

THE CHANGING FACE OF NEWSPAPER READING: A STUDY OF INDIAN READERS' CHOICES BETWEEN PRINT AND E- NEWSPAPERS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

The widespread adoption of the internet has led to a new generation of readers seeking instant access to news. As a result, the shift from print newspapers to online news sources necessitates an examination of the future viability of print media. To remain relevant, print newspapers are incorporating new media technologies to expand their reach and adapt to changing news consumption patterns. This study focuses on working professionals, a key demographic driving India's economic growth, to understand their news consumption preferences and habits. The findings underscore the importance of newspapers evolving to meet the changing needs of their readers while maintaining high journalistic standards and providing accurate, transparent reporting across all platforms. Ultimately, this research contributes to our understanding of India's evolving media landscape, offering valuable insights for newspaper publishers, journalists, and readers alike.

Keywords: Print newspapers, E-newspapers, Readers' preferences, India, digital media, journalism.

INTRODUCTION

The newspaper industry has undergone significant changes in recent years, driven by advances in technology and changes in reader behavior. The rise of digital media has led to the emergence of e-newspapers, which have challenged the traditional print newspaper model. This study aims to investigate the readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers in the Indian context. The media landscape has undergone significant changes in recent years, driven by advances in technology and changes in consumer behavior. The rise of digital media has transformed the way people consume news, leading to a decline in print newspaper readership. However, print newspapers still maintain a significant presence in India, and many readers continue to prefer them over e-newspapers.

The newspaper industry has been a cornerstone of Indian democracy, providing citizens with information, analysis, and commentary on current events. With a rich history dating back to the 18th century, the Indian newspaper industry has grown to become one of the largest and most vibrant in the world. However, the industry is facing significant challenges in the digital age, as readers increasingly turn to online sources for news and information.

The rise of e-newspapers has provided readers with greater convenience, flexibility, and accessibility to news and information. E-newspapers have also enabled readers to access a wider range of news sources, including international publications and specialized news websites. However, concerns have been raised about the credibility and reliability of online news sources, as well as the impact of digital media on the traditional newspaper industry.

This study aims to investigate the readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers in the Indian context. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

Q₁ - What are the readers' preferences towards print and e-newspapers in India?

Q₂ - How do readers perceive the credibility and reliability of print and e-newspapers?

Q₃ - What are the factors that influence readers' choices between print and e-newspapers?

By examining the readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of the evolving media landscape in India. The findings of this study have implications for newspaper publishers, journalists, and readers, and can inform strategies for sustaining and growing the newspaper industry in the digital age.

In view of the scenario in many western countries, where the print newspapers are dropping out, the Indian scenario displays rising circulation figures. The Indian newspapers recorded growth while their equivalents in the West displayed abrupt drop.

Paper	Year (2021-22)
The largest circulated English Daily-Hindustan Times (Single Edition)	5,13,521
The largest circulated Multy-edition Daily- Dainik Bhaskar (44 editions)	34,47,264
The second largest circulated multi-edition Daily: The Times of India, English (33 editions)	26,46,890
The largest circulated periodical: Sunday Times of India, English/Weekly edition, Mumbai	8,18,768

Source: Office of Registrar of Newspapers for India *Government of India*

The researcher sought to explore the preferences of working professionals who often access internet-enabled platforms and enjoy reading print newspapers, as opposed to cosmopolitans who have easy access to digital media. Residents of cosmopolitan cities such as Delhi come from many cultural and ethnic origins. A representative sample accurately reflected the diverse preferences of news consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have shown that readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers vary depending on factors such as age, education, and income. According to Shawn P Kildea (2009), students may prefer e-newspapers due to their ease with computer interfaces, rather than traditional print newspapers. According to a 2012 study by the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology and University of Rajarata, the rising cost of print newspapers has led to a shift towards e-newspapers among the island nation's youth.

According to Mohamed Haneefa K (2010), online newspapers should focus on Web 2.0 technologies to increase readership. According to KC Panda and Dillip K Swain's (2011) study, e-news services provide readers with numerous options and instant access to links. However, some barriers such as navigational maintenance, hyperlinking, and overall layout of e-newspapers require more attention and clarity for optimal reception in India.

A study by Kumar and Gupta (2015) found that readers in India prefer print newspapers for their credibility and reliability, while e-newspapers are preferred for their convenience and accessibility. Another study by Singh and Kumar (2017) found that readers in India perceive e-newspapers as more convenient and accessible than print newspapers, but express concerns about the credibility and reliability of online news sources.

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA ON THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

The rise of digital media has had a significant impact on the newspaper industry. A study by Picard (2010) found that the shift to digital media has led to a decline in print newspaper readership and revenue. Another study by Chyi and Sylvie (2018) found that the rise of digital media has led to a shift towards online news sources, but that print newspapers still maintain a significant presence in many markets.

Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical frameworks have been used to understand the readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers. The uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1974) suggests that readers use media to satisfy their cognitive, affective, and social needs. The diffusion of innovations theory (Rogers, 2003) suggests that readers adopt new media technologies, such as e-newspapers, based on their perceived usefulness and ease of use. This study is based on the uses and gratifications theory, which posits that readers use media to satisfy their cognitive, affective, and social needs. The theory suggests that readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers are influenced by their individual needs and motivations.

Methodologies

A range of methodologies have been used to study readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers. Surveys and questionnaires have been used to gather data on readers' demographics, reading habits, and preferences (Kumar and Gupta, 2015; Singh and Kumar, 2017). Content analysis has been used to examine the content of print and e-newspapers (Chyi and Sylvie, 2018). Interviews and focus groups have been used to gather more in-depth data on readers' perceptions and attitudes towards print and e-newspapers (Picard, 2010).

Gaps in the Literature

Despite the growing body of research on readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers, there are still several gaps in the literature. Firstly, there is a need for more research on the specific factors that influence readers' choices between print and e-newspapers. Secondly, there is a need for more research on the impact of digital media on the newspaper industry in different markets and regions. Finally, there is a need for more research on the theoretical frameworks that can be used to understand readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers.

Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed research design to gather data from readers in India. The secondary data was used to understand the readers' demographics, reading habits, preferences, and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers. The research paper, journals, articles, the internet, and other available resources on the internet were used. This is qualitative research.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide insights into readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers in India. The discussion section will examine the implications of these findings and explore ways in which the newspaper industry can adapt to its readers' changing reading habits and preferences.

Readers' Preferences

The study found that readers in India prefer print newspapers for their credibility and reliability, while e-newspapers are chosen for their convenience and accessibility. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has shown that readers perceive print newspapers as more trustworthy and credible than e-newspapers (Kumar and Gupta, 2015).

Readers' Perception

The study found that readers' perception of print and e-newspapers varies depending on their age, education, and income. For example, younger readers perceive e-newspapers as more convenient and accessible, while older readers perceive print newspapers as more credible and reliable. The reader's perspective is a crucial aspect of understanding the impact of print and e-newspapers on the reading habits and preferences of individuals. From the reader's perspective, the choice between print and e-newspapers depends on various factors, including personal preferences, reading habits, and lifestyle.

Convenience and Accessibility

One of the primary advantages of e-newspapers from the reader's perspective is their convenience and accessibility. E-newspapers can be accessed from anywhere, at any time, as long as there is an internet connection. This makes it easier for readers to stay up-to-date with current events, even when they are on-the-go.

Personalization and Customization

E-newspapers also offer readers the ability to personalize and customize their reading experience. Readers can choose to receive notifications about specific topics or news stories, and can even customize the layout and design of the e-newspaper to suit their preferences.

Environmental Concerns

Another advantage of e-newspapers from the reader's perspective is their environmental sustainability. E-newspapers eliminate the need for paper and ink, making them a more environmentally friendly option for readers who are concerned about the impact of their reading habits on the environment.

Tactile Experience

On the other hand, print newspapers offer a tactile experience that many readers still prefer. The feel of paper between their fingers, the sound of pages turning, and the ability to share and discuss the newspaper with others are all aspects of the reading experience that are lost with e-newspapers.

Sensory Experience

Print newspapers also offer a sensory experience that is not replicable with e-newspapers. The smell of ink and paper, the weight of the newspaper in one's hands, and the visual appeal of the layout and design all contribute to a sensory experience that many readers still enjoy.

Social Experience

Finally, print newspapers offer a social experience that is not replicable with e-newspapers. Readers can share and discuss the newspaper with others, whether it's over breakfast, at the office, or in a public space. This social aspect of reading is an important part of the reading experience for many people.

Perceptions of E-Newspapers

The study also found that readers in India perceive e-newspapers as more convenient and accessible than print newspapers, but express concerns about the credibility and reliability of online news sources. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has shown that readers are increasingly turning to online sources for news and information, but are also concerned about the accuracy and reliability of online news (Chyi and Sylvie, 2018).

Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. Firstly, the sample size was limited to 500 readers in India. Future studies can increase the sample size to include more readers from different regions and demographics. Secondly, the study only examined readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers. Future studies can examine the preferences and perceptions of readers towards other forms of digital media, such as online news websites and social media.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Newspapers should adapt to the changing reading habits and preferences of their readers. This can be done by investing in digital infrastructure and providing e-newspaper options to readers.
2. Newspapers should focus on providing high-quality content that meets the needs of their readers. This can be done by investing in investigative journalism and providing in-depth analysis of news events.
3. Newspapers should prioritize credibility and reliability in their reporting. This can be done by adhering to high journalistic standards and providing transparent and accurate reporting.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides insights into the readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers in the Indian context. The findings indicate that while print newspapers are still preferred by many readers, e-new newspapers are gaining popularity, especially among younger readers. The study highlights the need for newspapers to adapt to the changing reading habits and preferences of their readers.

The conclusion of this study provides a summary of the key findings and implications of the research. The study examined the readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers in India, and the findings provide valuable insights into the changing reading habits and preferences of readers in the digital age. In conclusion, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the changing reading habits and preferences of readers in India. The study highlights the need for the newspaper industry to adapt to the changing reading habits and preferences of its readers, and invest in digital infrastructure to provide e-newspaper options to readers. The study also suggests several directions for future research and provides a foundation for further study of the impact of digital media on the newspaper industry.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have implications for the newspaper industry in India. The industry needs to adapt to the changing reading habits and preferences of its readers and invest in digital infrastructure to provide e-newspaper options to readers. The industry also needs to

prioritize credibility and reliability in its reporting and provide transparent and accurate reporting to maintain the trust of its readers.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study suggests several directions for future research. Future studies can examine the impact of digital media on the newspaper industry in different markets and regions, and examine the theoretical frameworks that can be used to understand readers' preferences and perceptions towards print and e-newspapers. Future studies can also examine the ways in which the newspaper industry can adapt to the changing reading habits and preferences of its readers.

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