



Print Fashion Magazines and the Digital Native Generation

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Abstract

Over the years, digital media platforms have gained popularity and widespread usability among the digital native generation. In fact, there is a general perception in public discourse that the rise of new media technologies has conversely triggered a drastic decline in popularity and usage of print media. To challenge this perception, this article uses the case of print fashion magazines to argue that some kinds of traditional print media are still popular with the digital native generation. The article examines trends in the consumption of fashion magazines with particular focus on the conduct of digital natives. For the purpose of this article, the study applies the Uses and Gratifications theory to explore the extent to which print fashion magazines are still relevant to the digital native generation. The article used a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews to collect data from digital natives who consume (buy or read) fashion magazines. Evaluating the impact of print fashion magazines on digital natives is useful because it is likely to help fashion magazine publishers to devise innovative ways to meet the expectations of digital natives. The findings of the study show that while most participants consume fashion magazines from digital platforms, a significant number still prefers print fashion magazines.

Keywords: Fashion magazines, Digital natives, Digital media, Print media, Technology

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Citation: Mbombo M, Muthambi A (2022) Print Fashion Magazines and the Digital Native Generation. Global Media Journal, 20:55.

Received: 08-Sep-2022, Manuscript No. gmj-22-74092; **Editor assigned:** 12-Sep-2022, PreQC No. gmj-22-74092; **Reviewed:** 26-Sep-2022, QC No. gmj-22-74092; **Revised:** 31-Sep-2022, Manuscript No. gmj-22-74092 (R); **Published:** 07-Oct-2022, DOI: 10.36648/1550-7521.20.55.326

Introduction

In recent years, fast-developing technology has tremendously revolutionised the magazine industry [1]. As a result, two schools of thought have emerged in relation to how the new media technologies have affected mainstream media. On one hand, scholars [2-4] have argued that the emergence of new technologies has caused a major decline in the popularity and consumption of print magazines. On the other hand, some scholars have reported a surge in the reading of digital magazines [5]. Contrary to these findings, available data suggests that a significant number of print magazines are still flourishing and predominantly consumed by the digital native generation [6]. The print magazine industry, however, is in transition because of the constant growth in technology and the need to find a balance between the needs of print and digital magazine consumers.

Randle (2003) states that the print magazine publishing industry has encountered several challenges in an attempt to attract and keep its main sources of revenue, namely advertisers and

readers. The growth in technology has been evident over the years. The use of mobile devices for example has led to the print magazine publishing industry facing a number of obstacles (The Economist, 2012). Smooth glossy pages of print magazines now exist digitally on mobile devices and computer screens and web pages (The Economist, 2012). A significant number of print media consumers have turned to digital media platforms to consume fashion magazines due to their user-friendliness and convenience [7].

While Gillespie (2014) submits that the future of the print magazine is uncertain; Seltzer (2013) articulates that the print magazine platform has appreciated considerable success by pandering to the interests of individual readers in publications aimed at specialised interests. Web (2013) shares the same sentiments stating that print magazines offer consumers inspirational stunning glossy images. Print magazines, according to Randle (2003), still reign or at least have the opportunity to reign in the more effective, diversionary, and internally directed activities because they offer companionship to consumers and

often, they are associated with an elite lifestyle and social status.

Although scholars [8-10] have established that in industrialised nations, digital natives have acknowledged that they prefer digital media platforms, there is limited evidence from the perspective of emerging nations to substantiate this claim. The digital native generation, also referred to as digital natives [11] consist of young people "growing up in the global environment of information and communications technology". Prensky (2001) uses the term digital natives to make a distinction between two generations, one born into a world without digital technology, and another born into a world of digital technology. Prensky (2001) categorises individuals who were born before digital technologies as "digital immigrants", and those who were born into digital technology as "digital natives". This generation utilises the internet as the main method of searching for information and carrying out a number of learning activities [12].

Some studies [13], claim that this generation lacks interest in print media because of its inconvenience to them [14]. However, Loda and Coleman (2010) argue that while the digital native generation indeed prefers the internet the print magazine as a medium remains relevant to them [15], In their experimental study of college students aged 18 to 24, Loda and Coleman (2010) discovered that print magazines continue to reach a substantial, lucrative digital native market. The participants demonstrated integral confidence in content from print magazines [16]. The point that these studies make is that in spite of the advent of new media technologies that has undoubtedly revolutionised media consumption patterns, a significant portion of the digital native generation continues to consume traditional media in the form of print fashion magazines.

This research investigates trends in the way digital natives consume print and digital media to determine the media that they prefer and the reasons thereof. The term "digital natives" refers to a young generation born and raised in the digital era [17]. The article focuses on this generation to ascertain if the consumption of magazines in this generation has significantly shifted towards digital media platforms. Three research questions beg for answers in this study: To what extent are print fashion magazines still relevant to the digital native generation? Why do digital natives prefer certain fashion magazine platforms? How can print fashion magazines adapt and remain relevant and appealing to the digital native generation?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Given the rapidly evolving media industry, a careful reflection on existing literature is necessary to evaluate both previous and recent media industry trends. This section presents the theoretical framework applied in this research and reviews literature on the media industry and the impact of new media technologies on media consumption patterns.

This study applies the Uses and Gratifications theory to investigate trends in the fashion magazines market with particular focus on the consumption patterns of the digital native generation. The Uses and Gratifications theory focuses on how the media

gratifies consumers' social and psychological demands [18]. The theory attempts to explain why consumers seek gratification from a certain media platform, as well as their impressions of and affection for that media platform and its content [19]. The Uses and Gratifications theory acknowledges individual use and choice in media consumption. Roy (2009) articulates that different people can use the same medium for various purposes. The theory has been crucial in determining why consumers opt to continue using content from a particular media platform [20]. Researchers suggest that while people's first experiences with a medium may be unintentional, they are unlikely to utilise it again until it provides them with specific benefits [17]. Additionally, McGuire (1974) states that the Uses and Gratifications theory has been reasonably effective in identifying consumers' inspirations and conduct in conventional media contexts.

Bryant and Miron (2004) states that the Uses and Gratifications theory is often linked to Katz's (1959) assertion that "communication studies should transition from what media does to people (persuasion) to what people do with the media". The theory's major assumption is that before consumers choose a medium, they assess the possible choices to find out which media will best gratify a specific need or desire [18]. A consumer's prior experience with distinct media is the main factor that determines his/her choice (McLeod & Becker, 1981). Katz further argues that "the audience (acting actively, not passively) chooses and uses the media to fulfil their own needs and desires". The foundation of the Uses and Gratifications theory is "the functionalist stance on mass media communication" which suggests that media is there for a purpose and consumers have their own reasons for choosing a particular media platform [19]. Thus, the basic premise of the Uses and Gratifications hypothesis is that people use media for a variety of reasons and gratifications [21].

In a study that aimed to identify patterns in young adults' use of online news in the Kingdom of Bahrain Alsrudi (2018) used the Uses and Gratifications theory to investigate, the audience's motivations for using a particular type of communication tool whenever a new communication technology was launched. Similarly, in a study on media and communication technology characteristics, Ruggiero (2000) used the Uses and Gratifications theory to investigate how particular electronic media features made users active participants who could decide what to use and what elements contributed to satisfying their gratifications. The Uses and Gratification theory is relevant for this analysis because it is a consumer-centered theory suitable for studying consumers' use of various kinds of media [22]. It seeks to explain "how" and "why" digital natives utilise particular media platforms to fulfil certain needs [17], The theory integrates both the digital and print attributes of fashion magazines and challenges assumptions about the death of print fashion magazines.

Print fashion magazines

In an editorial titled Why Fashion Magazines Matter, Basu (2015) writes that today's fashion magazines not only provide commentary on social issues, but also democratise fashion by ensuring that it is accessible to a wider range of people and not only to the wealthy and famous. Fashion magazines have achieved this by recognising and tapping into various fashion

categories popular among the youths, such as hip-hop and street fashion styles, to name a few [23]. According to Caniato (2015), fashion magazines have evolved into a vehicle for communicating fashion news over time. Stone (2004) shares the same sentiments, stating that the fundamental goal of a fashion magazine is to cover and analyse fashion news. In a study on how fashion magazines connect networks of consumers, editors, and designers, Moeran (2006) establishes that magazines operate in what he calls a “fashion system”. A fashion system is a structure that offers a link between fashion runways and movements embraced by the ordinary end-user [24].

Hill (2004) in his book titled *As Seen in Vogue* summarises the impact that Vogue magazine has had on the fashion industry by presenting images and texts that it published from its inception. Hill (2004) submits that it is vital for fashion magazine content to supply material on newest movements and fashion bulletins. It is also equally important for fashion magazines to integrate additional information such as fashion forecasts about clothing, surveys, cosmetics as well as photographs for consumers. Caniato (2015) further clarifies that fashion magazines normally carry advertisements for clothing, cosmetics, and accessories. Generally, fashion magazines keep consumers up to date with the latest fashion trends and inform readers about who is wearing what and where the clothes shown in the magazine pages could be found [25].

Print and digital fashion magazines

The transformation of the media industry has led scholars to compare the two major media platforms. Studies that compare print and digital media platforms generally assume that digital natives and society prefer digital media [26]. However, the two media platforms have their unique features, advantages and disadvantages [27]. The integration of print and digital media platforms is probably the best way to merge innovative and exhilarating technology with the seasoned success of print media. Prosperous publications usually combine both media platforms as supplements to connect the strengths of both [28].

Even though digital media appears to have a multitude of benefits such as instant modifiability and ease of access, print media stays in consumers’ minds. While digital ads are often scattered and popping everywhere, print media ads are more intentional. Digital media comes across as a quick and inexpensive method whereas print media thrives on making profound connections. Digital media makes it easier for magazine editors to publish their magazines, avoiding the cost of suppliers and distributors [29].

If technology is effectively used, it can assist both digital and print media differently. Both media platforms would be able to thrive as the industry moves forward in the ever-changing media landscape. Kilian *et al.* (2012) further articulate that there is no question about how the evolution of digital media has transformed the media industry. However, perceptions about the demise of print media have been seriously overstated. In fact, the physical attributes of magazines continue to be significant to a considerable number of consumers. Killian *et al.* (2012) further intimates that print media still represents a fundamental part of the media industry.

Media industry transformation

The media industry is facing a wave of technological transformation. In fact, the shift to digital media platforms has greatly affected this industry. Notwithstanding the precise nature of the industry, the shift to digital media brings a threat to existing print media platforms. Deloitte (2015) posits that the consumption of media worldwide is progressively shifting towards digital media platforms. The increase in mobile devices that are efficient for accessing digital media and the increasing speed in internet access, has afforded consumers the opportunity to access the media content they prefer, wherever they are. Dalton and Logan (2019) state that consumers have, over the past two decades, broken barriers in digital streaming. Digital streaming has afforded consumers the convenience of content distribution through the touch of a screen or button effortlessly. Portability and easy access to digital content is the quickest way to distribute and send information currently [30].

Subsequently, publishing companies have realised that they can easily encounter a financial crisis if they ignore their innovative technological rivals [4]. Given the advent of new media technologies, magazine publishers have been forced to embrace technology to meet their consumers’ expectations and most importantly, to remain competitive [4]. Fodor *et al.* (2013) state that a significant quantity of global research and knowledge support the view that the media industry is experiencing an extensive revolution as it moves towards digital platforms and digital revenues are growing with above-average speed [23].

Consistent with Fodor *et al.* (2013), other scholars argue that there is no scarcity of consumer demand for print media’s central subscription; however, the print media platforms face stiff competition from a wide range of rival alternative sources. Several of these sources, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest are available at no cost. Social media networks are useful for finding the audience and sharing content digitally. Fodor *et al.* (2013) further claims that publishing companies have begun exploring online distribution opportunities to retain digital natives. In addition, they have shifted a significant quantity of their delivery channels from print to digital media platforms to cater for a larger audience [26].

Eisenberg (2011) submits that publishers, including those who have moved to the digital space, still want to sustain print advertising revenue for survival in the market. When magazines occupy the digital space, it is an opportunity for them to be innovative with the content that they disseminate to their readers (Eisenberg, 2011). Some magazine publishers produce web-built magazines that are similar to their printed versions and take advantage of the affordances of technology to design vibrant and interactive magazines (Eisenberg, 2011). Although the transformation in the media industry has affected society in general, its influence is extensively apparent amongst the digital native generation. Industries must keep up with the expectations of the digital natives who constitute an extensive stake in society and the fashion industry is no exception. Digital natives are growing up and fast becoming young adults who are in the process of making significant decisions about things such as the universities they will attend and the media content they will consume.

The Print media platform

Print media comprises sub-sections of industries such as magazines, journals, newspapers, and books to mention a few. Consumers usually consider print media as authentic, genuine, and stimulating (Dayton, 2016). Dayton (2016) emphasises that digital media's efficiency as compared to print media does not guarantee its effectiveness. Although some scholars see print media as an obsolete method of advertising, it remains a force to reckon with. Dayton (2016) further declares that print media is not the least bit a fading or ineffective method of communication and distribution of content. It offers consumers a tangibility that makes them consider content carefully as opposed to digital media [25] This is because readers must actively engage with printed content in order to read it; they must pick up the item, hold it, and read it [25] On digital platforms, readers tend to unresponsively page through media items without paying much attention to the content itself.

In terms of cost, print magazines are more expensive because they must go through the printing and distribution processes before they finally go into the shelves. Print magazines that do not sell become loss for the publisher. Picard (2003) notes that print media are facing a critical global challenge whereby digital media platforms constantly overshadow it and threaten its existence. As indicated by several scholars such as Dayton (2016), Kilian *et al.* (2012), and Picard (2000), print media is nowhere near its declining phase. In fact, some scholars have argued that print media is thriving and that the dialogue relating to its decline remains a perception. Pilcher (2014) articulates that technology is not going to cause the decline of print media while Kilian *et al.* (2012) insists that digital media is far from replacing print media which continues to represent a fundamental part of the media industry.

A study on the state of the print magazine industry published by The Association of Magazine Media (2015) notes that print magazine remains trustworthy, inspirational, and a powerful platform amongst readers. The outcomes of the study indicated a 10.2% growth in print magazine readership, a significant increase from first quarter growth trajectory in 2014 affirms that, for as long as there is a willingness from advertisers to buy advertising space, print magazines will continue to thrive. The main revenue stream for print magazines is advertising revenue and any other revenue streams are deemed as secondary [27]. This is the reason some publishers give away print magazines at no cost to target the largest audience so that advertisers can remain the main objective of the print magazine [27].

Print magazine publishers are accustomed to the evolving media industry, and they have realised that their business strategies ought to adjust to the industry changes. A significant number of print magazine publishers have begun to implement new business models. Some publishing companies have incorporated a digital section in their print business model. Das (2016) notes that magazines are actively pursuing new techniques for reaching consumers, new types of social media recommendation culture, and new forms of advertising, in which the relationship between the publisher and the brand is more than just messenger and channel.

The Digital media platform

The term 'Digital Media' is fluid. It is not just an innovative way to exchange and distribute information via electronic and mobile devices (Deloitte (2015). Dayton (2016) submits that digital media is quicker, affordable and reaches a wide range of people. It also appeals to a significant number of people as modern and innovative. While digital media has benefits such as innovative and exciting content, its flaws may represent strengths for print media. Digital media has performed well not only in improving communication methods but also in advancing the entertainment and media industries at large. Digital media is constantly changing the communication landscape, thus making a substantial revolution in how people communicate. Pilcher (2014) claims that digital media is on the brink of dominating the media industry, as several solely digital media subscriptions are increasing.

While in previous years access to information was through piled paper files from several newsrooms and archives, today's information is immediate and convenient, thanks to digital media platforms. According to Horsten (2010), the increasing infiltration of mobile devices has inspired publishers to capitalise by gradually developing mobile apps. Mobile devices offer consumers cinematic content, complete colour, high-resolution images, and content that are unavailable in print Mobile devices have become widespread. Decreasing prices for mobile devices would increase infiltration and a potential industry for paid digital circulation (Horsten, 2010). Even though consumers are accustomed to retrieving online content at no cost, they are comfortable with paying for mobile content.

Methodology

This study explored the relevance of print fashion magazines to digital natives in the South African context. It deployed a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews as research instruments to collect data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research allows the researcher to comprehend phenomena through observation and collaboration with selected participants. Qualitative researchers are interested in investigating and explaining people's problems as they arise in their natural settings. Qualitative research methods can produce detailed narratives about the participants' thought processes.

Participants in this study comprised University students as representatives of the digital native generation. The researcher undertook the study in the city of Johannesburg, with particular focus on two public universities located in the suburbs of Braamfontein and Auckland Park. It is worth noting that the researcher collected data for the study prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, the study does take into consideration the possible impact that the pandemic has had on the magazine industry. Ten participants were purposively selected to participate in the study based on their profile as digital natives. The age-range of the participants was between 18 to 25 years. The researcher asked each participant to confirm if they were comfortable with the use of technology. All participants were students at two public universities in Johannesburg, South Africa. The sample consisted of eight females and two males.

In terms of ethnicity, the participants were from three different ethnic backgrounds: one female participant was Indian, another female participant was White, six female participants were Black, and two male participants were Black. The researcher selected participants based on whether they belonged to the digital native generation and consumed fashion magazines or not. The demographic differences between participants in terms of race (White, Indian and Black) were coincidental and insignificant in terms of the objectives of the study. The researcher also selected participants based on their familiarity with digital media platforms. The study achieved data saturation with a sample size of ten participants.

The article employed an interview schedule as a guide and did not dictate the interview process. This method enabled the researcher to obtain extensive information from digital natives on the media platforms that they preferred and consumed. To avoid possible errors during the data analysis process, the author digitally recorded each interview and took notes with the participants' consent. The responses were recorded in such a way that participants did not feel threatened, and their anonymity was guaranteed. All the participants were interviewed individually. For ethical reasons, it was compulsory for participants to freely consent to partake in the research. Moreover, it was made clear to the participants that they could discontinue participation without having to justify themselves at any given time through the process of the interviews.

Employing interviews allowed the researcher to meet interviewees face to face and get to know their perspectives on issues relating to the consumption of fashion magazines. A predetermined interview schedule guided the interviews. The researcher prepared several structured questions; however, during the course of the interviews, he also asked additional follow up questions for clarity. The interview schedule was used as a guide for both the researcher and the participants. Table 1 below shows the structured questions that the researcher included in the interview schedule (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Semi-structured interview schedule.

Interview Schedule	
1.	What do you like about fashion magazines?
2.	In what format do you read fashion magazines? Print or digital? Why is that?
3.	What other format do you dislike or does not appeal to you?
4.	How do you think fashion magazines are doing in adapting to the digital age?
5.	What are some of the pros and cons of these changes or adaptations?
6.	How do you feel when people say print fashion magazines are dying? Why?
7.	Anything you would like to add in relation to the notion of digital media taking over the industry?

According to Wisker (2001), semi-structured interviews are beneficial to both the researcher and the participants because they are flexible. Semi structured interviews allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions and the participants to express themselves in greater depth. According to De Vos et al. (2004),

this flexibility allows the researcher to be empathetic to the interviewees, thus enabling the researcher to comprehend the participants' beliefs as well as their perspectives on the subject under examination.

Procedure

The researcher recruited participants from one of the two public universities by sending a bulk email to all the students within the selected division requesting them to partake in the research. The email did not yield expected results given that only one student responded to the invitation. The researcher then decided to approach students personally in both public universities and this approach produced better results. An overwhelming number of students who participated in the research were from the Film and Television Division in one of the universities. Some students who participated in the interview were from the Department of Fashion Design at one of the public universities.

The researcher explained the purposes of the study and the rights of the participants through an invitation letter given to all participants. In the invitation letter, the researcher emphasised that the research was precisely for academic purposes. Participants signed a consent form after having read the invitation letter and the researcher gave each participant a chance to pose questions before partaking in the interviews.

Analysis

The study used thematic analysis to analyse the data. Matthews and Ross (2010) state that thematic analysis is suitable for analysing qualitative data. It entails transcribing, reading transcripts, finding possible themes, evaluating as well as identifying conflicting themes. Through thematic analysis, the researcher drew themes from the participants' perceptions, experiences, and feelings about their preferred fashion magazine media platforms. The data categorising process began with identifying codes, which were described as a word or a short phrase to label key sections of the data.

The researcher identified precise themes from the collected data and thematic analysis enabled him to evaluate certain themes that occurred in the data. The study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis. The six-phase step by step thematic analysis includes getting familiar with data, initial coding, generating themes, validity, and reliability of themes, defining, and naming the themes, and finally interpretation and reporting of the findings.

Results and Discussion

The results revealed that digital natives generally utilise both media platforms, with the majority mentioning that they preferred digital fashion magazines. Several participants articulated their preference for print fashion magazines, while the least number of participants indicated that they preferred both media platforms for different types of content. Table 2 shows digital natives and the media platforms that they preferred when accessing fashion magazines (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Digital natives' media platform preferences for consuming fashion magazines.

Media platform preferences	Frequency	Percentage
Digital fashion magazine	5	50%
Print fashion magazine	3	30%
Print and digital fashion magazine	2	20%

It is clear in Table 2 above that the digital media platform is popular among the digital native generation. From the participants, 50% revealed that they preferred to consume digital fashion magazines. However, 30% indicated that they preferred print fashion magazines and 20% reported that they consumed content from both media platforms. This shows that digital media has generally become popular with the digital generation; however, there is a significant number of digital natives that continue to consume print media.

On this note, Pilcher (2014) argues that both media platforms should be able to prosper as the industry evolves in the ever-changing media ecosystem [28], Kilian *et al.* (2012) also submit that while there is no doubt that the advent of digital media has revolutionised the media sector, opinions about the decline of print media have been greatly exaggerated. In reality, for a sizable portion of the population, the physical aspect of magazines is still important [29] and print media is still an important aspect of the media sector.

During the interviews, as mentioned above, 50% of the digital natives revealed that they preferred digital media for reasons that ranged from convenience to accessibility and the interactivity features embedded within the media platforms. One participant (participant A) mentioned that they preferred digital fashion magazines "because, on the digital apps or websites, you can easily customize, or maybe match up certain clothes with this one". On the other hand, Participant I preferred "digital obviously, because it's convenient, there's Wi-Fi at school, so you can just check it online than going outside to buy a magazine". Deloitte (2015) points out that consumers now have access to the media content they want, wherever they are, thanks to the proliferation of mobile devices that are efficient for accessing digital media and the increasing speed of internet access.

From the responses of the participants, it is clear that the majority of digital natives utilise digital mobile devices to consume fashion magazines. When asked what media they preferred to purchase or read magazines, Participant F stated thus:

I feel like digital is like more of a way forward, it connects more people to a certain type of content, it's not like certain things need to be done, so I can receive content where I am. I can do it in like a click of a button, you know I can just go to Instagram, and I see whatever I need to see on the brand.

When it comes to selecting a specific media platform for fashion magazine consumption, participants provided several justifications. Those who preferred the digital media platform referred to its user-friendliness and ease of access. Participant J articulated the convenience of digital media in the following words:

I mean everybody is more into technology now and it's quick, you can easily access whatever you want, anytime. I don't have to

wait for the day of the publication to actually see, you get scoops and all those inside of international fashion shows.

However, the major reason the majority of participants preferred digital fashion magazines content was convenience. This finding resonates with Dalton and Logan (2019) who argue that digital media consumers have broken down barriers in digital streaming in the past two decades. Digital streaming has provided customers with the convenience of content dissemination at the touch of a screen or button (Dalton & Logan, 2019) and currently, the quickest way to disseminate and transfer information is through digital media. Participants further reported that digital media platforms were convenient for them because they were easily accessible anywhere at any time. Participant E noted that compared printed magazines, digital magazines "just easier and accessible [...] you just Google what you need and it's there". Participant I emphasised the convenience that comes with digital media as follows: "you can get it anytime; you can also download the page where you get the magazine".

As University students, participants had access to free Wi-Fi and hence, they considered buying print fashion magazines as expensive and inconvenient. Instead of going out to the shops to buy print fashion magazines, they could easily access magazines online at the click of a button. Participant I noted that "digital [is] convenient, there's Wi-Fi, [...] so you can just check it online than going outside to buy a magazine". Although the majority of digital natives (50%) indicated their preference for digital media platforms, access to digital platforms require mobile data and/or access to Wi-Fi. For most participants, digital magazines were technically free of charge because as Participant I put it "at school Wi-Fi is free, so you don't have to pay to get a magazine".

The 30% participants who preferred print fashion magazines mentioned they that they preferred print magazines because of their materiality or authenticity and the gratification that one feels when paging through a print fashion magazine. Participant C said:

I still would like to open a Vogue or a True Love magazine, you get to read, page through it, you get the articles, I still enjoy the magazine experience and holding it tangibly".

In addition, Participant B also noted that although digital magazines were cheaper and easily accessible "there's always going to be people who want a physical copy of something". According to this participant, some people like "just the smell of the magazine" and "the physical turning of the pages". Several participants perceived the print as a trustworthy media platform. Scholars such as Pilcher (2014) have argued that contrary to digital media, print media provides consumers with a tangibility that encourages them to think about the content (Media, 2018). This is because reading printed content requires readers to engage with it actively by picking up the item, holding, and reading it [30].

Participants further stated that the digital media platform is not user-friendly as most people think, and they would rather page through a print magazine than scroll through a mobile device screen. Participant B said that:

The website isn't user friendly when it comes to mobile. So, I think

it's much easier to page through a magazine sometimes than to scroll or try to enlarge an image to really see the detail, it doesn't really work online all the time, especially if you are on a mobile device.

While some scholars believe that print media is becoming obsolete, this study shows that print fashion magazines still have a place in the market and digital natives still find print fashion magazines relevant. The most fundamental justification digital natives conveyed for consuming print fashion magazines is that they are physical and tangible. Participant H preferred *"a hard copy, because, firstly, digital hurts my eyes and print make it more real"*. Although Participant G could not give a reason why she preferred print media, her response *"I like hard copies [...] I just like hard copies"* shows an intimate connection with physical printed copies. This response resonates with that of Participant C who enjoyed *"the magazine experience"* of *"holding it tangibly"*.

Dayton (2016) suggests that print media is generally regarded as authentic, genuine, and stimulating by consumers. In fact, print fashion magazines continue to be sources of information for a considerable number of digital natives. The efficiency of digital media as opposed to print media, according to Dayton (2016), does not necessarily ensure its efficacy. Some consumers see print media as an antiquated form of advertising, yet it is nevertheless a force to be reckoned with (Dayton, 2016). Dayton (2016) further argues that print media is neither vanishing nor useless as a means of communication and content distribution.

The least number (20%) of participants reported that they preferred both print and digital fashion magazine content. They provided several common reasons why they preferred both media platforms. The reasons generally related to the specific content that specific media platform offered. Participant C said they preferred *"articles [...] about fashion designers"* in print and *"getting style references"* in digital media. Participant D added that they preferred both because, on one hand *"print [...] is an important physical archive while on the other hand digital allows one to "see the full quality of the images in terms of different shades like HD images"*. Seltzer (2013) asserts that the print magazine platform has enjoyed significant success by catering to the preferences of specific readers in publications focused on specialised interests. Literature (Picard, 2003) further articulates the need for magazine publishers to sustain print advertising revenue for their survival in the market, even though they might have occupied the digital space. Similarly, when magazines occupy the digital space, it is an opportunity for them to be innovative and create different and relevant content to cater to the tastes of their readers (Simon, 2012).

The 20% participants who used both platforms mentioned that they preferred digital fashion magazines because they always have images and style tips. However, they also mentioned that they preferred reading articles about fashion designers from a print platform because of their material, almost social presence. They also mentioned that print fashion magazines were an important archive that they relied on in case of poor internet connectivity. Participant D said *"print [...] is an important physical archive" especially because one may not always "have access to internet"*. Participant E further shared that digital media is

"inaccessible for those who don't have access to Wi-Fi or free internet or whatever".

Digital natives in this category believed that the two media platforms could co-exist and that neither media platform should perish for one to excel. Participant H said both media *"have a place in society, neither one has to die down for the other one to succeed"*. Flavián and Gurrea (2009) articulate that the two media platforms have distinct characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages. The greatest way is to combine fresh and exciting technology with the proven success of print media, to integrate print and digital media platforms (Dayton, 2016). Even though digital media appears to have a number of advantages, such as quick modifiability and ease of access, print media is deeply embedded in the brains of consumers (Media, 2018).

While there is no doubt that new media technologies have tremendously transformed the media industry, both print and digital media can still survive because they serve different markets with different preferences and needs. All the participants believed that print fashion magazines were adapting to the digital age by using social media to lure consumers into buying their print versions.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore the relevance of print fashion magazines to the digital native generation. The study addressed the research questions through the digital natives' views on the two media platforms. Digital natives expressed their views about the platforms that they preferred. They also expressed their views on the notion that print fashion magazines are on a decline. The study revealed interesting views on what digital natives think fashion magazine publishers have been doing to adapt to the digital age. The digital natives believe that print fashion magazines should use social media for marketing purposes. The findings of the study are important because they can assist magazine publishers to develop fashion magazines in ways that resonate with the requirements of digital natives. The findings of the study validate several findings from preceding studies, particularly in relation to the significance of the internet to digital natives.

The study affirms that the survival of the print fashion magazine is dependent on the preferences of digital natives because they represent future consumers. As digital technologies are becoming universal, it is crucial to study the consumption behaviours and values of the digital native generation. While some scholars argue that digital natives are increasingly shifting to digital media, this study argues that there is still a significant proportion of digital citizens (30%) that still prefers print fashion magazines. In fact, if one adds the 20% that prefers both media, the proportion of digital citizens that prefer print media rises to 50%. Clearly, fashion magazines should take this significant market share seriously. Perhaps future studies should investigate how print magazines can also utilise digital platforms. The major shortcoming of this study is that it relied on a small sample size of university students. Therefore, future studies can sample a bigger and different population, for example working class digital citizens. Given that this article was conducted among university

students with access to free Wi-Fi, it would be fascinating to find out the preferences of other digital citizens with no access free Wi-Fi. A similar research among high school level digital natives may produce different results given that they have limited access to the internet.

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