%)	18(4.5%)	14(3.5%)	<b>44(11%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132(33%)</b>	<b>148(37%)</b>	<b>120(30%)</b>	<b>400(100%)</b>

**Source: field survey 2017**

Table 7 above shows common areas in mass communication research of the University of Lagos (Degree, Masters and Ph.D.). For the undergraduate students (Degree), public relations had the highest with 18 representing 4.5%. Majority interest area for the Masters student was the print media with 25(6.2%) and for Ph.D., Print media and Broadcast media had the highest with 18 representing 4.5%

**Table 8: Lagos State University: Areas of interest of research in mass communication**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>B.Sc.</b>	<b>Masters</b>	<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>%</b>
Print media	11(2.7%)	22(3.7%)	15(3.7%)	<b>48(12%)</b>
Broadcast media	14(3.5%)	19(4.7%)	15(3.7%)	<b>48(12%)</b>

Advertising	11(2.7%)	13(3.2%)	17(4.2%)	<b>41(10.2%)</b>
PR	29(7.2%)	15(3.7%)	11(2.7%)	<b>55(13.7%)</b>
Comm. advocacy	19(4.7%)	14(3.3%)	18(4.5%)	<b>51(12.7%)</b>
DEVCOM	12(3%)	9(3.7%)	15(3.7%)	<b>36(9%)</b>
Population comm.	9(2.2%)	6(5.2%)	10(2.5%)	<b>25(6.2%)</b>
Media Mgt	7(1.7%)	13(3.2%)	17(4.2%)	<b>37(9.2%)</b>
New Media	21(5.2%)	24(6%)	14(3.5%)	<b>59(14.7%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>133(33.3%)</b>	<b>135(33.7%)</b>	<b>132(33%)</b>	<b>400(100%)</b>

Source: field survey 2017

Table 8 above shows common areas in mass communication research of Lagos State University (Degree, Masters and Ph.D.). For the undergraduate students (Degree), public relations had the highest with 29 representing 7.2%. For the Masters students, it was the new media with 24 (6%) and for Ph.D., it was communication advocacy that had the highest with 18 representing 4.5%

**Table 9: Ajayi Crowther University: Areas of interest of research in mass communication**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>B.S.</b>	<b>Masters</b>	<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>%</b>
Print media	19(4.7%)	21(5.2%)	17(4.5%)	<b>56(11.2%)</b>
Broadcast media	14(3.5%)	20(5%)	19(3%)	<b>49(11.2%)</b>
Advertising	16(4%)	19(4.7%)	20(4.5%)	<b>55(11.2%)</b>
PR	19(4.7%)	13(3.2%)	16(2.7%)	<b>48(11%)</b>
Comm. advocacy	16(4%)	14(3.5%)	10(3.5%)	<b>40(11%)</b>
DEVCOM	19(4.7%)	15(3.7%)	16(3.3%)	<b>50(11%)</b>
Population comm.	3(0.7%)	5(1.2%)	2(2.5%)	<b>10(11%)</b>
Media Mgt	7(1.7%)	16(4%)	9(3.7%)	<b>37(11.2%)</b>
New Media	19(4.7%)	18(4.5%)	18(3.5%)	<b>55(11%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132(33%)</b>	<b>141(35.3%)</b>	<b>127(31.7%)</b>	<b>400(100%)</b>

Source: field survey 2017

Table 9 above shows common areas in mass communication research of the Ajayi Crowther University (Degree, Masters and Ph.D.). For the undergraduate students (Degree), print media, public relations, developmental communication and new media had 19 representing 4.7%. The majority interest area for the Masters students was the Print media with 21(5.2%). For the Ph.D. students, advertising had 20 representing 4.5%

**Test of Hypotheses**

Two hypotheses were tested in this study. The aim was to establish the findings of the work in line with the assumptions made.

**H<sub>0</sub><sub>1</sub>: The universities do not differ significantly according to the type of quantitative research methods adopted and the University of the Researcher.**

**Table 10: Pearson Chi-square of the level of adoption of quantitative research methods by the University of the Researcher**

<b>University</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Content Analysis</b>	<b>Total</b>
UNN	64 (70.25)	36 (29.75)	100
UNILAG	54 (70.25)	46 (29.75)	100
LASU	77 (70.25)	23 (29.75)	100
ACU	86 (70.25)	14 (29.75)	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>400</b>

$X^2 = 28.553$ , degree of freedom= 7, alpha level=0.05, critical value=0.002

The data presented in Table 10 emanated from the analysis in Tables 1. Only two quantitative methods were used because the others recorded no scores. The table indicates that the Chi-square value or calculated r-value of 28.553 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.002 at 0.05 alpha level with 7 degree of freedom. Therefore, the universities do not differ significantly according to the type of quantitative research methods adopted. It can further be hypothesised, in line with the theoretical framework of this study, that the prevalence of research methods is a result of the reinforcement given to the methods already in wide use. Further studies can be done using survey to test the hypothesis.

**H<sub>0</sub><sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the sampling techniques adopted by researchers in mass communication and the University of the Researcher.**

**Table 11: Pearson Chi-square of there is no significant difference in the sampling techniques adopted by the University of the researchers**

University	Simple %	Chi-square	Textual analysis	Combination of methods	Correlation coefficient	Total
UNN	55(55.25)	7(5.25)	6(3.25)	24(30.75)	7(5.5)	100
UNILAG	49(55.25)	7(5.25)	5(3.25)	34(30.75)	5(5.5)	100
LASU	51(55.25)	4(5.25)	2(3.25)	39(30.75)	4(5.5)	100
ACU	66(55.25)	2(5.25)	0(3.25)	26(30.75)	6(5.5)	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>400</b>

**$X^2 = 20.141$ , degree of freedom = 19, alpha level = 0.05, Table value = 0.3861**

The data presented in Table 11 emanated from the analysis in Table 3. The table indicates that the Chi-square value or calculated r-value of 20.141 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.3861 at 0.05 alpha level with 19 degree of freedom. This leads to the rejection of the alternate hypothesis.

### Discussion of Findings

The identity of mass communication is still more as a social science than as an art or as part of the humanities. This was a result of the level to which quantitative analysis in the form of survey and content analysis were adopted as revealed in this study. This was further attested to by the total absence of experiments and meta-analysis, which usually adopt inferential statistics more than descriptive statistics. The mix in the use of methods also shows that mass communication does not use only one method.

Calhoun (2011, p.1485) notes that there is great diversity in methods for *studying* communication, with contributions from experiments, ethnographies, historical research, surveys, textual analyses, and increasingly visual methods. The findings of Craigs (2011, p.1485) also support the findings of this study when he states that:

The notion that there could be a common method to communication research is laughable. But it is important also to laugh at the notion that there is a single common method for anthropology, economics, history, psychology, political science, or sociology. The idea that methods define disciplines is an illusion with roots in late 19th- century debates over a tendentious division between purely objective and generalizing science and knowledge based on subjective, particularizing interpretation.

The quantitative nature of mass communication studies was supported by findings in research question two in which probability sampling was the most used of sampling techniques. However, majority of analytical tools were limited to simple

percentages. Qualitative analytical tools were often used as an appendage or support to the quantitative tools. Simple percentages are seen as low cadre analytical tools (Ukonu, 2009), and this made it look as if mass communication research projects does not use complex analysis such as ratio measurements, analysis of variance and covariance and regression statistics. Yet, many mass communication research textbooks contain chapters on the just mentioned analytical tools (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

Correlation co-efficiency tests used in reliability tests and hypotheses tests were almost non-existent. However, chi-square tests ranked above multi-stage sampling techniques. This was because simple percentage was often combined with other technique(s) such as the correlation coefficient and Chi-Square.

Though a core mass communication research interest, content analysis ranked lower than all the other areas as research method. Awareness studies ranked the highest followed by perception studies. Researchers were also the most interested in audience perception as the most important variable across research topics.

Public relations was the most studied area for undergraduate students in UNN and Lagos State University (LASU). The print media was the area with the highest interest for Ph.D. in both schools, that is, LASU and UNN. The two schools differed at the Masters level where UNN students studied the broadcast media most, and LASU student studied the print media most. LASU and Ajayi Crowther University students had the highest interest in print media at the Masters level. The four universities did not differ significantly in the areas most studied. The various areas received interest across the schools. None of them was studied far above the others.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that quantitative method is the most adopted method by communication researchers and that qualitative methods are not employed alone for analysis by researchers. Mass communication research in the four universities is still tailored more to the social scientific techniques. Nigerian universities show remarkable similarity in subject matter areas, type of variables studied and analytical tools employed. As the effort towards more complex statistical (inferential statistics) analysis gains more attention, the current experience is that mass communication research in the studied universities has yet to significantly adopt inferential analytical tools.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested as a way forward in the debate that led to this investigation:

1. Universities should steer students' attention to qualitative analysis as core analytical methods. The importance of qualitative techniques should be stressed as much as quantitative techniques. This implies that depth



interviewing, focus group discussion, direct observation and ethnography should be thought as much as survey and content analysis. The experience of these researchers is that research teaching in departments of mass communication is such that survey and content analysis are the initial methods taught. Before there is time for other methods, the semester often draws to a close.

2. In the light of the above, research teaching should be sub-divided into more courses, such as quantitative research, qualitative research and data analysis.
3. While teaching research methods, qualitative analysis should be stressed as being of equal magnitude with qualitative methods. This is to avoid the situation in which one method is seen as better, more impressive or more precise than the other.
4. Supervisors should also give more attention to the various fields that attract the attention of bodies that give grants for research such as health communication, population communication, gender and children studies.
5. This study also found a difficulty in variable delineations and definition in studies cutting across degrees and universities. This should become an area of interest for universities. Students should be taught how to identify, define and focus on specific variables of interest.

## **References**

- Adeleke, J.O. (2010). *The basics of research and evaluation tools*. Lagos: Rest Ventures.
- Asika N. (1991). *Research methodology in behavioural sciences*. Ikeja, Lagos: Longman.
- Craig, R. (2007). *Communication as a field and discipline*. Boulder: University of Colorado
- Craig, C. (2011). Communication as social science (and more). *International Journal of Communication*, 6(2), 1479–1496.
- Folarin, B. (1998). *Theories of mass communication: An introductory text*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.
- Kerlinger, F. N. (1973). *Foundations of behavioural research, Second Edition*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Nwana, O. (1981). *Introduction to Education Research*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Oluyombo, O. (2011). *Research companion for students and professionals: A step by step guide*. Lagos: Treasure Land Academy
- Ukonu, M. (2009). Communication research and scientific research: The ego and the reality. In I. Essienubong; J. T. Kur; and F. Agudosy (eds.) *Perspectives on Mass Communication*. (309-323). Enugu: Faba Communications.

- Wilson, D., Onwubere, C. & Esiri, M. (2008). *Communication Research*.  
www.nou.edu.ng National Open University of Nigeria.
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2011). *Mass media research: An introduction* (9th  
Ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Wogu, J. (2008). *Elements of communication theories*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria  
Press.