

Newspaper reading habits of Undergraduates in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan

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Abstract

Newspaper is one of the most popular and reliable types of media among students. Newspaper reading is considered as a most advantageous activity for students of all ages as it enhances knowledge and information of reader. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the habits of reading newspaper among the students in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan as well as the factors affecting their habits of reading newspaper. A quantitative survey was used to collect the relevant data of the study. A total of 103 questionnaires were administered among the students in Literature & Language faculty in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan. The outcomes of data showed that the habits of reading newspaper among the students are poor. About 30 minutes per day was spent in reading newspaper. The respondents also read newspaper sometimes in a typical week. The most dominant factor affecting their habits of reading newspaper was radio & TV.

1. Introduction

Newspaper is one of the most widespread media among teenagers (Hayati et al., 2012). It updates readers about the world events in general (Ogunrumbi et al, 1995). Newspaper is the most important medium for students as it publishes numerous subjects in the form of print media in dissimilar languages (Kumar et al., 2011). Also, it assists in developing reading habits, knowledge, and information among students (Kumar et al., 2011). Likewise, the potential power that the media possesses is significant in rebuilding the backward societies like Afghanistan. This is evident as Frankel, Schoemaker and Himelfarb (2010) described that media has positive impact on the reconstruction of the nation after it was destroyed during the war.

Newspaper is one of the reading materials that have responsibility for building reading habits, which is seen to be essential for the different levels of the students. Regularly reading newspaper is considered a good habit. It is perceived that the students who read newspaper on a regular basis are more proficient and aware about the events that happen near or far away world (Elmadwi, 2014). By reading newspapers, students can get information on various subjects such as social-political-business issues, sports, entertainment, art, culture, music, education (Elmadwi, 2014). Majumder and Hasan (2013) stated that newspaper is a wonder of modern science as it transfers news and views of home and world to us. Newspaper reading is a familiarized reading which influences readers to find and enter the store house of knowledge on daily basis.

2. Literature Review

According to Elmadwi (2014) newspaper is a very good reading material for readers of all ages. All students enjoy various type of reading and visual materials deliver by newspapers. However, the habit of reading newspaper among students in some Asian countries such as India and China reported to be strong as compared to development countries like the U.S. and UK (Hooke, 2012). In Asia, countries such as China and India have experienced significant growth in terms of habits of reading newspaper over the past few years (Hooke, 2102). Heman (2003) conducted a survey study among the school students in Hong Kong. The study revealed that the habits of reading newspaper among the students are good. The study also found

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that a considerable number of students in Hong Kong read newspaper. Another study conducted by Kumar et al., (2011) in India. The study carried out among the university students discovered that the habits of reading newspaper among the university students are strong. The majority of Indian university students read newspaper 1-2 hour daily. Similarly, Rajpar et al., (2010) administered their study in Pakistan among the university students. It was found that the habits of newspaper reading among the students are good. Majority (77.33%) of them read newspaper. Also, Elmadwi (2014) study performed among the university students in Bangladesh. The study outcomes showed the habits of reading newspaper among the students are good. Most of university students in Bangladesh spent 1-2 hour per day reading newspaper.

According to the previous studies there are a few factors that contribute to low readership of newspapers globally. In addition, these factors differ somehow from one country to another. These are literacy, online penetration and parent role.

One of the motives which has a significant role in the shaping and growth of newspaper reading among the population is literacy. In the countries such as India, the newspaper industry has dramatically increased because of the growth of literacy (Hooke, 2012). On the other hand, in the countries like Afghanistan where there is a low level of literacy (60%) among the population, literacy is the main motive of fewer reading habit among the population (Medley, 2010; Cary, 2011).

Hooke (2012), Santhanam and Rosentiel (2011) described technology as another factor in decreasing newspaper readership in most developed countries such as the U.S, and UK which catches the attention of youth akin to cable TV, internet, and satellite. In the meantime, according to the Indian Readership Survey (2012) one of the most widely read English language newspaper is The Times of India, with a widely readership that increases throughout the country. In addition, the survey found for the last quarter of 2012, The Times of India average issue readership of over 7.6 million. The newspaper has retained this dominant position by maintaining leadership of key (Indian Readership Survey, 2012). Moreover, the majority of the previous studies argued that parents have a considerable role on their children habits of reading newspaper (Heman, 2003; Martireet al., 2004; Ogunrombi et al., 1995).

3. Methodology

A quantitative survey was used to collect the relevant data of the study. A total of 103 questionnaires were administered among the first, second, third and fourth year students of Language and Literature Faculty in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan. The data were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

4. Results

This section introduces the demographic information of respondents in terms of their ages, genders and academic years. Also, this part explains scores and results of statistical procedures used to examine the research questions under the investigation. The following is a summary of results.

Respondents' Profile

The demographic part consists of three items namely genders, ages and academic years. The following explains the demographic information of respondents involved in the study.

The Respondents' Ages

Table 1.1 shows that 26 (25.2%) students are 25 and above and 38 (36.9%) students' ages ranged from 18 to 20 years old. The largest groups of students are 39 (37.9%) comprised of those in the age groups of 21-25 years. The smallest groups of respondents 26 (25.2%) are 25 and above.

Table 1.1: The Respondents' Ages

	Frequency	Percent
18- 20	38	36.9
21-25	39	37.9
25-above	26	25.2
Total	103	100.0

The Respondents' Genders

Table 1.2 shows the number of male and female students that took part in the study. Of the 103 total students who participated in the study. Majority i.e. 57 (55.3%) of them are male, while 46 (44.7%) are female.

Table 1.2: The Respondents' Genders

	Frequency	Percent
Male	57	55.3
Female	46	44.7
Total	103	100.0

The Respondents' Academic Year

Table 1.3 shows the respondents' academic year. The table shows among the 103 respondents, 34 (33%) are fourth year students and 26 (25.2%) are second year students. Twenty three (22.3%) are third year students, and 20 (19.4%) are first year students. Therefore, the large numbers of respondents are fourth year students, while the least are from the first year students.

Table 4.4: the respondents' academic year

	Frequency	Percent
First year	20	19.4
Second year	26	25.2
Third year	23	22.3
Fourth year	34	33.0
Total	103	100.0

Research question and findings of the study

The analyses of data done based on the survey questionnaire items. The first part of questionnaire relates to the habits of reading newspaper among the students. The following research question was formulated:

Research Question 1: What is the habit of reading newspaper of the Al-Beroni university students?

The students were asked in a typical week how often they read a newspaper from always to never on four point Likert scale. A majority (43.7%) of them read newspaper sometimes in a typical week. Almost two fifths (38.9%) of them reported that they rarely read a newspaper in a typical week. From all of them, 8.7% read a newspaper regularly in a typical week, while 10.7% of them answered they never read a newspaper in a typical week. Most participants responded that they read newspaper from 30 minutes to one hour per day on the days they read a newspaper (30.1%), compared to 26.2% spending one and half hour reading a paper, and 24.5% spending less than 15 minutes reading the newspaper. Just above ten percent (10.7%) of respondents read less than fifteen minutes newspaper, while 8.7% of them spending more than two hours per day with the newspaper.

Table 4.5: Habits of Reading Newspaper among Students

	Frequency	Percent
Frequency of reading newspaper in a typical week		
Always	9	8.7
Sometimes	45	43.7
Rarely	38	36.9
Never	11	10.7
Total	103	100.0
Time spend reading a newspa		
Less than 15 minutes	11	10.7
15 to 30 minutes	25	24.3
30 minutes to one hour	31	30.1
One hour to 1.5 hours	27	26.2
Two or more hours	9	8.7
Total	103	100.0

The second part of questionnaire relates to the factors affecting habits of reading newspaper among the students. Five items designed based on Likert's scale to figure out the factors affecting the habits of reading newspaper. The following research question was formulated:

Research Question: Which factors affect the habits of reading newspaper among the students?

The students were asked to identify the factors affecting their habits of reading newspaper. Table 4.6 shows the mean and standard deviation for each questionnaire item. Item 4 concerning the use of Radio & TV obtained the highest mean ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.27$). The result suggests that the students were mostly inclined to use of Radio & TV rather than the newspapers. On the other hand, item 2 pertaining to encouragements of student by their parents obtained the lowest mean ($M=1.86$, $SD=.96$). It indicates that the majority of students encouraged by their parents to read the newspaper.

Table 4.6: Factors Affecting the Habits of Reading Newspaper of the Students

Nos.	Items	Mean	SD
1	I want to read a newspaper but the social net workings do not allow me to do so.	2.63	1.13
2	I am not encouraged by my parents to read a newspaper.	1.86	.92
3	I would prefer to use Radio and TV channels to keep me update with current world news rather than reading newspapers.	2.91	1.27
4	I do not have spare time to read newspaper.	2.61	1.19
5	I would prefer to read news on mobile devices.	2.80	1.14

5. Discussion of Findings

According to the results of quantitative data, the habits of reading newspaper among the undergraduates are poor. The results showed that the students allocate less time to read the newspaper. Based on the section of habits of reading newspaper questions of quantitative data, the majority of students read a newspaper sometimes in a typical week. It shows low habits level of reading newspaper among the students. This finding of the current study on the fewer reading habits of newspaper among the undergraduates in Al-Beroni university of Afghanistan is similar with the findings of some previous studies carried out in other countries. A survey study conducted by Wilson (2007) in the United States of America (USA) found that the habits of reading newspaper among the college students 'were very poor. The study stated that a few number of American college students read a newspaper once in a typical week. Instead the American students had a considerable interest to read on internet.

The outcomes of data also revealed that there are some factors affecting the habits of reading newspaper among the students in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan. Based on the results of quantitative data, the majority of the students were inclined to use radio and television rather than reading a newspaper as their sources of news and information. Accordingly, radio and TV were found as dominant factors affecting their habits of reading newspaper.

This finding is similar to that of Heman (2003) performed a study in Hong Kong. The study found that one of the main factors affecting habits of reading newspaper among the school students is existing use of radio and TV. The study added that a significant number of Hong Kong students preferred listening radio and watching TV than newspaper. Wilson (2007) study carried out among the college students in the USA. It was found that college students spent most of their time using electronic media. The college students were much more interested to use internet, subsequently radio and television. Rajpar et al.,(2010) in Pakistan discovered that a significant amount of University students viewed television than reading newspaper.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that the habit of reading newspaper among the students in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan is poor. They read newspaper sometimes in a week. About 30 minutes per day was allocated for reading newspaper. Concerning the factors affecting the habits of reading newspaper, the results showed that the radio and TV were dominant factors affecting their habits of reading newspaper.

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