



## **Perceived Credibility and Consumption of Homeland News among Diasporic Nigerians in Malaysia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Increasing migration, powered by advanced transportation, information and communication technologies, has created huge diasporic communities around the globe. Through push and pull forces, citizens of countries across the world have migrated from their homelands to near and far locations in search of better socio-political and economic opportunities and possibilities. In their new milieu, these corps of transnational migrants maintain close attachment with their countries of origin via a plethora of cyber-powered homeland communication and media artifacts. The migration of homeland traditional print and electronic media to the Internet, however, offers news avenues for migrants' consumption of unadulterated news about events happening in their countries. While migrants' homeland media consumption has received tremendous attention among scholars, little concern has been accorded factors that predict the forms and types of homeland media attracting migrants' attention. This study, therefore, explored the relationship between perceived credibility and consumption of news from the online newspapers among Nigerian students in Malaysia (N=321). Findings revealed differential perceptions of three Nigerian online newspapers in terms of story depth, fairness, accuracy and trustworthiness. Perceived credibility of each online newspaper relates to reading the newspapers the most among the respondents. The study thus offered practical implications of perceived credibility of homeland newspapers for increased readership among diasporic audiences who could be valuable patrons of and contributors to homeland journalistic products.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Positive perception and evaluation of the media have contributed to audience reliance

on them as vehicles of authentic information about the external environment on the one hand. Audience skepticism about veracity of media information, on the other hand, also emanated from audience perceptions of the media as biased umpires in public affairs discourse. Varying perspectives used in deciphering the trustworthiness of news media, therefore, are of great practical and theoretical significance (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). Members of the public rely on the news media to furnish them with news of events beyond their reach and touch. Believing the media is thus a function of bias-free perceptions of the media. "It was reasoned that people's expectations about source bias caused them to see media coverage as biased" (Choi, Yang, & Chang, 2009, p. 62). Hence, scholars and media professionals have considered credibility as one of important attributes the Fourth Estate of the Realm must possess if it is to be seen as a responsible societal sentinel (Choi, Yang, & Chang, 2009).

Bentele and Seidenglanz (2008, p. 49) defined credibility as "a feature attributed to individuals, institutions or their communicative products ... by somebody ... with regard to something ..." (Nah & Chung, 2012). In media parlance, credibility has been associated with believability, accuracy, completeness, fairness and trustworthiness, among others. The import of credibility lies on its centrality to attention the audience is likely to pay to information emanating from the media. The issue of credibility is paramount because it signals media relevance and responsibility, particularly with studies

showing increasing public distrust of the media institution (Pew Center for the People and the Press, 2002).

Media credibility has attracted scholars' attention for a long time. The evolutionary nature of media landscape equally places on researchers the need to continually document the state of affairs of media role in society. Hence, a number of studies have explored perceived differential credibility of varying media formats (Kiousis, 2001; Moehler & Singh, 2011). The advent of the Internet and migration of legacy media to the virtual realm have blossomed research on media credibility. Scholars have not only explored how the new media platforms contribute to the resuscitation of interest among the hitherto apathetic media audience, they have also compared audience perceptions of the mainstream and new media credibility (Kiousis, 2001; Johnson & Kaye, 2010; Tsfati, 2010; Nah & Chung, 2012). While how media credibility impinges on media use of homeland nations' citizenry has received tremendous exploration and documentation, perceived credibility of transnational and diasporic users of homeland media seems to remain at the margin. The importance of theoretical examination of transnational media use is also apparent in Budarick's (2014, p. 139) submission: "Despite the central place of transnational media in understandings of diasporic communities, there is yet to be a sustained dialogue between theoretical understandings of diaspora and diaspora media studies." Hence, this study explored transnational and diasporic media use within the media credibility theoretical model.

With increasing transnational migration that expands the locales of homeland media consumption, the need to extend research on media credibility has emerged. Migrants and diasporic audiences whose knowledge of their homelands revolves around consumption of cyber-powered homeland media products are becoming important factors in the contemporary media market. Studying the impact of perceived credibility on media use of these important nations' stakeholders, therefore, opens a new direction in media credibility scholarship.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Media Credibility*

Meyer, Marchionni and Thorson (2010, pp. 104-105) defined media credibility as "a multidimensional construct that measures the perceived believability of a message (article), source (journalist or media company), or medium (newspaper, website, radio station, etc.)." Believability of media institutions and messages is an essential attribute that contributes to trust the audience reposes in the media system as a whole. Being the arbiter between the external environment and the pictures in our head (Lippmann, 1922), the media system must not only be unbiased but must be seen to be fair to every side in their narratives. As the watchdog of societal affairs, media are expected to be impartial umpires that present all sides of opinions, thus guiding members of the public in making important decisions. These

important expectations vis-à-vis the near absence of alternative societal information avenues that rival the media system make credibility the cachet of the media in the society. "Although credibility discussions harken to Aristotle's Rhetoric, the topic has been important to contemporary mass communication researchers since the dawn of mass communication research" (Robert, 2010, p. 46).

Exploration of media credibility has a long historical antecedent. Media credibility research is associated with Carl Hovland who, in the 1920s, provided leadership for the Yale research team who were examining credibility of the source of government propaganda efforts during World War I (Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Johnson & Kaye, 2010). Subsequently, other dimensions of exploring media credibility were introduced. Pjesivac and Rui (2014), for example, submitted that credibility was usually explored via source, message and medium credibility in the United States. Elaborating further, the two scholars defined source credibility as attributes of an individual or organisation connected with the news; message credibility referred to characteristics of the news article (for example, balanced/unbalanced), while medium credibility referred to the credibility of the news institutions (print, electronic, new media, etc.).

More recently, inter-media credibility has received tremendous attention of scholars (Kioussis, 2001; Johnson & Kaye, 2010). Being a comparative media

credibility research, inter-media credibility studies, pioneered by Burns W. Roper's seminal studies on the credibility of radio, television, newspapers, and magazines, asked the following question: "If you got conflicting or different reports of the same story from radio, television, magazines and the newspapers, which of the four versions would you be most inclined to believe – the one on radio or television or magazines or newspapers?" (Kohring & Matthes, 2007, p. 233). Besides the Yale's team initial exploration of media credibility, and Roper's seminal study, Kohring and Matthes (2007) also documented a retinue of factor analytical studies exploring the multi-dimensionality of the concept. They concluded that each study contributed to increasing precision in validly tapping the concept of media credibility.

#### *Credibility and Media Trust*

Differentiating media credibility and media trust is not only a herculean task; it is generating heated and complex polemics among media scholars. Robert (2010) aptly captured the contradiction in defining media credibility, averring that conceptualising credibility was a contradictory and confusing adventure given the problems associated with its mercurial nature. Media credibility and trust intuitively seemed to be attributes of audience and media respectively. However, a number of scholars held that the duo (media credibility and media trust) are synonyms (Kioussis, 2001; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Tsfati, 2010;

Nah & Chung, 2012). Hence, it is always a difficult task to disentangle media credibility from media trust and vice versa, though scholars have also been using the two concepts interchangeably or complementarily.

Nah and Chung (2012), for example, believe that credibility is a sub-phenomenon of trust. Kohring and Matthes (2007, p. 232) also surmised that "in the field of communication, research concerning trust in news media has emerged almost entirely under the label of media credibility." Implicitly or explicitly, other scholars have also made allusion to the synonymous nature of media trust and media credibility. Given the consistency and coherence in interchangeable usage of these concepts among researchers, trust and credibility seem to have acquired a seamless existence in the literature.

Kioussis (2001) also deployed the two concepts in his study of trust and mistrust of media in the information age. In a study exploring trust in the mainstream media as a consequence of exposure to online media, Tsfati (2010, p. 32) operationalised *mistrust* (one of the main constructs of the study) as "the feeling that the mainstream media are neither *credible* nor *reliable*..." (emphasis intended). Lee (2010) also dwelt much on media *credibility* in his study of why members of the audience did not *trust* the media (emphasis mine). In view of this interchangeable usage, trust and credibility seem to have become synonymous concepts in media research.

*Credibility and the New Media*

The new media have revolutionised virtually every facet of mass communication practice and scholarship. Scholars have not only explored the effects of the changing media landscape on the audience, they have also studied and documented differential uses and effects of mainstream and new media platforms. “The question about media credibility by news audiences is critical today as news readers are increasingly able to select from abundant sources” (Nah & Chung, 2012, p. 718). A number of studies have examined cross-media credibility in the traditional media environment (Kiousis, 2001; Golan, 2010; Johnson & Kaye, 2010). The appearance of the new media landscape, powered by the new information and communication technologies, opens a new era in media credibility research. Thus studies have tested comparative perceived credibility of traditional media and the new media (see for example, Kiousis, 2001; Golan, 2010).

The need to explore and/or compare credibility of new media and traditional media stems from the growing mistrust of the traditional media to serve public information needs impartially. In addition to mistrust of the traditional media, the varying quality of online information is also a source of credibility evaluation (Lucassen & Schraagen, 2012). Mistrust of the mainstream media system and mendacity of online information have thus driven audiences to seek alternatives in online news sources (Tsfati, 2010). Being the functional equivalent of traditional

media, online news media have become attractive to the audience because of some added features that facilitate interactivity, immediacy, ubiquity, multimodality and hyper-textuality (Trappel, 2008). The new journalistic environment that facilitates increasing interactivity between the news organisation and the audience thus enhances the creation of social capital that boosts the credibility of the online media (Nah & Chung, 2012). These developments might explain why scholars have considered the comparative exploration of perceived credibility of traditional and online media.

While earlier studies have found that traditional media, such as newspapers and television, are the most credible sources of news (Nah & Chung, 2012), new findings from comparative studies of traditional and new media seem to be disproving the hypothesis of traditional media’s superiority. Kiousis (2001), for instance, explored differential perceived credibility of traditional and online news sources. He found that the audience primes online news over television, but below newspapers. In a more elaborate study, Johnson and Kaye (2010) compared credibility of online newspapers, news magazines, candidate literature, issue-oriented sources, television news and radio news with their traditional counterparts over three presidential elections (1996, 2000 and 2004) in the United States. They found incremental perceived credibility of online news sources from 1996 to 2000, but a decline in 2004. Findings thus far have shown that comparative cross-media

credibility studies between traditional and online news media are far from being conclusive. Tsfati (2010: 26) also affirmed that “research regarding the credibility of Internet news information has yielded inconsistent results.” However, perceived credibility of new media among some members of the audience, such as migrants and Diasporas, is yet to be explored.

#### *Migrants, Diaspora and Homeland Online Media*

Folarin (2010) defined a migrant as someone outside the country of his/her birth for over six months. Migrants consist of people who are outside the territorial entity in which they are deeply rooted by virtue of their origin (Hiller & Franz, 2004). Advances in transportation, information and communication technologies have been implicated in transnational movements of people across the frontiers of their places of birth (Peep, 2002; Panagakos & Horst, 2006; Thussu, 2007). Citing a number of scholars, Thurman (2007) averred that these movements have produced a cyber-communication culture where audiences are more dependent on interests rather than geographical locations, as the Web offers interactive global communication opportunities. The de-territorialisation of news by Web newspapers thus makes it possible for news to be accessible everywhere and anywhere, thus facilitating attachment to local communities of interest even from afar (Skogerbo & Winsvold, 2011).

Unlike in the past when migrants and diasporas waited on old copies of their homeland media artifacts, the presence of homeland newspapers on the Web and opportunities to participate in cyberspace have made homeland a daily living experience among transnational migrants and the diaspora. Thussu (2007) offered how communication revolution had facilitated increasing connectedness to local culture, even as Hiller and Franz (2004) claimed that attachment to homeland in today’s transnational communities was no more a matter of “memory supported by occasional contact.” In this ‘here’ and ‘there’ presence, Web newspapers play a tremendous role. According to Hashim, Hasan and Sinnapan (2007), Web newspapers provided foreign residents with opportunities to monitor both global happenings and local events in their homelands. Alshehri and Gunter (2002) buttressed the claim by offering that online newspapers were central to appropriation of socio-political and economic conditions of migrants’ homeland.

The dual nature of migrant homes (homeland and host land) conferred a sense of ‘co-presence’ on them (Panagakos & Horst, 2006). Through access to homeland local newspapers via the Internet, migrants developed some sorts of connections with socio-economic and political realities, which oftentimes precipitated their direct or indirect participation in homeland affairs (Mersey, 2010; Skogerbo & Winsvold, 2011). The fact that newspapers

inform, educate, entertain and adaptably fit into evolving technologies makes them important in every epoch (Ola & Ojo, 2006). This explains why newspapers' community building potential is linked to social capital formation. The combined power of financial and social capital, usually at the disposal of migrants and the opportunity to connect with their kith and kin, create a nexus between their homeland news use and social capital formation.

#### *Web Newspapers and Migrant Social Capital*

Generally, the ability of advanced communication technologies to create community has remained contentious. Not a few doubt the belief that decreasing social contacts have strong linkage with the form of new social communication infrastructures that skew in favour of personalised information consumption. Some scholars have, for example, claimed that Internet and its offspring, Web newspapers inclusive, have contributed to dwindling political participation among youths (Bimber, 2001; Andiuza *et al.*, 2010; Christensen, 2011). A lot of studies also claimed community consensus, that is, the prime function of the agenda-setting role of the media is equally a fleeting encounter with the advent of newspapers on the Web (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002; Schoenbach *et al.*, 2005; Maier, 2010).

While much emphasis has been placed on audiences within the local territories to back their conclusion on the

negative impacts of the new media, little attention has been given to transnational audiences whose use of Web media remains substantially positive. The transnational audiences, by virtue of their dislocation from the homelands, are bound to be experiencing some social voids, which only information from and communication with their communities of origin can alleviate. In their study of the use of Internet in diaspora, Hiller and Franz (2004) found that "many participants read home newspaper every day on the internet not only as a way of staying in touch, but as a way of dealing with homesickness." This will no doubt facilitate attachment to migrants' community of birth.

For the most part, migrants are always well educated people with access to contemporary technological facilities. These make them faithful users of the Internet and the media artifacts therein. The combination of their cognitive complexity and temporal dislocation also often make them an active audience. If the known axiom of the centrality of active and informed audience to democracy and community building is anything to go by, migrants, relying mostly on online newspapers of their communities, are bound to maintain a form of virtual community ties that can dovetail into active ties and connectedness when the opportunity affords. This mode of connectedness has brought huge social and political capital to bear at different times on Nigerian political trajectories.

### *Research Question*

Based on the position taken in the literature and the belief that audiences would give attention to the media they perceived as credible, the ones whose information they perceived as believable, accurate, complete, fair and balanced, the following questions were posed:

*RQ1: Did Nigerian students in Malaysia perceive homeland online newspapers as credible sources of homeland information?*

*RQ2: Were homeland online newspapers perceived differently in terms of their credibility?*

*RQ3: Did perceived credibility relate with online newspapers read by Nigerian students in Malaysia?*

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a cross-sectional design, as data used were collected at one point in time. Data in this study were parts of elaborate data collected on online newspaper use among Nigerian students in Malaysia in respect of the 2011 Nigerian presidential election. The data were collected using the self-administered questionnaire and the locales of the study were some selected universities and university colleges in the Klang Valley of Selangor State, Malaysia. Data collection spanned the period between April 1 and April, 20, 2011, being the period of heightened 2011 general elections coverage, before the result of the presidential election was announced.

There is a total of almost 6,000 Nigerian students in Malaysian higher learning institutions; the fourth largest in the group of over one hundred nations' international students in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011). However, the population of students in universities selected for this study was 2, 228. Based on 95% confidence level, 350 questionnaires (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Universal Accreditation Board, 2003) were distributed to randomly-sampled Nigerian students. Out of the returned questionnaires, 321, representing 87%, were valid for analysis.

Since the questionnaire contained elaborate items measuring respondents' demographics and many other constructs, only the parts that dealt with perceived credibility of online newspapers are presented in this paper. However, the questionnaire was pilot-tested and adjusted before the final data collection. All scale items in the questionnaire attained a Cronbach's alpha value of over 0.70, guaranteeing the reliability of the scale items.

### **FINDINGS**

#### *Demographic Profile*

The main demographic characteristics in this study were respondents' age, gender, religious and geopolitical groups. Respondents aged between 21 and 30 constituted the bulk of Nigerian students in this study. Above two thirds (72.9%) of respondents in this study were males while females accounted for 27.1%. Muslims

accounted for slightly more than half (55.4%) of the population while Christians were 44.6%. Altogether, those from the Northern region accounted for 52.6% while Southerners were 47.4% of the respondents. These patterns reflected the patterns in the demographic distribution of Nigerian students' population in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2010).

#### *Online Newspapers Use*

While there are many Nigerian newspapers on the Web, three major ones, the *Daily Trust*, the *Punch* and the *Vanguard* were selected for this study. Of the three online newspapers, respondents read the *Daily Trust* (40.4%) the most, while the *Vanguard* (14.7%) had the least readership at the time of conducting this study. While only 6.4% of the respondents avoided reading Nigerian online newspapers weekly, others (93.6%) read online newspapers for at least one day and at most seven days. Similarly, paying attention, in different degrees, to issues discussed in the online newspapers was a preoccupation of substantial majority of the respondents. Only one in 10 respondents (10.4%) seldom paid attention to content they read in the Nigerian online newspapers. Contents frequently consumed included politics, sport, finance, life style and foreign issues, with politics (50.3%), sport (13.3%) and lifestyle (11.7%) being the most significantly attractive issues to the respondents.

#### ***RQ1: Perceived Credibility of Online Newspapers***

Perceived credibility indicates the extent to which readers (the respondents) of Nigerian online newspapers perceived the selected online newspapers as credible sources of information. Table 1 presents the results of perceived credibility of the three online newspapers selected in this study in terms of in-depth reporting (telling the whole story), fairness (fair in reporting the news), accuracy (accurate in reporting the news) and trustworthiness (trustworthy in reporting the news).

On the whole, respondents generally agreed that the selected online newspapers were credible sources of news and information (the *Daily Trust*:  $M=3.22$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ; the *Punch*:  $M=3.17$ ;  $SD=0.96$ ; the *Vanguard*:  $M=3.11$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ). For the *Daily Trust*, two of the credibility variables with the highest means were "fair in its reporting" ( $M=3.28$ ,  $SD=0.83$ ) and "trustworthy in its reporting" ( $M=3.28$ ;  $SD=0.91$ ). Conversely, "telling the whole story" ( $M=3.13$ ,  $SD=0.92$ ) was the lowest. For the *Punch*, "fair in its reporting" had the highest mean ( $M=3.22$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ), while the lowest mean went to "telling the whole story" ( $M=3.07$ ,  $SD=0.97$ ). Telling the whole story ( $M=3.07$ ,  $SD=0.97$ ) had the lowest score. In the *Vanguard*, the highest mean came from "trustworthy in its reporting" ( $M=3.18$ ;  $SD=0.92$ ). This was followed by accurate in its reporting ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=0.83$ ). However, "telling the whole story" ( $M=3.02$ ,  $SD=0.94$ ) had the lowest mean.

TABLE 1  
Perceived Credibility of Online Newspapers

Perceived Credibility	Level of Agreement*(%)					M	SD	Overall (%)
	1	2	3	4	5			
<b>Daily Trust</b>								
Telling the whole story (In-depth)	5.1	10.1	62.1	11.9	10.8	3.13	0.92	62.6
Fair in its reporting (Fairness)	3.3	5.1	60.6	21.9	9.1	3.28	0.83	65.6
Accurate in its reporting (Accuracy)	4.5	6.3	63.2	18.2	7.8	3.19	0.84	63.8
Trustworthy in its reporting (Trustworthiness)	4.4	5.9	58.1	20.0	11.5	3.28	0.91	65.6
Total						3.22	0.88	64.4
<b>Punch</b>								
Telling the whole story (In-depth)	8.2	9.8	57.6	15.3	9.0	3.07	0.97	61.4
Fair in its reporting (Fairness)	6.7	7.1	53.0	23.3	9.9	3.22	0.96	64.4
Accurate in its reporting (Accuracy)	6.3	9.1	52.8	22.6	9.1	3.19	0.95	63.8
Trustworthy in its reporting (Trustworthiness)	7.5	7.1	56.0	18.3	11.0	3.18	0.96	63.6
Total						3.17	0.96	63.3
<b>Vanguard</b>								
Telling the whole story (In-depth)	7.2	13.6	56.8	14.8	7.6	3.02	0.94	60.4
Fair in its reporting (Fairness)	5.1	10.2	61.0	17.8	5.9	3.09	0.85	61.8
Accurate in its reporting (Accuracy)	5.1	6.8	63.2	18.8	6.0	3.14	0.83	62.8
Trustworthy in its reporting (Trustworthiness)	5.2	10.3	55.4	19.7	9.4	3.18	0.92	63.6
Total						3.11	0.87	62.2

\*Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree (1-20%), 2=Disagree (21-40%), 3=Slightly Agree (41-60%), 4=Agree (61-80%), 5=Strongly Agree (81-100%)

Perceived credibility of online newspapers was measured because credibility, according to scholars, led to reliance and eventual use of the medium for information about an orientation to the external environment (Kiouisis, 2001; Miller, 2005; Johnson, 2010; Tsfati, 2010).

The results showed that the respondents perceived the selected newspapers as being credible. Specifically, they believed that the online newspapers were told the whole story (the *Daily Trust* 62.6%; the

*Punch* 61.4%; the *Vanguard* 60.4%), fair in their reporting (the *Daily Trust* 65.6%; the *Punch* 64.4%; the *Vanguard* 61.8%); accurate in their reporting (the *Daily Trust* 63.8%; the *Punch* 63.8%; the *Vanguard* 62.8%) and trustworthy in their reporting (the *Daily Trust* 63.8%; the *Punch* 63.6%; the *Vanguard* 63.6%). These high scores denote perception of the selected online newspapers as credible sources of information among Nigerian students in Malaysia.

**RQ2: Differences in Perceived Credibility of Online Newspapers**

Differentials in perceived credibility of the three selected online newspapers were explored using a paired-sample t-test. The t-test examined whether there was significant difference in the

perceived credibility of the online newspapers content. Table 2 presents the results of the t-test, which examined significant differences in the perceived credibility of the Daily Trust, the Punch and the Vanguard.

TABLE 2  
Paired-Sample T-Test on Perceived Credibility of Online Newspapers

Perceived Credibility	Daily Trust			Punch			Vanguard			t	Df	p
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
In-depth	242	3.66	1.22	242	3.57	1.34				1.035	241	0.302
	232	3.63	1.19				232	3.54	1.31	1.046	231	0.297
				233	3.58	1.33	233	3.53	1.30	0.512	232	0.609
Fairness	241	3.97	1.15	241	3.85	1.30				1.259	240	0.209
	233	3.96	1.15				233	3.70	1.19	2.840	232	0.005
				232	3.87	1.30	232	3.69	1.19	1.973	231	0.050
Accuracy	237	3.79	1.17	237	3.76	1.30				0.347	236	0.729
	228	3.77	1.16				228	3.72	1.18	0.522	227	0.602
				230	3.76	1.31	230	3.71	1.17	0.534	229	0.594
Trustworthiness	237	3.93	1.21	237	3.73	1.33				1.968	236	0.050
	228	3.92	1.20				228	3.92	2.72	0.024	227	0.981
				230	3.75	1.33	230	3.89	2.71	-0.766	229	0.444

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Agree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

A paired sample t-test was conducted to find out whether or not there was significant difference in perceived credibility of the Daily Trust, the Punch and the Vanguard. The results as shown in Table 2 reveal that

there was no difference in the perceived credibility of the Daily Trust and the Punch on the one hand as well as the Punch and the Vanguard on the other, in terms of in-depth reporting.

With regards to fairness in reporting, there was also no significant difference between the *Daily Trust* and the *Punch*. However, a significant difference existed between the *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard* ( $t=2.840$ ,  $df=232$ ,  $p=.005$ ). In the same vein, the *Punch* and the *Vanguard* differed in terms of fairness in their reporting ( $t=1.973$ ,  $df=231$ ,  $p=.050$ ).

From an accuracy prism, perceived credibility of the online newspapers yielded no significant difference between the *Daily Trust* and the *Punch*. Similarly, no difference existed between the *Punch* and the *Vanguard* pertaining to accuracy of their news reporting.

In terms of trustworthiness, the results revealed a significant difference between the *Daily Trust* and the *Punch* ( $t=1.968$ ,  $df=236$ ,  $p=.050$ ). However, there was no difference between the *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard* as well as the *Punch* and the *Vanguard*.

Across the three online newspapers, the *Daily Trust* credibility index ( $M=3.22$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ) was higher than that of the *Punch* ( $M=3.17$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ) and the *Vanguard* ( $M=3.11$ ,  $SD=0.87$ ), while the *Punch*'s credibility index was higher than that of the *Vanguard*. These results, perhaps, explain why the *Daily Trust* was read more than the *Punch* and the *Vanguard* on the one hand, and why the *Punch* was read more than the *Vanguard* on the other by Nigerian students in Malaysia.

### ***RQ3: Relationship between Perceived Credibility and Reading Online Newspapers***

To ascertain whether perceived credibility relates with online newspapers read the most by the respondents, a series of Pearson Product Movement Correlations were carried out (Table 3).

TABLE 3  
Relationships Between Perceived Credibility and Consumption of Homeland Online Newspaper News

Perceived Credibility	Online Newspapers Reading		
	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Punch</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>
<i>Daily Trust</i>	.653**	.338**	.351**
<i>Punch</i>	.348**	.643**	.345**
<i>Vanguard</i>	.351**	.351**	.704**

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Across the board, the results showed that there was a strong and statistically significant correlation between perceived credibility and reading a particular online newspaper than reading other newspapers. There were strong relationships between perceiving online newspapers as credible and reading the online

newspapers. Conversely, there were weak correlations between online newspapers perceived as less credible and reading such online newspapers. The results, therefore, revealed that there was strong relationship between perceived credibility and reading online newspapers.

## DISCUSSION

This study explored the relationship between perceived credibility and consumption of homeland news from homeland online newspapers among Nigerian students in Malaysia. Results showed that perceived credibility had significant relationship with consumption of news from different media sources. Previous studies have explored the relationship between perceived credibility and consumption of news from certain news organisations/platforms. However, the locale of production and consumption of news have been within national territories.

The increasing transnational migration, availability of homeland news artefacts on the internet and interest of transnational migrants and diasporas on events and happenings in their countries of origin provide a platform for examining how media credibility affects consumption of news beyond national frontiers and among nations' high profile foreign residents. The importance of transnational migrants and diasporas lies in their exposure, socio-economic and technological remittances, which have increased their social capital. This group has great potential to contribute to the homeland in many respects, including to the media system. Olorunnisola (2000), for instance, opined that African media and content providers could enhance their visibility by targeting African transnational migrants in diaspora. It is therefore important for media outlets within the country to take advantage of interest of diasporas in their news production and

distribution as a means of expanding the seemingly moribund market.

In addition, the need for media organisations to feel the pulse of their perceived credibility among the audience is more auspicious in these days of exponential media evolution and cut-throat competition. Apart from public apathy, availability of numerous media outlets, particularly the new media that are both ubiquitous and free, could drive perceived discredited media out of the market. Therefore, surviving in the contemporary media market requires not only being innovative, professional, ethical and responsible, but also being perceived as fair, balanced and unbiased producers of facts that could assist members of the public in making important and critical decisions in their daily lives. While several studies have raised the importance of credibility of news sources and outlets within the confines of a territory, this study has advanced the importance of media credibility in today's borderless world where patrons of media platforms can access news products everywhere and anywhere without time and geographical hindrances.

## CONCLUSION

This study is predicated on the notion that perceived credibility is an important factor in media use among the audience. It is also the notion of these researchers that perceived credibility differs within and between media platforms. Previous studies have explored differential perceived credibility via cross-media

approaches. Differential perceived credibility among traditional media platforms (newspapers, radio and television) has, for example, received tremendous documentation. Similarly, disparity between perceived credibility of traditional media and the new media has been well-explored. This study used within-media approach to explore how perceived credibility relates to using different media in the same media platform.

Based on the belief that homeland media on the Web serve homeland information needs of transnational migrants and diasporas, we examined how perceived credibility acted as a filter that determined which particular online newspaper appealed to Nigerian students in Malaysia. We found that perceived credibility had strong, positive and significant correlation with reading certain online newspapers. The findings showed that mere availability of homeland newspapers on the Internet did not translate into their use among members of diasporic community. Despite the establishment of the role credibility played in making homeland media products appealing to high net-worth audience, this study suffered from some limitations.

First, data for this study were collected during an election period and many contingencies, such as political interest, ideological inclination and perceived bias of the online newspapers towards certain political groups may have informed how respondents perceived the online newspapers. Besides, election time is a period of increased need for orientation.

Hence, respondents may have been conditioned by the charged atmosphere in the political public sphere to hold a certain position on the role of the media.

Second, being one of a plethora of sources through which transnational migrants and diasporas acquire homeland information, using online newspapers alone might not account well for the role of perceived credibility in the consumption of homeland news among this group. Incorporating other media on the Internet, such as television, radio, as well as online news sites, Internet group and social media could offer a robust perspective on how credibility mediate or moderate media use of transnational migrants and the diasporas.

Third, the role of demographic differences need to be explored because different types of demographic classification may have impact on respondents' perceptions. Ethno-religious differences among Nigerians remain critical contingencies in many of Nigeria's space, including media ownership and patronage. Therefore, exploring the impact of ethno-religious cleavages may explain why different media outlets are perceived differentially in terms of credibility.

These limitations notwithstanding, homeland media outlets should recognise that being credible could increase their patronage, not only among the citizens within the country, but also among nations' foreign residents. Given the centrality of homeland media to acquisition of homeland information among migrants and diasporas, homeland media on the Internet stand a better chance

of enhancing their fortunes at this time of declining readership and revenue. Therefore, homeland media outlets need to repackage and rebrand with a view to remaining credible sources of homeland information for their teeming diasporic audiences.

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