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ONLINE READING PREFERENCE AND MEDIA CONTENT IN MALAYSIA: A CASE STUDY ON THE MALAYSIA SIN CHEW DAILY FACEBOOK PAGE

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Abstract:

Online reading preferences encompass the reading materials that readers favor, invest considerable effort and time into, and thoroughly enjoy. Within this context, readers have the autonomy to make their own decisions and the complete freedom to select content that most captivates their interest. Understanding the online reading preferences of audiences is crucial for media organizations and content creators. It enables them to craft content that not only attracts more readers but also retains their attention and engagement. By catering to readers' interests, media outlets can enhance their online presence, reach a broader audience, and potentially increase revenue through increased viewership and advertisement opportunities. In Malaysia, numerous online newspaper Facebook pages cater to diverse content types such as news, entertainment, sports, feature writing, and more, aiming to cultivate readers' interest. This study focuses on the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook Page as a case study, as it represents the most popular newspaper among readers in Malaysia. The objective is to investigate the online reading preferences of the readers. To accomplish this, a quantitative survey involving 130 respondents was conducted, utilizing content analysis to observe the "likes" and "shares" of the content. The results indicated a positive correlation between online reading preferences and media content. This research holds significant value as it can serve as a reference for organizations seeking to enhance their content to better cater to readers' preferences.

Keywords:

Reading Preference; Media Content; Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook Page

Introduction

In the digital era, reading can easily provide access to information via the internet. It is not as difficult for people to obtain information or news as it was a few decades ago. Due to their easy access to information, people today often disregard printed materials such as books, periodicals, and newspapers (Khairuddin, 2013). People must therefore modify or move from their antiquated to modern methods of studying or acquiring knowledge. Nonetheless, people may use the internet with ease in the digital age. For whatever reason, they are able to accomplish everything online just by clicking or browsing the web. While some pupils read for information and education, others do so for enjoyment or even needs. But lately, reading has started to pose a challenge to language acquisition for many of us. When it comes to learning how to read printed texts, the majority of people are uninterested and unmotivated (Male, 2021)

The Digital Age's Reading Habits Technology advancements and inventiveness have made e-books and digital libraries a reality. Thanks to the quickly developing information technology, computers can now publish texts as electronic pages. To get access to new information, readers should read on a screen. This led to the creation of two new reading practices: "reading on the screen" and "screen readers," which are new categories of readers. (Liu, 2005)

Reading habits have changed somewhat in recent years due to society's rapid development. From reading a single paper book in the past to reading books online now—which is also a result of the Internet's quick development. One broad significance of online reading that is discussed in this paper is the ability to display the contents of paper books on computers or mobile devices. Online reading cannot be restricted by location or time. Online reading is growing in popularity since it can be done anytime, anywhere, on mobile phones or other devices (Ista Maharsi, 2019). It's also easier for readers to discover books and express their thoughts and ideas when they read online. The aggressive national reading campaign has opened up new avenues for the growth of online reading. Simultaneously, more and more individuals are beginning to acknowledge and accept this type of internet reading. These days, the advancement of internet reading greatly depends on how to enable readers to locate the publications they want or need among numerous others. With the Internet developing so quickly, online reading is also expanding quickly, giving people the comfort of reading at their convenience. Users who read online also categorize themselves into various groups at the same time (Hu, 2022).

People can explore their interests and enhance their reading skills by using the information about their reading preferences. It is anticipated that the availability of reading material tailored to their interests will pique their interest in participating in the learning process, making the transformation of knowledge easier (Karim, 2007). It is therefore anticipated that people will be able to continue to advance their reading abilities, albeit in more enjoyable contexts, as the text will align with their interests (Dewi, 2018). Reading preferences are the materials that people prefer to read and for which they dedicate a lot of time and effort to reading. Here, people are free to choose the materials that most pique their interest and make their own decisions (Rahman, 2019)

In digital and social media communication, content is gathered from a variety of online and social media sources. Digital content, whether created by professionals or by users, whether free or paid, shared or earned, must be measured and analysed. Furthermore, socialization on the internet, in various forms, has resulted in significant changes in data collection processes

as well as methods used to analyse various phenomena. Communicators, theorists, and practitioners must consider new content and approaches to measuring and analysing their activities. The addressed viewpoint is user-centric or consumer-centric, and it is specific to social media. Social media platforms such as blogs, podcasts, social networks, wikis, and mobile applications and games are redefining communication channels as well as communication theories and practices. Web content must refer to a variety of platforms and be measured in accordance with each of them (Drula, 2012)

One of Malaysia's oldest newspaper is Sin Chew Jit Poh, often known as Sin Chew Daily. When it was first published on January 15, 1929, there were about 400,000 copies in Peninsular Malaysia alone. In Malaysia, Sin Chew Daily enjoys a substantial audience in both West and East Malaysia. The Malaysian Audit Bureau of Circulations has indicated that the print run in Sarawak is greater than fifty thousand. As a result, Sin Chew Daily is the Chinese newspaper that is distributed nationwide. The fact that Sin Chew Daily has one of the greatest circulations of any publication across all categories is what sets it apart. Although the Bahasa Malaysia newspapers outsell it on Sundays, the circulation figures really indicate that it is the most popular daily in Malaysia. Sin Chew has excellent ties to the local media proprietors. The daily is distributed not just in Malaysia but also in its neighbouring countries of Brunei, Indonesia, and certain regions of Thailand. It is a member of the Asia News Network. It is owned by Sin Chew Media Corporation Berhad and has 53 news bureaus and 6 printing factories spread across the nation. Aw Boon Par and Aw Boon Haw, the creators of Tiger Balm and Haw Par Village in Singapore, launched the newspaper. Back then, its headquarters were in Singapore. Even after Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965. There, the original office continued to function. The Petaling Jaya printing facility was established in the 1970s primarily to serve the needs of the Malaysian public. Over time, it gradually detached itself to become the autonomous entity it is today. The Aw family sold the business to Lim Kheng Kim in 1982. Following this, the business will merge with Ming Pao Enterprise and Nanyang Press holdings, two more massive Malaysian media companies. Subsequently, Sin Chew emerged as an additional MCA-affiliated publication, signifying its political alignment with Malaysia's ruling administration. One of the most well-liked Chinese dailies in the nation, Sin Chew, has a reputation for reporting in an apolitical manner despite the fact that many mainstream media outlets have currently been accused of serving as political mouthpieces for the ruling party (Sinchew, 2023).

The Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook Page Facebook page was established on 30 November 2011 and presently boasts 2.5 million followers (Malaysia Sin Chew Daily, 2011). This study is dedicated to examining the online reading preferences of its audience, with a particular focus on the Malaysian Sin Chew Daily Facebook Page Page. To achieve this, the researchers conducted a quantitative survey, which garnered responses from 130 participants. Content analysis was then employed to scrutinize the engagement metrics, specifically the "likes" and "shares" of the content posted on the page.

Research Objectives
a) To investigate the Online Reading Preference in Malaysia.
b) To investigate the Online Reading Preference of Media Content in Malaysia.
c) To investigate the Online Reading Preference of the content on Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.

d) To investigate the relationship between Online Reading Preference and Media Content in Malaysia.

Research Methodology

This research employs a quantitative methodology, utilizing a combination of survey questionnaires and content analysis for data collection and analysis.

Quantitative methodology is the dominant research framework in the social sciences. It refers to a set of strategies, techniques, and assumptions used to investigate psychological, social, and economic processes through the analysis of numerical patterns. This type of research collects a wide range of numerical data. Some of this data is quantitative by definition, while in others, a numerical structure is imposed (Chua, 2020). The collection of quantitative data allows researchers to conduct analyses ranging from simple to complex. These analyses can aggregate data, reveal relationships between different sets of data, or compare aggregated data. Quantitative research methods include questionnaires, structured observations, and experiments (Pallant, 2020). In contrast to qualitative research, which involves the collection and analysis of narratives and/or open-ended observations through methods such as interviews, focus groups, or ethnographies, this approach involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data (David Coghlan, 2014). This study initially collected responses from 130 participants.

Content analysis is a research technique that identifies the presence of specific words or concepts within texts or collections of texts. The presence, meanings, and relationships of such words and concepts are quantified and analyzed by researchers, who then draw conclusions about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time period in which they exist. Books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, theater, informal conversation, or really any occurrence of communicative language can be considered texts. To conduct a content analysis on any such text, it is coded, or broken down, into manageable categories on a variety of levels--word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme-- and then examined using one of the basic methods of content analysis: relational analysis or conceptual analysis (Berelson, 2000). This study conducted an analysis of the content posted on the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page on 15 Nov 2023, encompassing a total of 112 posts.

Finding & Discussion

Table 1 Gender

				Valid	Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
Valid	Male	48	36.9	36.9	36.9
	Female	82	63.1	63.1	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that the research included 48 male respondents and 82 female respondents, in total 130 participants.

Table 2 Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	66	50.8	50.8	50.8
	25-40	35	26.9	26.9	77.7
	41-55	20	15.4	15.4	93.1
	Above 55	9	6.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by age range. There is 66 respondents aged 18-24, 35 respondents aged 25-40, 20 respondents aged 41-55, and 9 respondents above the age of 55.

RO1: To investigate the Online Reading Preference in Malaysia.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics Of Online Reading Preferences
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I read online news through Facebook pages.	130	1.00	5.00	3.7231	1.16815
I read online magazines through Facebook pages.	130	1.00	5.00	2.8154	1.28669
I read e-books through Facebook pages.	130	1.00	5.00	2.2923	1.27253
I read stories and novels through Facebook pages.	130	1.00	5.00	2.3154	1.20744
I read movie reviews through Facebook pages.	130	1.00	5.00	3.4923	1.31919

I look at photo albums through Facebook pages.	130	1.00	5.00	3.5154	1.17622
I read all kinds of information through Facebook pages.	130	1.00	5.00	3.4385	1.23893
I usually skim through the online content.	130	1.00	5.00	3.6308	0.97359
I usually save or bookmark online content that I want to revisit later.	130	1.00	5.00	3.5769	1.26898
I subscribe to or pay for online content that I'm interested in.	130	1.00	5.00	2.3000	1.37897
Valid N (listwise)	130				

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of online reading preferences. It indicates that respondents preferred read online news through Facebook pages (mean = 3.7231, SD=1.16815), and while they express interest in online content, they tend not to subscribe or pay for it (mean = 2.3,SD= 1.37897).

RO2: To investigate the Online Reading Preference for Media Content in Malaysia.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics Of Media Content

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I enjoy reading local news through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.	130	1.00	5.00	3.5692	1.17426
I enjoy reading foreign news through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.	130	1.00	5.00	3.4231	1.16716
I enjoy reading business and stock market news through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.	130	1.00	5.00	2.7231	1.16815
I enjoy reading feature writing through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.	130	1.00	5.00	3.2000	1.16406
I enjoy reading sports news through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.	130	1.00	5.00	2.9462	1.28384

I enjoy reading entertainment news through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.	130	1.00	5.00	3.3077	1.24419
I enjoy reading review articles through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.	130	1.00	5.00	3.3615	1.22001
Valid N (listwise)	130				

Table 4 showed the descriptive statistics of media content. It indicates that respondents generally enjoyed reading local news through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page (mean = 3.5692, SD = 1.17426), while they showed less interest in reading business and stock market news through the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page (mean = 2.2731, SD = 1.16815).

RO3: To investigate the Online Reading Preference for the content on the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page.

Table 5 Frequency Of Posts

	Frequency
Local News	65
Foreign News	19
Business and stock market news	3
Feature writing	4
Sports news	8
Entertainment news	7
Review articles	6
	112

Table 5 showed the frequency of posts on the Malaysia Sin Chew Daily Facebook page on November 15, 2023, with a total of 112 posts. It was found that local news is covered the most, with a total of 65 posts, and feature writing is covered the least, with only 4 posts.

Table 6 Most Popular And Least Popular Posts

Topics	Likes	Comments	Share
A local Malay girl adopted a dog	4100	144	220
Feature Writing (Muzium British)	27	4	2

Table 6 shows the most popular and least popular posts. It shows that a local news story about a Malay girl adopting a dog received the most likes, comments, and shares, with 4100 likes, 144 comments, and 220 shares. This news was gaining high interest among readers as touching a dog is not their usual religious practice (Shaykh al-Munajjid, 2023), but the local Malay girl was willing to adopt a dog due to compassion. However, the Museum British feature writing about digital products received fewer likes, comments, and shares, with only 27 likes, 4 comments, and 2 shares.

R04: To investigate the relationship between Online Reading Preference and Media Content in Malaysia.

Table 7 Relationship Of Online Reading Preferences And Media Content

Coefficients[a]

Model				Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.574	0.179		8.817	0.000
	M_MC	0.478	0.053	0.623	9.013	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: M_ORP

In this study, the independent variable is online reading preferences, while the dependent variable is media content. Table 7 showed a positive relationship between online reading preferences and media content, with a significance level of $p < .05$.

Conclusion

The study investigated online reading preferences and media content in Malaysia, and it discovered that online readers preferred reading online news but did not prefer to subscribe or pay. According to the findings, local news is the content that online readers prefer. According to the content analysis research, local news receives the most likes, comments, and shares, this is aligned with the survey findings. The study showed that human interest news is the most popular among readers. In conclusion, online reading preferences has positive relationship with media content.

Implication Of The Study

This research can be applied to the media industry in Malaysia. To study the online reading preferences, the media can arrange their media content according to the media preferences. Knowing the popularity of posts, the editor and reporter may work on the news to gain the high interest of readers.

Acknowledgement

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