

# Readability of news papers



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BUSTER**

Newspaper played a vital role for generations as one of the primary sources of news throughout the world. Since the first newspaper (China, 2nd-3rd century AD), newspaper has evolved and proved as a trustworthy source of news and information . According to Hynds - (1975) a newspaper can be considered a historian, reporter, analyst, communicator, salesman and an advocate. It can effectively stimulate, motivate, inspire and influence the emotions of the readers. Also, it contributed on the growth of society by preserving history, recording the present and assuring the probability of a better future. Indeed, newspaper has possess great power which make it an effective media

But newspaper lose its popularity due to the advent of new and technologically advanced media such as radio, TV and the internet. Today, newspaper industry is experiencing a crisis. Many newspaper companies shut down especially in the United States where news- paper used to be very popular. A bunch of newspapers shifted to online versions to cope up with the very tight completion with other medias. (Keevey, 2009) Here in our country, newspapers are not that popular but it is clear that the newspaper industry is also affected.

Many studies tried to explain the diminishing popularity of newspapers and one of them is boring content and lack of entertainment. These areas are very important to get the reader's attention especially for the generation today where teens want amusing and innovative things. Atkins et al. did a study in the 1970s on high school students on how they see newspapers. The Study shows that majority of the students spend only 15 minutes reading newspaper and their Reason includes too much insignificant and

boring content, another reason is they already watched or heard most of the news on TV or radio.

Another study by Benozza (1982) shows that youths view newspaper as an information and an authority on news and socio-political issues. However, they find it as a poor entertainment medium and low in persuasive appeal. Both TV and radio were viewed as a persuasive and motivational media. (Asuncion, 1990)

Though youth were exposed to different media they still think that newspaper is more credible when it comes to information and news. Quebral found that high school students see other media as a source of entertainment rather than source of information.

Entertainment is certainly one of the reasons why newspaper is less favorable on teens but that's not all. Another issue is the readability of newspaper articles. Readability is considered as an important aspect in journalism. This is where understand ability takes place. The journalists must be sure that everyone in the society, from lowest to highest members, will understand and reach the message. The readability concept applies to every journalism principles whether a readability formula is used or not. (De Leon, 1985)

Kline and Worrall Suggest that if a writer wants to reach the readers, He should know his readers very well. He should know their social and cultural customs and beliefs. He should also know their social habit and their language. The level of comprehension is very important in sending the message to a reader.

Kincaid and Schramm said that a writer should know his audience very well. He should know what they already know about the subject, their past experiences, the terms they can understand and how well they can read, listen and their interests. (Deleon, 1985)

Readability is very important to get the reader's attention and for him to decode the message. If a writer fails to make his article or story readable, the reader will lose interest and might misunderstand the message. The goal of writing which is frequently intended to persuade will not be achieved. (Behrens et. al. , 2009)

Readability is hard to achieve when it comes to newspaper articles. Because there is no intended audience, writers sometimes forget about the comprehension level of his readers. Sometimes a writer uses language or technical terms that his readers cannot understand- especially to the younger readers.

Choosing words is very important to gain a reader's respect. If a reader doesn't understand the words, they might lose interest. This is very hard to achieve in a general audience media and the best example here is newspaper. Writers sometimes use words that need higher comprehension to understand. (Cooper, 2007)

Based on the National Achievement Test (2010) 85.65% of grade school to high school students were below mastery level when it comes to reading (English) and only 66.33% passed the comprehension exam. This proves that many young Filipinos today have a low comprehension level. This is a problem because most of the broadsheets are in English and the most of the

words were hard grasp for a low level comprehension reader. Young readers tend to read tabloids more which uses vulgar words and sensationalism.

Trying to get younger readers is important in the survival of newspaper industry. If newspaper journalists cannot encourage young readers, newspaper in its current form might die and will be replaced by their online counterpart. Writers must understand that youth shall replace their adult readers in the future. Newspaper will be left out by the other medias if reading newspaper will not be established in younger generation. (Keevey, 2009)

Journalists should find a way to connect with younger readers. Understanding their language, what they know and what interest them might gain their readership. Using terms that they can understand is one way for writers to connect with young readers and establish reading newspaper among them.