



Comparative Study between Times of India (English Newspaper) and Ajit (Regional Newspaper)

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Abstract: The paper aims to provide a high-level overview and comparison on the research based on comparing the regional paper- Ajit and the widely circulated national newspaper namely, the Times of India. A newspaper qualifies to be called a national newspaper if it has a large distributive network preferably having a circulation network spread across the country. National newspapers also sometimes have a local leaflet, which deals with local happenings. Whereas, a local newspaper does not have the specialized leaflet as it is being circulated only in a particular region or state.

In this paper the basic aim is to provide an analysis on the acceptance and the circulation of these two newspapers based on the empirical data collected which has been attached as Annexure 1 and Annexure 2.

Keywords: Newspapers, Comparison, Circulation, Preferences, Variety

1. INTRODUCTION

A newspaper is a widely circulated publication containing written information about the current affairs and developments that take place in the whole world. They cover a wide variety of fields such as politics, business, sports and art, and often include materials such as opinion columns, weather forecasts, reviews of local services, obituaries, birth notices, crosswords, editorial cartoons, comic strips, and advice columns.

The newspapers that this research project aims to analyze are the nationally circulated paper The Times of India and the local newspaper Ajit. Before dwelling in the comparison it is important to know the background and history of these two papers.

2. TIMES OF INDIA

The Times of India is the third-largest newspaper in India by circulation and largest selling English-language daily in the world is an Indian English-language daily newspaper owned by the Times Group.¹ It is the oldest English-language newspaper in India still in circulation although it has been circulated under different names since its first edition published in 1838.

The Times of India issued its first edition on 3 November 1838 as The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce under the editor J.E. Brennan. It was only in 1850 that it began to publish daily editions. In 1860 their then editor bought the interests of the Indian shareholders and the group was merged with their biggest rivals Bombay Standard, only to form India's first ever-formal news agency. However, the very next year witnessed the change in name from the Bombay Times and Standard to The Times of India.

The Times of India has seen multiple ownership changes till the year 1892 when an English journalist named Thomas Jewell Bennett along with Frank Morris Coleman acquired the newspaper through their new joint stock company, Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.

Subsequently, Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd also saw a lot of shift of hands as it was first sold to sugar magnate Ramkrishna Dalmia of the then-famous industrial family Dalmiyas, for Rs 20 million in 1946, as India was becoming independent and the British owners were leaving. After which based about the fraudulent fiasco the Justice directed the Government to assume control of the newspaper,

¹According to Audit Bureau of Circulations (India)

which resulted in replacing half of the directors and thereby appointing a Bombay High Court judge as the Chairman.

2.1. Ajit (Daily Ajit)

The Ajit is a Punjab based daily newspaper having its publishing house primarily in Jalandhar, India and is run by Sadhu Singh Hamdard trust. The newspaper covers current affairs relating to business, politics, sports, fashion, Punjabi films, hind films, national and international news reports from all over the world.

The newspaper was founded in the year 1941 and was originally printed in Urdu language. Veteran journalist and ex-Rajya Sabha member, Barjinder Singh Hamdard, is the current editor-in-chief. The circulation started with an Urdu language weekly edition in 1941 from Shaheed Sikh Missionary College Amritsar where Ajit Singh Ambalvi was its first editor. It was only in November 1942 that it became a daily newspaper and began printing from Lahore. After independence it moved its base to Jalandhar. Thereafter in the year 1955, its name was changed to Ajit Patrika and the language was changed from Urdu to Punjabi. However its name was changed back to Ajit in the year 1957.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research paper is based on primary data or empirical data whose study was aimed at finding the more popular newspaper and analyzing the reading preferences of readers between Ajit and Times of India. For this purpose an online survey using a Google form was conducted and a total of 50 responses were collected and closely analyzed. Both men and women between the age brackets of 18-30 years of age were the targeted group.

3.1. Comparative Analysis

- Layout/ Structure: Times of India Has a Broadsheet Layout
Ajit Also Has a Broadsheet Layout

3.2. Paper Material

The newspapers are usually made from either recycled paper or wood pulp, newsprint paper comes in large rolls and is an inexpensive, thin paper used to print a variety of publications from traditional newspapers to common tabloids.

The type of paper used for making a newspaper is called newsprint. It is a low quality paper, which has a shelf life less than months. Also different type of news prints are used considering the purpose of the same, such as for tabloids pastel-tinted newsprint is used.

3.3. Times of India

The Times of India uses a glossy, thicker and a better quality paper as compared to the local circulator. The clarity, color, text size and font do not get smudged on rubbing and in fact remains intact. It was also noticed that material used by other national suppliers also had glossy and good quality paper.

3.4. Ajit

Ajit in comparison to the Times Of India uses thinner paper and had no supplements. Also, the printing of the paper was of poorer quality that gets smudged on rubbing.

3.5. Advertisements v/s Editorial

On reading both newspapers, Times of India had a 60-40 (3:2) Ratio of Ads and Editorials respectively. Whereas, Ajit had 40-60 (2:3) Ratio of Ads and Editorials respectively.

3.6. Ads- Times of India

TOI has a variety of products Advertisements for example it advertised both print and picture ads for companies like Myntra watches, Tanishq jewellery, cars like Maruti Suzuki etc. It also has advertisements relating to certain beauty product Ads. Government Schemes like Farmers Loan (half page) and Dept. of employee generation Ads are also a usual part of the paper.

From the above discussion it can easily be concluded that the Ads are very generic and are not restricted to a certain area.

3.6.1. Ajit

On the other hand, Ajit had more Punjab specific Ads. The Ads were fewer in number and advertised Local Hospitals/IVF and Fertility clinics in and around Punjab. Certain job applications for Jalandhar and Chandigarh were also present. And major Ads relating to political parties in Punjab were also printed.

4. EDITORIAL

4.1. Times of India

TOI covers the overall, large-scale activities of the country and does not only focus on one specific area or one specific genre. It had separate sections for sports, international news (Times Global), business news (Times Business), entertainment news (Entertainment Times), local news (Times Regional), and national news (Times Nation), and jobs/career (Times Ascent), sports (Times Sport). It has a wide sphere of news coverage.

4.2. Ajit

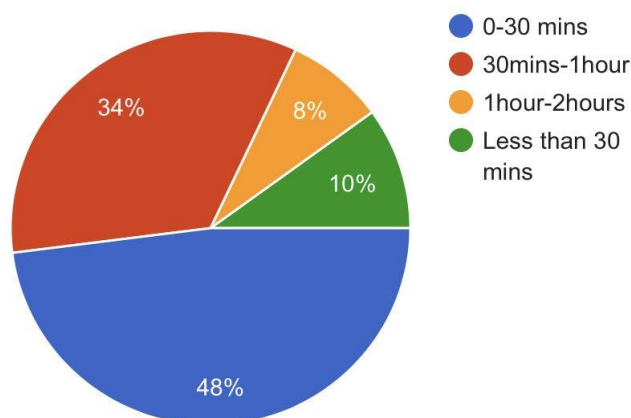
Ajit focuses mainly on news in Punjab and areas around it like Chandigarh, Kapurthala, Amritsar, etc. It has a lot of propaganda news from Punjab political parties like Akali Dal, the Badal families and Capt. Amrinder Singh. Their activities and whereabouts are repeatedly mentioned. It has one Page called Ajit Chandigarh, which has news specific about Chandigarh like events and accidents. Also a section for sports news relating to players from Punjab is published. There is hardly any international news mentioned.

5. RESULTS

How much time do you spend reading a newspaper?



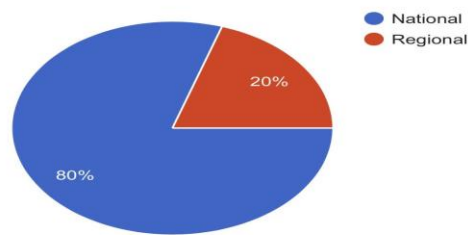
50 responses



- This pie chart shows that majority of the people i.e. 58% people spend less than 30 minutes reading a newspaper.

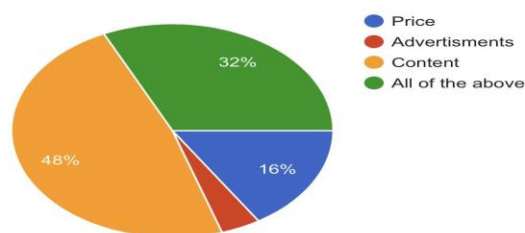
Which is your preferred newspaper?

50 responses



What is your criteria of choosing a newspaper?

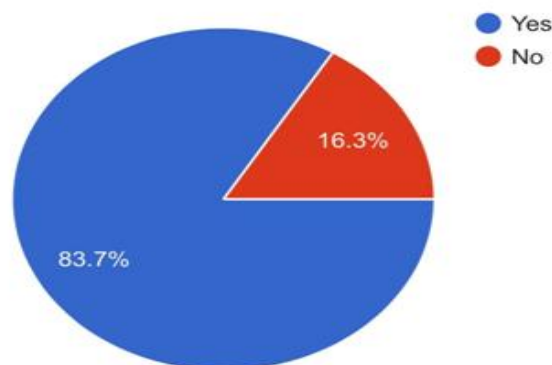
50 responses



- It is seen that 80% people prefer reading a national newspaper.
- It is seen that most people choose newspapers by its content.

Do you think regional newspapers have more information on local matters?!

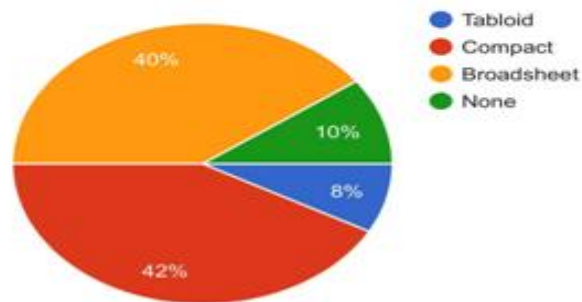
49 responses



- It is seen that most people believe that local newspapers have more information on local matters as compared to national newspapers.

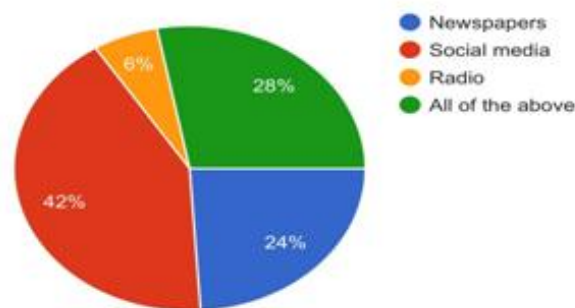
Which newspaper format do you prefer?

50 responses



Which source do you rely on for news?

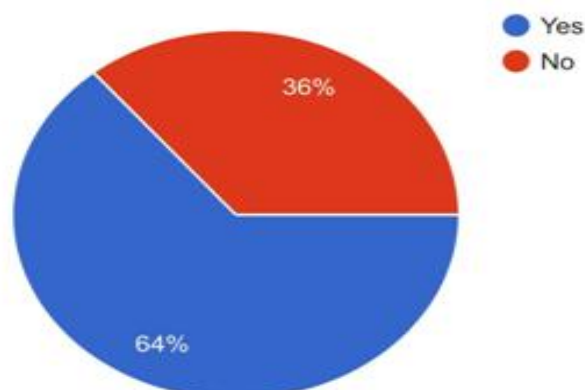
50 responses



- It is seen that most people prefer tabloid or broadsheet type newspapers.
- It is seen that most people rely on Social media and newspapers for information

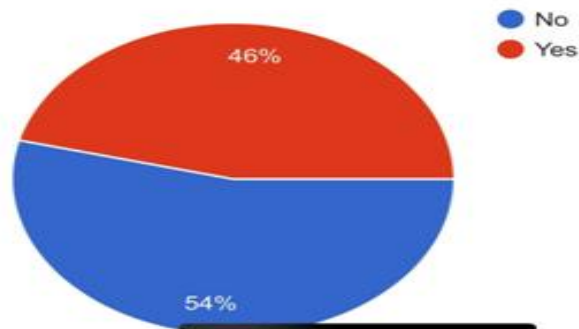
Do you think reading newspapers is a slow process of getting news?

50 responses



Have you read the Punjabi regional newspaper Ajit?

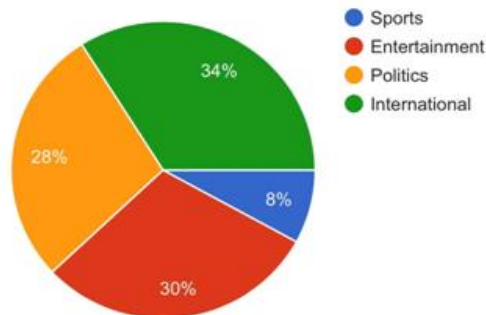
50 responses



- This pie chart shows that most people still believe that reading newspapers is not a slow form of getting news.
- It is seen that 54% of the people have read Ajit.

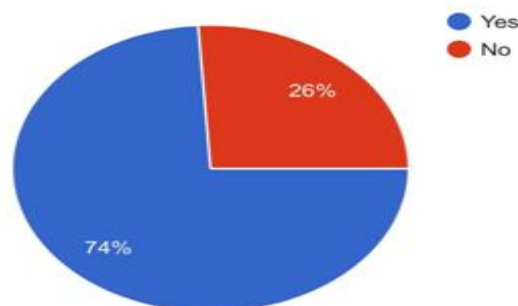
Which is your favourite section in a newspaper?

50 responses



Do newspaper ads benefit you?

50 responses



- International and Political news are the most favourite newspaper sections in a newspaper.
- Majority of the people benefit from the newspaper ads. (74%)

6. DISCUSSION/INTERPRETATION

Through this research paper the author analyzed and noted that firstly, more than 50% of the readers spend less than 1 hour reading a newspaper. Secondly, it was evident that Times of India was a more preferred brand as most people prefer National newspapers over Regional newspapers due to their wide circulation and better coverage (80% and 20% respectively). Thirdly, it was seen that readers make the choice of newspaper based on the Content provided and Price of newspapers. It has a wider range of content including local, national, international, sports, business, etc whereas Ajit has news of mainly issues concerning Punjab and areas around it. Also TOI cost Rs. 4 whereas Ajit costs Rs.5. It was seen that International and Entertainment news in very popular among readers. 74% of the people do not mind newspaper ads, and actually find them benefiting. Also, Compact and Broadsheet newspapers were more preferred choices of newspaper layouts. The paper quality in the national newspapers was better, glossier and thicker paper whereas regional newspapers lacked good quality paper. Also, national newspapers focused on national issues and more classified ads whereas regional newspapers focused more on local news in and around Jalandhar. It had local job ads.

It was surprising to see that many people have read/heard of Ajit.

It was seen that people still believe that a regional newspaper like Ajit is far better in issues concerning local matters. Readers still rely on newspapers for information and 64% people don't consider reading newspapers a slow process of getting news. Even though a lot of people get their news from various sources like Radio, TV, Social media, Newspapers still play a very prevalent role in reaching out to a large number of people and hence have loyal readers.

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ANNEXURE 1

Questionnaire on Comparison between Ajit and Times of India Newspapers:

- 1) Which is your preferred newspaper?
 - a) National
 - b) Regional
- 2) What is your criteria of choosing a newspaper?
 - a) Price
 - b) Content
 - c) Advertisements
 - d) None
- 3) Which newspaper format do you prefer?
 - a) Tabloid
 - b) Compact
 - c) Broadsheet
 - d) None
- 4) Which source do you refer to for daily news?
 - a) Newspapers
 - b) Internet
 - c) Radio
 - d) Social media?
- 5) Do you think reading newspapers is a slow process of getting news?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 6) Have you ever read Ajit?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 7) Which is your favorite section in the newspaper?
 - a) Sports
 - b) Entertainment
 - c) Civil
 - d) International

