

Exploring Reading Habits of the Residents of Timergara, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa: Uses and Gratification Theory

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Abstract:

Newspaper is the main and important source of getting information, education and entertainment. By reading newspapers people can update themselves from current affairs and many other things occurring in the surrounding.

In this study, survey technique was used to collect data from 600 respondents through a questionnaire, to know about newspaper reading habits of the residents of Timergara, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Also to investigate what type of newspapers the residents prefer to read and what factors motivate them for reading it. Among the 600 respondents, 317 were male and 283 were female. The study demonstrates that 225 (71%) male and 144 (51%) read newspapers in which majority of the respondents have the habits of reading newspapers on daily basis. Moreover, the result shows that 130 (57.7%) male and 80 (55.5%) female respondents read newspaper for up to 15 minutes. This paper also highlights that majority of the residents prefer to read national newspaper and about 336 (91%) both male and female respondents read Urdu language for surveillance needs.

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INTRODUCTION

History reveals that press freedom and relationship between the print media and government has always been remaining crucial since that time, but instead of this situation newspaper has always remained a source of information and entertainment for the people (Hijazi *et al.*, 2004).

Apart of the boosting current technological development in the field of communication, newspaper especially in Pakistan is an important source of information, entertainment and education enables the readers in decision making process. In present developed world newspaper still have great importance because it is a cheaper way for the remote and backward areas' people to gratify themselves (Bangash, 2012).

Newspapers have become an integral part of almost every person and it has affected the lives of many people in so many ways. People are interested in reading the news/information related to politics, sports, militants, showbiz, etc. And for these types of gratification the people reads newspapers. Pakistani media is playing very active and vibrant role in taking national and international issues of public concerns. In some instance print media, especially national newspapers coverage and dissemination of information which is very important for its readers.

The present research study signifies the newspaper reading habits of the people of Timergara. The aim of this study was to analyze that how the respondents of Timergara gratify themselves by reading newspapers. Why and for what purpose they trend to read the newspaper?

Keeping in view facts the present research study is designed to investigate the newspaper reading habits,

newspaper reading effects and what type of effects newspapers have on their readers.

Lower Dir is one of the 26 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is the district in which the researcher has conducted his study in the capital city of the district. At that time the district was established in 1996 when the district was divided into two districts namely Upper Dir and Lower Dir. Timergara is main city and headquarter of the district. It has District Swat in the East, Afghanistan on the West-South, Bajaur Agency on West, Upper Dir on North-West and Malakand on the south. Pashto is the main spoken language of the population, followed by Kohistani and Gujri (Wikipedia, accessed on 11th June, 2015).

As concerned to the research study, the researcher has conducted study on the reading habits of the residents of Timergara. The people of district have facing many challenges like education, transportation, religious, social and economic problems. They are facing difficulties in getting education and have no access to the modern media technology like t.v and internet. So, newspaper and radio is the main source of information, education and entertainment.

Although, newspaper is the main source of information for local people but there is no local newspaper in the area. It means that all newspapers are been published from Peshawar and Mingora Swat.

BACKGROUND

The history of newspaper in sub-continent goes back to 18th century when in Bangal James Augustus started Hicky's Gazette or Calcutta General Advisor which introduced the concept of journalism in the sub-continent (Awan, 2009_a).

“The first Urdu newspaper Jam-i-Jahan Numa was launched in 1822 at Calcutta under the editorship of Lal Sadasukh Lal. It became the forerunner of an unbroken chain

of papers from many other centers and made it possible for Urdu language press to play a dominant role for many years to come” (Awan, 2009_a) The earliest authentic record about the state of Urdu press relates to 1848, when there were 26 newspapers in which 19 were in Urdu, 3 each in Hindi and Persian and one in Bangali (Awan, 2009_b).

Press in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is one of the fourth province of Pakistan, located in northwestern region of the country. It borders with the federally administered tribal areas, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, Balochistan and Punjab. The Islamabad lies on the southeast. Before partition, there were only two outstanding English newspaper published from Peshawar, the Khyber Mail and Frontier Gazette. Khyber Mail was launched as a weekly in 1932, and converted into a daily in 1950. The paper existed for a small duration. Now there are too many English newspaper are been published from the province (Hasan, 2007_a).

In Urdu press there were two newspapers published from Peshawar. And after the partition the first Urdu newspaper Daily Mashriq was started in 1964. Apart of this there are many Urdu newspaper which are been published from different cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on daily basis (Hasan, 2007_b).

Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and Gratification is the theory argues that people use media to gratify their needs. Uses and gratification theory has direct impact on its audience. People use media very frequently and specifically those media which provide them information which are useful for them. There are different ways in which people use media to gratify their different needs. People use media especially print media to get information about those events which they think are related with them. This type of gratification is called information and education. Different

research scholars used social scientific theories in Uses and Gratification. In the light of Uses and Gratification theory people read newspapers to fulfill their needs like, food, shelter, safety and satisfaction. The uses and gratification theory shift focus from the purpose of communicator to the purpose of receiver. Uses and gratification theory attempts to determine that what type of function mass media is doing for its audience. Needs and gratification of people may be put in five categories as information, surveillance, personal relationships, personal identity, and tension release. The uses and gratification approach explained that people read newspaper for various purposes. Some people read it to get information and entertain themselves while some use it for social interaction and escape from their problems (Wammer *et al.*, 2013).

Asokan & Dhanavandan (2013) explained in a study that “most of the professionals read newspapers to improve their general knowledge (Kenchakkanavar *et al.*, 2015) because it is the main source of information and education. Newspaper reading habits expand the knowledge and interest of people about himself and other human beings and things around the world.

Bruce E. Pinkleton stated in his study that people use media for information during election campaign about “because media gave coverage to different aspects of the candidate (Pinkleton *et al.*, 2011). The study reveals that people not only use newspaper as a source of information but it also helps them in making their decision. For example people select a political candidate for polling in election in the light of information available in newspapers or other media sources regarding his performance. Newspapers reading habits also help the students to prepare themselves for examination. Not only for information, the people also read newspapers for their inspiration and relaxation.

In short, uses and gratification is the theory of media in which the researchers Bernald Berelson *et al.*, described the

motivation of readers toward media. The readers are also selecting a particular content of newspaper which are more gratifying their needs and wants. The readers read newspapers for the basic needs like information, diversion, entertainment, integration and social relationships. The researchers also explained that different people are gratifying differently by using a specific medium or content. It means the people will look the content in their own point of view.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis of the study are;

- The residents of Timergara prefer to read Urdu newspapers for gratifying their needs.
- The residents of Timergara read local newspapers more often than the national newspapers for gratification of their needs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objectives of the study are:

- To document newspaper reading habits;
- To explore cognitive effects of newspaper on its readers;
- To explore how and to what extent the people of Timergara read news contents relating to their local social problem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For data collection survey research method was used. According to Devin Kowalczyk, "A survey is defined as a brief interview or discussion with individuals about a specific topic".¹² Questionnaires were made to obtain the target result of the research study.

Statement of the Problem

What is the impact of newspaper on readers? Exploring Reading Habits of the Residents of Timergara, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa: Uses and Gratification Theory was the statement of the problem of the research study.

Universe of the Study

Residents of Timergara was the universe of the research study. There are numerous factors responsible for the residents of Timergara who reads newspapers because majority population of the area are living in the rural areas and they have no access to the modern technology in one way or on the other.

Sample Size

In order to obtain information 600 respondents who read newspaper were selected for data collection. So the sample size of the study was 600 respondents.

Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling technique was used for data collection in this research study. Questionnaire was designed and randomly distributed among the residents of Timergara. After collection the researcher analyzed data through SPSS program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Gender wise

Data tabulation shows that among the 600 respondents, researcher randomly distributed questionnaires in 317 male and 283 female, which is 52.8% male and 47.1% female (Table 1).

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of questionnaire

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	317	52.8	52.8	52.8
	Female	283	47.2	47.2	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	100.0	

Newspaper readership

Table 2 showed that 225 (71%) out of 317 male read newspaper while 92 (29%) don't read it. In female data 144 (51%) out of 283 read newspapers and 139 (49%) don't read.

This result contrast with the study of Dr. K. Chinnasamy "A study of Madurai Kamaraj University Madurai" in which the finding shows that female readerships is high than the male newspapers readerships. But the main reason is that this study has been conducted in the rural area of the country while Dr.K. Chinnasamy has conducted his study on the university students.

Therefore, the female readership among the residents of Timergara is low as compared to the female newspapers readerships in the other parts of the world.

Table 2: Newspaper readership

Do you read newspaper?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	369	61.5	61.5	61.5
	No	231	38.5	38.5	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	100.0	

Readership on daily basis

Study reveals that 170 being 75.5% out of 317 male read newspaper on daily basis while 85 being 59% female respondents reported that they read newspapers daily.

Similarly 20 being 8.8% and 34 being 23.6% male and female respectively read newspapers on weekly basis. The ratio of biweekly newspapers readers is 20 (8.8%) and 19 (13.1%) of male and female respectively. While 15 being 6.6% male and 06 being 4.1% of female respondents read newspaper on monthly basis (Table 3).

While a researcher Akandai et al, 2013 in Bangladesh in his study explains that ninety percent of people read newspapers on daily basis. Another researcher Dr. Chinnasamy nearly half in India explains in his study that nearly half of the respondents (113, 79.6%) visit college Library every day. On the other hand, the number of students and faculty (7, 4.9%) who visit the library once in a week and 20 (14.1%) go to the library at least twice in a week.

Therefore, it is inferred from the analysis that majority of the people have the habits of reading newspapers on daily basis.

Table 3: Readership on daily basis

		How frequently do you read newspaper?				Total
		Daily	Weekly	Biweekly	Monthly	
Gender	Male	170	20	20	15	225
	Female	85	34	19	6	144
Total		255	54	39	21	369

Readership on time basis

The data tabulation determines that out of 225 male respondents, 130 being 57.7% read newspaper up to 15 minutes and 60 being 26.6% read it from 15 to 30 minutes. The ratio of male readers who read newspaper from 30 to 45 minutes and an hour is 30 being 113.3% and 5 being 2.2% respectively. While in female respondents 80 out of 144 which is 55.5%, read newspaper for 15 minutes and 30 being 20.8% read it from 15 to 30 minutes. Similarly 25 being 17.3 % and 9 being 6.2% read

newspaper from 30 to 45 minutes and for an hour respectively (Table 4).

The study of Akandai et al, 2013 explains that 48.67% respondents spent 1—2 hours per day reading newspapers and 44.6% read newspapers for less than one hour. Similarly, another researcher Dr. Nagashetti et al, 2015 in their study “Newspaper reading habits among the students of Muncipal Arts and Commerce College Laxmeshwar” also explains that 102 being 47.22 out of 216 read newspapers for 1 to 2 hours.

So, it is concluded that majority of the residents of Timergara read newspapers for a very short time while in India and Bangladesh the people spent 1 to 2 hours on reading newspapers.

Table 4: Readership on time basis

		How much time do you spent while reading newspapers?				Total
		0-15 mints	15-30 mints	30-45 mints	45--1:00 hr	
Gender	Male	130	60	30	5	225
	Female	80	30	25	9	144
Total		210	90	55	14	369

Readership by number of newspaper

Data explain that out of 170, 120 being 70.5% male respondents read one newspaper daily and 30 being 17.6% read two newspapers daily. While 15 (8.8%) and 05 being 2.9% read three and more than three newspapers on daily basis. In female respondents, 50 (66.6%) out of 75 read one newspaper daily and 15 being 20% read two newspaper daily. While 8 out of 75 female respondents which is 10.6% read three and other 02 (2.6%) read more than three newspapers on daily basis (Table 5).

While compared to the study of Akandai et al, 2013 which explains that 85 (56.67%) respondents read 1 to 3 newspapers on daily basis while 43% respondents read more

than three newspapers daily. It is inferred from the analysis that in Timergara, the readerships of more than one newspapers on daily basis is less than the readerships in Bangladesh.

Table 5: Readership by number of newspaper

		How many newspapers do you read daily?				Total
		One	Two	Three	More	
Gender	Male	120	30	15	5	170
	Female	50	15	8	2	75
Total		170	45	23	7	245

Readership by types of newspaper

Data tabulation describes that in male respondents, 30 being 13.3% out of 225 read regional newspapers and 185 being 82.2% read national newspapers. While 10 (4.4%) read international newspaper. In female respondents 10 out of 144 which is 6.9% read regional newspaper and 130 (90.2%) read national newspapers. While 4 being 2.7% read international newspapers (Table 6).

Table 6: Readership by types of newspaper

		What type of newspaper do you prefer to read?			Total
		Regional	National	International	
Gender	Male	30	185	10	225
	Female	10	130	4	144
Total		40	315	14	369

Readership by language

Data reveals that 200 being 88.8% out of 225 male respondents read Urdu newspaper and 20 being 8.8% read English newspaper. While 05 being 2.2% read local language newspaper. Similarly, in female respondents 136 being 94.4% out of 144 read Urdu newspaper and 6 being 4.1% read English

newspaper. While 2 being 1.3% read local language newspaper (Table 7).

While the study of Akandai et al, 2013 shows that 56.67% respondents read newspapers in both medium (Bengali and English), while 36.67% respondents read only Bengali newspapers. Among the respondents, 6.66% read English newspapers only.

Dr. Chinnasamy et al, in his study explains that average 100% of students and faculty members use Tamil for newspaper reading, whereas 68.3% use English, and none students faculty use Hindi. Another researcher Nagashett, 2015 shows that majority of respondents 119 (55.09%) are preferred Kannada language and 59 (27.31%) respondents are preferred English newspapers to read. 34 (15.75%) respondents are given preference to Hindi newspapers and remaining few 04 (1.85%) respondents preferred newspapers of other languages. It is inferred that the majority of the people prefer to read newspaper in their national and local languages.

Table 7: Readership by language

		What language do you prefer to read in newspaper?			Total
		Urdu	English	Local language	
Gender	Male	200	20	5	225
	Female	136	6	2	144
Total		336	26	7	369

Readership by need

Data tabulation (Table 8) shows that in male respondents 130 being 57.7% out of 225 fulfil cognitive needs by reading newspapers and 10 being 4.4% says that they read newspapers for affective needs. While 65 being 28.8% told that they read newspapers for tension free needs and 20 being 8.8% read it social integrative needs. In female respondents 70 being 48.6% read newspapers for surveillance and 14(9.7%) read for

affective needs. While 50 (34.7%) female read newspapers for entertainment and 10 (6.9%) read it for social integrative needs. Dr. K. Chinnasamy et al, in his study asked respondents about the various purposes of reading newspapers and they mentioned different reasons for reading newspapers. He finds that majority 140 (98.6%) number of the respondents read newspaper to get the information while the second largest 136 (95.8%) respondents read newspaper to broaden the horizon of general knowledge and 123 (11.12%) respondents read to know the sports news while 121 (85.2%) for educational purpose. The least number of respondents i.e. 53 (37.3%) for pass the time. Another researcher Dr. Nagashetti, et al, explained in their study that majority of the respondents prefer to read newspapers for surveillance needs and very least respondents prefer to read newspapers for pass time and entertainment.

While Akandai et al, 2013 finds in their study that 80 (7.98%) out of 1003 respondents prefer to read sensational contents in newspapers.

Therefore, it concluded that majority of people in the world prefer to read newspapers for surveillance needs and very low number of people read it to pass time of for other purposes.

Table 8: Readership by need

		Which needs does reading a newspaper fulfil?				Total
		Surveillance	Excitement	Entertainment	Social Interaction	
Gender	Male	130	10	65	20	225
	Female	70	14	50	10	144
Total		200	24	115	30	369

Newspaper influence on decision making

Data (Table 9) reveals that 55 being 24.4% out of 225 male respondents are agree that very much newspapers influences their decision making and 92 being 40.8% readers says much of

their opinion are influenced by reading newspaper. Similarly, 63 being 28% say that to some extent newspapers influence their opinion while 15 being 6.6% refusing from it. In female respondents, 10 being 6.9% out of 144 say that newspaper very much influence their opinion and 15 being 10.4% are agree that much of their opinion are influencing by reading newspapers. 114 being 79.1% respondents say that to some extent newspaper influence their opinion while 5 being 3.4% refused from it.

Related to this question, a researcher Kumar et al., 2011 conducted study in Chudary Charan University, India which shows that about 79% of the respondents read editorial and 72.55% other respondents political news in newspapers for influencing their decision making process.

So it is concluded that majority of the residents both male and female say that to some extent newspapers influence their decision making while in high number of the students in Chudary Charan University, India prefer to read editorial and political news contents for this purpose.

Table 9: Newspaper influence on decision making

		How much reading newspapers influences your decision making?				Total
		Very much	Much	To some extent	Never	
Gender	Male	55	92	63	15	225
	Female	10	15	114	5	144
Total		65	107	177	20	369

CONCLUSIONS

The study aimed to discover reading habits of the residents of Timergara and to know the social and psychological needs of the readers which motivate them for reading newspaper.

Newspaper is a source of gratification therefore the residents of Timergara prefer to read Urdu language newspaper for gratifying their needs and desires. To know about the habits of the resident for reading newspaper, the researcher asked the respondents that do you read newspaper?

So it can be concluded that majority of the respondents of Timergara read newspapers very frequently while data analysis also brought very interesting results that majority of the respondents read newspaper for a very short time and like to read one newspaper daily.

It can be also inferred that majority of the residents prefer to read national newspaper rather than local or international newspaper and also prefer to read Urdu newspaper which is the national language of the county.

As we know that newspaper is a source of information, so therefore majority of the people like to read newspapers for surveillance purpose and to some extent newspapers influence the decision making process of the people of Timergara. It is also concluded that the residents of Timergara prefer to read columns in newspaper for making their opinion and analysis.

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