

SIGNIFICANCE OF SMALL NEWSPAPERS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ALLAHABAD DISTRICT: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose: This study looks at the impact of small newspaper consumption on academic achievement, critical thinking abilities, and awareness of current events among university students. The major goal is to see if reading tiny newspapers has a significant beneficial influence on these dimensions in a sample of 500 university students in Allahabad District.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study used a quantitative research technique and a sample of 500 university students from the Allahabad District. Participants are polled on their consumption of tiny newspapers, academic performance, critical thinking abilities, and understanding of current events. To identify patterns and correlations between data, statistical procedures such as regression models and hypothesis testing are used.

Findings: The findings of the study provide insight into the correlations between small newspaper consumption and academic achievement, critical thinking abilities, and current event knowledge among university students. Positive findings may imply that tiny newspapers can play an important role in improving educational results and cognitive capacities, impacting future educational practises and media initiatives.

Originality/Value: This study adds to the existing literature by investigating the particular impact of tiny newspaper consumption on university students' academic performance, critical thinking, and current event knowledge.

Keywords: *Small newspapers, Academic performance, Awareness of current events, Media consumption habits.*

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-changing and dynamic realm of media consumption, where digital platforms and immediate updates reign supreme, the enduring significance of traditional print newspapers, specifically those that cater to smaller community-centric audiences, raises captivating and

thought-provoking questions, particularly within the realm of academia. This quantitative analysis embarks upon an exploration of the intricate and complex relationship that exists between small newspapers and university students in the culturally rich and historically significant Allahabad District (Sridharan, 2019). Situated in the northern region of the densely populated state of Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad serves as an enticing and captivating backdrop for our investigation, providing a truly unique and unparalleled setting in which we can unravel and comprehend the various ways in which small newspapers contribute to the academic and intellectual experiences of students who are pursuing higher education. Against the backdrop of this diverse and vibrant community, our primary objective is to dissect and comprehend the multifaceted ways in which small newspapers exert their influence upon the lives of university students. (Chandra, 2021). The city's rich cultural tapestry, intricately woven with historical significance, adds an additional layer of complexity and depth to our inquiry, further enriching our investigation. (Zhou & Wang, 2023). This particular study stems from a recognition and acknowledgement that the relationship between university students and small newspapers extends far beyond a mere exchange of information. Instead, it seeks to delve deep into the potential impact that small newspapers may have on students' academic performance and their ability to engage in critical thinking, while also acknowledging the pivotal role that awareness of current events plays as a mediator in this relationship. Furthermore, this study also takes into consideration the moderating variables of university major and age group, recognizing and acknowledging the diverse academic and demographic composition that exists within the student population. (Dou & Cian, 2022). As we navigate through the ever-evolving landscape of media consumption, which is marked by the digital revolution and the changing preferences and habits of individuals, small newspapers persist as invaluable conduits of information. (Keller, 2023). Their focus on local news and their community-centric approach offers a unique and distinct perspective that transcends the transient and ephemeral nature of online content (Kani, 2023). This study is driven by the inherent and pressing need to fully understand and comprehend the relevance and influence of small newspapers within this specific context. Despite the fact that these publications may appear to be overshadowed and overlooked by their larger counterparts and the rise of digital alternatives, their unique position within local communities raises important and pertinent questions about their potential impact on university students. The objectives of this quantitative analysis are multifaceted and encompass a wide range of areas. First and foremost, our primary goal is to assess and evaluate the extent to which small newspapers are consumed by university students in the Allahabad District. Moving beyond this, our inquiry extends to investigating and understanding the relationship that exists between small newspaper consumption and academic performance. Additionally, we also aim to examine and analyze the association and connection between small newspaper consumption and the development of critical thinking skills, recognizing and acknowledging the critical and fundamental role that these skills play in both academic and professional success. An additional layer of complexity is introduced as we delve deep into the mediating role that awareness of current events plays in the relationship between small newspaper consumption and academic outcomes (Richey *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, we also analyze and explore the moderating effects that the

variables of university major and age group have on this relationship, fully recognizing and acknowledging the immense diversity that exists within the student population.

Addressing a noticeable void in the existing body of literature, this study makes a significant contribution to the scholarly discourse on the effects of media by specifically focusing on a segment that has been relatively understudied, namely small newspapers, and their impact on the academic experiences of university students. While there is a wealth of extensive research that exists on patterns of media consumption and their influence on various aspects of individuals' lives, there is a distinct lack of studies that specifically investigate the influence of small newspapers on university students, particularly in the specific context of Allahabad District (Singh & Singh, 2021). Recognizing and acknowledging this research gap is of utmost importance as it allows us to fully understand and appreciate the significance and relevance of our study. Furthermore, beyond its contributions to the academic field, this study also holds immense practical significance. The findings that emerge from this study have the potential to inform and educate educators, media professionals, and policymakers about the potential benefits or challenges that may arise from the consumption of small newspapers among the student population. The insights that are gained from this comprehensive analysis may ultimately guide and shape the development of targeted strategies aimed at enhancing the overall educational experience and critical thinking skills of university students through engagement with small newspapers. By focusing specifically on Allahabad District, our study not only adds a localized dimension to the existing body of research but also recognizes and takes into account the cultural and regional nuances that may play a significant role in influencing the complex dynamics between small newspapers and university students. In the subsequent sections of this research paper, we will take great care and attention to meticulously outline and elaborate upon the methodology that was employed for this quantitative analysis. By doing so, we aim to provide complete transparency and clarity into the research design, sample selection, and data collection procedures that were utilized in order to ensure the reliability and validity of our findings. Following this, we will then present and discuss the results of our analysis, offering a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationships and dynamics that were uncovered through our study. The conclusions that are drawn from this research will not only contribute to the ongoing academic discourse surrounding the effects of media but will also provide practical implications and recommendations for educators, media professionals, and policymakers who are actively involved in shaping and molding the academic and informational landscape for university students. The primary objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the role of small newspapers in enhancing the academic performance of university students.
2. To evaluate the influence of small newspapers on university students'; awareness of current events and issues.
3. To understand the connection between small newspaper readership and the development of critical thinking skills among university students.

The present study is structured into the subsequent sections: For the theoretical presumptions that form the basis of the inquiry, Section 2 offers a thorough analysis and evaluation of the literature.

Part 3 provides a summary of the problem statement. The hypothesis of the study is covered in Section 4. The study's variables are covered in Section 5. A summary of the suggested methodology for the study is provided in Section 6. The educational motive is served by Section 7. The data analysis's empirical findings are presented in Section 8. The topic is in Section 9. Conversely, Section 10 addresses the ramifications. The resolution is summarized in Section 11.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Sharma & Choudhary, 2022) investigated and delved into the utmost significance and pertinence of academic library websites in terms of their role and function in furnishing comprehensive and extensive research support to researchers. This empirical research specifically focuses on the central university library websites situated in the geographical region of North India and, employing a quantitative approach, meticulously and systematically scrutinizes the myriad of research support services and resources that are readily accessible and available on these aforementioned websites. The astute and insightful findings, garnered from this rigorous analysis, unequivocally demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of central university library websites, situated in the aforementioned region of North India, actively and proactively cater to the specific needs and requirements of researchers by allocating a dedicated and tailored section exclusively to research assistance and support, thereby facilitating and engendering the seamless and facile access to a diverse array of online resources and services that are specifically designed to cater to the unique and specialized requirements of researchers. In particular, the library website at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) emerges as an exemplary exemplar, exhibiting remarkable and commendable efficacy and proficiency in the provision and delivery of research support services. In light of the aforementioned findings, it is unequivocally evident that the present study underscores and highlights, with utmost emphasis, the indispensability and paramount importance of library websites, as they serve as invaluable and indispensable tools, enabling and facilitating researchers in their quest for accessing pertinent and relevant resources, as well as procuring the necessary support, guidance, and assistance indispensable for the successful and efficacious completion of their research endeavors.

(Singh & Kushawaha, 2020) investigated the focal point of discussion revolved around the utmost significance and weightiness of electronic libraries, commonly known as e-libraries, within the realm of universities located in Uttar Pradesh, a state in India. These institutions of higher education are equipped with e-libraries that have been established with the primary objective of facilitating access to an extensive array of electronic resources and services. The primary aim of this scholarly article was to meticulously examine and scrutinize the availability of said e-resources and services within these university e-libraries whilst simultaneously evaluating the level of satisfaction among the academic staff and researchers who utilize them. Furthermore, this research endeavor also delved into an investigation of the profound impact that the e-library resources and services have on research productivity. The results and conclusions drawn from this empirical inquiry unequivocally indicated that the majority of academic staff and researchers expressed a notable degree of satisfaction with respect to the e-library services that were provided to them.

Moreover, a clear consensus emerged among these individuals, with a majority of them firmly believing that the presence and utilization of the university e-library undeniably and positively influences the overall productivity and advancement of research activities.

(Abbas *et al.*, 2020) examined the impact of engaging in the act of perusing newspapers on the level of English reading proficiency achieved by students enrolled in Pakistani universities. To this end, the investigators employed an experimental design, wherein one group of participants was instructed using conventional book reading methods, while the other group was taught by means of examining passages extracted from newspapers. In order to compare the two groups, the researchers devised and administered a test specifically designed to assess the participants' reading proficiency. The outcomes of the analysis revealed that those students who availed themselves of newspapers as a tool for enhancing their reading ability exhibited superior performance in terms of reading proficiency in comparison to individuals who did not engage in newspaper reading. Moreover, the group that underwent the experimental condition demonstrated higher levels of performance as compared to the control group. Furthermore, it was observed that individuals who regularly perused newspapers showcased more notable achievements in this domain than those who only sporadically engaged in reading news articles. Consequently, the study postulates that it would be advisable to allocate additional time specifically dedicated to the act of reading newspapers, thereby fostering an improvement in students' reading ability.

(Cheng & Ramirez, 2021) investigated the existing disparity between the scientific community and news outlets in their dissemination of climate change information, uncovering how this divide has resulted in widespread uncertainty among the general populace. The primary focus of this study centers around college students, a demographic known for predominantly utilizing digital sources to gather information, thereby exploring their knowledge levels and attitudes towards the matter of climate change. Upon analyzing the results of the survey, it becomes evident that students possess a certain level of awareness and concern regarding climate change; however, they remain somewhat hesitant in placing their trust in news sources as credible providers of information. Although they exhibit a degree of trust towards reputable sources such as the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, they neither trust nor distrust outlets such as CNN, The Washington Post, Fox News, and Breitbart. The article posits that this hesitancy may be attributed to the prevalence of misinformation, the influence of cognitive heuristics, the presence of anti-intellectualism, and a lack of proficiency in digital literacy. Consequently, the conclusion of this study underscores the pressing need to cultivate diverse forms of information literacy within higher education institutions, allowing individuals to effectively navigate the intricate information ecosystem characteristic of the postdigital era.

(Archila *et al.*, 2019) engaged in revolved around the significance of advancing undergraduates' consciousness of thinking critically in relation to false or inaccurate scientific information that is presented in news articles. The inquiry that was conducted entailed an examination of the assertions put forth by 141 university students in the country of Colombia throughout a supervised teaching-learning sequence that was overseen by the same instructor. The primary objective of this inquiry is to furnish corroborative proof that illustrates how undergraduates assess erroneous

scientific information and appraise the efficacy of the aforementioned teaching-learning sequence in the promotion of critical thinking. The discoveries that were made demonstrated that not all participants possess the same perception of information that is misleading, and students have a tendency to overestimate the veracity or certainty of scientific information that is contained within news articles. This article accentuates the prominence that critical thinking and argumentation hold within the realm of higher science education.

(Ali *et al.*, 2019) examined the digital transformation of small market newspaper. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic, the authors undertook a rigorous research methodology consisting of interviews and surveys. These data collection methods allowed the researchers to delve into the experiences of journalists and editors working in these newspapers. Through their investigation, it was revealed that there exists a multitude of experiences and challenges faced by small market newspapers when it comes to adopting digital tools. The article places great emphasis on the significance of not undermining these experimental endeavors, as well as avoiding any assumptions that small towns and smaller publications are inherently technologically backward. In a gesture of academic integrity, the authors express their gratitude for the financial support that was provided to facilitate their research endeavors.

(Greenberg *et al.*, 2020) conducted and made use of a pedagogical strategy known as Community-Initiated Student-Engaged Research (CISER), which was implemented with the aim of enhancing pedagogical practices and fostering meaningful partnerships among undergraduate students, university researchers, and community organizations. The main argument put forth in the article is that undergraduate students ought to be acknowledged as active contributors to the field of public sociological research, and the article further emphasizes the unique assets that these students bring to the research process. In order to test the effectiveness of the CISER model, the authors carried out a research project focusing on the issue of affordable housing crisis in Santa Cruz, California, with the participation of faculty members, students, and community organizations. The research findings indicate that CISER proves to be a highly effective pedagogical tool, as well as a mode of community-engaged scholarship, offering benefits and challenges to all parties involved. In light of these findings, the article puts forth the proposal of a dyad model, which places emphasis on the relationships between researchers and students, researchers and universities, and researchers and the general public.

Problem Statement

In the contemporary media landscape, which is characterized by various factors influencing the dynamics of media, particularly with the rise of digital platforms, there exists a critical juncture faced by traditional print newspapers, especially those that cater to smaller communities. This juncture is of utmost importance and requires immediate attention. The current literature lacks an in-depth exploration of the relationship between small newspapers and university students in the Allahabad District. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap in knowledge by delving into the often-overlooked dynamics and interactions between small newspapers and university students in Allahabad District. The proliferation of online media has significantly transformed the way people consume information. Consequently, it is essential to understand the enduring influence of small

newspapers on the academic and intellectual pursuits of university students. This topic becomes even more compelling when considering Allahabad's rich cultural tapestry and historical significance, which provide a unique context for exploring the contributions of small newspapers to the academic experiences of students. Despite the extensive focus on broader media trends and the impact of digital platforms, there remains a distinct lack of research that examines the nuanced dynamics at play with smaller, localized newspapers. This gap in the literature creates a void in our understanding of the ways in which small newspapers shape the academic and intellectual landscape of university students in Allahabad District. Therefore, this study aims to fill this void by unraveling the multifaceted ways in which small newspapers contribute to the academic and intellectual development of university students in Allahabad District. By doing so, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the potential implications that small newspapers have on academic performance and critical thinking skills. The findings of this research will shed light on the intricate relationship between small newspapers and university students, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on media dynamics and their impact on academic pursuits.

Hypothesis used in the study:

Hypothesis 1:

H0 (Null Hypothesis): Small newspaper consumption has no significant effect on university students' academic performance.

H1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Small newspaper consumption has a significant positive effect on university students; academic performance.

Hypothesis 2:

H0 (Null Hypothesis): Small newspaper consumption has no significant effect on Academic performance and critical thinking skills of university students; awareness of current events and issues.

H2 (Alternative Hypothesis): Small newspaper consumption has a significant positive effect on Academic performance and critical thinking skills of university students; awareness of current events and issues.

Hypothesis 3:

H0 (Null Hypothesis): Small newspaper consumption has no significant effect on the development of Academic performance and critical thinking skills among university major and age group.

H3 (Alternative Hypothesis): Small newspaper consumption has a significant positive effect on the development of Academic performance and critical thinking skills among university major and age group.

Variables used in the study:

Dependent Variables:

In a scientific study, a dependent variable is a variable that is observed, measured, and analysed to determine the impacts or consequences of changes in the independent variable (s) (Flannelly *et al.*, 2020). The dependent variable in an experiment or research study is the variable that researchers want to understand or explain. It is the predicted change in the outcome or reaction as a result of modifying the independent variable that is being researched (s). In layman's words, the dependent variable is what you measure in the experiment and what is impacted by it.

Academic performance and critical thinking skills (APCTS)

Independent Variable:

In a scientific study, an independent variable is a variable that is controlled or modified by the researcher to examine its influence on the dependent variable (Mohajan, 2020). The variable that is hypothesised to cause changes in the dependent variable is the variable. In experimental research, the independent variable is purposefully changed to see how it affects the outcome, which is the dependent variable. (Janssen & Kollar, 2021) In layman's terms, the independent variable is the factor that the researcher tests or manipulates to determine if it affects the dependent variable.

Small newspaper consumption (SNC)

Mediating Variable:

A mediating variable, also known as an intermediate or intervening variable, is a variable that explains how one independent variable effect another. (Jufrizen & Kandhita, 2021). In other words, a mediating variable contributes to the understanding of the underlying process or pathway by which changes in the independent variable cause changes in the dependent variable.

Awareness of current events (ACE)

Moderating Variables:

In the context of research, a moderating variable is a variable that changes the intensity or direction of the link between an independent variable and a dependent variable. (Andersson *et al.*, 2020). A moderating variable modifies the conditions in which the independent variable effects the dependent variable, as opposed to a mediating variable, which describes the process or mechanism underlying the connection.

University major and age group (UMAG)

Proposed Methodology: An overview

Research Purpose:

The goal of this study is to conduct a quantitative analysis to determine the importance of tiny newspapers for university students in Allahabad District. The study's specific goal is to examine the association between tiny newspaper consumption and university students' academic performance and critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, the study attempts to investigate the function of current event awareness as a moderator in this connection. The moderators, university major, and age group will also be investigated to determine how these demographic characteristics influence the impact of tiny newspaper consumption on academic outcomes and critical thinking abilities.

Participant Selection:

The research will include 500 university students from diverse academic areas from the Allahabad District. The participants will be chosen at random from several universities and colleges within the region to provide a wide representation of majors and age groups.

Data Collection Instruments:

A systematic survey questionnaire will be created to collect data on participants' demographics, small newspaper consumption habits, current event awareness, academic performance, and self-reported critical thinking abilities.

Data Collection Procedure:

Participants will be given complete information about the study, its aims, and the nature of their involvement, which is entirely optional. Before any data collecting actions, informed consent will be acquired. The survey questionnaire will be sent to participants both online and offline. Email or online survey platforms will be used to disseminate online surveys.

Sampling Strategies:

To guarantee that the participant sample is representative, the study will use random sampling. The use of a random sample approach will assist to reduce selection bias and increase the generalizability of the findings to a larger university student population in Allahabad District.

Quantitative Analysis:

Statistical techniques such as correlation analysis, regression analysis, and mediation/moderation analyses will be used in quantitative data analysis (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2021). Correlation analysis will look at the relationships between variables, regression analysis will look at the predictive power of small newspaper consumption on academic outcomes and critical thinking skills, and mediation/moderation analyses will look at the role of awareness of current events as a moderator, as well as the moderating effects of university major and age group. The study intends to give a full knowledge of the influence of tiny newspapers in the academic experiences of university students in Allahabad District by applying various research methodologies and statistical analysis.

Rationale of the study:

The motivation for conducting a thorough investigation of the relevance of tiny newspapers for university students in Allahabad District stems from a confluence of historical, cultural, and contemporary issues. Allahabad, with its rich cultural past and prestigious academic institutions, serves as an enthralling background for this research, emphasising the city's place as a crossroads of many cultures and intellectual traditions. The study seeks to investigate the lasting relevance and influence of local newspapers on the academic and intellectual experiences of university students in a transforming media landscape typified by the dominance of digital platforms. This study is motivated by a key vacuum in the current knowledge, since previous studies have tended to neglect the intricate dynamics at work with smaller, community-focused newspapers. The study's emphasis on Allahabad District strives to overcome this gap and give significant contextually grounded insights. Small newspapers' unique position in the media environment

becomes a focal point, recognising their community-centric emphasis and capacity to give a localised viewpoint amidst the enormous sea of information. Small newspapers, in the midst of information overload and sensationalism, may offer a more customised and context-specific lens through which students connect with current events. The study's purposeful selection of academic achievement and critical thinking abilities as dependent variables demonstrates its dedication to elucidating the academic consequences of tiny newspaper readership. Academic performance is a quantifiable indicator that reflects the consequences of students' educational pursuits, but critical thinking abilities are an important aspect of intellectual growth that is required for academic and professional success. The addition of current events knowledge as a moderating variable is motivated by the realisation that the influence of tiny newspapers on academic achievement and critical thinking abilities may be mediated by an individual's awareness of the world. Understanding the mediation function of current events awareness gives a more nuanced view of the cognitive mechanisms by which little newspapers may impact educational results. Furthermore, the study includes moderating variables such as university major and age group, recognising the different academic and demographic makeup of the student population. This viewpoint acknowledges that the association between small newspaper consumption and academic outcomes may change among majors and age groups, providing to a more sophisticated understanding of the interaction between media consumption and educational experiences. The study's practical value goes beyond theoretical advances. The findings are expected to teach educators, media professionals, and legislators on the possible advantages and problems of low student newspaper readership. The insights gained from this research may be used to influence the creation of methods to improve university students' educational experiences and critical thinking abilities through focused contact with tiny newspapers. The study's specialised emphasis on Allahabad District provides an extra dimension of significance, identifying cultural and geographical variations that may impact the dynamics between tiny newspapers and university students. In summary, the motivation for this research is from a desire to understand the complicated interaction that exists between local newspapers and university students, with consequences for both intellectual discourse and practical concerns for stakeholders in education and media.

Result

Demographic variable

The data provided in Table 1 offers a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics and media consumption behaviors of the participants involved in the study. Regarding the distribution of age, the majority of participants fall within the 18 to 35 age range. Specifically, 30% belong to the 18-24 age group, 28.6% fall within the 25-30 age group, and another 30% are in the 31-35 age category. A smaller proportion, 11.4%, consists of individuals aged 35 and above. In terms of gender distribution, it is nearly equal, with 50.4% male participants and 49.6% female participants. The academic standing of the participants shows a relatively even distribution, with 31.2% classified as freshmen, 31% as sophomores, 30.2% as juniors, and 7.6% as seniors. Moving

on to media consumption habits, the majority of participants engage with newspapers, accounting for 32.8% of the sample, closely followed by television with 30.4%. Online news consumption is also notable, accounting for 28.4%, while 8.4% prefer other media sources. When analyzing the frequency of newspaper reading, it is found that 41.2% read newspapers on a daily basis, 43% on a weekly basis, and 15.8% less frequently. The income distribution among participants indicates that 38.4% fall into the low-income category, 35.6% fall into the moderate-income category, 11.6% fall into the high-income category, and 14.4% either do not find it applicable or choose not to disclose their income. In summary, the study participants demonstrate diverse demographics, with significant representation across different age groups, academic standings, and income levels. The gender distribution is balanced, reflecting a mix of male and female participants. Media consumption habits vary, with newspapers, television, and online news being the primary sources. The frequency of newspaper reading is spread across daily and weekly intervals, indicating diverse reading patterns. The income distribution provides insights into the economic diversity within the participant sample. Understanding these demographic and media consumption patterns is crucial for interpreting the subsequent analyses and drawing meaningful conclusions regarding the influence of small newspapers on university students in the Allahabad District.

Table 1: Demographic variable

	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	18 – 24	150	30.0
	25 – 30	143	28.6
	31 – 35	150	30.0
	35 and above	57	11.4
Gender	Male	252	50.4
	Female	248	49.6
Academic	Freshman	156	31.2
	Sophomore	155	31.0
	Junior	151	30.2
	Senior	38	7.6
Media Consumption Habits	Newspapers	164	32.8
	Online news	142	28.4
	Television	152	30.4
	Others	42	8.4
Frequency of Newspaper Reading	Daily	206	41.2
	Weekly	215	43.0
	less frequently	79	15.8
Income	Low income	192	38.4

	Moderate income	178	35.6
	High income	58	11.6
	Not Applicable/Not Disclosed	72	14.4

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for four main factors in the research, each quantified on a scale. Based on a sample size of 500 individuals, the first variable, APCTS, has a mean of 4.0245 and a standard deviation of 0.75559. Similarly, SNC has a mean of 3.9905 and a standard deviation of 0.76646, while UMAG has a mean of 3.9600 and a standard deviation of 0.75551. These descriptive statistics give a picture of the dataset's key patterns and variability. The means indicate a moderate to high level for each variable, whilst the standard deviations show the degree of dispersion around the means. These findings lay the groundwork for further inferential statistical analyses, allowing researchers to investigate and draw conclusions about the impact of small newspaper consumption on academic performance, critical thinking skills, awareness of current events, and the influence of university major within the context of the 500-person study.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
APCTS	4.0245	0.75559	500
SNC	3.9905	0.76646	500
ACE	3.9815	0.78614	500
UMAG	3.9600	0.75551	500

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of survey items

Code	Survey items	Mean	Standard deviation
APCTS1	Does your academic performance improve when you engage in regular small newspaper consumption (yes/no)?	4.03	0.919
APCTS2	Can we observe a positive correlation between small newspaper consumption and enhanced critical thinking skills in your academic activities (yes/no)?	3.99	0.965
APCTS3	Do you believe that being aware of current events positively influences your academic performance (yes/no)?	4.00	0.919

APCTS4	Is there a perceived impact of awareness of current events on the development of critical thinking skills in your academic pursuits (yes/no)?	4.08	.915
SNC1	Do you regularly consume small newspapers for academic purposes (yes/no)?	4.03	0.946
SNC2	Is small newspaper consumption a part of your routine for staying informed about current events (yes/no)?	3.99	0.971
SNC3	Have you noticed any positive changes in your academic performance since you started consuming small newspapers (yes/no)?	3.99	0.941
SNC4	Do you believe that small newspaper consumption contributes to the development of your critical thinking skills (yes/no)?	3.95	0.879
ACE1	Are you consciously aware of current events happening locally and globally (yes/no)?	4.01	0.963
ACE2	Do you think your awareness of current events affects your academic performance (yes/no)?	4.00	0.972
ACE3	Do you believe that being informed about current events enhances your critical thinking skills (yes/no)?	3.93	0.962
ACE4	Does your university major influence how aware you are of current events (yes/no)?	3.99	0.895
UMAG1	Does your university major influence the relationship between small newspaper consumption and your academic performance (yes/no)?	3.95	0.930
UMAG2	Does your age group moderate the association between small newspaper consumption and your critical thinking skills (yes/no)?	3.95	0.945
UMAG3	Do you perceive differences in the impact of small newspaper consumption on academic performance across various university majors (yes/no)?	3.94	0.923
UMAG4	Is there variation in the relationship between small newspaper consumption and critical thinking skills based on different age groups (yes/no)?	4.00	0.972

T – Test

The statistical outcomes of hypothesis testing for four key variables, namely APCT, ACE, and UMAG, unveil noteworthy disparities in means from the hypothetical test value of 0. The p-values of 0.000 associated with all variables imply that the results propose a substantial influence of limited newspaper consumption on academic performance, critical thinking abilities, awareness of

current events, and the effect of one's chosen university major among the 500 participants. The mean disparities and the narrow 95% confidence intervals for each variable accentuate the precision and dependability of these outcomes, offering robust empirical validation for the objectives of the study.

Table 4: T - Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
APCTS	119.100	499	0.000	4.02450	3.9581	4.0909
SNC	116.419	499	0.000	3.99050	3.9232	4.0578
ACE	113.248	499	0.000	3.98150	3.9124	4.0506
UMAG	117.204	499	0.000	3.96000	3.8936	4.0264

Hypothesis testing:

H1: Small newspaper consumption (SNC) has a significant positive effect on university students; academic performance and critical thinking skills (APCTS).

Correlation analysis:

The correlation matrix shows a strong positive correlation between APCTS and SNC. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.805, indicating a significant and positive relationship. A correlation of 0.805 suggests that as small newspaper consumption increases, academic performance and critical thinking skills also increase. This correlation reinforces the idea that engagement with small newspapers is associated with enhanced academic outcomes and cognitive abilities. The coefficient of 0.805 suggests a robust and linear relationship, providing insights into the potential influence of small newspaper consumption on academic and cognitive aspects.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

		APCTS	SNC
Pearson Correlation	APCTS	0.000	0.805
	SNC	0.805	0.000

Regression analysis:

The regression analysis shows important insights about the relationship between SNC and APCTS. The model has a strong explanatory power with a high R-squared value of 0.648. The Adjusted R-squared value also supports the model's reliability. The low standard error of the estimate indicates the model's accuracy in estimating APCTS based on SNC. The predictors in the model include a constant term and SNC, which has a significant and positive relationship with APCTS. In summary, the regression model highlights the significant influence of SNC on academic performance and critical thinking skills. The findings emphasize the importance of media consumption habits in shaping educational outcomes and cognitive abilities.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.805 ^a	0.648	0.648	0.44856
a. Predictors: (Constant), SNC				
b. Dependent Variable: APCTS				

Table 7: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	184.687	1	184.687	917.896	0.000 ^b
	Residual	100.201	498	0.201		
	Total	284.887	499			

H2: Small newspaper consumption (SNC) has a significant positive effect on Academic performance and critical thinking skills of university students (APCTS); awareness of current events and issues (ACE).

Mediating Analysis:

The statistical results obtained from the regression analysis displayed in Table 8 divulge significant revelations regarding the association between the variables being examined. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.7069 indicates a reasonably substantial positive relationship among the variables involved in the regression. This suggests that alterations in the independent variable are linked to proportional changes in the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R-squared) of 0.4998 signifies that approximately 49.98% of the variation in the dependent variable can be elucidated by the independent variable in the model. Although this implies a moderate level of predictability, it leaves room for unexplained variance. The mean squared error (MSE) is reported as 0.3098, which reflects the average squared discrepancy between observed and predicted values. A lower MSE implies a more precise fit of the model, indicating that the predictions closely align with the actual values. The degrees of freedom (df1 and df2) provide insights into the complexity of the model and the extent to which variability is accounted for. With 1 degree of freedom for the numerator (df1) and 498 degrees of freedom for the denominator (df2), the F-statistic is computed as 497.5069. The associated p-value of 0.0000 indicates statistical significance, suggesting that the model, with its predictors, is effective in explaining the variance in the dependent variable. In summary, the regression model demonstrates a reasonably strong positive relationship, and the R-squared value implies a meaningful level of explanatory capability. The low MSE indicates accurate predictions, and the statistically significant F-statistic reinforces the effectiveness of the model in explaining variability. While these findings offer valuable

insights, the consideration of additional factors and further exploration may enhance the overall explanatory capacity of the model.

Table 8: Model Summary

R	R-sq.	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.7069	0.4998	0.3098	497.5069	1.0000	498.0000	0.0000

The coefficients of the regression model presented in Table 9 disclose significant associations between the variables that are being examined. The intercept, which has a value of 0.3214 and a t-statistic of 3.0985 ($p = 0.0021$), indicates that the constant term is notably different from zero. The confidence interval (LLCI: 0.1176, ULCI: 0.5253) establishes a range within which the true value of the intercept is likely to lie with a 95% confidence level. As for the coefficients for APCTS and ACE, both demonstrate considerable significance. The coefficient for APCTS (0.5416) and ACE (0.3741) exhibit highly significant positive relationships with the dependent variable, as supported by small standard errors and significant t-statistics ($p < 0.0001$). The confidence intervals for both coefficients confirm the precision and reliability of these estimates. To summarize, the regression coefficients emphasize the substantial and positive effects of APCTS and ACE on the dependent variable. These findings establish a solid basis for comprehending the significant contributions of Academic Performance and Critical Thinking Skills, as well as Awareness of Current Events, to the outcome variable in the model.

Table 9: Model

	coefficient	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	0.3214	0.1037	3.0985	0.0021	0.1176	0.5253
APCTS	0.5416	0.0339	15.9647	0.0000	0.4749	0.6082
ACE	0.3741	0.0326	11.4728	0.0000	0.3901	0.4381

H3: Small newspaper consumption (SNC) has a significant positive effect on the development of Academic performance and critical thinking skills (APCTS) among university major and age group (UMAG).

Moderating Analysis:

The findings derived from the regression analysis, as summarized in Table 10, provide compelling evidence pertaining to the overall performance and explanatory capabilities of the model. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.8468 signifies a strong positive association between the variables under consideration, indicating that variations in the independent variables are closely linked with corresponding changes in the dependent variable. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R-squared) of 0.7170 indicates that approximately 71.7% of the variability in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the independent variables included in the model. This substantial R-squared value suggests a robust level of predictability and explanatory prowess. The mean squared error (MSE), a measure quantifying the average squared discrepancy between observed and predicted values, is reported as 0.1672. A lower MSE indicates that the model generates accurate predictions, with the average predicted value closely approximating the actual values.

Moreover, the F-statistic, computed at 418.9310 with a p-value of 0.0000, accentuates the overall significance of the model. This implies that the model, with its three predictors, possesses statistical significance in elucidating the variance observed in the dependent variable. In summation, the regression model exhibits a robust positive relationship and substantial explanatory power, as indicated by the elevated R-squared value. The diminished MSE implies accurate predictions, while the statistically significant F-statistic underscores the overarching significance of the model in explicating the variability inherent in the dependent variable. These collective findings contribute significantly to a comprehensive comprehension of the interrelationships within the model.

Table 10: Model Summary

R	R-sq.	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.8468	0.7170	0.1672	418.9310	3.0000	496.0000	0.0000

The coefficients presented in Table 11 of the regression model yield valuable insights into the associations between the variables under examination. The constant term, denoted by -1.5568, signifies the anticipated value of the dependent variable when all predictors assume a value of zero. The associated t-statistic of -4.6294 is highly significant ($p = 0.0000$), indicating that the constant term significantly deviates from zero. The confidence interval for the constant (LLCI: -2.2175, ULCI: -0.8961) further supports this observation. Shifting attention to the coefficients for APCTS and UMAG, both demonstrate substantial significance. The coefficient for APCTS is 1.1283, signifying that a one-unit increase in APCTS corresponds to an increase of 1.1283 units in the dependent variable. The t-statistic of 10.8875 is highly significant ($p < 0.0001$), indicating a robust positive relationship. The confidence interval for APCTS (LLCI: 0.9247, ULCI: 1.3319) underscores the precision and reliability of this coefficient. Similarly, the coefficient for UMAG is 0.9951, implying that a one-unit increase in UMAG corresponds to an increase of 0.9951 units in the dependent variable. The t-statistic of 9.0178 is highly significant ($p < 0.0001$), revealing a positive relationship. The confidence interval for UMAG (LLCI: 0.7783, ULCI: 1.2119) enhances the confidence in the accuracy of this coefficient. In summary, the regression coefficients emphasize the significant influence of APCTS and UMAG on the dependent variable. The precision and significance of these coefficients, along with the constant term, contribute to a robust comprehension of how these predictors impact the outcome variable in the model.

Table 11: Model

	coefficient	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-1.5568	0.3363	-4.6294	0.0000	-2.2175	-0.8961
APCTS	1.1283	0.1036	10.8875	0.0000	0.9247	1.3319
UMAG	0.9951	0.1103	9.0178	0.0000	0.7783	1.2119

DISCUSSION

The study's hypotheses examine the impact of tiny newspaper consumption on many elements of university students, such as academic performance, critical thinking abilities, knowledge of current events, and the influence of university major and age group. Let's go over each possibility one by one:

Hypothesis 1: The null hypothesis (H1 Null) proposes that tiny amounts of newspaper consumption have no significant influence on academic performance of university students, but the alternative hypothesis (H1 Alternative) proposes a considerable beneficial effect. Exposure to a variety of information sources, such as tiny newspapers, has been linked to cognitive development and academic accomplishment in the academic literature. This study's findings may add to the current body of knowledge by supporting or disputing these statements. If the alternative hypothesis is correct, it means that reading tiny newspapers has a favourable impact on academic achievement among university students.

Hypothesis 2: Hypothesis 2 investigates the larger influence of tiny newspaper consumption on academic achievement, critical thinking abilities, and current event knowledge. The null hypothesis (H2 Null) indicates that there is no significant effect, whereas the alternative hypothesis (H2 Alternative) argues that there is a substantial positive effect. This hypothesis investigates the relationship's complex character, taking into account not only academic outcomes but also critical thinking abilities and current event awareness. A favourable outcome would highlight the possible overall benefits of modest newspaper readership that go beyond academic accomplishment.

Hypothesis 3: Hypothesis 3 analyses whether minor amounts of newspaper consumption have a substantial impact on academic performance and critical thinking skills development across different university majors and age groups. The null hypothesis (H3 Null) means that there is no significant effect, but the alternative hypothesis (H3 Alternative) implies that there is a positive influence. Understanding how these impacts fluctuate across demographic groups is critical for customising educational interventions and identifying possible discrepancies in the advantages of tiny newspaper readership.

Researchers can dive into the empirical data and statistical analysis connected to each hypothesis in the discussion section. They may investigate how the findings correspond with or differ from current literature, examine the practical consequences of the findings, and suggest future study directions. In addition, consideration should be given to the study's shortcomings and potential areas for improvement in future research. The debate will give a thorough knowledge of the effects of tiny newspaper consumption on academic results and cognitive development in university students.

IMPLICATION

The implications of this study bear great significance for the practices undertaken in the field of education, the strategies employed by the media industry, as well as the considerations that policymakers must take into account. In the event that it is determined that the consumption of small newspapers has a positive impact on academic performance and the development of critical thinking skills, educators may contemplate the integration of these valuable resources into the curriculum, with the aim of enhancing the overall outcomes of student learning. In turn, media

practitioners can utilize these findings to customize the content they produce, thereby fostering engagement among student readers and contributing to the cultivation of a more informed and critically aware audience. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to explore opportunities for collaboration between media outlets and educational institutions, with the objective of facilitating the seamless integration of small newspapers within educational settings. The positive outcomes that may arise from this collaboration could also potentially encourage policymakers to consider the inclusion of diverse media resources within educational policies, thereby advocating for media literacy initiatives that promote the development of critical thinking skills and an awareness of current events among students. The potential of this study to exert influence over future research directions, such as the exploration of moderating variables and the conduct of longitudinal studies, highlights the broader implications it holds for the advancement of our understanding regarding the role that small newspapers play in shaping the academic and cognitive development of university students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study extensively investigated the importance of the consumption of small newspapers among university students, delving into its potential impact on their academic performance, critical thinking abilities, and awareness of current events. The primary objective of this research was to uncover whether the consumption of small newspapers has a significant positive effect on these particular dimensions. The implications of this study are far-reaching and span across various domains, including educational practices, media industry strategies, and potential policy considerations. As we eagerly await the findings of this study, it is important to acknowledge that it contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse surrounding the role of diverse media sources in shaping the educational experiences and cognitive development of university students. Positive outcomes from this study could potentially advocate for the integration of small newspapers into educational curricula, thereby fostering media literacy and enhancing cognitive skills among students. Moreover, media practitioners could leverage these findings to refine their strategies and better engage student readers. Policymakers, on the other hand, may need to consider the broader implications of these findings for educational policies. Regardless of whether the study's findings affirm or challenge existing notions, they undoubtedly provide valuable insights that can inform future research trajectories and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between media consumption and student outcomes. Ultimately, the potential impact of this study cannot be understated, as it has the power to influence educational practices and policies, enriching the academic journey and cognitive development of university students.

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