

Future of Printed Newspaper Amid Digital Age: An Empirical Evidence from Readers of Mymensingh in Bangladesh

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Received 17/12/2024

Accepted 01/03/2025

Published 01/06/2025

ABSTRACT

Newspaper, a part of mass media performs as a mirror of the society. It is one of the oldest mass media in the world. It carries news, views, commentary, features for the wider ranges of readers. It generally published in printed form. But the advancement of digital technology, its online version, online news-portal have been introduced all over the globe. Now-a-days the dependency and habit on printed newspaper have changed rather online version has been popularizing speedily. So, both printed and online news-portals simultaneously are available to the readers. But the question is whether the printed newspaper could survive in competing with online news-portal. Thinking this, the study has analyzed the current situation and challenges through which the future of printed newspaper could be visible in the eye of its readers of Mymensingh division in Bangladesh. Applying questionnaire survey and content analysis method, a total of 396 newspaper readers have been interviewed from four Upazilas of four districts of Mymensingh division. The findings on printed newspaper are termed as quite frustrating. Only 33% of the respondents read newspaper regularly and the rest read sporadically. Only 15% read printed version while about 37% read online. Social media used by about 65% of the respondents for reading newspaper. But interestingly, about 98% satisfied to read printed newspaper while almost 99% satisfied on online version. Having the frustrating situation, findings also indicate some prospects which is dependent on adaption of digital technology. Finally, it can be said that the future of printed newspaper is not smooth but it will survive. For this, introducing online version and convergent with new media could be possible suggestions to implement for survival.

Keywords: Printed Newspaper, digital technology, online news-portals, future of newspaper

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As a powerful part of mass media, newspaper in fact is considered the oldest mass media in the world. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, newspaper is a publication and a form of mass communication and mass media, published daily, weekly or other regular times. It

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provides various contents like news, views, features and other message and information of public interest. It also often carries various advertising (Encyclopedia Britannica 2024). Now-a-days, newspaper has been publishing in different forms. The newspaper industry in Bangladesh has mainly started with new hopes, aspirations, technology, investment and endeavors after the 1990s. Since then, newspaper has been becoming an industry where capital flow was grown up. In a society, newspaper has been playing a vital role of informing, educating, entertaining and persuading to the people. As these roles and technological development continued, Dominck (2010) observed some trends of modern mass media viz. audience segmentation, convergence, increased audience control, multiple platforms, user-generated contents and mobile media which are truly relevant for Bangladesh newspaper industry since, digital technology and internet had been introduced more in around 2000s.

This got an extra attention when bdnews24.com, the country first online news-portal was first introduced in 2005 and officially in 23 October 2006 (Khan and Shnaider 2021). Before that, *The Daily Star* started to develop website for their newspaper. So, the online and offline version have started to move forward side by side. While technological development and internet facilities advance, the online news-portals have got momentum and simultaneously the printed newspapers also started its online version. These online versions and news-portals also started to reach through social media like Facebook, YouTube etc. Therefore, a clear convergence of mass media has been visible and operational in the 21st century which Dominick (2010) observed. But the dual existences of print and online news-portals have influences upon the readers as a whole. Readers are now being accustomed with the new communication devices and internet. Once readers loved to read printed newspaper but now online news-portals are available at readers' finger on 24 hours. Podcast, social media newsfeed, online news-portals, reels etc. are being much popular to the readers. So, the readers' mindset has also been affecting with these alternatives of printed newspaper. The world-wide printed newspapers have been decreasing day by day. In this connection, amid the digital technology, the future of the print media especially the newspapers of Bangladesh could be comprehensively investigated from the readers' viewpoint. This effort would help for printed newspaper understand the real situation and take coping strategy to survive in future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study was to analyze comprehensively the pros and cons of current situation and to identify the challenges of printed newspaper in digital age through the eye of its readers of Mymensingh division in Bangladesh. Simultaneously, the study attempted to draw the future of printed newspaper of Bangladesh.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES

In a study on Bangladeshi news managers' perceptions of print media's future, Noman (2023) explored that newspaper as print media is necessary and relevant medium and print media should be convergent. Tajrin (2016) found that 77.8% of respondents consumed daily newspapers online and assumed that the print media may eventually demolish in the near future, and Akanda & Haque (2013) found that graduate students prefer online newspapers over printed ones. This is happened due to the horizontal expansion of digital technologies.

Ghersetti (2014) revealed no significant differences between print and online media news and readers of both media are getting the same information. Islam and Billah (2019) mentioned that 60% of respondents reading softcopy, particularly among the young generation. Hassan et al. (2021) found new media technology has influenced almost all aspects like subscriptions, readership, circulation, and advertisement revenue, potentially posing a threat to print media. This review paper suggests publishers can utilize digital technology to expand readership and maximize revenue. The study by Islam and Ahsan (2020) found that print media can still survive in the digital age. However, strategies like online versions, social media platforms, and integrated newsrooms have not been fully implemented, but these are necessary to be introduced in the newspaper industry to survive amid of digital age. Amuda et al. (2018) found a decline in circulation and readership of four leading print newspapers in Ghana due to the prevalence of online news portals and websites. Despite this, print media remains considered the most credible and reliable sources of news. So, the findings of the literatures indicate a feature of vulnerable condition of print newspaper in home and abroad due to availability of digital technologies. But the readers' viewpoint analysis is important to draw the future of printed newspaper and its allied matters in Bangladesh.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the theoretical bases of the study is Roger Fidler's "Mediamorphosis Theory" which was first coined by him in 1990 (Loop 1998) to mean, "the transformation of communication media, usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, and technological innovations" (Fidler 1997, p. xv). The theory is about the death of print media. The main assumption of the theory is that the new models of communication viz. new media emerge, the old models of communication like printed newspaper don't die but adapt to new environment and survive (Ahmad & Jimoh, no date). "Media Displacement Theory" originally introduced by Maxwell McCombs (1972) is also considered for this study to develop theoretical base because of the emergence of the online and digital media and having consequences on other old media like newspaper, magazine etc. According to McCombs, the resources like time and money are limited and as such the more people spend on one medium the less they spend on other media (Anis and Fahad 2020). When a new communication technology is introduced, people use other media to a lesser extent. The attention would be more on newer one than older and others. These two theories are considered for the study since how people think over old print media like newspaper.

STUDY METHODS

The study is quantitative in nature. Therefore, a questionnaire survey method applied for the study. The locale of the study was Mymensingh administrative division. Both primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed accordingly.

Sampling and Determination of Sample Size

All daily newspaper readers either in offline or online living in Mymensingh administrative division are considered as the population. To draw the sample, the following formula is applied:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where, n= sample size, p= sample proportion = 0.5, q=1 - p= 1-0.5 = 0.5, z = 1.96 (95% confidence level of nominal curve worked out from the table) e = error = 0.05 (error of 95% of confidence level). By calculation, the total sizes of population would be 384 (Kothari 2003). The final sample size was 396 to maintain the cluster sampling as 4 Upazials × 11 categories × 9 respondents. The sample size of each study area of four districts was the equal like 396/4=99. From Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Netrokona and Sherpur district, one Upazila was selected randomly through lottery process. In this way, four Upazilas viz. Mymensingh Sadar, Mymensingh; Purba Dhala, Netraokona; Sherpur Sadar, Sherpur; and Madarganj, Jamalpur were selected. To select the respondents, cluster sampling technique was applied. First of all, the newspaper readers were clustered into 11 categories viz. students of class IX & X, students of XI & XII, students of BA/BCoM/BBS/BBA, students of MA/MCoM/MSS/MBA, Govt. service holders, businessman, home maker, unemployed political activists, non-government service holders and teachers. Total 9 respondents were selected from each cluster randomly from every selected Upazila.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Collected data were tabulated and analyzed through IBM SPSS 25 version software and STATA 14 version. Mainly descriptive statistical measure like percentage was done and graph, chart, table etc. were used to present analyzed data.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio-Economic Status of the Respondents

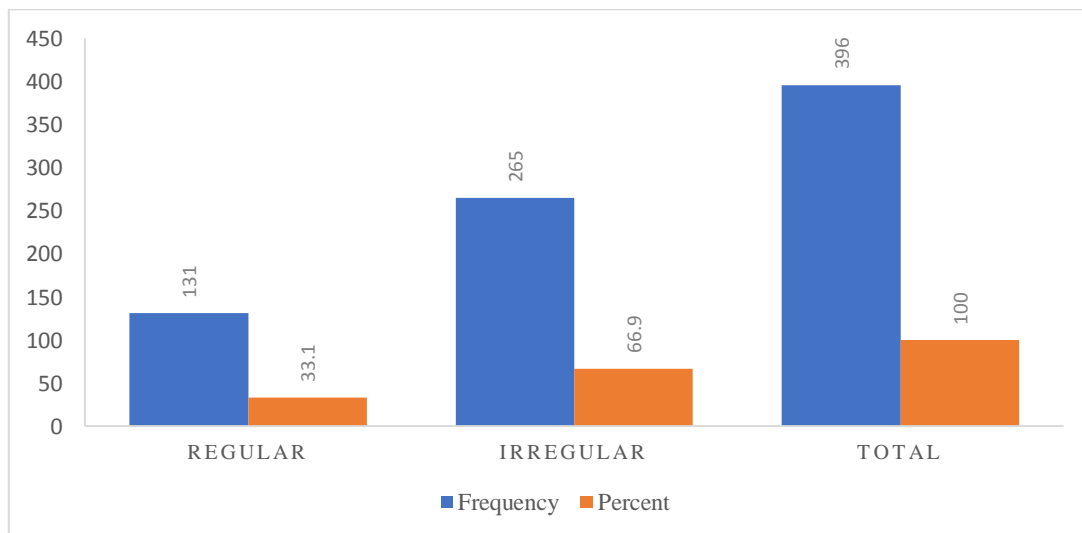
It is important to discuss the socio-economic status since it provides the necessary information on sample population which determines the inclusiveness of the study. The study has covered both male (71.7%) and female (28.3%) respondents. Since the study has conducted on the literate people only who can read newspapers either in offline or online, the educational status was found ranging from class eight to MA/ equivalent. The majority of the respondents (28.3%) had fallen into BA/ equivalent educational strata. The analyses of educational data indicate that 90.2% of the total respondents had fallen into SSC/ equivalent to MA/ equivalent education strata. Considering the age distribution, it is ranging from 15 to 75 years. Most of the respondents were from 15 to 25 years cluster which was 44.4%. A variety of occupations were found in the study. Most of the respondents (38.1%) were students followed by 27.3% were service holders, 10.6% were businessman and 9.1% were home makers and 9.3% were unemployed. So, field data on socio-economic conditions showed that a conscious and eligible clusters of newspaper readers were considered as respondents which indicate inclusions of all classes of readers to ensure representation.

Reading Habits of Printed Newspaper

The future of the printed newspaper is largely dependent on its readership status. It is commonly understandable that if a newspaper is read by more readers on regular basis, the newspaper is considered popular and influential. Regarding reading habits, the findings were

frustrating. Only 33.1% of the respondents read newspaper regularly while 66.9% read newspaper on irregular basis.

FIGURE 1. READING HABITS OF PRINTED NEWSPAPERS



Source: Field Survey, 2024

Medium of Reading Newspaper

The respondents read newspapers using some media. The findings showed that only 15.2% of the respondents read offline version while online news-portals were read by 37.1% respondents and printed and online both versions were read by 47.7% respondents. It means that only printed newspaper reading habit is not higher.

TABLE 1. MEDIUM OF READING NEWSPAPER

| Valid | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Offline | 60 | 15.2 | 15.2 | 15.2 |
| | Online | 147 | 37.1 | 37.1 | 52.3 |
| | Both | 189 | 47.7 | 47.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 396 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Dominant Online Newspaper Reading Medium

Sources of online newspapers are social media dominated. Majority of the respondents (64.9%) read online newspapers or news feed from social media while mobile phone was 26%. Website users were only 9.1%. Social media has become a powerful source of infotainment. Newspaper readers have been showing now a positive attitude towards social media and mobile phone to read newspapers. They also preferred read newspaper online which was 43.7% while only 34.3% of the respondents satisfied reading printed newspaper (Table 3).

TABLE 2. DOMINANT MEDIUM OF ONLINE NEWSPAPER READING

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Website | 36 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 9.1 |
| | Mobile Phone | 103 | 26.0 | 26.0 | 35.1 |
| | Social media (Facebook and others) | 257 | 64.9 | 64.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 396 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

TABLE 3. SATISFACTORY MEDIUM OF NEWSPAPER READING

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Online | 173 | 43.7 | 43.7 | 43.7 |
| | Printed (offline) | 136 | 34.3 | 34.3 | 78.0 |
| | Both | 87 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 396 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Toper Reading Newspaper

There are thousands of national and local newspapers in Bangladesh. But the circulations are different. All are not well accepted by the readers at the same degree. The study findings indicate that *The Daily Prothom Alo* was read by the highest numbers of the readers which was 70% followed by *Bangladesh Pratidin* 45% of the respondents. *The Daily Jugantor* was read by only 19% while *Samakal* was mentioned by 18% of the respondents. The only English daily newspaper *The Daily Star* was read by 15% of the respondents. The online news-portal like *bdnews24.com* and *banglanews24.com* were read by 17% and 08% of the respondents respectively. Almost all the national daily newspapers have their online versions which are available in social media and web-portals. The readers might have access to read these newspapers through online version but in regard to printed version the followings were found more prominent.

TABLE 4. TYPES OF NEWSPAPER READ

| Name of Newspaper | Number of Responses (%) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>The Daily Promthom Alo</i> | 277 (70%) |
| <i>Bangladesh Pratidin</i> | 178 (45%) |
| <i>The Daily Jugantor</i> | 77 (19%) |
| <i>Samakal</i> | 70 (18%) |
| <i>The Daily Star</i> | 60 (15%) |
| <i>Kaler Kantho</i> | 53 (13%) |
| <i>The Daily Ittefaq</i> | 41 (10%) |
| <i>The Daily Janakantha</i> | 30 (8%) |
| <i>Dainik Amader Shomoy</i> | 28 (7%) |

| | |
|--|----------|
| <i>The Daily Manab Zamin</i> | 18 (5%) |
| <i>The Daily Inquilab</i> | 07 (2%) |
| <i>bdnews24.com</i> | 68 (17%) |
| <i>banglanews24.com</i> | 32 (08%) |
| <i>campusnews.com</i> | 10 (3%) |
| Others (some local news and others online news-portals etc.) | 24 (6%) |

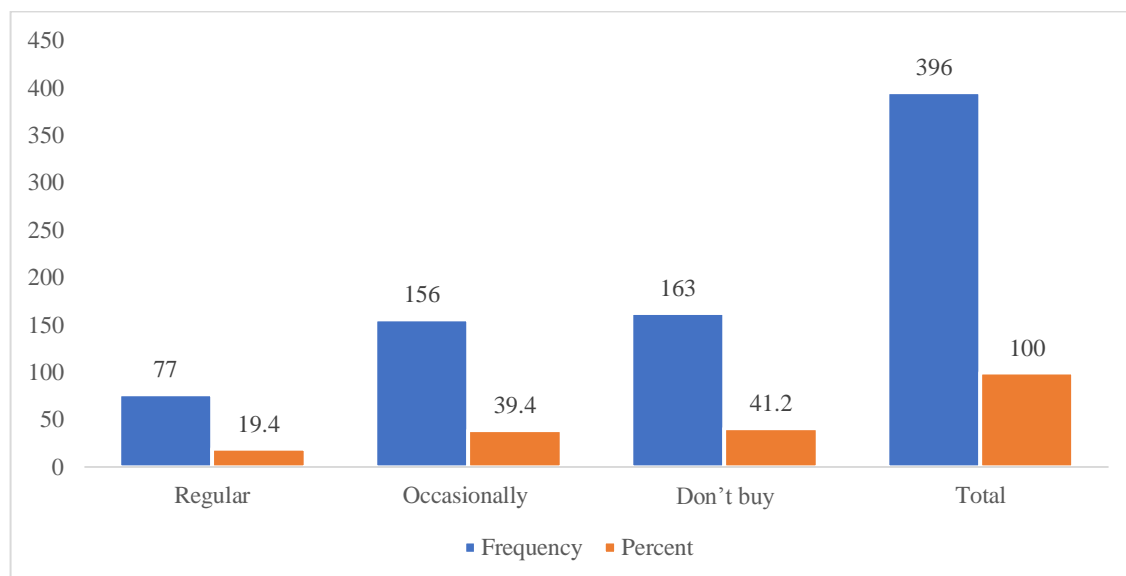
Source: Field Survey, 2024

N= 396, multiple responses, parenthesis shows percentage

Subscriber of Printed Newspaper

In the study area, the subscription situation of printed newspaper is not satisfactory. Without huge subscriptions of the printed newspaper, the whole industry could suffer and ultimately its existence would be vulnerable. The readers of Mymensingh division show this situation. Only 19.4% of the readers bought printed newspaper regularly while 39.4% of the respondents bought occasionally. Rest of the respondents (41.2%) did not buy printed newspaper at all. Since the regular subscribers are the heart of the printed newspaper industry, but this ratio is not satisfactory. From this point of view, printed newspaper future could not be stable.

FIGURE 2. BUYING PRINTED NEWSPAPER



Source: Field Survey, 2024

Newspaper Advertisement

The main source of newspaper income is advertisement. Eventually newspaper publishes a good quantity of advertisement. The readers' understanding about advertisement is not so positive. Only 36.6% of the respondents opined the situation of advertisement in the

newspapers was normal. Other 27% and 23.5% directly termed the situation as excessive and boring respectively. Some (3.3%) respondents also termed it as profit maximizing activity where 9.6% of the respondents mentioned the advertising had been increasing day by day. So, the respondents' perception of newspaper advertisement indicates that there should have balance scale to publish advertisements.

TABLE 5. OPINION ON NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Valid | Excessive | 107 | 27.0 | 27.0 | 27.0 |
| | Normal | 145 | 36.6 | 36.6 | 63.6 |
| | Boring | 93 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 87.1 |
| | Profit maximizing | 13 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 90.4 |
| | Increasing day by day | 38 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 396 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Feelings to Read Printed and Online Newspaper

Even in the digital era, the readers read printed newspapers and its feelings were found satisfactory. The findings from the below table indicate that only 1.5% of the respondents felt 'not good at all' while 54.3% responded 'good' and 21.2% felt 'very good' to read printed newspaper. Another 21.2% of the respondents felt 'moderately good'. If it is considered 'very good', 'good', 'moderately good' to 'less good' collectively the reading taste was scored by 98.5% of the respondents. So, it is remarkable that viewers still like to read printed newspaper. They are now in the ocean of digital technologies and social media. Options are now available. But it is optimistic findings that readers still enjoy to read printed newspaper and also love to read online newspapers as well. The results are found almost same. A total of 98.7% of the respondents liked to read online newspapers ranging from 'very good', 'good', 'moderately good' to 'less good' collectively (Table 10). So, interestingly it is clear from these findings presented here that though regular subscribers are not high, regular readers are not as high as expected, but the readers as a whole love to read both printed and online versions almost at the same rate. It could be assumed that the findings are optimistic for the newspaper industry.

TABLE 6. ENJOYMENT TO READ PRINTED AND ONLINE NEWSPAPER

| Level of Enjoy | Printed Newspaper | | Online Newspaper | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Not at all good | 6 | 1.5 | 5 | 1.3 |
| Less Good | 7 | 1.8 | 23 | 5.8 |
| Moderately good | 84 | 21.2 | 94 | 23.7 |
| Good | 215 | 54.3 | 196 | 49.5 |
| Very Good | 84 | 21.2 | 78 | 19.7 |
| Total | 396 | 100.0 | 396 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Prediction on Readers’ Growth of Printed and Online Newspaper

The respondents were asked about the trends of readers’ situation of both printed and online newspapers. Majority of the respondents (74.2%) thought that the printed newspaper’s readers had been decreasing while 88.9% of the respondents mentioned the online newspaper’s readers had been increasing. It is an opposite prediction on readers’ trend. It indicates the future perceptions on readers as well. Since the respondents’ perception on online newspapers was found positive so it could be predicted that online newspapers could dominate and printed newspaper could suffer from the readers’ scarcity.

TABLE 7. PREDICTION ON PRINTED NEWSPAPER AND ONLINE READERS’ GROWTH

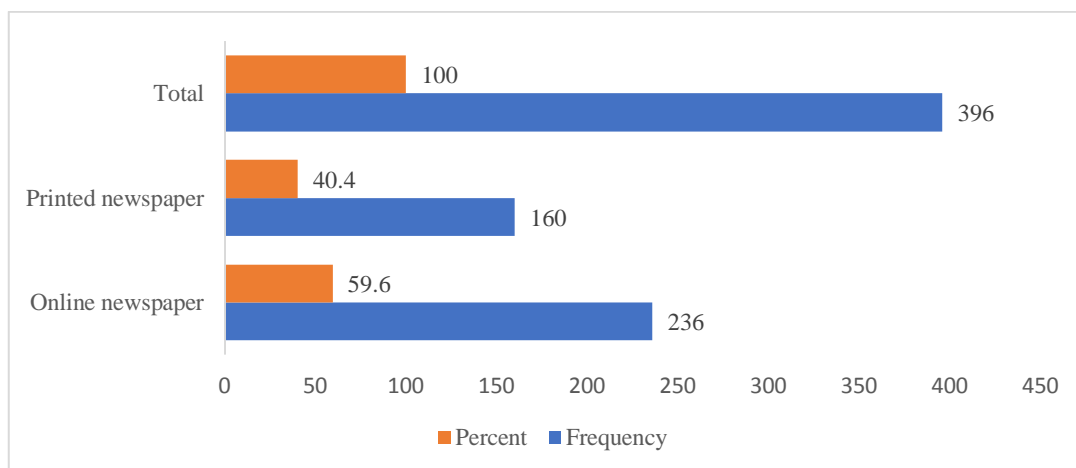
| Opinion | Printed Newspaper | | Online Newspaper | |
|------------|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Increasing | 32 | 8.1 | 352 | 88.9 |
| Decreasing | 294 | 74.2 | 5 | 1.3 |
| Unchanged | 23 | 5.8 | 12 | 3.0 |
| Don't idea | 47 | 11.9 | 27 | 6.8 |
| Total | 396 | 100.0 | 396 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Easy and Comfortability

Though some positive aspects of printed newspapers are identified by the respondents but in regard to easy and comfortability, the majority of the respondents (59.6%) opined that they felt easy and comfortable with online newspaper while rest of the respondents (40.4%) comfortable with printed newspaper. So, in the digital age, the readers have been gradually accustomed with online platforms. On this basis, it could be predicted that the easy and comfort zone with online newspapers and news-portals would increase so far. Printed version needs to take measures in this regard.

FIGURE 3. OPINION ON EASY AND COMFORT VERSION OF NEWSPAPER

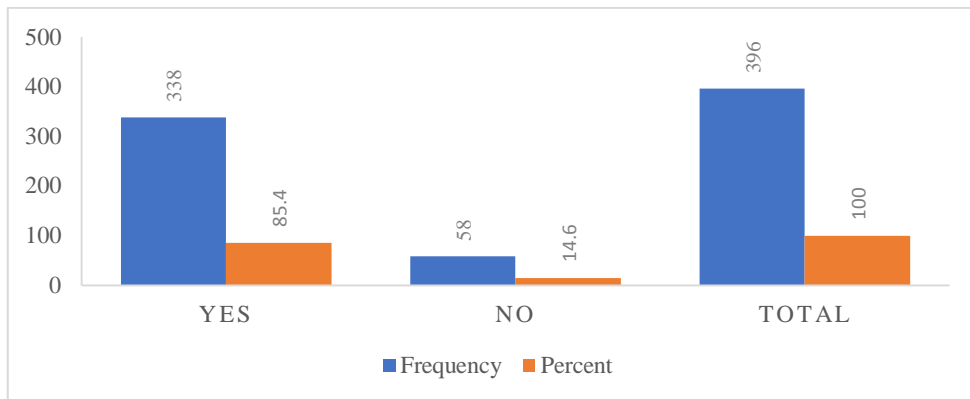


Source: Field Survey, 2024

Readers Perceptions on Competitions of Printed Newspapers with Online

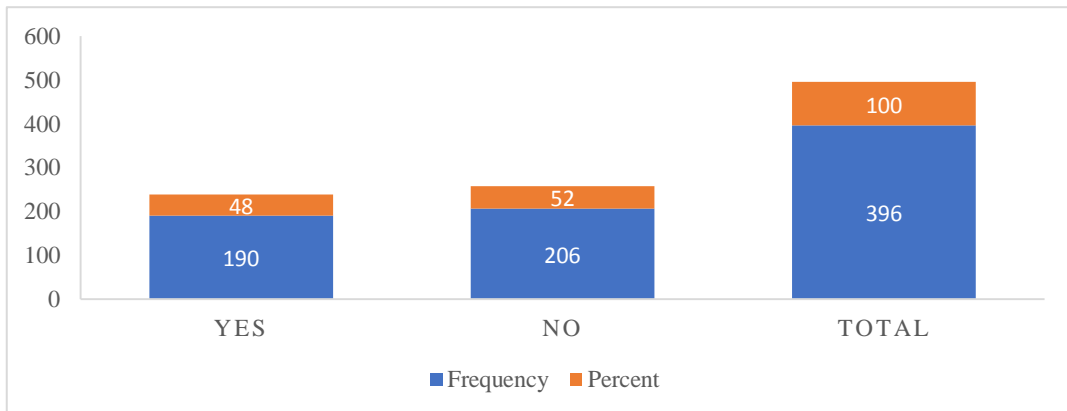
The online news-portals would create a pressure on the printed newspapers’ subscribers. The majority of the respondents (85.4%) thought that due to the online news-portals the printed newspaper’s subscribers would be decreased. The majority of the respondents (52%) also thought that in future the printed newspaper would not be able to survive in the competing with online news-portals (Figure 5). Though 48% of the respondents were confident on the survival of printed newspaper with online, but tough situation would be prevailing accordingly. In regard to profit maximizing, 63.1% of the respondents expressed that the profit would not be earned by the printed newspaper in the competition with online news-portals (Figure 6). In online newspapers, advertisements were seen more comparing with printed newspapers. Majority of the respondents (90.9%) mentioned that tendency to publish advertisement was in online news-portals (Figure 7). So, as per findings, in upcoming days, the advertiser could be interested to publish advertisements in online only. Therefore, it is clear that the printed newspaper could adopt different policies and strategies to survive and cope with in future.

FIGURE 4. PROBABILITY TO DECREASE PRINTED NEWSPAPERS’ SUBSCRIBERS



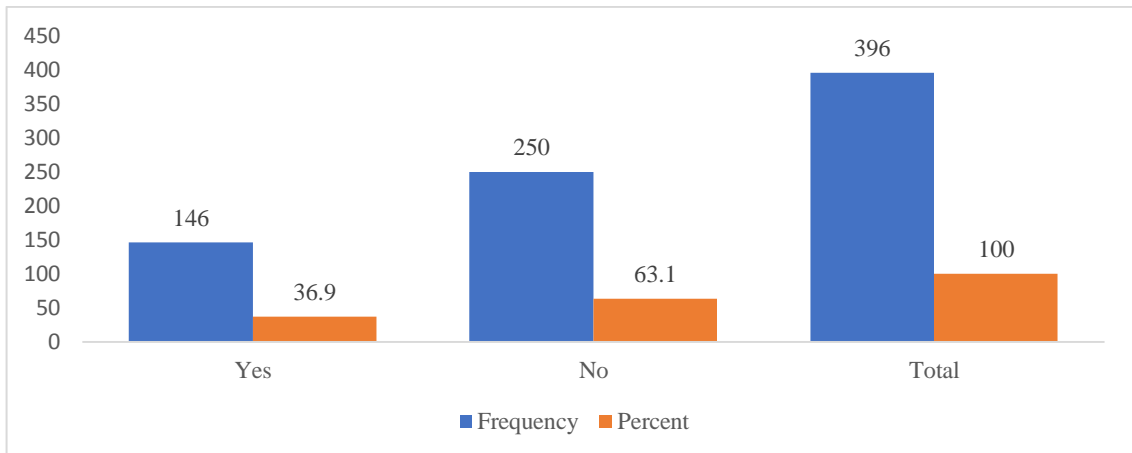
Source: Field Survey, 2024

FIGURE 5. SURVIVAL OF PRINTED NEWSPAPERS IN COMPETITION WITH ONLINE



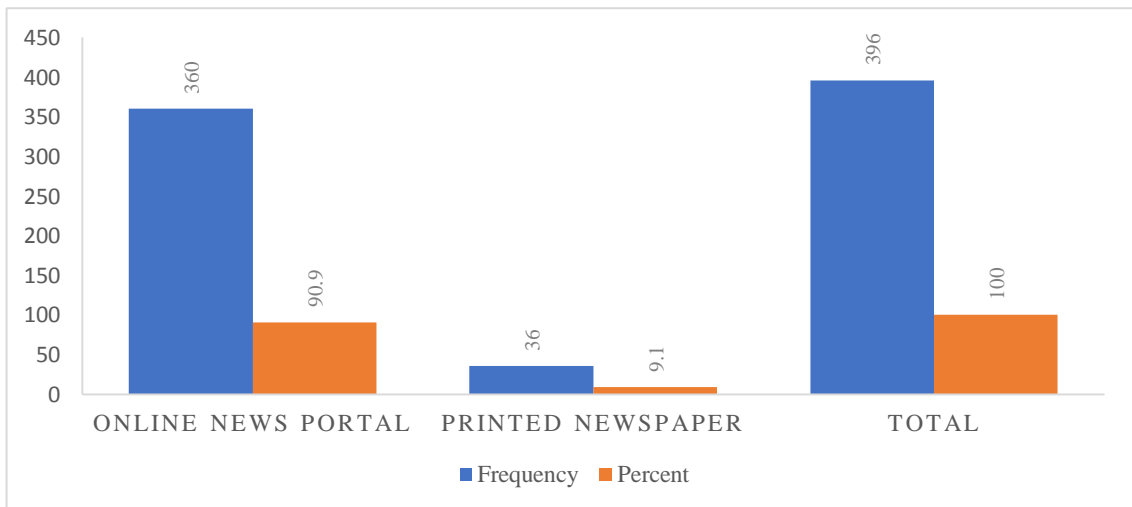
Source: Field Survey, 2024

FIGURE 6. PROFIT OF PRINTED NEWSPAPER IN COMPETITION WITH ONLINE



Source: Field Survey, 2024

FIGURE 7. TENDENCY TO ADVERTISING MORE IN MEDIA



Source: Field Survey, 2024

Evaluation of Role of Printed Newspaper

The respondents expressed their ideas on the role of newspaper of Bangladesh. Only 32% of the respondents thought that the newspapers have been performing effective role and 29% assumed newspaper did not perform effective role at all. But 38% and 34% of the respondents expressed that newspapers in Bangladesh are highly politically biased and had more effective role in earlier but not now respectively. The findings indicate that the newspapers of Bangladesh have not been performing its role effectively as a whole. Its present role is questionable and being criticized. As some contended its earlier effective role, so it could be an opportunity for further improvement.

TABLE 8. RESPONDENTS' OPINION ON THE ROLE OF NEWSPAPERS

| Remarks | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|--|---------------------|------------|
| Newspapers in Bangladesh are highly politically biased | 150 | 38% |
| More effective role in earlier | 135 | 34% |
| Performing effective role | 126 | 32% |
| Not performing effective role | 114 | 29% |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

N= 396, multiple responses

Fulfillment of Expectation by Printed Newspaper

The readers have some expectations toward the printed newspapers. As the newspaper is the mirror of the society so, it could do for the nation, also satisfies the readers. To illustrate the situation, the majority of the respondents (58.8%) thought the printed newspapers had fulfilled their expectation. But it is also important that 41.2% of the respondents were not satisfied. The findings could be important that newspaper could not perform for many readers. The newspaper could compromise in many occasions or political economy of the newspaper could have been worked to decline the situation. But since majority responded positively so the finding is considered as optimistic.

TABLE 9. FULFILLING THE EXPECTATION BY PRINTED NEWSPAPERS

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Yes | 233 | 58.8 | 58.8 | 58.8 |
| | No | 163 | 41.2 | 41.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 396 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Scope of Digital Technology in Print Newspaper

The digital technologies are expected to be blessing for the printed newspaper industry. The respondents of the study also thought accordingly. Majority of the respondents (51%) mentioned that printed newspaper could introduce online version that means media convergent could be made. This is already done by the number of national and even local newspapers. Moreover, 46% of the respondents also opined that digital technology can be engaged to present quick news and 35% told it could be helpful to facilitate all-time updates of newspaper. Digital technology also opened up the scope for the practice of multimedia journalism by 23% and to relieve manual archiving, online archiving of the newspapers could be done with the help of digital technology mentioned by 21% of the respondents. Variations in printing/ graphics/ page makeup could also be done (12%). So, these are the opportunities to engage digital technology which could be considered as the coping strategy for the upcoming days.

TABLE 10. ENGAGEMENT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN PRINT NEWSPAPER

| Types of Engagement | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Introducing online version (Convergent) | 201 | 51% |
| Quick presenting the news | 184 | 46% |
| Facility of all-time updates | 140 | 35% |
| Scope for the practice of multimedia journalism | 93 | 23% |
| Facility of online archiving | 84 | 21% |
| Variations in printing/ graphics/ page makeup | 46 | 12% |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

N= 396, multiple responses

Challenges due to Improvement of Digital Technology

Digital technology has already created some challenges on the printed newspaper. There exist some added advantages of online media for having its technology dependency. These added advantages might have created challenges on printed newspapers. For instance, majority of the respondents (54%) opined that online news-portals' subscribers have been increasing while online news-portals are easily available mentioned by 37% of the respondents. The improved digital technologies have created less operational cost for online news-portals, opined by 35% and benefits of digital advertisements were mentioned by 34% of the respondents. The digital technology has created opportunity to be very easy interactivity and convergent by 23% and 18% of the respondents thought that digital media have options to have unlimited contents. All these challenges have been created by the improved digital technology. With the help of digital technology, online media have availed these benefits, on the contrary, created challenges on printed media.

TABLE 11. CHALLENGES OF PRINT NEWSPAPER

| Types of Challenges | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Increasing of online news-portal subscribers | 214 | 54% |
| Easy availability of online news-portals | 148 | 37% |
| Less operational cost of online news-portal | 140 | 35% |
| Benefits of digital advertisements | 133 | 34% |
| Very easy interactivity and convergent | 91 | 23% |
| Unlimited contents | 71 | 18% |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

N= 396, multiple responses

Prospects of Printed Newspaper

In the digital era of twenty first century, printed newspaper has also some prospects to survive. The respondents expressed opinions through which printed newspapers would perform to be more readers-friendly and effective. The majority of the respondents (62%) thought that printed newspapers have scope to provide directives in any crisis of the country while 61% thought that the printed newspapers could be active in different social issues like

environment, disasters, adulteration, price hike etc. and 33% of them mentioned opportunity to promote to publish dissent. Some of the respondents (23%) opined the printed newspaper had vivid past that is inspiring and 15% of them thought contents could have variations. The findings hint that if these thinking of the readers could be fulfilled by printed newspapers, their prospects would be firmly luminous. In this way the printed newspapers would be more readable and readership. Readers could be more trustful upon the printed newspaper and credibility would be increased vice versa. The printed newspaper could survive amid of the challenges derived from the digital technological advancement.

TABLE 12. PROSPECTS OF PRINT NEWSPAPER

| Types of Prospects | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Provide directives in any crisis of the country | 245 | 62% |
| Active in different social issues like environment, disasters, adulteration, price hike etc. | 243 | 61% |
| Opportunity to promote dissent opinion to publish | 129 | 33% |
| Vivid past that inspiring | 90 | 23% |
| Content variations | 59 | 15% |

Source: Field Survey, 2024
N= 396, multiple responses

Findings

The study has focused on current situation and challenges of printed newspaper in the digital age through which the future of printed newspaper could be visible. The situation of printed newspaper is found quite frustrating. Only 33.1% of the respondents read newspaper regularly and rest of them read irregularly. Only 15.2% readers read offline version while 37.1% read online newspapers. Social media is found as dominating medium of reading online newspaper by 64.9% of the respondents. As a result, readers express satisfaction upon online version by 43.7% of the respondents. The printed newspaper industry is largely dependent on its large size of circulation and readership. The findings of the study indicate that only 19.4% bought newspaper on regular basis while 39.4% of the respondents bought occasionally. Publishing advertisement in newspaper is termed excessive (27%) and boring (23.5%). The growth of online newspaper is found very high compared to printed newspaper which was 88.9% of the respondents. The online newspaper is also very easy and comfortable. Moreover, some features of online news-portals like increasing online news-portals subscribers (54%), easy availability of online news-portals (37%), less operational cost (35%), more benefits from digital advertisement (34%), very easy interactivity and convergent in nature (23%) and unlimited contents of online news-portals (18%) etc. are termed as challenges of printed newspaper as a whole. Apart from these, decreasing of printed newspapers' subscribers (85.4%), profit would be made more by online news-portals and advertisements would also go to the online version more in quantity are also challenges for printed newspaper.

Keeping all the fading situation of printed newspaper, the readers feel a bit satisfaction to read printed newspaper. About 98% of the respondents are satisfied to read printed newspaper. Simultaneously, online newspaper is also found satisfactory by 98.7% of

the respondents. So, interestingly it is clear that though regular subscribers and readers are not high as expected, but the readers as a whole love to read both printed and online versions almost at the same rate. The role performed by the newspaper is termed as effective by 32% of the respondents. In regard to fulfilling the expectation, majority of the respondents (58.8%) expressed positive. The digital technology has created an opportunity to printed newspaper as well. Fifty-one percent of the respondents have mentioned that it could be convergent which means printed newspaper could open up online version and reach through online platforms. The respondents (62%) opined that printed newspaper could provide direction to the nation in any crisis and perform active role in different social issues for the society (61%). Having negative perceptions comparing with online news-portals, 48% of the respondents still believe the printed newspapers could survive in competition with online versions. The findings are considered as optimistic for the newspaper industry.

CONCLUSION

The print media in digital age is now-a-days a serious issue to discuss since the tremendous advancement of technology has already been taken place. This advancement has changed the total atmosphere of the newspaper industry alike of other sectors of the country. With the advantages of the digital technology, online news-portals and online newspapers have been publishing almost two decades ago. The social media and its convergent with traditional media have also raised some questions on the future of printed newspapers in Bangladesh. The survival and coping strategy are very much important for the existence of printed newspaper in Bangladesh. Thinking all these, the study started with a view to analyze comprehensively the pros and cons of current situation and challenges of print media in digital age on daily newspaper readers of Mymensingh division in Bangladesh. The future of printed newspapers would also be drawn in the study through analyses. The findings of the current situation of printed newspapers indicate non-satisfactory rather weak situation is prevailing compare to online news-portals. The study has identified some challenges derived from the advancement of digital technology. But according to the findings, the prospect of printed newspaper is not smooth rather having competition and challenges with online news-portals. Opportunity is there, but it needs to be properly addressed. Finally, on the basis of the findings, it can be said that the printed newspaper would not die but the future of the printed newspapers of Bangladesh can be considered a bit vulnerable unless and until the digital technology is adapted comprehensively.

Recommendations

The findings lead to the following recommendations:

- The printed newspaper can adapt updated and advanced digital technologies in all possible sections of the its house.
- The print newspaper can be convergent with digital and social media in all aspects.

Acknowledgement: The study was financially supported by the Research and Extension Center, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh-2224, Bangladesh (2023-24 FY). The researcher acknowledges the contribution of the university authority and expresses gratitude to the respondents.

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