

A Comparative Analysis of Readers Preference Satisfaction and Trust towards Traditional and Digital News Platforms: A Study with reference to NavGujarat Samay

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Abstract

The newspaper and media industry plays an important role in providing information, creating awareness, and connecting people with local, national, and international events. In India, the industry includes print and digital news platforms in English, Hindi, and regional languages. Despite the rapid growth of digital media, regional-language newspapers continue to have strong readership because of their local connection, language preferences, reading habits, and credibility.

Introduction

The newspaper and media industry plays an important role in providing information, creating awareness, and connecting people with local, national, and international events. In India, the industry includes print and digital news platforms in English, Hindi, and regional languages. Despite the rapid growth of digital media, regional-language newspapers continue to have strong readership because of their local connection, language preferences, reading habits, and credibility.

The Indian news industry can broadly be divided into traditional print media and digital news media. Print newspapers have a long history in India and continue to be valued for detailed reporting, credibility, and a familiar reading experience. Gujarati journalism also has a strong historical background, beginning with Bombay Samachar in 1822. However, print media faces challenges such as rising printing and distribution costs, changing reading habits, and shifting advertising revenue towards digital platforms.

Digital news has grown rapidly due to affordable smartphones, low-cost mobile data, and improved internet connectivity. Websites, e-papers, mobile applications, social media, and digital-only news platforms allow readers to access news anytime and anywhere. At the same time, concerns related to misinformation, fake news, source verification, and trust have become important factors in news consumption.

In Gujarat, newspapers such as Gujarat Samachar, Sandesh, and Divya Bhaskar have established strong readership bases, while readers are increasingly using digital platforms. NavGujarat Samay, launched in Ahmedabad in January 2014 under The Times Group, operates across both print and digital formats. It

provides national, international, local, business, sports, and entertainment news through its newspaper, e-paper, website, mobile application, and social media platforms.

Therefore, the present study focuses on a comparative analysis of reader preference, satisfaction, and trust towards traditional and digital news platforms, with special reference to NavGujarat Samay. The study examines how readers perceive both formats and the factors influencing their choice in the changing news consumption environment.

Literature review

1. Reader Preference Towards Print and Digital News Platforms

Several studies have examined whether digital news platforms are replacing print newspapers or whether both formats continue to coexist. Hassan and Azmi (2018) found that although online newspaper readership is increasing, print newspapers continue to remain relevant due to established reading habits and credibility. Lucena (2011) similarly reported that print decline is not universal, as newspapers continue to retain value across many countries. Waal, Schönbach and Lauf (2005) concluded that online newspapers generally complement rather than replace print newspapers. Kit and Teng (2016) observed that younger readers increasingly prefer online news, while print continues to attract loyal readers. Singh (2018) and Anyim (2021) also found that convenience encourages digital adoption, whereas trust and habit remain the key strengths of print newspapers.

2. Reader Satisfaction with News Platforms

Research on reader satisfaction highlights that different factors influence satisfaction across print and digital platforms. Hassan, Azmi and Atek (2015) found that timeliness, accuracy, and ease of access significantly improve satisfaction with online newspapers. Fikri, Pane and Ahmad (2020) reported that content quality and reader satisfaction positively influence reader loyalty. Rajanen (2020) observed that while digital platforms offer convenience, frequent distractions may reduce reading satisfaction compared with print newspapers. Lu, Zhang and Ma (2018) further found that user satisfaction changes throughout different stages of online news reading. Collectively, these studies suggest that satisfaction depends on format-specific features, such as print quality and readability for newspapers, and speed, usability, and accessibility for digital platforms.

3. Trust and Credibility in News Media

Trust remains one of the most widely researched factors influencing news consumption. Kim and Johnson (2009) found that traditional news media are generally perceived as more credible than internet news sources. Kalogeropoulos et al. (2019) reported that trust varies more across individual news organizations than across media formats. Jun (2023) observed that readers often trust the news sources they personally use more than the media in general.

4. Digital Transformation of the Newspaper Industry

Rapid technological development has significantly transformed the newspaper industry. Albadri (2023) reported that newspapers increasingly integrate print and digital operations to remain competitive. Siles and Boczkowski (2012) identified declining advertising revenue as one of the major reasons behind digital transformation. Alzubi (2023) found that most newspaper organizations now operate hybrid business models by combining print and digital services. Bhuller et al. (2024) observed that although internet usage has reduced print circulation, its impact differs across countries and reader groups. Karambelkar (2019) further reported that regional-language newspapers have shown greater resilience than national English newspapers.

5. Young Readers and News Consumption Behaviour

Several studies have focused on changing news consumption habits among younger audiences. Ihlebæk (2024) found that young readers increasingly access news through digital platforms and social media rather than printed newspapers. Casero-Ripollés (2012) also reported a clear generational shift towards mobile and online news consumption. Loan (2011) found that college students strongly preferred digital media because of its convenience and accessibility. Cherian and Jacob (2013), however, observed that many students still preferred print newspapers for detailed and focused reading. Podara et al. (2019) further reported growing engagement with multimedia and interactive news formats among young adults.

6. Social Media, Fake News, and News Trust

The increasing role of social media in news consumption has raised concerns regarding misinformation and trust. Heuer and Breiter (2018) found that readers generally consider news encountered through social media to be less credible than news obtained directly from established publishers. Russmann and Hess (2020) observed that young adults often verify information obtained through social media before accepting it as accurate. Bhuiyan et al. (2021) reported that visible fact-checking indicators and transparent sourcing improve trust in online news. Flew (2022) argued that digital platforms themselves influence public trust in news. Overall, previous studies suggest that fake news, misinformation, and lack of source verification remain major challenges affecting trust in digital news platforms.

7. Reading Behaviour and User Experience Across Print and Digital Media

Research has also examined how reading behaviour differs across print and digital formats. Singer and Alexander (2016) found that print reading generally results in better comprehension and information retention than digital reading. Walsh (2016) similarly concluded that printed material supports deeper reading, while digital platforms offer greater speed and accessibility. Laine and Leppänen (2016) found that printed newspapers provide a more focused reading experience, whereas digital newspapers offer greater convenience and interactivity. Andersson (2016) reported that print readers spend more time reading articles, while online readers tend to skim larger volumes of content.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To study reader preference towards print and digital news platforms.
2. To examine the level of reader satisfaction with print and digital news platforms.
3. To compare print and digital news platforms based on reader preference, satisfaction, and trust.

4. Research methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine readers' preference, satisfaction, and trust towards print and digital news platforms, with special reference to NavGujarat Samay. The population comprised individuals using print newspapers and/or digital news platforms, and a sample of 130 respondents was selected through convenience sampling from Ahmedabad. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire containing closed-ended and Likert-scale questions, while secondary data were obtained from research journals, articles, and industry reports.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Interpretation

The table shows that the majority of respondents are male (61.5%) and belong to the 20–30 years age

group (65.4%). Most respondents are students (56.9%), followed by salaried employees (21.5%). Regarding reading frequency, 48.5% read news once a day, while 15.4% read it multiple times a day. The preference for print newspapers (50.8%) and digital news platforms (49.2%) is almost equally divided, indicating that both formats remain relevant among respondents.

2. Comparative Analysis of Reader Preference

2.1 Preference Towards Print Newspaper

[1] Factors Influencing Preference Towards Print Newspapers

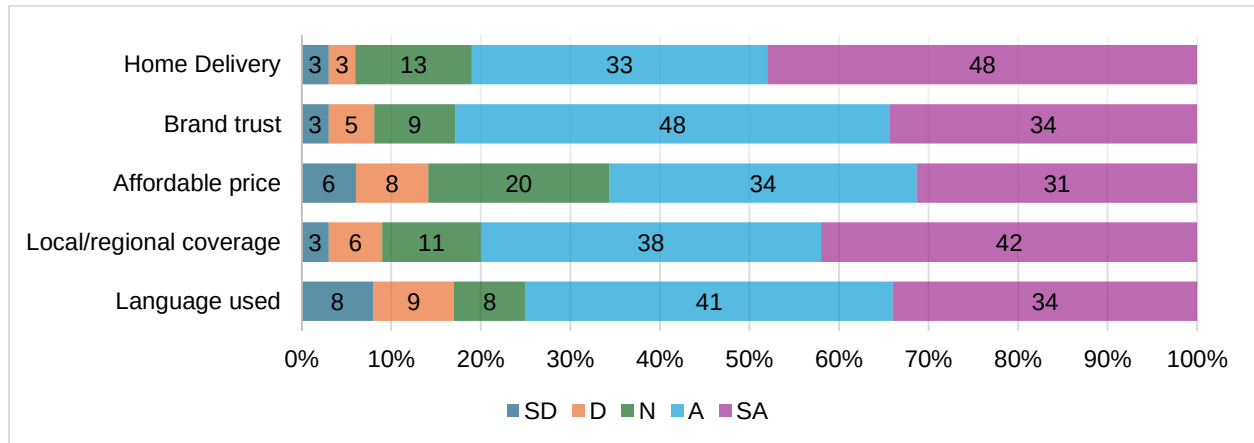


Figure: Key Factors Influencing Print Newspaper Preference

Interpretation:

The results indicate that **home delivery** and **brand trust** are the most influential factors affecting readers' preference towards print newspapers. **Local/regional news coverage, language used, and affordable price** also contribute to readers' preference, but to a comparatively lesser extent. Overall, readers primarily value the **convenience and credibility** offered by print newspapers.

[2] Most Preferred Features of Print Newspapers

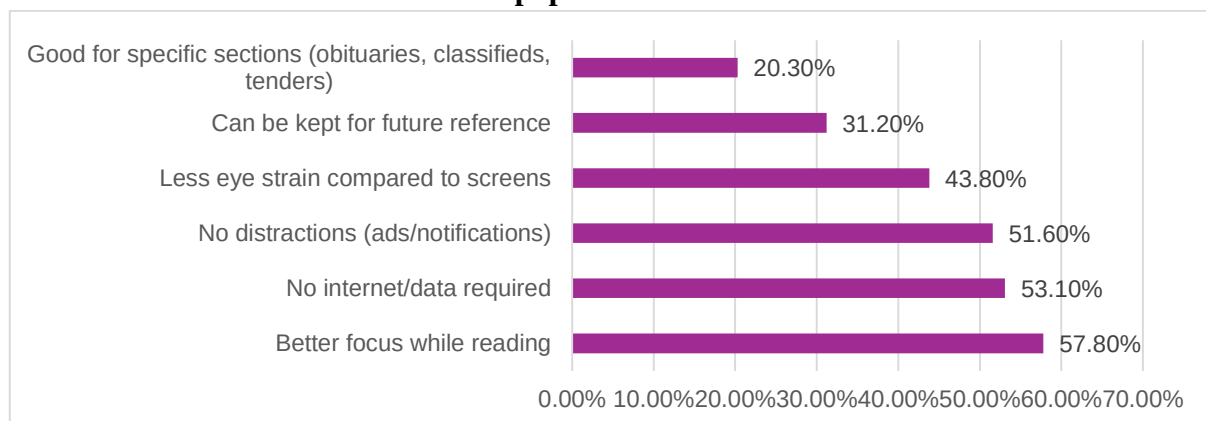


Figure: Features Most Liked About Print Newspapers

Interpretation:

The findings indicate that better focus while reading (57.8%) is the most-liked feature of print newspapers among respondents. A majority also value no internet requirement (53.1%) and a distraction-free reading experience (51.6%). Overall, the results suggest that readers prefer print newspapers for their focused, uninterrupted, and convenient reading experience.

3.2 Preference Towards Digital News Platform

[1] Most Preferred Digital Platforms for Reading News

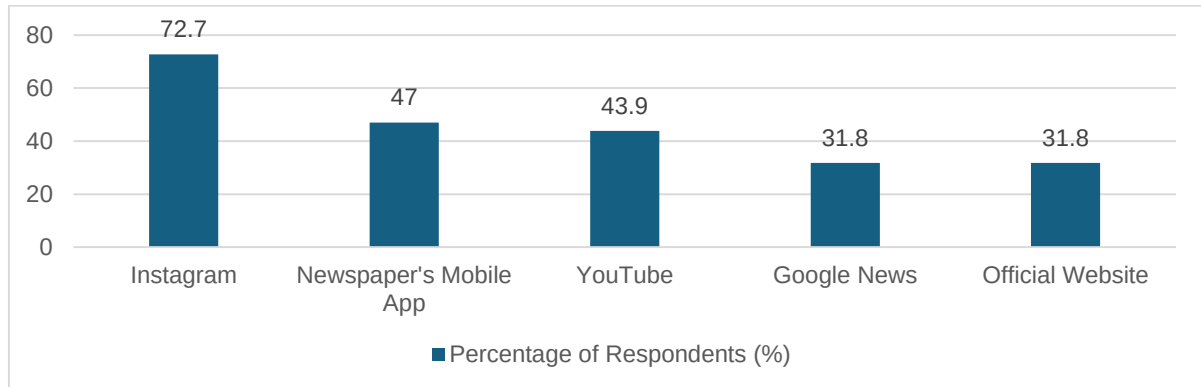


Figure : Digital News Platform Usage Among Respondents

Interpretation:

The findings reveal that **Instagram (72.7%)** is the most commonly used digital platform for accessing news among respondents. This is followed by the **newspaper's mobile app (47.0%)** and **YouTube (43.9%)**, indicating that readers prefer both social media and dedicated news applications. **Google News** and **official websites** are used by **31.8%** of respondents each, making them comparatively less popular sources for news consumption.

[2] Factors Influencing Preference Towards Digital News Platforms

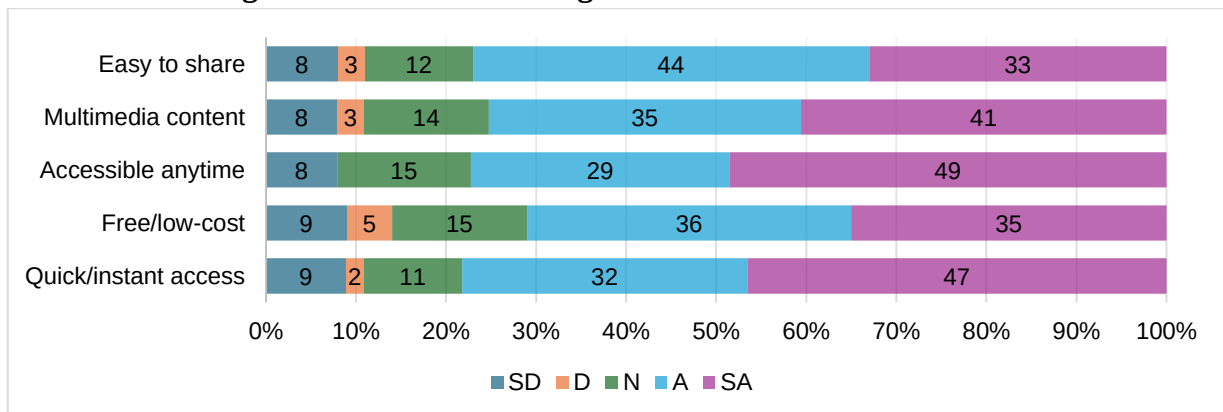


Figure: Key Factors Affecting Preference for Digital News Platforms

Interpretation:

The results indicate that **accessible anytime** and **quick/instant access** are the most influential factors affecting readers' preference towards digital news platforms. **Multimedia content, easy sharing, and free/low-cost access** also contribute to readers' preference, but to a comparatively lesser extent. Overall, readers prefer digital news platforms for their **convenience and instant accessibility**.

3. Comparative Analysis of Reader Satisfaction

3.1 Satisfaction Towards Print Newspaper

[1] Factors Influencing Satisfaction with Print Newspapers

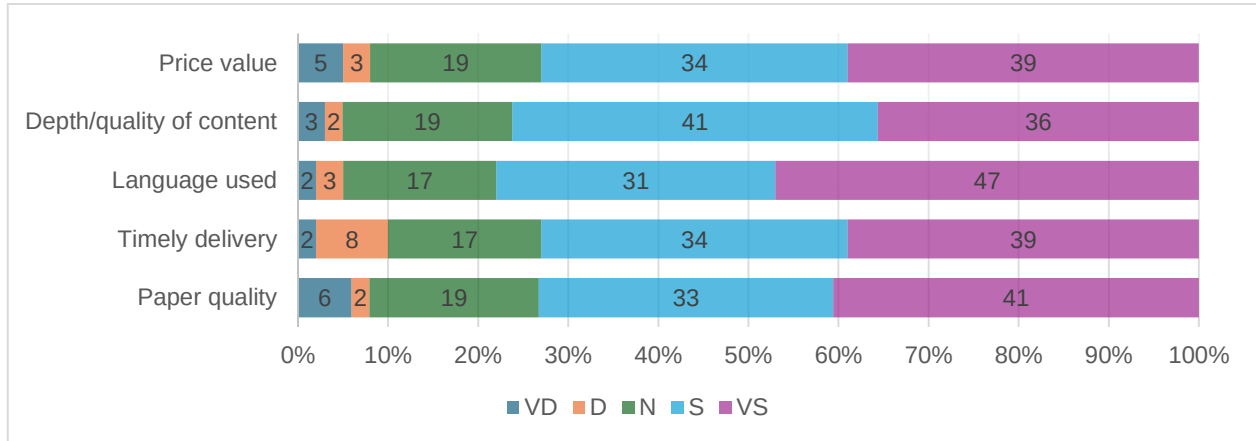


Figure: Key Factors Affecting Satisfaction with Print Newspapers

Interpretation:

The results indicate that language used is the most influential factor contributing to readers' satisfaction with print newspapers. Other factors such as paper quality, timely delivery, depth and quality of content, and price value also received favourable responses. Overall, readers demonstrate a positive level of satisfaction with the overall quality of print newspapers.

[2] Readability Difficulties in Print Newspapers

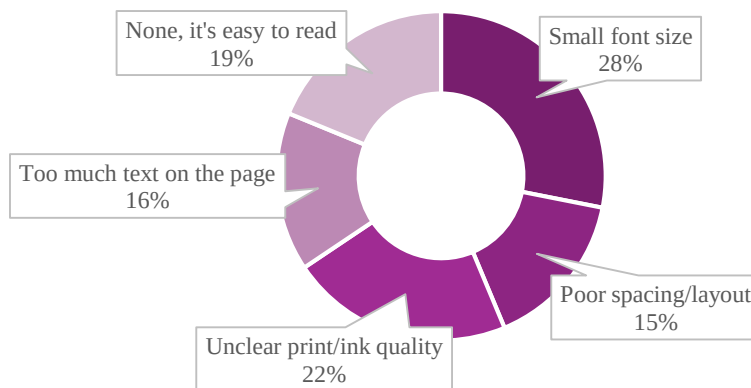


Figure: Readability Difficulty in Print Newspapers (n = 64)

Interpretation:

Small font size is the most commonly reported readability issue among print readers, cited by 28.1% of respondents. Unclear print or ink quality follows at 21.9%, while 18.8% of readers reported no difficulty at all, finding print easy to read. Too much text on the page and poor spacing or layout were each cited by 15.6% of respondents. Overall, font size and print quality emerge as the two main readability concerns for print newspaper readers.

3.2 Satisfaction Towards Digital News Platform

[1] Factors Influencing Satisfaction with Digital News Platform

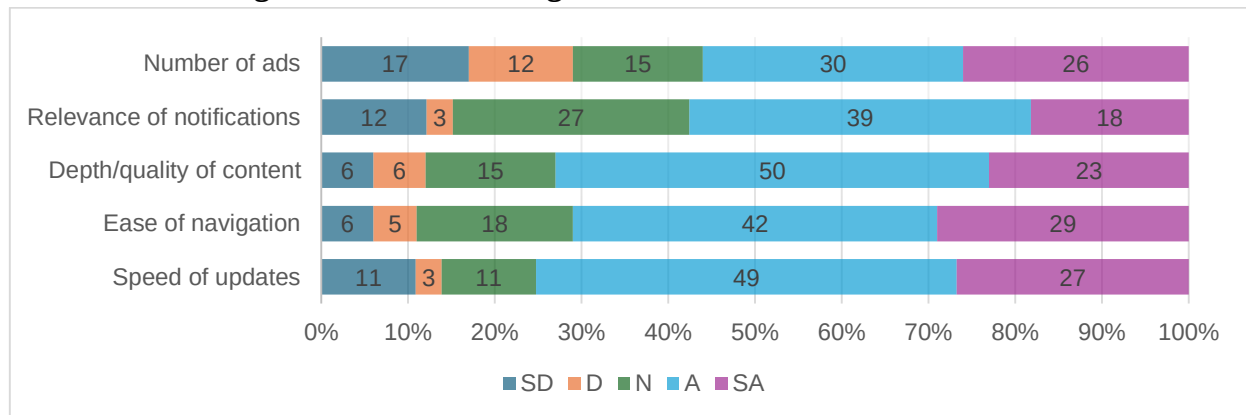


Figure: Key Factors Affecting Satisfaction with Digital News Platforms

Interpretation:

The results show that speed of updates and ease of navigation are the key factors contributing to digital reader satisfaction, followed by the quality of news content. However, respondents expressed lower satisfaction with notifications and advertisements, with ads receiving the least favorable ratings. This indicates that reducing advertisements and pop-ups could significantly improve the overall digital reading experience.

[2] Areas Requiring Improvement in Digital News Platforms

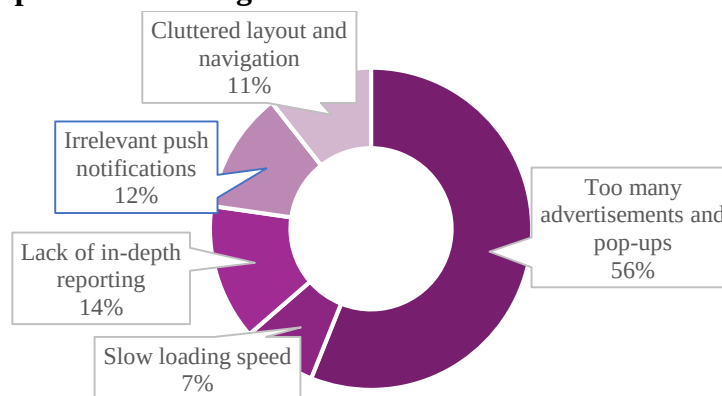


Figure: Key Areas for Improvement in Digital News Platforms

Interpretation:

The results indicate that too many advertisements and pop-ups is the major area requiring improvement in digital news platforms. Other issues, such as lack of in-depth reporting, irrelevant push notifications, cluttered layout, and slow loading speed, were reported less frequently. Overall, improving the user experience could enhance readers' satisfaction with digital news platforms.

4. Relationship Between Demographic Variables and Preferred News Platform

4.1 Age and Preferred News Platform

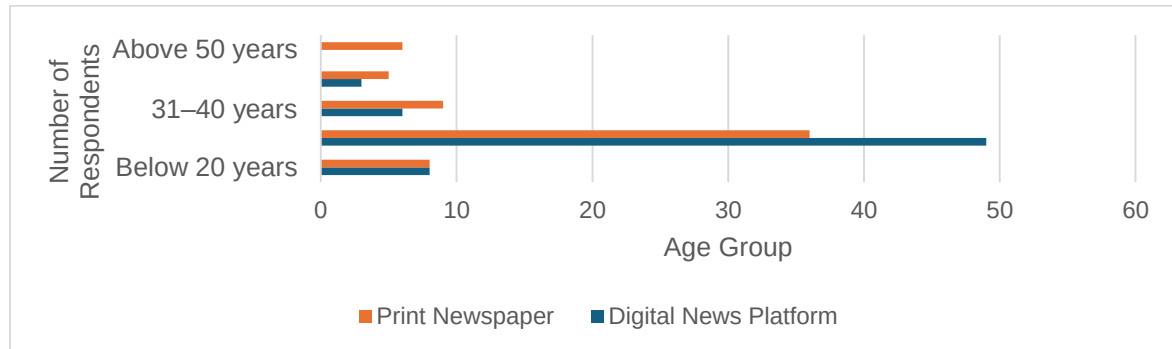


Figure : Relationship Between Age and Preferred News Platform

Interpretation:

The chart shows that respondents aged 20–30 years have the highest preference for both digital and print news platforms, with a slightly higher preference for digital news. Respondents aged above 50 years show a stronger preference for print newspapers. Overall, preferences vary across age groups, but both platforms are used by respondents of different ages.

4.2 Gender and Preferred News Platform

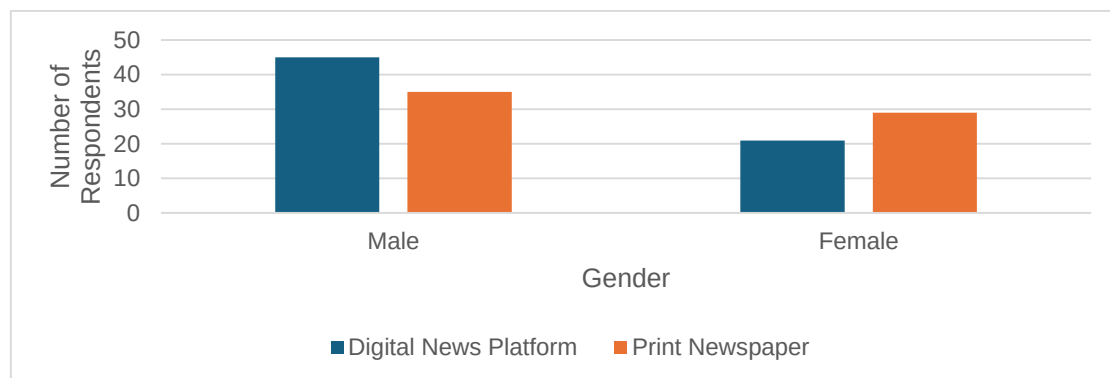


Figure: Relationship Between Occupation and Preferred News Platform

Interpretation:

The chart indicates that male respondents have a relatively higher preference for digital news platforms, while female respondents show a slightly higher preference for print newspapers. However, the difference in preference between males and females is relatively small.

4.3 Occupation and Preferred News Platform

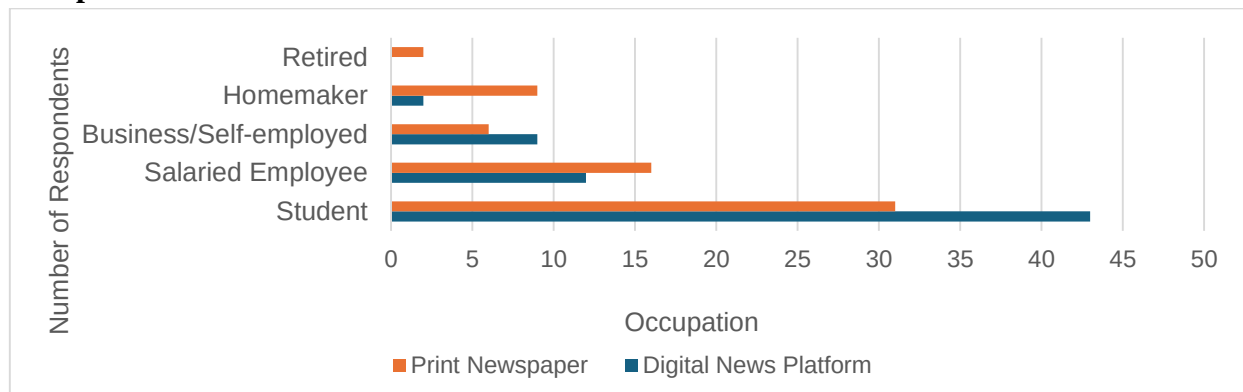


Figure : Occupation-wise Preferred News Platform

Interpretation

The chart shows that **students** have the highest preference for digital news platforms, while **homemakers**, **Retired** and **salaried employees** display a relatively higher preference for print newspapers. Business/self-employed respondents also show a greater inclination towards digital news. Overall, news platform preference varies across different occupational groups.

4.4 News Reading Frequency and Preferred News Platform

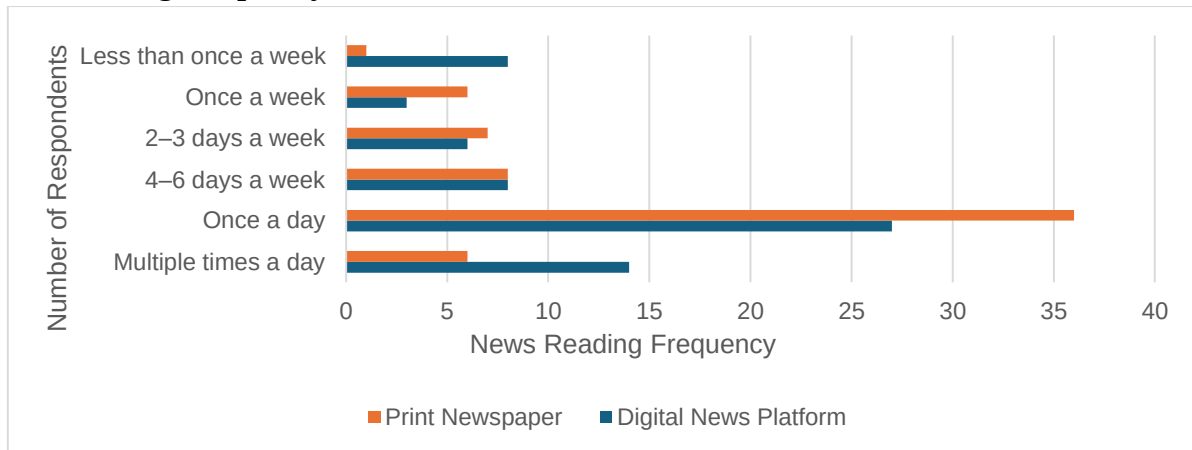


Figure: News Reading Frequency and Preferred News Platform

Interpretation:

The chart shows that respondents who read news once a day form the largest group, with a slightly higher preference for print newspapers. Respondents who read news multiple times a day show a stronger preference for digital news platforms, while those who read news once a week prefer print newspapers. Overall, news reading frequency is associated with differences in respondents' preferred news platform.

Hypothesis 2: Satisfaction Between Print Newspaper Readers and Digital News Platform Readers

H₀: There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction between print newspaper readers and digital news platform readers.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction between print newspaper readers and digital news platform readers.

Statistical Test Used: Independent Samples t-test

Particulars	Print Readers	Digital Readers
Sample Size (n)	64	66
Mean	4.05	3.55
Standard Deviation	0.86	1.05

Test Statistic	Value
Calculated t-value	2.969
Degrees of Freedom (df)	124.56
Critical t-value (5% level, Two-tailed)	±1.980

Table: Independent Samples t-test Results

Source: Primary Data (n = 130), analysed using SPSS.

Interpretation:

An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare the satisfaction levels of print newspaper readers and digital news platform readers. Print newspaper readers had a higher mean satisfaction score ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.86$) than digital news platform readers ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.05$). The calculated t-value was 2.969, while the critical t-value at the 5% level of significance (two-tailed) with 124.56 degrees of freedom was ± 1.980 .

Since the absolute calculated t-value (2.969) is greater than the critical t-value (1.980), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference in the level of satisfaction between print newspaper readers and digital news platform readers. The findings indicate that print newspaper readers are significantly more satisfied with their news source than digital news platform readers.

Decision: H_0 : Rejected | H_1 : Accepted

Hypothesis 3: Preference Between Print Newspaper Readers and Digital News Platform Readers

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the level of preference between print newspaper readers and digital news platform readers.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in the level of preference between print newspaper readers and digital news platform readers.

Statistical Test Used: Independent Samples t-test

Particulars	Print Readers	Digital Readers
Sample Size (n)	64	66
Mean	3.99	3.98
Standard Deviation	0.89	1.09

Test Statistic	Value
Calculated t-value	0.068
Degrees of Freedom (df)	128
Critical t-value (5% level, Two-tailed)	± 1.979

Table: Independent Samples t-test Results

Source: Primary Data (n = 130), analysed using SPSS.

Interpretation:

The results show that print and digital news readers have almost equal preference scores (3.99 and 3.98). Since the calculated t-value (0.068) is lower than the critical value (1.979), the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference in preference between print and digital news platforms.

Decision: H_0 : Failed to reject | H_1 : Rejected

5. Reader Switching Behaviour

This section presents respondents' views on what would prompt them to switch from their current news platform to the alternative format, based on Section E of the questionnaire. As this represents a single behavioural indicator rather than one of the study's three core constructs (trust, satisfaction, and preference), it is presented descriptively rather than through formal hypothesis testing.

Figure: Reader Switching Behaviour

Platform	Better Content Quality	Improved Accessibility	Nothing Would Make Me Switch	Other (Pricing/Peer/Misc.)
Digital News Platform	51.5%	24.2%	10.6%	13.6%
Print Newspaper	26.6%	25.0%	32.8%	15.6%

Table: Reason for Switching Platforms, by Current Platform (%)

Interpretation:

Digital news readers are considerably more likely to switch platforms for better content quality (51.5%) compared to print readers (26.6%), suggesting that content depth remains a key weakness for digital platforms relative to print.

Print newspaper readers, on the other hand, display much stronger platform loyalty, with nearly one-third (32.8%) stating that nothing would make them switch more than three times the corresponding figure for digital readers (10.6%). Improved accessibility matters almost equally to both groups (around 25% each), indicating it is not a major differentiator between the two segments.

Major finding

- The study covered 130 respondents, mainly 20–30 years old (65.4%), with males (61.5%) and students (56.9%) forming the majority.
- Print readers preferred newspapers mainly for home delivery and brand trust, while digital readers valued instant and anytime access. Instagram was the most-used news platform (72.7%).
- Print readers showed higher satisfaction with language and content, while digital readers preferred speed and easy navigation. Advertisements/pop-ups (56.1%) were the main digital concern.
- Print readers had significantly higher trust and satisfaction, but there was no significant difference in overall preference between print and digital platforms.
- Digital readers were more willing to switch for better content quality, while print readers showed stronger platform loyalty.

Conclusion

The study compared reader preference, satisfaction, and trust toward print and digital news platforms with reference to NavGujarat Samay, based on 130 respondents. Both platforms remain important for meeting readers' information needs. Print newspapers were preferred for their credibility, reliable news, and reading experience, while digital platforms were valued for instant access, convenience, and multimedia features. Print readers showed significantly higher trust and satisfaction, although no significant difference was found in overall preference. Advertisements and fake news were major concerns for digital readers, while objectivity and unbiased reporting remain important for print. Therefore, NavGujarat Samay should maintain the credibility of its print edition while improving its digital content, user experience, and trustworthiness. An integrated print–digital approach can help the organization meet changing reader expectations and strengthen reader engagement.

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