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Reading behavior of the newspaper readers during pandemic COVID-19

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Abstract
Media play a very significant role in the life of every individual. Media work as disseminating the information to people and helps in making their opinions and perception towards world. The present study was conducted in Yamunanagar district of Haryana state covering two localities (50 from each) were selected. Various socio personal, economic, communication variables, media ownership, media exposure, constituted independent variables and reading frequency, pattern and response constituted dependent variables. Three newspaper were selected on the basis of maximum circulation in the area and these were two english newspaper *viz*; The Hindu and The Tribune and one hindi daily i.e. Punjab Kesari. Majority of the respondents were read newspapers regularly, majority of the respondents spent 15-30 minutes for reading newspaper. Readers prefer news reading over other content. Headlines and pictures were the motivational factors for reading newspaper. All the respondents liked the content and majority had also discussed it with others. Finally concluded, there was positive feedback by the respondents regarding newspaper reading.

Keywords: Reading behaviour, pandemic COVID-19, newspaper

Introduction

A newspaper is a form of print media which provides knowledge of all the latest news and events happening in the world. Since, its origin in 17th century, the newspaper has become an essential part of our daily life. There were many crises in the print media but with the support of the readers, the print media in the country continued to expand (Jadhav, 2020) [5]. The novel coronavirus, which is taxonomically termed as SARS-CoV-2 and named by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "Covid-19". The rapid transmission of this virus from human to human made the World Health Organization (WHO) declared this as a public health emergency of international concern and called it a global pandemic (Vasantha and Patil, 2020) [12]. As the number of Covid-19 patients increased, this hit the country's print media. As mentioned by (Banerji and Banerji, 2020) [2] the lockdown cooled the production of newspapers and magazines. There were also problems with the distribution system. As a result, the print media across the country was disrupted. Fear of the corona virus spreading through newspapers was expressed on social media. Many readers stopped handling newspapers. Distributors also refused to distribute newspapers. In 2020, Covid-19 became the trigger for a media consumption shift that was both swift and brutal in its consequences. The reading behaviour of people has changed to a large extent (The Hindu, 2020) [11]. The outbreak of pandemic Covid-19 has taught us that change is inevitable. It has worked as a catalyst for educational institutions to grow and opt for platforms with technologies that have never been used before. During pandemic Covid-19, the use of whatsapp, skype, youtube, etc. became the effective mode of communication. E-medium has become prominent in the communication process (Jena, 2020) [6]. Newspapers are an important source of health and nutrition information for many readers. The information published in the newspaper play vital role during pandemic Covid-19. (Maheshwar and Rao, 2012) [9].

Need of the study

As Covid-19 arrived, it modified the way readers typically read. People's reading habits have also evolved. They no longer prefer to read the same content, and their reading habits have altered. Therefore, this study will aid in determining readers' reading habits following the Covid-19 outbreak.

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Methodology
English newspapers *viz*; The Hindu and The Tribune and hindi daily *Punjab Kesari* were selected to find out the reader's behavior towards pandemic Covid-19. The newspapers were selected on the basis of maximum distribution of these dailies in the selected district. The study was conducted in Yamunanagar district of Haryana state and 100 respondents (50 males and 50 females) were chosen randomly from two localities i.e. Luxmi garden and Model town respectively. The selected respondents were selected in age group from 30-50 years because this age group category supposed to have active readers of the selected newspapers. On the basis of extensive reviews, relevant literature, the variables and their measurement for the study were selected which are described as under: Independent variable which included personal and socio-economic variable; Communicable variable included media ownership and media exposure and the Dependent variable included reading pattern, reading frequency and reading response. A well-structured and pretested interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection including all the variables of the study.

Frequency, percentage, weighted mean and rank score were calculated for the purpose of data analysis.

Results
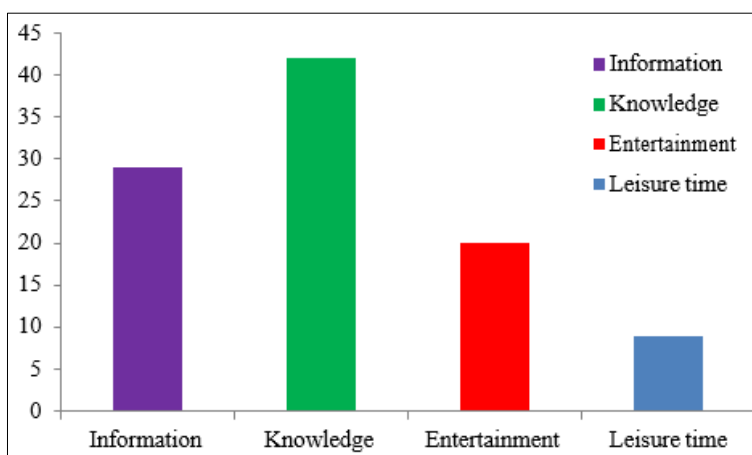### Reading purposes of the respondents
Fig 1 depicts that most of the respondents (42%) read newspapers for improving their knowledge achieved 1st rank which was followed by 29 percent of the respondents read for information occupied 2nd rank. It was found that 20 percent of the respondents read newspapers for entertainment with 3rd rank and remaining 9 percent of the respondents were at 4th rank who read newspapers for leisure time purpose.

Table 1: Reading purposes of the respondents N=100

Sr. No.	Purpose	f(%)	Rank
1.	Information	29(29.0)	II
2.	Knowledge	42(42.0)	I
3.	Entertainment	20(20.0)	III
4.	Leisure time	9(9.0)	IV

Multiple Response Table

Fig 1: Reading frequency of the respondents

Frequency to read newspapers
Data pinpoints in Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents (81%) read newspapers regularly with rank 1st which was followed by 2nd rank for occasionally readers (15%) and least were rare readers (4%) with 3rd rank respectively.

Time spent on reading newspaper/day
It is obvious from the data in Table 2 that third fourth of the respondents spent 15-30 minutes approximately in reading newspaper ranked 1st which was followed by the respondents (24%) spent between 30-60 minutes in reading newspaper, with 2nd rank, remaining only 1 percent spent more than 60 minutes with ranked 3rd respectively.

Table 2: Reading frequency of the respondents N=100

Sr. No.	Reading Behaviour			Responses	f(%)	Rank
1.	Frequency to read newspapers			Regularly	81(81.0)	I
				Occasionally	15(15.0)	II
				Rarely	04(4.0)	III
2.	Time spent newspaper/day	on	reading	15-30min. (approx.)	75(75.0)	I
				31- 60 min (approx.)	24(24.0)	II
				More than 60 minutes	1(1.0)	III

Multiple Response Table

Items wise reading pattern of the respondents towards pandemic Covid-19
It is well exhibit in Table 3 reveals that most of the respondents gave first rank to news related to pandemic Covid-19 with weighted mean score 3.98 which was followed by photographs (weighted mean score 3.9 with rank 2nd), political (weighted mean score 3.4 with 3rd rank), articles with (weighted mean score 3.11 with 4th rank), features (weighted mean score 2.41 with 5th rank) and editorials (weighted mean score of 1.91 with 6th rank) respectively.

Table 3: Items wise reading pattern of the respondents about pandemic Covid-19 N=100

Sr. No.	Items	Frequency				Weighted mean score	Rank
		Regularly (4)	Frequently (3)	Occasionally (2)	Casually (1)		
1.	Editorials	8	15	37	40	1.91	VI
2.	Articles	55	18	10	17	3.11	IV
3.	Features	44	15	20	25	2.41	V
4.	News	98	2	0	0	3.98	I
5.	Photographs	96	2	2	0	3.90	II
6.	Political	70	12	4	16	3.40	III

Preferences of reading subjects in newspaper

The different subjects in newspapers were studied for their preferences by respondents and recorded in Table 4. Multiple responses were taken to study these variables and found that majority of the respondents (90%) preferred health and nutrition section which was followed by laws and defence (89%), development program (83%), government social advertisement (80%), women issues (79%), an equal number of respondents preferred subjects for environment and business section (79% each), entertainment (77%), political news (70%), an equal number of respondents preferred subjects for education and sports (65% each), (62%) respondents prefer culture section, science and technology and medical have equal number of preference (60% each). Agriculture, employment, sudoku and fillers (comic strip, editorial cartoon) had (58%, 53%, 52% and 51%) of the respondents respectively.

Table 4: Preferences of reading subjects in newspaper N=100

| Sr. No.	Subject	Preference	
		f(%)	Rank
1.	Health and Nutrition	90(90.0)	I
2.	Laws and defence	89(89.0)	II
3.	Developmental programs	83(83.0)	III
4.	Government social advertisements	80(80.0)	IV
5.	Women issues	79(79.0)	V
6.	Environment	79(79.0)	V
7.	Business	79(79.0)	V
8.	Entertainment	77(77.0)	VI
9.	Political	70(70.0)	VII
10.	Education	65(65.0)	VIII
11.	Sports	65(65.0)	VIII
12.	Culture	62(62.0)	IX
13.	Science and technology	60(60.0)	X
14.	Medical	60(60.0)	X
15.	Agriculture	58(58.0)	XI
16.	Employment	53(53.0)	XII
17.	Sudoku	53(52.0)	XIII
18.	Fillers (comic strip, editorial cartoon)	51(51.0)	XIV

Multiple Response Table

Motivating factors for respondents to read newspapers

Fig 2 highlights that majority of the respondents preferred headlines and pictures (80% each) which, was followed by well written stories (78%), design (30%) and layout (18%) as a motivating factors to read newspapers.

Table 5: Motivating factors for respondents to read newspapers N=100

Sr. No.	Factors	f(%)	Rank
1.	Headlines	80(80.0)	I
2.	Design	30(30.0)	III
3.	Layout	18(18.0)	IV
4.	Pictures	80(80.0)	I
5.	Well written stories	78(78.0)	II
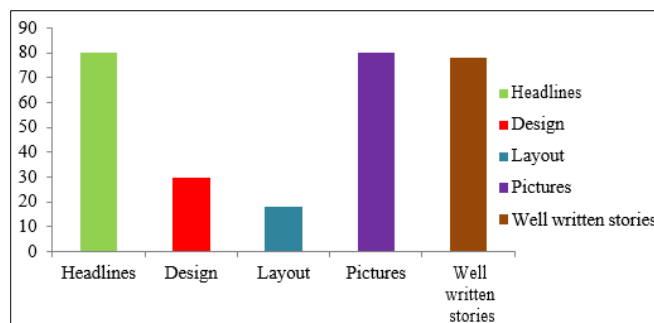
Fig 2: Motivating factors for respondents to read newspapers

Reading responses of the respondents about pandemic Covid-19

Reading response is a type of literary analysis that emphasizes the reader's response to a literature. Table 6 highlights the reading responses about the pandemic Covid-19 by the respondents. Majority of the respondents (98%) liked the content and (97%) discussed it with others and cent percent of the respondents (100%) applied it at their homes and workplaces.

Table 6: Reading responses of the respondents about pandemic Covid-19 N=100

Sr. No.	Responses	f(%)
1.	Liked the content	98(98.0)
2.	Discussed it with others	97(97.0)
	Apply it: (i) At their home	100(100.0)
	(ii) At workplaces	100(100.0)

Conclusion

The entire weight of data indicates that nearly half of the respondents read newspaper for knowledge and information purpose. Maximum number of the respondents read newspaper regularly and maximum readers spent time on newspaper for approximately 15-30 minutes. News reading was found to be most regularly reading choice of the respondents. Extreme number of the respondents preferred health and nutrition subject in the newspaper and it was also found to be the most effective content. Majority of the respondents preferred reading headlines and pictures which act as a motivational factor. The cause of this might be because they have a hectic schedule and little personal time throughout the day. Overwhelming percentage of the respondents liked the content, discussed it with others and cent per cent applied it at their home and work place. A positive readers' response has been received.

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