Impact of Digitization on Student Buying Behaviour in the Indian Print Business

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Abstract

This research paper strives to examine the impact of digital revolution on the "print business" and the industry of books. The primary objective being the analysis of students under the age of 24 and their preferences when it comes to books and e-books; their requirements of usage of e-books. A questionnaire was circulated among 50 students and conclusions were derived from the same. The status of printed books, growing interest and extent of e-books and the demands of the market today were discovered.

Keywords: E-books • Paperback books • Print industry

Introduction

Information is vital and is circulated in different forms. With the evolution of man, the means of circulating information has also evolved. This evolution can be witnessed from signs in the Stone Age to symbols to language in the medieval age and recently to digitalization in the modern age. Late 1900's and the early 2000's is known as the digital era, where the world witnessed the perks of using technology for saving time and energy. Information in diverse forms: texts, sounds, images and voices are converted into a single binary code, to make them digitally available. In comparison to analogue information, digital information can be transmitted at a faster rate and without degradation.

Printing industry in India has witnessed a shift from printing books and novels to commercial printing in the last two decades. Despite of this shift, India still remains as one of the major market leaders in the world having a market share of over 20% in the world. Not only that, it has grown healthily in the last 5 years. According to a survey, more than 2,50,000 printing press, including small; medium as well as large press, currently exist in India. The current annual turnover of this industry is estimated to be around 50,000 crores INR, according to an economic survey conducted. The industry has gained capital investment of over 83,000 million rupees. The industry has also witnessed a growth of over 12% in the last few years.

As we saw, despite being in the modern era and being digitally equipped, the Indian printing industry is booming. In the period where people are shifting their preferences to digital means, it is interesting to see such tremendous growth of the printing industry in India. We in this research try to analysis the reason for the same by understanding the impact of digitalization on the printing industry. We narrow down our research and focus primarily on the paperback industry, i.e. novels and books in particular.

Literature Review

Literature is a basic study of field our research based on exiting knowledge

and literature in the field. It helps us in bringing different perspectives into one light and therefore, shaping our opinions on that path. The proposed study reflects a different light in terms of perspective. However, this review attempts on combining various attempts at understanding the field and bring them under one banner.

Faculty experiences with E-books

A study conducted in the Arizona State University Libraries through moderation of a focus group aims to find out faculty perceptions about use of electronic books. The focus group states that the technical difficulties discourage them from using electronic material in class [1]. Also, acceptance comes only from a few professors and not every one of them. The reason for promotion of e-books is that fact that students living in remote areas don't have to travel to carry books. However, the drawback is that only six faculty members were part of the focus group, which leaves us with very limited information. Also, the whole research was based on certain anecdotes that the professors could recount and might have had slight deviation from the reality.

Another research talks about whether acceptance of e-books should be encouraged or not, which has done a survey of around 2,000 students and faculty members around University College, London suggests that users of e-books are more likely to be students than professors. Age becomes a very relevant factor in determination of usage of e-books [2]. Also, a unique revelation made by this study is that men are more likely to read from the screen than women. However, this revelation does not hold not as mean and women today are equally likely to read from screen. Also, usage of e-books could be seen more by faculty for research work than, leisure reading.

Undergraduate students and usage of E-books

Initially when around the year 2000 e-books were introduced, hype for them was created and steady growth could be seen in their usage. However, slowly, reluctance could be seen in college students while discovering e-books in the library treasury. Regardless of this decline is users, millennial kids are known to have been "technology friendly". One of the key factors of the decline was that students tend to get distracted with the various aspects of a smart phone, or a laptop rather than concentrating on their reading, whereas printed books avoid that kind of distraction [3]. It studies the relation between various aspects of physical health conditions over students also. The study only goes to reveal the co-existence of the two, as it keeps on beating around the bush and dodging the ball to both sides of the court, but it does not take a final stand point on anything. Also, the ever growing changes are something the study looks forward too and states that the main priority of any library or institution is the convenience of the users.

Another study was conducted through convenience sampling method which goes out to state the various reasons why undergraduate students

choose to use e-books. It was assumed that students would adapt to e-books very easily because of how cost effective they are in comparison to printed books [4]. This study was conducted on a very limited population and hence yielding of proper result is not certain. The study establishes a relation between usage of e-books and in-class reading, leisure reading and conducting any type of research and how the frequency for each differs. Accessibility also determines our preferences. If printed books are readily available then, the use of e-books is hampered to an extent. Contrary to their usage, 95% of libraries support the usage of e-books and promote them [5].

So, the studies in these fields depict that e-books are making their way into the field; however, printed books still hold a bigger and stronger ground.

Preference of e-books over printed books in regards to text-books

A study conducted through web survey, on students of University of Strathclyde was conducted to analyse the use of e-books in higher education. The study suggests that e-books are very relevant in finding out to the point information and reference finding becomes very easy [6]. Also, emergence and growth of e-books can be traced back to different middle-men making e-books available to everyone. E-books make it easy to get references as easy access of artificial bookshelf is present. When it comes to finding relevant information and facts, e-books find a better preference but when it comes to leisure reading, printed books are considered much more valuable. Changes although have to be made to make the service better. Features to online gadgets have to be added.

Another study conducted through anonymous questionnaires traces the usage of e-books over printed books suggest that students also take into consideration the re-sale value of the books [7]. Printed books have a re-sale value, while e-books don't. One of the key points of using e-book is that many books can be stored on one device only. However, not everyone has come to a stage where they are user-friendly with technology. There exists "digitally challenged" students who have technical difficulties while using a gadget and thereby are not willing to switch over from printed books to electronic ones. It can also be seen that as the years progress, students get more engrossed towards e-books. This so happens because in the first year, students are unaware about usage of e-books and can't make most of the library resources provided. However, usage of printed books does not decline as books are passed on from the senior batch to their juniors [7]. Awareness is being continuously created about the usage of e-books in order to increase their usage worldwide.

Usage of e-books in variety of fields

This part of the study deals with how corporate sector deals with publishing of e-books works for its promotion and what are the factors responsible for subscription of these books. Factors include format of e-prints, also access and licensing problems. Also, pricing becomes an issue for the corporate sector. Equitable access at a reasonable price become the goal [8]. However, the incentive to use e-books firstly becomes its mobility and also the cost savings over printed books.

A survey conducted among college students in a distributed learning academic library through 29 days aimed to find out students from which courses tend to have more usage of e-books [9]. It talks about how unawareness of presence of e-books leads to students not following them.

Millennials and e-books

Usage of e-books have many advantages such that it can be read by specially abled people also and also cost effectiveness and searching abilities. A survey was conducted through email questionnaires which suggested that millennials have adopted themselves to e-books to quite an extent [10].

A study based on the subscription of electronic journals reveals that faculty and students both in the University of Pune are aware about the electronic journals and among these students tend to use it more often than faculty members. However, these millennials kids prefer to shift to printed books

during examinations. Also, the Gen Y faculty face difficulty in operating and accessing the e-journals [11].

Research gap

The literature review that we have completed earlier suggests the various reasons of the growth in usage of e-books and also, the limitations to its uses. However, what we are trying to study is the impact of digitization not in general but concentrated to the Indian market and institutions, also we will try and get into the depth of how it has hampered the "print business", which none of the articles have slightly accomplished.

Objectives of the study

- To explore the impact of digitization on paperback industry
- To focus on the scale of adaptivity
- To understand crowd's demand from the digital world in the coming years in India
- To get insights into the reading community and their preferred mode of reading
- To understand the change in the reading world

Statement of problems

Many studies so conducted earlier suggest the various reasons of the growth in usage of e- books and also, the limitations to its uses. However, what we are trying to study is the impact of digitization not in general but concentrated to the Indian market and institutions, also we will try and get into the depth of how it has hampered the "print business", which none of the articles have slightly accomplished.

Limitations

- Time constraint: Reading being a hobby, may not have events or meetings regularly and thus a detailed study may take a lot of time.
- Geographical Constraint: A particular geographical location may enable people to have a similar opinion and therefore result in a biased conclusion.

Research Methodology

The research will use a mix of quantitative as well as qualitative approach as the study of choice and preference is very individualistic. A questionnaire is used to collect primary data from 50 students who enjoy reading from places like colleges, libraries and events like book talks, etc. The questionnaire mainly has Likert scale question to understand their preferences apart from the extreme ends.

Results and Discussion

Analysis and interpretation

The results of this research paper depend on the questionnaire circulated. The questionnaire asked for the following information:

- Name, age, gender of the student
- Their frequency of reading
- Types of books they prefer
- Preferred medium of reading; along with reason for preference
- Frequency of usage of e-books and their reasons to use the same
- Their opinion of relevance of paperback books in the coming years

Most of the students that answered the questionnaire were from the age of 17-24 and most of whom had a vigorous passion for reading (Figure 1).

Swamped with college work and other activities, this age group has to create time to read. But, since most of their work is research based they cannot escape it either (Figure 2).
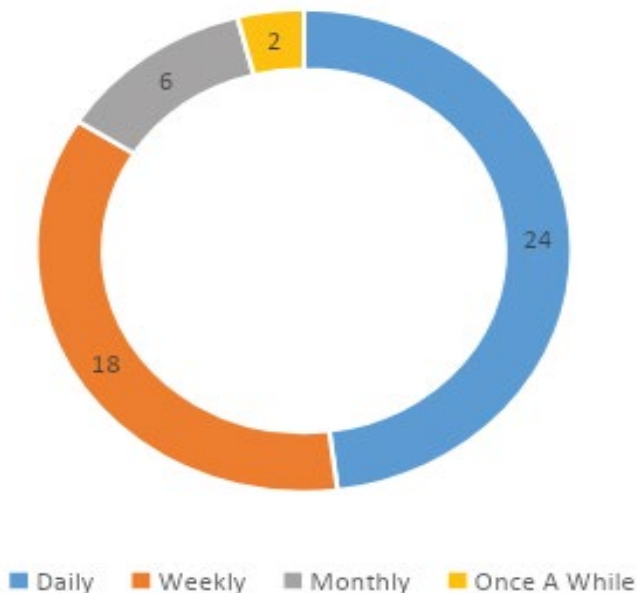

Figure 1. Frequency of reading.

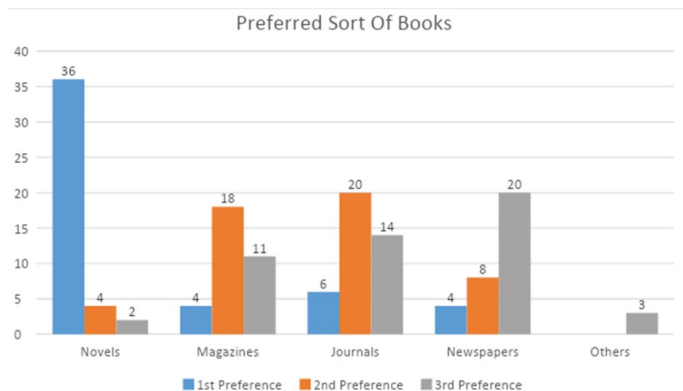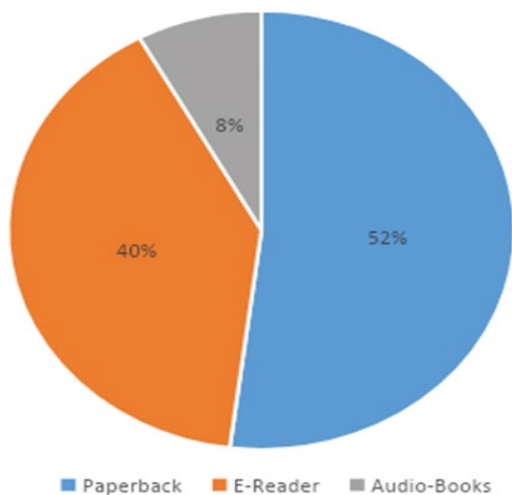**Figure 2.** Preference of books.

Figure 3. Medium of reading.

No matter how necessary or not, reading comes to those who are passionate about it. It is also seen that this age group if more diverted towards novels and journals and have a constant habitual preference of newspapers (Figure 3).

Major percentage is still diverted towards paperbacks, but an evolving population is slowly taking up e-books and also, a small percentage seems to chow interest in audio-books. E-books have become an instant source of knowledge and easy to access and also of reasonable price. These might be some reasons for their growing popularity.

Conclusion and Findings

- The research paper thus concludes that paperback books still hold a very good relevance, even though e-books are slowing making their toll over things.

- Habit of reading might be a dying one and curiosity still prevails that persuade people into picking up new books and reading them.

- People prefer to get news updates over the digital medium as it's faster and also gives a lot of content at once. But again, sale of newspapers has not reduced because old habits die hard and people have this imbibed habit of buying newspapers.

- Most preferred books include novels and journals. Novels mostly are out of one's passion and interest and journals mostly fulfil academic purposes and provide with a lot of information.

- More than half of the people prefer paperback books, because they believe holding a physical book peeks their interest and more easy to the eye. The ones who have started to develop an interest for e-books are not looking for leisurely passing time, but rather interested in finding facts and academic research.

- User-friendliness and cost-efficiency (that they are one-time investment) has contributed to the usage of e-books.

- The Indian Market is brimming with possibilities for the digital books, if they can come above their limitations and find a way to tap the consumers in a better way. As for print media, it may be on its way to decline but there is still a long way for it to go and it will always have loyal consumers who would prefer paper over screen any day.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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How to cite this article: Agarwal, Harshita, Shivang Goyal and Vidhi Agarwal. "Impact of Digitization on Student Buying Behaviour in the Indian Print Business" Int J Econ Manag Sci 11 (2022): 637.