

Importance Of Newspaper Reading Habit For Social Science Students: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

The study aimed to find out how far newspaper reading habit was important for Social Science students. In doing so the paper took into consideration the perception of students towards newspaper reading. To achieve the objective a sample of 105 social science college students were chosen. Findings revealed that newspaper reading habit among students was moderate and majority of students were interested in entertainment news, education / career news and political news. Also, it was found that newspaper as a source of information has high importance for Social Science students.

Keywords: Newspapers, Reading Habits, Newspaper Reading Habit, Social Science, Political Science, Economics, History, Sociology.

Introduction

Newspaper is one of the most important primary sources of information. While there is a constantly increasing notion that the habit of reading newspaper is declining day by day; the emergence of online newspaper however has made it more updated and relevant. Students while on one hand can rely on books and internet for academic purpose, Newspaper have a lot of potential to act as an authentic source of current, local and everyday information. Specially for social science students' newspapers are sources to local political news, social conditions and economic aspects of a locality.

Various researches have studied newspaper from various

Special Issue On Multidisciplinary Research

perspectives. 'Newspaper reading habit' is one of the most important topics among them. The study of Stone and Wetherington (1979) comes with the conclusion "reading a daily newspaper is a habitual practice involving certain repetitive actions and that the newspaper habit is dependent on the tradition of newspaper reading in the home when the individual was growing up".

Akanda, Hoq & Hasan (2013) in their study identified trends in reading of Bangladeshi students. They concluded "with the decline of the reading habit among young people, it is important to find new ways to instil love for reading in their hearts and improve their reading habit." The studies of Majumder & Hasan (2013) also dealt with newspaper reading habits of students and revealed that male students read more newspaper than female students and the main purpose is to increase general knowledge. In the study, "Newspaper reading habits of College students" Sivakumar & Tamilselvan (2015) depicted a picture on newspaper reading habits among students of Kalaingar. Chen (2016) in his study claimed that there was a high percentage of Japanese people who had newspaper reading habit, and their loyalty toward newspapers was high. From the analysis it was discovered that majority of the respondents reads newspapers daily. Kothainayagi and Karthikeyan (2019) in their study proved that "to increase the newspaper reading behaviour respondents should depend more on online medium of newspaper rather than printed medium". The study of Dhiman (2022) encompassed newspaper reading habits among under graduate and post graduate students who studied in Kurukshetra University. He concluded that newspapers not only provide current news, but also provide various types of information to the students viz. editorial, informative article, social and economic status of the country.

However, the existing literary warrant did not show any evidence of work on importance of newspaper reading habit of students for academic purpose. So, a knowledge gap has been found in the area and thus further research is necessary.

Objective

The major objective of the study was to determine the importance of newspaper reading habits of students for academic purpose. While doing so, the research attempted:

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- To investigate frequency of newspaper reading;
- To identify the students' purpose & inspiration in newspapers reading;
- To study types of newspapers that Social Science students prefer to read;
- To know the area of interests of Social Science students in reading newspaper;
- To know the importance of newspaper reading for Social Science students

Methodology

For the purpose of the study a survey method had been adopted using a structured questionnaire.

As the population is large a sample was chosen through random sampling method. For the study Mathurapur Lok Sabha constituency (West Bengal, India) was chosen to select Social Science college students. There are 7 assembly constituencies namely: Patharpratima, Kakdwip, Sagar, Kulpi, Raidighi, Mandir Bazar and Magrahat Paschim. A total of 140 close-ended questionnaires were distributed in the areas; from each assembly 20 Social Science college students were chosen.

Under each assembly, every sample was chosen as per researcher's judgment.

Among them only 105 responses were considered as only they were found to be reading newspapers. Percentage formula and Likert scale were used to fulfill the objective. Mean level was calculated from this Likert scale data using MS- excel.

In this section if the mean level is between 0.1-2.00 then it is considered 'low level importance'; if it is between 2.1-3.5 then 'moderate level importance' is considered and if the mean level is between 3.6-5 then 'high level importance' is considered.

The obtained data was then tabulated, analyzed and interpreted to find out the answers of the above-mentioned objectives of the study.

Data Analysis

At first an overview of the respondents (stream & gender) is highlighted here and then to fulfil the objective the data analysis has been shown.

Overview of the respondents:**Table 1: Overview of the respondents**

Stream wise distribution of students	
Streams	Percentage
Economics	24%
History	29%
Political Science	32%
Sociology	15%
Total	100%
Gender Wise Distribution of students	
Male	Female
44%	56%

The above table reveals that out of 105 respondents' maximum number of them belongs to Political Science (32%), followed by History (29%), Economics (24%) and Sociology (15%). Also 44% belongs to the category of male and 56% female.

Frequency of use of newspapers:**Table 2: Frequency of use of newspapers**

Frequency of Use	
Frequency	Percentage
Very Frequently	10%
Frequently	8%
Occasionally	49%
Rarely	9%
Very Rarely	24%
Total	100%

Out of 105 respondents it is found that maximum number of them reads newspaper occasionally (49%), followed by 24% students who reads very rarely. 10% of them reads very frequently, 9% rarely and only 8% frequently.

Purpose of newspaper reading:**Table 3: Purpose of newspaper reading**

Purpose	Percentage (Out of 105 in each category)
Academic / Career News	75%
Develop Reading /Writing /Vocabulary skills	37%

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For Preparing Answers	35%
For Project Work	23%
Hobby/Time Pass	61%
Improve Knowledge	49%

From table 3 it is revealed that 75% respondents read newspapers for 'Academic/ Career news' followed by 61% for 'Hobby/ Time Pass', 49% to 'Improve Knowledge', 37% for 'Develop Reading / Writing / Vocabulary Skills', 35% for 'Preparing Answers' and 23% for 'Project Work'.

Inspiration for reading newspapers:**Table 4: Inspiration for reading newspaper**

Inspiration	Percentage
Brothers/ Sisters	0%
Friends	0%
Library staffs	8%
Parents	28%
Self	43%
Teachers	21%
Total	100%

From the table it is revealed that 43% respondents said that their motivation behind reading is 'Self' followed by 28% inspired by 'Parents', 21% by 'Teachers' and 8% by 'Library staffs'.

Types of newspaper reads by Social Science students:**Table 5: Types of Newspaper**

Bengali Language Newspapers		English Language Newspapers	
Name	Percentage (Out of 105 in each category)	Name	Percentage (Out of 105 in each category)
Anandabazar Patrika	87%	The Times of India	88%
Bartaman	61%	The Telegraph	62%
Sangbad Pratidin	37%	The Economic Times	39%
Ei-Samay	7%	The Statesman	6%
Aajkaal	3%	Hindustan Times	4%

It is revealed from table 5 that when students were asked about Bengali language newspaper preference 87% chose

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'Anandabazar Patrika'; 88% chose 'The Times of India' for English newspapers. 61% students read 'Bartaman' followed by 'Sangbad Pratidin' 37%, 'Ei-samay' 7% and 'Aajkaal' 3% (Bengali newspaper). 62% students read 'The Telegraph', 39% read 'The Economic Times', 6% read 'The Statesman' and 4% 'Hindustan Times' (English newspapers).

Areas of Interest / Subjects Preference for Reading**Newspapers:****Table 6: Interest areas in Newspapers**

Items	Percentage (%) (Out of 105 in each category)
Agricultural news	4%
Art/Culture news	4%
Educational / Career news	70%
Entertainment news	91%
Finance/Economics news	44%
Health news	30%
Political news	69%
Religious news	28%
Social news	59%
Sports news	9%

It is found that 91% students prefer to read 'Entertainment news', followed by 70% 'Educational / Career news', 69% 'Political news', 59% students prefer to read 'Social news', 44% 'Finance/ Economics news', 30% 'health news', 28% 'Religious news', 9% 'Sports news', 4% 'Agricultural news' and 4% Art/ Culture news respectively.

Importance of Newspaper to Social Science Students:**Table 7: Importance of Newspaper to Social Science Students**

Level of importance in reading newspapers for Social Science students						
Statements	Total (%)				Mean	Importance level
	SA	A	DA	SDA		
1. Newspapers are an easily accessible primary source of information	46	35	17	2	3.25	Moderate

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2. Information on newspapers is fulfilling my need / purpose	55	17	24	4	3.24	Moderate
3. Information in the newspapers is reliable and correct on Social Science subjects	26	51	11	12	2.90	Moderate
4. Social science related current information found in the newspapers is not available elsewhere	70	21	9	00	3.61	High
5. Newspaper is an important tool for Social Science students	63	18	7	12	3.31	Moderate

In this table when the respondents were asked about statement-1, they said that they thought newspapers has moderate level (Mean= 3.25) of importance as a primary source of information. Information on newspapers (statement-2) are fulfilling their needs and moderate importance (Mean= 3.24) is found about this statement. Moderate level (Mean= 2.90) of importance is found when they were asked about newspaper as a reliable and correct source of information (statement-3) for Social Science subjects. They thought that current information on newspaper cannot be found elsewhere (statement-4) and high level of importance (Mean= 3.61) of newspapers is found here. Moderate level of importance (Mean= 3.31) is found when they were asked about newspaper as an important tool for Social Science students (statement-5).

Findings

- The frequency of reading newspaper was moderate as maximum number of students reads only occasionally.
- Maximum respondents preferred to read to get 'academic/career news' (75%). Also, high percentage of respondents prefer to read as 'hobby or time pass' (61%). But the study confirmed that use of newspaper for academic purpose (35% for preparing answers and 23% for project work is low and needs to be improved.
- Inspiration for reading newspapers was not up to the mark. So, parents can play a major role improving reading habit. Library staff can organize orientation programme for promoting newspaper reading habit. Brothers/ sisters and

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even friends can motivate.

- Maximum students read only 1 or 2 newspapers (for both Bengali & English newspapers). Thus, newspaper reading habit of different newspaper needed to be promoted.
- Majority of students were interested in entertainment news, education / career news and political news. But they needed to read more variety of news.
- High level of importance was found when newspaper was considered as source of Social Science information which has hardly any alternative.
- Moderate levels of importance were found when newspaper was considered as primary source; as fulfilling respondents need; as reliable and correct source and as an important tool for Social Science students.

Conclusion

The study was initiated keeping in view of the importance of newspaper as a source of information for academic purpose. It showed that students are moderately regular in reading newspapers. Their main intention of reading newspapers was for entertainment news. But academic / career news also held an important place. Parents, siblings, teachers, library staff etc. can play important role in inspiring students to read newspapers. Different types of newspapers (in mother tongue and in English) are recommended for students to create diversity in reading. Library can play crucial role in promoting reading habit. Lastly, newspaper is considered as such a source of information which has hardly any alternative. So, students are needed to be made more aware of the importance of newspaper as a source to various types of news that are relevant to their subject of study.

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