



NEWSPAPER CONTENT PREFERENCES - A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Hindu and The Times of India are the two best-known English newspapers in India. The circulation of The Hindu has crossed 1 lakh readership milestone in Coimbatore. This represents more than combined readership figure of all other English dailies put together and specifically 3.5 times the readership of Times. The Hindu provides good editorial excellence and commitment in providing news in an interesting and engaging manner, has thus reinforced its supremacy as most preferred English daily. The Hindu therefore puts a wider emphasis on news such as National and International news than entertainment, whereas The Times has alarming high focus on ads, crime, entertainment such as spoofs, gossips, Bollywood, eats out, fashion, youth of the country than the actual news. Therefore this survey will enable the newspapers to customize the contents of various sections to individual needs and preferences.

KEYWORDS : newspaper, readership, The Hindu, The Times of India.**1. Introduction**

A newspaper in the modern society has great social and educative value. It is a common media of giving news along with views. Its principal aim is to supply news, information with different views through comments, articles and editorials. It is therefore, called the 'people's university'. Different people expect different things from the newspaper. For example a business man wants to know the market trends, a farmer is eager to know the weather report; a book reader wants to know about the latest arrivals. A newspaper satisfies them all like an intimate friend.

The main purpose of the newspaper is to let know about the world problems and their solutions. Information that comes to us from newspaper all round the world is known as the news. It may be general or special interest, most often published daily or weekly, monthly or fortnightly. Newspaper have four basic functions- to inform, to interpret the news, to provide a service to readers and to entertain. These functions explains what the newspaper does, and why people read newspaper.

(i) Newspaper help readers become informed citizens and make better decisions by providing lots of facts. Hard news stories about national, international and local news, vital statistics, weather, sports stories and scores and event calendars are examples of items that help inform readers. (ii) Some newspaper articles help interpret or explain the meaning of news to readers. These stories often include the opinion of the writer or newspaper management. Editorials, opinion columns, news analysis and reviews are some examples. (iii) Newspaper stories provide information that helps readers solve their business, home, fashion, food, recreation and daily living problems. Ads assist in informing readers about products and services. Hard news stories, feature stories, classifieds ads and display ads are items that provide a service. (iv) Some items in the newspaper are designed to amuse or provide enjoyment to readers. Feature stories, comics, puzzles, movies, and humor columns are entertainment items.

Reading newspapers everyday is must for both students and adults for growth and enlightenment irrespective of the class or field of their life.

2. Literature Review

Geetha (2012), The study enhanced the attitude of the readers towards Dinakaran daily newspaper and also the study examined the impact factors affecting attitude and satisfaction level of the newspaper. Sample size of 150 subscribers of Dinakaran Daily were used for the study. Simple percentage method were used for statistical analysis. The respondents are highly satisfied with the content of the Dinakaran Daily, majority 84% have excellent opinion about the availability of the newspaper, majority of the readers are ready to recommend Dinakaran Daily to others, the price motivated them to subscribe Dinakaran Daily and 56% of the respondents are highly satisfied with

impartiality of news in Dinakaran Daily.

Rashmi Gupta and H V Gokhale (2012), In their study attempted to identify the satisfaction and perception of the customers with special reference towards Nagpur region. The sampling technique used is simple random sampling. A comprehensive and structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. Among the four newspapers, The Hitavada and Lokmat enjoy high readership as per the survey. This is because the customers showed high satisfaction level towards these newspapers' state coverage, supplements and sports coverage.

Sivakumar and Tamilselvan (2015), "Newspaper reading habits of college students: A case study of Kalaigarr Karunanidhi Institute of Technology". The study explored the use of newspapers among college students. A questionnaire and personal interviews were used for data collection. The collected data are tabulated using statistical table and percentage. The study discovered that majority of the students read newspaper in English language, the time spent is one to two hours only, the students read newspapers to get information and to improve their knowledge, most popular newspapers are The Hindu Tamil and The Hindu English and students prefer to read Headline News sections.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To assess the comparative content preferences in the main newspaper.
2. To assess the comparative content preferences in the supplement newspaper.
3. To provide appropriate suggestions based on the study.

4. Research Methodology

The research area is restricted to Coimbatore city in TamilNadu and the study period is from July 2016 to October 2016. The sample size is 200 respondents out of whom 100 were readers' of The Hindu and 100 were readers' of The Times of India. The selection of sample is based on convenient sampling method. Primary data was used for the study and it was collected by means of a structured questionnaire developed for the study. The statistical tools used here were Weighted Mean Rank and Kendalls' Co-Efficient of Concordance.

5. Limitations of the study

The study is based on convenient sampling which is a type of non-random sampling. Hence the limitations of non-random sampling are applicable. The attitudes of the consumer may change from time to time. Hence the result of the project may be applicable for the present situation.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

This section deals with analysis and interpretation of a study on

newspaper content preferences of The Hindu and The Times of India newspapers. Appropriate statistical tools were applied on the data collected from the samples and presented in the form of tables under various headings:

(I) Content Preferences of Main Newspaper

In order to measure and assess the comparative preference of the content in the main section of the paper and the supplement paper of the two leading newspapers taken for study, questions were framed separately for the two. In the main section of the newspaper, the variables considered were business news, sports news, first page, editorial, city news, national and international news, state news, science and technology and others.

Table 1 : Content preferences of Main Newspaper

CONTENTS OF MAIN NEWSPAPER	WEIGHTED MEAN RANK			
	THE HINDU		THE TIMES OF INDIA	
	Weighted Mean	Rank	Weighted Mean	Rank
Business News	4.97	5	5.09	6
Sports News	5.39	7	5.24	7
First Page	3.94	1	3.97	2
Editorial	3.96	2	3.75	1
City News	5.36	6	4.96	5
National / International News	4.25	3	4.77	3
State News	4.39	4	4.89	4
Science & Technology	6.18	8	6.43	9
Others	6.56	9	5.89	8

In view of the content preferences of main newspapers, the first page of The Hindu newspaper were given first importance whereas as in case of The Times of India newspaper editorial section were given due importance. Lastly the other sections of The Hindu newspaper were ranked ninth, but with the case of The Times ninth rank were given to the section Science and technology.

(ii) Content Preferences of Supplement Newspaper

In the supplement papers, the variables considered were fashion & beauty, movies, cuisine, health, religion, travel, education, classifieds and games and comic strips. The respondents were asked to rank these two questions in their order preference giving rank 1 to the highly preferred section, rank 2 to the next preference etc. The mean rank were calculated for the variables and presented in the following sections to assess the comparative preferences.

Table 2 : Content preferences of Supplement Newspaper

CONTENTS OF MAIN NEWSPAPER	WEIGHTED MEAN RANK			
	THE HINDU		THE TIMES OF INDIA	
	Weighted Mean	Rank	Weighted Mean	Rank
Fashion & Beauty	5.20	5	3.60	3
Movies	3.98	4	3.57	2
Cuisine	5.59	6	5.56	6
Health	3.88	3	4.89	5
Religion	6.68	9	6.41	7
Travel	6.13	7	6.61	8
Education	3.57	1	6.84	9
Classifieds	3.74	2	3.23	1
Games & Comic Strips	6.22	8	4.29	4

Whereas in view of the content preferences of supplement newspapers, first rank were given to the section education in case of The Hindu newspaper and classifieds were given first rank in case of The Times newspaper. Classifieds were given second rank in case of The Hindu and the section movies were ranked second in case of The Times and the other sections of the were ranked in the order of the readers' preference.

(iii) Content Preferences -Kendalls' Co-efficient of Concordance

This analysis is used for assessing agreement among raters. For this purpose the sections of Main Newspaper and Supplements Newspapers are rated in order to find the agreement between the raters of these two newspapers.

Table 3: Level of Agreement in the Content Preferences of Main and Supplement Newspaper

MAIN NEWSPAPER	KENDALLS' CO-EFFICIENT OF CONCORDANCE	
	THE HINDU	THE TIMES OF INDIA
	0.121	0.093
SUPPLEMENT NEWSPAPER	0.199	0.266

The main sections of The Hindu and The Times of India newspapers inferred that the agreement between raters were 12% and 9% respectively and as in the case of supplement newspaper the agreement between the raters of The Hindu and The Times of India were said to be 19% and 26% respectively.

1. Findings

The content preferences of main newspapers, the first page of The Hindu newspaper were given first importance whereas as in case of The Times of India newspaper editorial section were given due importance. As in the case of supplement newspaper first rank were given to the section education in case of The Hindu and classifieds were given first rank in case of The Times .

The level of agreement regarding the content preferences in the main newspaper between the readers of the Hindu is higher than the level of agreement between the readers of the Times of India whereas the content preferences in the supplement newspaper between the readers of The Times is higher than the level of agreement between the readers of The Hindu newspaper.

2. Suggestions

The Hindu

- The newspaper can focus on the special requirements of the student category to provide information in fulfilling their educational needs and to meet their career and employability prospects.
- It should mainly focus on the sections of the supplements such as games and comics, religion and travel.

The Times of India

- Revisions in the contents of the first page of the newspaper, the layout etc may be considered to increase satisfaction.
- The newspaper should focus towards education, travel, religious aspects of news in the supplements.

3. Conclusion

Though The Hindu and The Times of India are known as the best leading English newspapers but they are facing a lot of competition. For this purpose the study was taken to study the readership pattern, content preferences of reading newspaper and to analyse the level of satisfaction of the readers. The results of the study will provide interesting insights for both the newspapers in terms of these characteristics which they could utilize for their further advancements.

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