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Research Article

Nameplate Designs, Headline Point Sizes, and Colour on Nigerian Newspapers: A Study of Selected National Dailies

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Abstract

Nigerian newspapers are consciously adapting to visual design formats in their bid to appeal to consumers. These visual design methods involve the arrangement of page furniture, such as headlines, colour, and nameplates, in a way that is visually attractive and perceptive to the reader. This study sought to discover the current application of colour, headline typefaces, and point sizes, as well as nameplate designs, on four of the nation's leading daily newspapers: *Vanguard, The Punch, Daily Sun,* and *Leadership,* from September 2014 to August 2015. Twenty-four issues of each of these titles were sampled for the study over a period of 12 months, from September 2014 to August 2015. These resulted in a sample frame of 96 issues of the selected newspapers. The population of the four daily newspapers during the period was 1,048, made up of 261 daily issues of *Vanguard*, 261 issues of *The Punch*, 263 issues of the *Daily Sun,* and 263 issues of *Leadership*. The study which was anchored in the Gestalt theory of visual perception adopted the visual analysis method of research. The methodology was chosen because it addresses a designer's formal elements, such as visual attributes best explained in the form of colour, line, texture, and size. Data obtained from the sampled newspapers was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0. The findings were that each of these newspapers paid attention to the design of its nameplate, printed the front and back pages in colour and applied bold headlines to attract the attention of readers during the period of the study.

Keywords

Colour, Headlines, Nameplates, Page Furniture, Point Sizes, Typefaces, Visual Perception

1. Introduction

Virtually all newspapers in Nigeria have adopted digital technology in their designs. This has signaled an end to the process of cut-and-paste in the layout of newspapers, which thrived until the 1990s. That was an era where texts were typeset and printed on composing machines as bromides, and graphic artists were made to cut and paste these bromides on card boards, following the instructions of subeditors. As Ryan and Conover [8] have observed, digital technology has significantly changed not only how news is obtained but also how the total newspaper is produced. Thus, sophisticated technological software such as Page Maker, Quark Xpress, InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop have combined to simplify the process of newspaper production in contemporary times. A study conducted on the design of information products in Ibadan (Suraj and Timiyu) [14], for instance, focused on magazines and specialised booklets. While that study produced noteworthy results, it did not satisfy the needs of newspaper producers and readers. This is because questions

like the effective display of page furniture or elements were not raised, neither were display elements like balance, contrast, unity, or even the application of white spaces and other design vehicles discussed. Equally noteworthy was the controversy over the use of capital letters on headlines, application of upper- and lower-case headlines, and suitable point sizes for any content on the page examined. In light of these observations, this study seeks to examine the fundamental patterns or forms associated with the design of newspapers in Nigeria.

2. Visual Formats of Early Nigerian Newspapers

Early newspaper publishers in Nigeria were obviously not bothered by the visual appearance of their publications. This was not peculiar, as the global readership at the time was equally uncritical of the visual appearance of the early newspapers. A number of factors account for this scenario, but two of the issues that exacerbated the phenomenon were technological challenges and the absence or lack of eye tracking studies on newspaper readership. *The Lagos Observer* which was published by J. Bagan Benjamin in 1886, was designed in three columns. Its April 17, 1886, issue, cited in Duyile [2] had no headlines, but it published labels to designate specific advertisements. Also remarkable is the fact that *The Lagos Weekly Record* published by John Payne Jackson in 1890, did not feature headlines. Its January 1918 issue presents a paper with a nameplate set in Roman italics that ran across the top of the paper. Labels that served as headings were also set across two-thirds of the page. The remaining section of the page was divided into three columns, where specific services were published.

The African Messenger, another newspaper published in 1921 by Ernest Ikoli, was separated into four columns for advertisements, with each slot being given a label. *The Nigerian Pioneer* of January 14, 1921, featured a nameplate that was approximately two inches deep, while both the labels and text ran across the paper. There was no separation into columns. Even the *Nigerian Daily Times issue* of June 1, 1926, did not feature substantive headlines. The paper was separated into four columns, with labels set in caps and mini heads in upper and lower caps.

However, as newspapers evolved in the 1930s, they began to reflect ideals of professionalism. *The Nigerian Eastern Mail,* established at Calabar, Cross River State, in October 1940 by J. V. Clinton, and praising itself as 'the Voice of the East' was separated into four columns. Ibuot and Akanni [6] explain that its visual design reflected a vertical composition and appeared to have understood the need for the use of photographs in its designs. The nameplate was typeset in italics. On its part, *The Southern Nigeria Defender,* published in 1944 in Warri, Delta State, appreciated the ideals of professional design. Its nameplate ran across four of the five

columns, with a promotional headline above the masthead. Each of the three stories had a headline with a two-column photograph to illustrate the page.

The West African Pilot of January 2, 1943, was published in six columns. Its nameplate ran across four of the six columns, with a depth of two inches. It featured two single-column advertisements on the left and on the right. A promotional headline was displayed across the six columns on top of the nameplate, with another immediately below it. Each of the stories had a headline above it, while two head-and-shoulder photographs were also displayed along with these stories. *The Nigerian Citizen*, published weekly at Zaria, Kaduna State, in September 1948, by Alhaji Abubakar Imam, was designed in five columns. The nameplate spread across two columns with a depth of two inches and was displayed prominently on the top left corner of the page. The lead story was displayed horizontally across three columns, with a three-decked headline set in caps and the associated riders also in caps. A photograph that was related to the story was displayed on half of a column with a depth of three inches.

When the *Nigerian Tribune* appeared on the streets of Ibadan in November 1949, it ran in four columns. The nameplate spread across three columns, while the lead headline was set in all caps with the rider in upper and lower case types. In the 1960s, newspaper publishers appeared to have begun to take considerable interest in the design of their publications. The nameplate of the May 1963 issue of *The Nigerian Morning Post* was designed across two columns and two inches deep. It was displayed in the top left corner of the paper. The front page headline had a kicker set at 36 points, while the lead headline was set at 84 points across four columns on two decks. The *Daily Express's* issue of November 26, 1971, had the nameplate on top, set across five of its seven columns, with a depth of one and a half inches.

The nameplate was sandwiched on both sides by classified advertisements. In terms of layout design, the lead story was set across two columns, with the headline set at 72 points in Times Roman. The *New Nigerian* newspaper that was established in 1966 also featured unique designs. Its issue of February 14, 1987, cited in Duyile [2], had the nameplate spread across four of its six columns and measured one and a half inches deep. Its editorial comments were presented vertically in a single column on the left side of the front page, with news stories in the remaining five columns. Apart from its lead headline, set at 72 points in Sans Serif bold caps, and other headlines set in the same font but of diverse point sizes, it also featured a three-column photograph to serve as the furniture of attraction.

Modern newspapers are, however, more conscious of the need to make their titles attractive to readers. This may have come from the influence of research findings on readers' perceptions of designs. One of these findings may have been the development of the eye tracking concept. Holmqvist and Wartenberg [4] explain that early newspaper publishers might have been encouraged to produce their newspapers without a

visual design sense because there was a virtual absence of feedback on readers' perceptions of design. The psychological concept of eye tracking during newspaper reading is a relatively recent phenomenon. Its methodology provides insight into how readers perceive newspaper spreads. Holmqvist and Wartenberg [4], who cited a study by Widman and Polansky, assert that, while eye tracking during newspaper reading offers precise information 50 times per second on where readers are looking, the implication of this innovation is that the bigger the size of a display item on a newspaper page, the greater the possibility of its being seen and remembered. This postulation aligns with the Poynter eye tracking research, which shows that most readers enter newspapers reading with front-page headlines and large photos (Stark, [13]). What is discernible or appreciable from the eye tracking studies, especially in the Nigerian media scene, is that newspaper publishers have begun to consider the visual outlook of their newspapers as products that should be properly packaged to attract readers or consumers.

3. The Gestalt Theory of Visual Perception

This study is anchored in the Gestalt theory of visual perception. Gestalt theory is best described as a pattern or form of joined or arranged structure or format and owes its origins to German scholars, otherwise known as the Berlin School, in the 1920s. The theory describes how people tend to organise visual elements into groups or unified wholes when certain principles are applied. It is a theory that proposes that what is 'seen' is what appears to be there and not what may 'actually be there' and that the nature of a unified whole is not understood by analysing its parts. According to Utriainen [15], the Gestalt School's major theorists were Max Wertheimer, Christian von Ehrenfels, Wolfgang Kohler, Kurt Koffka, and Kurt Lewin. The theory postulates that the 'whole' is greater than the sum of its parts. Wertheimer [17] summed up the thesis behind the theory when he noted: "There are contexts in which what is happening in the whole cannot be deduced from the characteristics of the separate pieces, but conversely, what happens to a part of the whole is, in clear-cut cases, determined by the laws of the inner structure of its whole."

Wertheimer's view was that the characteristics of an object could be observed from two perspectives: either as a whole or in parts. When observed from the perspective of the whole, the characteristics that are associated with the parts are lost in the observation. However, when the object is observed in parts, different pictures or scenarios that could not be observed immediately become evident. Soegaard [11] lists six principles that are associated with Gestalt perception theory. These are the principles of similarity, proximity, common fate, good continuation, closure, area, and symmetry. In the first principle, which is also called the law of similarity, he observes that the eye tends to perceive similar events in a design

as a complete picture, shape, or group, even when those elements are separated. The shape, size, or colour of the elements are also said to influence similarity. Thus, when an object with a high degree of similarity is mixed with a group of dissimilar objects, the brain is said to devote time and energy to creating a link between them so that it can try to understand their relationship with each other.

The second principle of Gestalt perception is proximity. Soegaard [12] explains that this law describes how the human eye perceives connections between visual elements. Thus, elements that are close to each other are perceived as related, especially when compared to those that are far away. The law of proximity allows the newspaper page reader, for instance, to use a photographic image to build relationships between other elements on the page. The third Gestalt principle is that of common fate. Rutledge [7] remarks that this principle is vital to humans' perceptions of how things around them are or are not related to one another. They tend to perceive elements moving in the same direction as being more related than elements that are stationary or that move in different directions. The principle of common fate is, therefore, vital to our perception of how the things around us are or are not related to one another. Good continuation is the fourth Gestalt principle of perception. As Soegaard [11] explains, the law stipulates that the human eye follows a pattern of lines, curves, or shapes in sequence to determine relationships between design elements. Thus, when we view an infographic element, our eyes tend to draw a line that connects different elements.

The Gestalt principle of closure applies when a complete figure is seen, even when part of the information is missing. Skaalid [10] is of the view that the law of closure is evident when humans see black circles covered by a white triangle, though it could just have been three incomplete circles joined together. Area and symmetry, as Gestalt principles of perception, refer to instances where humans perceive a smaller square to be on top of the other figure as opposed to a whole in the larger shape. Skaalid remarks that the principle of symmetry describes instances where the whole figure is perceived rather than the individual parts that make up the whole figure. Understanding Gestalt principles is particularly useful because it enables us to play with the principles of similarity to determine the sizes of headlines or the principle of continuation to navigate the news pages of the newspapers.

4. Methodology

The study is essentially a form of visual analysis research. According to Sayre [9], the purpose of visual analysis is to recognise and understand the visual choices that were made in creating the work of art that is being studied. It addresses a designer's formal elements, such as visual attributes best explained in the form of colour, line, texture, and size. Vanderdonct [16] describes the visual design method as the arrangement of information items such as texts, colour, diagrams, or tables in a way that is visually attractive, perceptive,

and easily understandable. Twenty-four issues of *Vanguard*, 24 issues of *The Punch*, 24 issues of the *Daily Sun,* and 24 issues of *Leadership* were sampled for this study over a period of 12 months, from September 2014 to August 2015. These resulted in a sample frame of 96 issues of the selected newspapers. The population of the four daily newspapers during the period was 1,048, made up of 261 daily issues of *Vanguard*, 261 issues of *The Punch*, 263 issues of the *Daily Sun,* and 263 issues of *Leadership*. All the newspapers under review also published substantive Saturday and Sunday titles that were not counted as part of the daily titles.

Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The procedure involved a sample of the daily newspapers published by each of the four newspaper organisations over the study period. Issues of *Vanguard* published every first and third Monday of the months under study, *The Punch* every first and third Tuesday, the *Daily Sun* every first and third Wednesday, and *Leadership* every first and third Thursday, were examined. Nameplate designs and sizes, use of colour, typefaces, and point sizes of headlines were determined on the basis of inches and depth. The statistical software package employed for the comparative analysis was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0, with the aid of frequency, percentage score, average, and ratio for the information obtained from the Nigerian newspapers sampled. The result of the analysis was also presented in simple bar charts, multiple bar charts, and pie charts.

5. Results

Nameplate designs on front pages of the four newspapers.

Table 1. Front page analysis at a glance.

	FRONT PAGE			
	VANGUARD	*THE PUNCH*	*DAILY SUN*	*LEADERSHIP*
NAME PLATE DESIGN	13.50"	7.875"	7.875"	13.50"
WHITE SPACE: MACRO	22 (91.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	22 (91.7%)
MICRO	2 (8.3%)	24 (100%)	24 (100%)	2 (8.3%)
	2 (8.3)		24 (100)	2 (8.3)
PHOTOGRAPHS/INFOGRAPHICS	24 (27)	24 (28)	24 (20)	24 (25)
COLOUR	24 (100%)	24 (100%)	24 (100%)	24 (100%)
POINT SIZE: HIGHEST	96	72	96	96
LOWEST	18	18	18	18

Vanguard nameplate design and size: The newspaper′s nameplate size was displayed across six columns, or 10½ inches with a depth of 2¼ inches. It was displayed in red on the top of the newspaper. No promotional headlines or texts were displayed above the nameplate during the period of the study. There was also no change in the size of the nameplate during the period.

The Punch nameplate design and size: The newspaper's nameplate was displayed on its top left corner. It measured 3½ columns (6¼ inches), with a depth of 2¼ inches. The nameplate was printed in red. During the period of the study, the newspaper ran three promotional headlines above its nameplate. These were displayed across two columns each and set at between 24 and 30 points. Two subject photos displayed each at 1½ columns by 1½ inches deep were also evident, with one on the left and another on the right sides of the page.

Daily Sun nameplate design and size*:* The newspaper's nameplate was displayed on its top left corner during the period of the study. It measured 3½ columns (6¼ inches) with a depth of 2¼ inches and was printed in red. The balance of the space besides the nameplate, measuring 2½ columns, was often used for the display of ear-piece advertisements or for promotional headlines. No texts were observed on the newspaper's front pages, apparently because it was published as a poster tabloid.

Leadership nameplate design and size*:* The newspaper's nameplate was displayed across the five columns on the top of the paper. It was set in black and white with a red dot on top of the letter 'I'. The nameplate measured 10½ inches (the paper was designed in five columns) and 2¼ inches deep. No pro-

motional headline or text was observed on top of the nameplate during the period of the study.

5.1. Point Sizes of the Front Page Headlines of the Four Newspapers

Point sizes of headlines on the front pages of *Vanguard*: The biggest headline point size found on its front pages was 96 points in Frankfurt Gothic, while the smallest point size was 18 points. The lead headlines were usually displayed across six columns on two decks.

Point sizes of headlines on the front pages of *The Punch*: The front page promotional lead headlines of the newspaper were published with 72 points, Times Roman, across six columns and on two decks. The smallest headline point size was set at 18 points.

Point sizes of headlines on the front pages of the *Daily Sun*: Lead headline promos were published with 96 points in the USA Black font across six columns and over two decks on the front pages of the newspaper. The smallest headline point size was set at 18 points.

Point sizes of headlines on the front pages of *Leadership*: The biggest promotional headline observed on the front page of the newspaper was 96 points Helvetica Condensed, across its five columns and over two decks, while the smallest headlines were set at 18 points.

5.2. Colour Printing of the Front Pages of the Four Newspapers

Colour printing on the front pages of *Vanguard*: The newspaper printed its front pages in full processed colour during the period.

Colour printing on the front pages of *The Punch:* The newspaper under study printed its front pages in full processed colour during the period.

Colour printing on the front pages of the *Daily Sun*: The newspaper under study printed its front pages in full processed colour during the period.

Colour printing on the front pages of *Leadership*: The newspaper under study printed its front pages in full processed colour during the period.

5.3. Point Sizes of Headlines on the News Pages of the Four Newspapers

Table 2. Headline point sizes and use of colour in news pages of the four newspapers.

	NEWS PAGES			
	VANGUARD	*THE PUNCH*	*DAILY SUN*	*LEADERSHIP*
WHITE SPACE: MACRO	14 (58.3%)	0.00%	3 (12.5%)	12 (50%)
MICRO	10 (41.7%)	24 (100%)	21 (87.5%)	12 (50%)
COLOUR	8 (33.3%)	22 (91.7%)	5 (20.8%)	14 (58.3%)
NONCOLOUR (BW)	16 (66.7%)	2 (8.3%)	19 (79.2%)	10 (41.7%)
PHOTOGRAPHS/INFOGRAPHS	24 (3½cols x 4")	24 (4 cols x 3½")	24 (4cols x 3½")	24 (3½ cols x 4")
POINT SIZE OF THE HEADLINES: HIGHEST	36	36	36	40
LOWEST	18	18	18	18
NEWS HOLES: HIGHEST	40"	35"	30"	35"
LOWEST	5"	5"	5"	3½"
LAYOUT DESIGNS: HORIZONTAL	22 (91.7%)	24 (100%)	24 (100%)	24 (100%)
VERTICAL	2 (8.3%)	0%	0%	0%
SUBHEADS	4	0.00	0.00	0.00
LOGO TYPES	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Headline point sizes in *Vanguard* news pages: The newspaper used a 36-point Frankfurt Gothic bold font for its headlines. In contrast, the smallest news stories attracted

18-point Frankfurt Gothic bold font headlines.

Headline point sizes in *The Punch* news pages: The newspaper applied 36-point Times Roman font headlines for its

lead news stories, while the smallest news stories attracted 18-point Times Roman headlines.

Headline point sizes in *Daily Sun* news pages: The newspaper applied 36-point USA Black font headlines for its lead news stories and 18-point USA Black for its smallest news stories.

Headline point sizes in *Leadership* news pages: The newspaper applied 40-point Helvetica condensed headlines for the lead news stories and 18-point Helvetica condensed headlines for its smallest news stories.

5.4. Colour Printing of the News Pages of the Four Newspapers

Colour printing of *Vanguard* news pages: The ratio of colour to black and white pages in *Vanguard* during the period was 8:16. The average number of news pages published in the early section of the newspaper was 11.

Colour printing of *The Punch* news pages: The newspaper published an average of nine news pages in the early section during the period. The ratio of colour to black and white pages was 22:2.

Colour printing of *Daily Sun* news pages: The newspaper published an average of 11 news pages in the early section during the period. The ratio of colour to black and white pages was 5:19.

Colour printing of *Leadership* news pages: The newspaper published an average of 10 news pages in the early section during the period. The ratio of colour to black and white pages applied to news was 14:10.

5.5. Point Sizes of Opinion Page Headlines

Headline point sizes on *Vanguard* opinion pages: Average point sizes of headlines on the opinion pages ranged from 24 points in Frankfurt Gothic to 36 points.

Headline point sizes on *The Punch* opinion pages: These ranged from 30 to 36-point Times Roman bold headlines.

Headline point sizes on *Daily Sun* opinion pages: The newspaper published its opinion articles with 36-point USA Black headlines.

Headline point sizes on *Leadership* opinion pages: These vacillated between 24 and 36-point Palatino Linotype headlines.

5.6. Design and Size of the Back Page Nameplates

Table 3. Nameplate design, point sizes and use of colour on back pages of the four newspapers.

	BACK PAGES			
	VANGUARD	*THE PUNCH*	*DAILY SUN*	*LEADERSHIP*
NAME PLATE DESIGN	5.25"	4.5"	6"	3"
WHITE SPACE: MACRO	10 (40%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)	15 (62.5%)
MICRO	14 (60%)	19 (80%)	19 (80%)	9 (37.5%)
COLOUR	24 (100%)	24 (100%)	24 (100%)	23 (95.8%)
NON COLOUR (B/W)	0.00	0.00	0.00	1 (4.2%)
POINT SIZES OF HEADLINES: HIGHEST	72	36	48	48
LOWEST	18	30	36	36
PHOTOGRAPHS/INFO-GRAPHICS	24 (13colsx16")	24 (5.5cols x7")	24 (6colsx12")	24 (6colsx12")
NEWS HOLES: HIGHEST	12"	25"	42"	42"
LOWEST	3"	22"	35"	38"
PULL QUOTES	0.00	0.00	4	24
SUB-HEADS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Size and design of *Vanguard's* back page nameplate: A reduced size of *Vanguard's* front page nameplate was displayed on the back page. It measured three columns, or five inches, with a depth of 1¼ inches, and was displayed in red on the top left flank of the newspaper.

Size and design of *The Punch's* back page nameplate: The newspaper's front page nameplate was reduced and displayed on the back page. It measured two and a half columns, or 4

inches, with a depth of 1¼ inches. It was displayed in red on the top left flank of the newspaper.

Size and design of the *Daily Sun* back page nameplate: The newspaper's front page nameplate was reduced and displayed on the back page. It measured two columns, or 3½ inches, with a depth of 1¼ inches. It was displayed in red on the top left flank of the paper.

Size and design of the *Leadership* back page nameplate: The newspaper's front page nameplate was reduced and displayed on the back page. It measured 2¾ columns, or 5¾ inches, with a depth of 1½ inches. It was displayed on the top of the paper, in black and white, with a red dot on top of its letter 'I'.

5.7. Point Sizes of Headlines on Back Pages

Point sizes of headlines on the back pages of *Vanguard*: The biggest headline point sizes found on the title's back pages ranged from 48 points in Frankfurt Gothic to 72 points, while the smallest was 18 points in Frankfurt Gothic. The biggest headlines were applied to lead sports stories and ran across between four and five columns, sometimes on two decks. The smallest headline point sizes were used for shorter sports stories. All the sports stories on the back pages were continued on the inside pages.

Point sizes of headlines on the back pages of *The Punch*: The headline point sizes on the newspaper's back pages ranged from 30 points in Times Roman bold font to 36 points. They ran across either four or five columns on the pages.

Point sizes of headlines on the back pages of the *Daily Sun*: The headline point sizes found on the newspaper's back pages varied between 36 and 48 points in USA Black. The headlines ran across four columns and sometimes spilled over to two decks.

Point sizes of headlines on the back pages of *Leadership*: The headline point sizes found on the newspaper's back pages varied between 36 and 48 points for Helvetica Bold Condensed. The headlines ran across four columns and sometimes spilled over to two decks.

6. Colour Printing of the Back Pages

Colour printing of the back pages of *Vanguard*: All the issues of the newspaper's back pages were printed in full processed colour during the period.

Colour printing of the back pages of *The Punch*: All the issues of the newspaper's back pages were printed in full processed colour during the period.

Colour printing of the back pages of the *Daily Sun*: All the issues of the newspaper's back pages were printed in full processed colour during the period.

Colour printing of the back pages of *Leadership*: All the issues of the newspaper's back pages were printed in full processed colour during the period.

7. Discussion

The study examined the visual designs of Nigerian newspapers, with special emphasis on *Vanguard, The Punch, The Daily Sun,* and *Leadership*. The results of the analysis of nameplate designs and sizes indicate several specific formats. Findings relating to the design and size of the nameplates of the newspapers show that two major sizes of nameplates were dominant in the Nigerian media market. The first were those that ran across six (or five) columns of the pages and measured 10½ inches by 2¼ inches deep. The second were those that ran approximately across 3½ columns measuring 6½ inches by 2¼ inches deep. Two newspapers that chose to identify themselves essentially as red-top tabloids, *The Punch* and *Daily Sun,* were arrayed in nameplates that captured the norm. *The Punch* nameplate measured 3½ columns (6¼ inches) with a depth of 2¼ inches. It was printed in red on the top left corner of the paper. Similarly, the *Daily Sun*, which was also draped in red on the top left corner of the paper, had a nameplate that measured 3½ columns (6¼ inches) with a depth of 2¼ inches. These two titles were published as poster tabloids and had no news holes on the front pages.

The second category of newspapers under study, the *Vanguard* and *Leadership*, though published as tabloids in the compact genre, had nameplates that spread across the top of the paper. *Vanguard*'s nameplate measured six columns (10½ inches) with a depth of 2¼ inches. *Leadership* equally ran nameplate on its five columns measuring 10½ inches with a depth of 2¼ inches. While the *Vanguard* nameplate was displayed in red, *Leadership* was printed in black and white with a red dot on top of the letter I. Equally two or 50 per cent of the newspapers, which had shorter nameplates, used only promotional headlines on their front pages. The other two that had full-sized nameplates, ran their front pages with headlines and very short news holes. This finding is in support of eye tracking studies by Lunqvist and Holmqvist, cited in Holmqvist and Wartenberg [4], that show that larger newspaper objects are seen significantly earlier than smaller objects.

Another specific pattern that is unique to each of the titles is the use of typefaces or fonts. *Vanguard* used the Frankfurt Gothic font as the headline on all its pages. The point sizes varied depending on the relative weight of the stories and the specific pages on which they were displayed. In the case of headline display, it was observed that all the newspapers ran their front page lead headlines across their six (or five) columns and on two decks. While *Vanguard, Daily Sun,* and *Leadership* consistently ran their front page lead headlines across their pages and on two decks, with 96-point headlines, *The Punch*'s front page lead headlines were also run across the page with two decks but with 72-point headlines. Promotional headlines' point sizes varied from 18 points to 36 points. In *Vanguard*, the kickers utilised between 30 and 48 points of Frankfurt Gothic, while the newspaper applied between 18 points of Frankfurt Gothic and 24 points for its riders.

Vanguard utilised 10-point Candida BT font with a leading of 11 points for its body text. The newspaper adopted 12 points of Candida BT bold for its subheads and 14 points of Candida BT bold italic with a leading of 16 points for its pull quotes. The newspaper also consistently used its back pages for sports coverage. This consistency was noteworthy, as virtually all other national dailies had substituted sports coverage on the back pages with displays of the contributions of their ace columnists.

The Punch applied a 9-point Times Roman font with a leading of 10 points as body text. On its news pages, its headline point sizes varied between 18 and 36 points in Times Roman. This was also observed on the *Daily Sun* news pages, which adopted between 18 and 36 point USA Black headline fonts and 10 point USA Black as body text fonts. The *Leadership*, however, offered a different typeface and point sizes on its news pages. Its news page stories were displayed in between 36 and 40-point Helvetica Condensed fonts, with 10-point Palatino as body text.

All the newspapers printed their front and back pages in colour. Three of the four newspapers, or 75 per cent, were arrayed in red nameplates, while one was in black and white with a red spot colour on one of its letters. However, differences in the use of colour on news pages were manifest. The ratio of colour to black and white printing on *Vanguard* news pages was 8:16, while the ratio of colour to black and white on *The Punch* news pages was 22:2. The ratio of colour to black and white printing on *Daily Sun* news pages was 5:19; while the ratio of colour to black and white printing on *Leadership* news pages was 14:10. The findings indicate that with 22:2, *The Punch* led the other newspapers in the ratio of news pages printed in colour. This was followed by *Leadership, Vanguard* and the *Daily Sun,* respectively.

These findings are in line with our theoretical framework of Gestalt theory of visual perception, which posits that separate newspaper units or design shapes can be joined to yield meaning to readers. They also reinforce findings in the study by Suraj and Timiyu [2] that readers preferred publications with pictorial rather than textual information. Furthermore, the findings support the results of De Haan, Kruikemeier, Lecheler, Smit, and van der Nat's [1] eye-tracking study that measured the use of direct attention to visualisations on three different news platforms: print newspapers, e-newspapers on tablets, and news websites. Those results showed that news consumers do indeed read news visualisations, regardless of the platforms on which the visuals were published. Besides, the outcome of De Haan et al's study was that visualisations were appreciated by readers if integrated into news stories.

Thus, Nigerian newspapers have begun to adapt to the use of more infographic elements to attract readers to their titles. A study on newspaper reading with eye-tracking data from readers' actual interactions conducted by Holsanova, Rahm, and Holmqvis [5] found that readers enter newspapers from two major perspectives. The first is that people read newspapers from a socio-semiotic perspective, while the second is

through the application of an eye-tracking perspective to examine entry points and reading paths.

Generally, socio-semiotic research is concerned with the placement of eye-catching headlines in large font sizes and styles, as well as expressive photographs against a red background. These combine to grab the attention of the reader. Newspaper reading through entry points and entry paths is associated with paratexts, a concept coined by Genette [3] to embody a group of practices and discourses of all kinds that are of common interest or a convergence of effects that seem to be more important to the reader. Holsanova, Rahm, and Holmqvis [2] define paratext as thresholds to the texts, or a notion for the different accompanying texts that connect to the main texts and can function as a starting point or an invitation to the reader. Paratexts thus provide a central notion for creating, recreating, and interpreting newspaper spread semiotics.

8. Conclusion

All the newspapers under study performed remarkably well in their display of nameplates, headline point sizes, and use of colour on their pages. The nameplates varied with the orientation of the newspapers. The red tops, which adopted poster tabloid formats, *The Punch* and *Daily Sun,* adopted shorter nameplates spanning 3½ columns (6¼ inches) by 2¼ inches deep. The other newspapers that adopted the compact tabloid formats used nameplates that ran across the pages. These were six or five columns measuring 10½ inches with a depth of 2½ inches. Three of the newspapers, *Vanguard, Daily Sun,* and *Leadership*, applied front page lead headline point sizes that ranged from 72 points to 96 points. The significant other, *The Punch,* applied front page headline sizes ranging from 60 points to 72 points. All the newspapers published their front and back pages in colour, though one title ran its nameplate in black and white with a red dot on one of its letters. *The Punch*, however, led the other titles in the ratio of front and back pages printed in colour.

Author Contributions

Udo Philip Ibuot is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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