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Comparative Study of Newspaper Reading Preferences among College-Going Youths

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Abstract

India is witnessing a healthy trend when it comes to higher education and the attendance of youngsters in colleges. India's youth is career-oriented and focused on their goals. Girls and boys are headstrong and raring to go. With streams ranging from science to mathematics to political science to psychology to various other subjects, college students are making their presence felt in every stream. They are no longer considered ignorant and self-obsessed. The study is an investigation of the reading patterns and preference of young people going-college in India. The survey research method was used to delve into the psyche of young collegians in Bhopal and study the characteristics of their reading patterns. The study queries among other: do girls have any different interest in news and articles than the boys studying in the city?

Keywords: Newspaper, Reading Preferences, College Education, Media, Youths

Introduction

The youth are aware of the goings-on in India and are part of the revolutionary change happening in our society. This evolution is evident in their reading preferences especially as regards newspaper. One might think reading is a phenomenon that has always been in existent. However, it dates back to the invention of writing during the 4th millennium BC. With the industrial revolution, came a considerable rise in the number of readers. Reading can define as a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to derive meaning. It is a means of language acquisition, smooth communication with one another, and sharing information and ideas. It is a complex interaction between the text and the reader, which has already been formed by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community. The process of reading requires continuous practice, development, and refinement.

The problem

With an increasing number of boys and girls choosing careers instead of the traditional fields like engineers and doctors, their choice of subjects in college also varies a great deal.

Notwithstanding which economic strata they belong to, it is interesting to note that they form a significant section of newspaper readers. Sports, economy, science, gadgets, fashion, lifestyle, national and international – college-goers are interested in all sorts of news. It corroborated with the fact that newspapers and magazines are increasingly coming up with youth-oriented supplements to cater to these young readers. For example: Dainik Bhaskar has City Bhaskar that contains college news, The Times of India's feature pull-out Bhopal Times mainly targets young readers; DNA's After Hrs has particular articles that are of interest of college-going boys and girls; Hindustan Times has a youth-centric supplementary called HT City that regularly features college activities and college news. This study aims to delve into the psyche of young collegians in Bhopal and study the characteristics of their reading patterns. The study is divided into two parts, reading preferences of girls and reading preferences of boys.

Study area

The survey research to be conducted takes into consideration the viewpoints of youngsters studying in Bhopal district. This research is a comparative study on two sections implicating Bhopal as a district – college-going girls and college-going boys. According to Census 2011, the population and literacy rate of Bhopal district stands as below:

Population (%)	19.16 %	80.84 %
Total Population	453,806	1,914,339
Male Population	237,717	1,001,661
Female Population	216,089	912,678
Average Literacy	69.36 %	85.18 %
Male Literacy	79.67 %	89.20 %
Female Literacy	58.00 %	80.76 %

Collection of random samples of information will be from graduation and post-graduation college students studying in various institutions in Bhopal district.

Newspapers in Bhopal

There are more than a hundred newspapers published in Bhopal district, and college-going youngsters form a large section of the readers. Various Hindi and English newspapers published here include The Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Pioneer, The Hitavada, among the leading English dailies. While Dainik Bhaskar, Raj Express, Nava Bharat, Nai Dunia, Dainik Jagran, Patrika, Peoples Samachar are the leading Hindi dailies published from

here. All these newspapers are distributed and are available across the city.

The objective of study

This research is being carried out to compare the choices and preferences of girls and boys studying in various colleges in the city. One might think college girls would only like to read news related to lifestyle and fashion and boys would read political and sports news only. This study is being conducted to establish the preferences of college students of both the sexes – boys and girls. The study also aims at finding out the reading preferences of students from different fields. It aims at finding out whether a science student will only have interest in news related to science and technology or the boy or girl also likes articles that are not directly related to his or her field. It will try to find out if boys are only interested in fields such as sports and politics, and girls are only interested in articles related to fashion and lifestyle. The study will also be a help to print media with deciding and focusing on its readers and their reading preferences. The study has the following objectives:

- To compare the choices and preferences of girls and boys studying in colleges and institutes situated in various areas of the city.
- To establish the preferences of college students across all economic strata, belonging to different backgrounds.
- To find out reading choices of students of different fields and those opting for different streams in college.
- To see if a student of a particular stream will read articles based on that stream only or not.
- To check if girls will have any different interest in news and articles than the boys studying in the city.

Literature review in prospect

Literature and studies on reading preference and college students will be reviewed in the study. The aim is to provide background information for the research objectives and conceptualize the keywords. The following literature will help situate the study:

- A Summary of Research on The Reading Interests and Habits of College Graduates by Brewster Porcella (Acquisition Assistant Librarian, Acquisitions Department, State University of Iowa Library, Iowa City, Iowa)
- Comparative Study of Reading Preferences among Hindi Dailies: With Special reference to Dainik Bhaskar & Naidunia, Indore by Prachi Sharma, Dr Punit K.Dwivedi, Upendra Singh Panwar, Lt.Col. (Retd.) Dr V.K.Gautam (Modern Institute of

Professional Studies, Indore)

- A Study of Reading with Dedicated E-Readers by Miriam Schcolnik (Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences Nova Southeastern University)
- Reading Habits of Rural and Urban College Students In the 21st Century by Fayaz Ahmad Lone (University of Kashmir)
- Defining Women's Reading Preferences by Rebecca Nappi (The Spokesman-Review)

Methodology

Primary sources will be used in the course of research work. While the research design was ex-post-facto, the method of study applied was a random sample survey. The term ex-post-facto, when translated, means 'from what is done afterwards'. It can be used to study specific types of human behaviours. The person who conducts the research relies on the feedback of the subjects who participate in the study. The researcher does not have control over independent variables as their manifestation has already occurred or as they are inherent and not manipulatable.

For the method of study, a random sample survey was adopted, considering the nature of the respondents, who are college students and are subscribers of print media. In total, a thousand graduate and post-graduate students from 20-25 colleges of the Bhopal district to be covered. The colleges will be randomly selected, and the students of different streams, including science, arts, engineering and medicine, will be considered.

Research instruments

A structured questionnaire was developed for the research. The questions were framed, keeping in mind the nature of the survey. The questionnaire consists of two sections-

The area where the college is located: The following variable was used to gather background information of the respondents:

1. Age
2. Stream/Subjects

b) Point of view: The respondents were asked to give their opinions on various questions asked to them, which are as follows:

i) Name the newspapers you read.

ii) How many supplementary pull-outs do you read? Name them.

iii) News related to which field do you read the most? (E.g., crime news, politics, business, sports news, etc.)

iv) What, according to you, is the most interesting section in the newspapers you read?

v) Any weekly column that you wish could come daily? Why?
vi) Which is the most informative section of the newspaper for you?
vii) Which is the most useful section for you; something that helps you in your day-to-day life?
viii) For how many hours or minutes do you read a newspaper in a day?
ix) What are the sections in newspapers that help you in your college's course studies?
x) Anything that you would like to add to the newspapers you read, which you think will be of the interest of young college students.

Sampling method

Simple random sampling will be used in the survey. The respondents comprise 500 newspaper-reading collegians each – boys and girls – from colleges located in various areas of Bhopal which amounts to 1000 respondents.

Academic relevance

This study will be significance in identifying the tastes and preferences of young students studying in colleges. It will help the college authorities in determining an apt syllabus that will be of keen interest among the students. It will streamline the interests of the young college-goers so that faculty members can prepare their lectures accordingly. The study will also help newspapers in addressing issues that will be of interest for collegians. This way, they will be able to decide the newspaper content better, according to the interests of its young readers. The academic relevances of the study are as follows:

- This study will throw light on the interest of young college students studying in different parts of the Bhopal district.
- It will help the college authorities in determining the syllabus according to the field of interest of the youngsters.
- It will be a guide to faculty members to render lectures to each student according to his or her choice of subject.
- The study will help newspapers to address their young readers in a better way, with more articles and news-pieces of their interest.
- The content of newspapers will derive with the help of the feedback given by college students in Bhopal district in the study.

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