

# Preference Content of Undergraduates in Al-Beroni University Of Afghanistan in Newspaper

<sup>1</sup>Ahmad Jahed Mushtaq, <sup>2</sup>Dr Zuraina BT Ali

<sup>1,2</sup>Centre for Modern Language and Human Science (CMLHS), University Malaysia Pahang (UMP)

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**Abstract:** Reading is making use of mind in order to grasp the most important points of a text. Newspaper reading increases students' knowledge, information, as well as it improves reader's language abilities. As they provide fresh information on variety areas of sciences. The aim of this paper is to find the favourite contents of undergraduates in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan in reading newspapers. This was done using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A total of 97 questionnaires were administered among the students in Literature and language Faculty of Al-Beroni University, and also ten students were interviewed. Findings show that the vast majority of students are interested to read the latest local and international issues of newspaper. Also, they read newspaper to enhance their knowledge and information.

**Keywords:** newspaper reading habits, Undergraduates.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential element of education. It enhances students' awareness about their interested issues such as politics, economic, social, culture, and education (Faizli, 2012). Newspaper has a very effective role in creating reading habits among the readers (Kumar, Rajkumar, & Siddiqui, 2011). Someone who read newspaper is interested to read books and other reading materials. Also, newspapers are full of reading issues, for instance they provide fresh information about the present, past and future events of the world. Newspapers are considered as advantageous tools for audiences want to be updated of day-to-day issues (Kumar, Rajkumar, & Siddiqui, 2011). In addition to that, newspaper reading improves the reader language abilities, because they are written in miscellaneous languages (Akpinar, 2012) as well as publish in standardize languages (Rajpar, Salim & Hassan, 2010).

### 1.1 Background of the Study

This study has been done in a developing public University of Afghanistan. Al-Beroni University, which is located in the north of the country, having more than 2000 students from all across the country with wide area, consists of libraries. It has nine faculties and several departments. This study had been conducted among the Language and Literature Faculty students. This is because these students meet the requirements of this study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been conducted on newspaper reading habits. Results of these studies show that the newspaper reading habits has been decreasing in the past decades. In addition, these studies have looked to newspapers from different viewpoints. One of the focused points of previous studies is related with the favourite content of reader. According to the Readership Institute (2001), one of the most important factors attracts youth's attention to read newspaper is the content satisfaction. If the content provides towards the youth's choice, newspaper reading habits increases.

Additionally, previous studies described that youth are more interested in reading entertainments. They also prefer cartoon and comedy, horoscope, movie and sports occupy their free times (Hayati *et al.* 2012; Arvidson, 2008; The Decode

Research Consultancy, 2008; Bentley, 2000). On the other hand, Hayati, Hayati *et al.* (2012) noted that in order to improve students' language and knowledge, newspapers should disseminate education programmes in the forms of entertainment.

Moreover, based on the previous studies, beside entertainments, youth are interested to different kinds of news, for instance snack news, political news, war news and local news. Youth also like lifestyle and youth section in newspaper, which echo youth's opinions and problems (Readership Institute, 2001; The Decode Research Consultancy, 2008). Besides, sport is the most favourite page of young generation (Heman, 2003).

Furthermore, Pardun and Scott (2004) conducted a study among the students in the U.S. They found different choices of whites and blacks in newspapers contents. Whites were interested to read news, comics, horoscopes and advice features while the blacks' favourite contents were local news, celebrity news, lifestyle and entertainment. There were no considerable distinctions in the U.S news, sports and entertainment between them.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In gathering data of the study, researcher used mixed method. A quantitative survey was used to collect relevant data. In order to have in-depth findings semi structured interviews were conducted with the students, as well.

#### 3.1 Participants

Participants of the study were bachelor students of Literature and Language faculty of A-Beroni University. These participants were randomly selected from the first, second, third and fourth year students. Ninety seven students randomly chosen as the subjects of quantitative data, and ten students were called for interviews. These participants were from all parts of the country.

#### 3.2 Instruments and Data Analyse

Instruments of this study were questionnaires and interview protocol questions. The questionnaire consists of 15 Lickert scale items, while the interview protocol questions contain nine open-ended items. Moreover, the quantitative data were analysed through SPSS using descriptive statistics, while themes were emerged from qualitative data analysis based on the research questions and responses of interviewees.

### 4. RESPONDENTS PROFILE

The demographic part of questionnaire consists of three items, which are gender, ages and education years. Following explains demographic information of respondents.

#### 4.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 4.1 depicts number of male and female students took part in the study. Of the 97 total students who participated in the study, majority 69 (71.1%) were male, while 28 (28.9%) were female. This indicates that the number of male students participated in the study is significant than the female. This is because in the research area of the study has been fewer female students.

**Table 1: Gender of respondents**

|        | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male   | 69        | 71.1    |
| Female | 28        | 28.9    |
| Total  | 97        | 100.0   |

#### 4.2 Ages of Respondents

Table 4.2 shows that 17 (17.5%) students aged 25 and above, and 38 (39.2%) students aged 18-20 years. The largest groups of students 42 (43.3%) comprised of those in the age groups of 21-25 years. The smallest groups of respondents 17 (17.5%) were 25 and above.

**Table 2: Ages of Respondents**

|          | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| 18- 20   | 38        | 39.2    |
| 21-25    | 42        | 43.3    |
| 25-above | 17        | 17.5    |
| Total    | 97        | 100.0   |

#### 4.3 Studying Year of Respondents

Table 4.3 depicts education years of respondents. As it shows of the 97 respondents 29 (29.9%) were fourth year students and 26 (26.8%) were second year students. Twenty two (22.7%) were third year students, and also 20 (20.6%) were first year students. Therefore the largest numbers of respondents were fourth year students, while least of them were first year students.

**Table 3: Studying Years of Respondents**

|             | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| First year  | 20        | 20.6    |
| Second year | 26        | 26.8    |
| Third year  | 22        | 22.7    |
| Fourth year | 29        | 29.9    |
| Total       | 97        | 100.0   |

## 5. FINDINGS

The results and findings of study are divided in two parts. First part presents quantitative data followed by qualitative data.

### 5.1 Quantitative Findings

The data of the study were collected through quantitative and qualitative methods in January and February 2014. A Total of 97 questionnaires were administered among the first, second, third and fourth years students of Literature Faculty in Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan.

Questionnaires are consisting of demographic information and newspaper reading habits questions. In addition, the questionnaire has 15 Lickert Scale items. Each item for example consists of strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and strongly disagrees. The value for strongly agree was given (5), while for strongly disagree was assigned (1), and for the rest of scales located within two above scales, given values were 4, 3, and 2. In order to know the reliability of questionnaire, all questions entered in to the (SPSS) Social Science Statistical Package. The Cronbach's Alpha rating for all items was .706.

#### 5.1.1 Favourite Content of Students

The students were asked concerning their favourite content in reading newspaper from 1 – “lowest” to 5 – “highest” on five point Likert scale. Table 4 shows the frequency of student answer and mean (standard deviation) for each questionnaire item. The results suggest that students were generally interested to read international news followed by local issues in newspapers as maximum ratings fell above 2, i.e. the average score.

**Table 4: Favourite content of students in newspaper**

| Preferences content  | Frequency |    |    |    |    | Mean | SD    |
|--|-----------|----|----|----|----|------|-------|
|  | 1         | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |      |       |
| I would prefer reading the front page of newspapers.           | 16        | 38 | 14 | 17 | 12 | 2.70 | 1.284 |
| I am interested read sports section in newspapers.             | 15        | 48 | 9  | 16 | 9  | 2.55 | 1.208 |
| I am interested in reading the entertainment.                  | 21        | 31 | 19 | 12 | 14 | 2.66 | 1.338 |
| I always read newspapers to get the latest international news. | 3         | 29 | 14 | 37 | 14 | 3.31 | 1.140 |
| I am interested to read local/state issues of newspapers.      | 7         | 26 | 21 | 34 | 9  | 3.12 | 1.130 |

## 5.2 Qualitative Findings

In collecting qualitative data ten students were interviewed; five male and five female. These participants were drawn from the first, second, third and fourth years students of Literature and Language faculty of Al-Beorni university. Interviews were conducted among the students using semi structured interviews. For reporting students' responses in the paper, students were asked to write his/her real name or pseudonym; all of them agreed to mention their real name, so researcher mentions real names of interviewees. Male interviewees are: Abdul Rashid Rashed, Ahmad Faiaq, Ahmad Khaled Aryan, Nasratullah Behroz, and Mohabat Habibi. Also females are: Lina, Taiaba, Mariam Moqadas, Husna and Khatera.

After data was collected, they were transcribed. The themes related to the research question of study were highlighted. The emerged themes were identified and categorised under the main theme, which is preference content.

### I. Preference content

Two themes-- 'Interest to informative issues' and 'Being informed of news issues'--emerged after the interview data were analysed in determining students preferences content in reading newspapers.

#### a) Interest to informative issues

This theme was emerged since the most of male and female students read newspapers to get information and enhance their knowledge. As Abdul Rashid Rashed, a male student usually read newspaper to improve his awareness and knowledge. In addition, the same idea was described by a female respondent, Mariam Moqadas who is also interested to read newspapers in order to uplift her information about her interested issues. She alleged:

Beside our university lessons we need extra information about the other issues. So newspaper can help us in this regards. We read newspaper because we want be aware of our society and other countries matters.

In the same way another female student, Husna mostly read to get information about everything. For example about news, sport youth and etc. Beside Taiba's opinion is also same. She read to get information about the other countries situation. She stated:

Of course I read in order to get familiar to other nations, and increase my information. Also I read in order to know about my country and other countries situation and events.

#### b) Being informed of news issues

This theme was emerged based on the male and female students' opinions regarding to their preference content in reading newspapers. Some of the students read newspapers for purpose of being informed about the latest national and international news of country and world. For example Lina, a female respondent, read newspaper for purpose of getting

news of her society and other nations. In addition, she also believed reading about the other countries events, increases capacity of students' awareness. In that order Khatera also reads to get news. She claimed:

There are two main purposes why I read newspaper. Firstly, newspapers help us to know what is going on in the world. It is very important for us to know about our society, and our province as well. And another thing is that by reading we can get extra information about everything happens.

Also Abdul Rashid Rashed read English newspaper to get news of states and out of the country. He also believes news is the most important for every person to be informed of current political, cultural, economic and social situations.

## 6. DISCUSSIONS

The outcomes of the quantitative data revealed that the majority of students were interested to read about international and local issues. Also, qualitative data supported quantitative data illustrated that the main purpose of students in reading newspapers was to get informative issues as well as being informed of news issues more than the other topics. Based on the students' opinions, reading of information issues increases their awareness and help students in shortage of their knowledge. They also believed having information uplift mental capacity of them and gives them academic advantages than the persons who do not read. In addition, students alleged reading of news keep them up-to-date of the world facts. Heighten their awareness about the other nation's political, cultural, economic and social situations. This finding of this study is similar to the Readership Institute (2003) findings. The study was conducted in the U.S found students are interested in different kinds of news, for instance snack news, political news, war news and local news.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the favourite content of students in Al-Beroni University in reading newspaper was assessed through this study. The outcomes of quantitative data revealed that the most of students were interested to read about the international and local issues. The results of qualitative were supportive of quantitative data and showed that the students were more inclined to informative and news issues of newspapers.

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