



Comparative perception of readers towards the components of agricultural magazines

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Abstract

Agricultural magazines have a pivotal role in the dissemination of knowledge among the farming community. In Punjab Province of Pakistan literacy rate is increasing gradually as compared to the previous era, it is important for the success of agricultural magazines to create interest and motivates the individual to search for the new information timely, relevant to readers taste, perceptions and needs. Hence, this descriptive study was proposed to evaluate the reader's perception towards various components agricultural magazines. The target population in this study was all the readers of *Ziraat Nama*, *Zarri Digest* and *Nida-e-Kissan* magazines in Punjab, Pakistan. The sample size of (400) respondents drawn through systematic sampling technique from three highest circulation agricultural magazines (*Ziraat Nama*, *Zarri Digest* and *Nida-e-Kissan*) selected from three different organizations i.e. state department of agriculture, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, and private organization respectively. The study revealed that 40.00%, 32.20% and 42.50% readers of *Ziraat Nama* were satisfied regarding the length, writing quality and information presented in articles respectively, followed by 94.2.00% readers were dissatisfied with pictures quality. The 40.00% and 44.40% readers were most satisfied regarding length and information contained articles, followed by 48.10% and 62.90% were satisfied and dissatisfied with writing quality of articles and pictures published in *Zarri Digest* respectively. The *Nida-e-Kissan* readers 40.00% and 52.10% were satisfied with length and information contained in articles respectively, followed by 46.90% readers were dissatisfied with picture. It is concluded that different component of agricultural magazines showed a positive effect on the perception level of magazine readers.

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Introduction

In agriculture, print media is the more popular and reliable source of disseminating information to the farming community. Print media is the most effective and easy method of introducing new agricultural technologies at farm level and encourage the farmers to pursue more information from the extension agents and farming community (Ayaz, 2005; Farooq *et al.*, 2007). The printed materials such as pamphlets, posters, newspapers, booklets, magazines and journals are the most useful forms of agricultural information to farming community (Velasco *et al.*, 1996). Worldwide, agricultural publications (farm magazines) and other periodicals are considered one of the effective communication source to disseminate the knowledge regarding farm technologies among the farming community. The ultimate purpose of any agricultural magazine is to convey ideas and make the farmers to adopt the recommendations in their field practices (Archana and Sailaja, 2013). They play an important role to increase the agricultural information and adoption level among the literate farming community (Nain, 2003).

Like other countries in Pakistan, Agricultural publications are considered as an effective tool to disseminate the agriculture related information among the farmers (Shahzad *et al.*, 2011). Farm publications have proved to be effective way for the dissemination of information, to introduce new technologies among the literate farmers (Singh, 2003). Printed literature play a significant role to aware the farmers about different types of diseases, pest control and much other information related to agriculture development (Abbas *et al.*, 2003; Muhammad, 2005). The effectiveness of farm magazines depends on many factors, such as, literacy of people, varying needs of local people, timely information, proper readability and content according to needs of readers, and quickly in feedback (Muhammad *et al.* 2002; Rehman, 2011; Shahzad *et al.* 2011; Gill, 2012). In Punjab Province of Pakistan literacy rate is increasing gradually as compared to the previous era, it is important for the success of agricultural magazines to create interest and

motivates the individual to search for the new information timely, relevant to your taste, perceptions and needs. Hence, this study is a pioneering attempt wherein, efforts are made to analyze the comparative perception of readers towards various components of agricultural magazine. This study was confined to analyze the three agricultural magazines published in Punjab, Pakistan with reference to the perception of contents from the reader's point of view.

Material and methods

Population

All the subscribers of agricultural magazines published in Punjab, Pakistan was the population of the study. The target population in this study was all the readers of *Ziraat Nama*, *Zarri Digest* and *Nida-e-Kissan* magazines in Punjab, Pakistan.

Sampling procedure

This study was conducted on three highest circulation agricultural magazines (*Ziraat Nama*, *Zarri Digest* and *Nida-e-Kissan*) selected from three different organizations i.e. state department of agriculture, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, and private organization respectively, in Punjab, Pakistan. List of subscribers address obtained from concern organizations. The sample size of (400) respondents drawn through systematic sampling technique. The desired number of respondents (400) divided by the total number of three agricultural magazines subscribers (13,631) and then multiplied each magazine subscriber to draw the 171, 53, and 176 sample of *Ziraat Nama*, *Zarri Digest*, and *Nida-e-Kissan*, respectively. Thus a random sample of 400 subscribers of agricultural magazines was selected.

Design of the study

The research was conducted as a descriptive survey design, a mail questionnaire was used to collect the data.

Instrumentation and data collection

Taking into consideration of the objective of the study, a well questionnaire was prepared in both Urdu and English language after perusal of available

literature and through consultation with expert in the field of agricultural extension, education and other related fields to get a reliable information from the subscribers of agricultural magazines. The data were collected through post-mail with three follow up letters. The overall response rate was 53% recorded.

Data Analysis and reporting

The data derived from close-ended questions were analyzed and reported, using suitable statistics tools to draw necessary interference and conclusions.

Results and discussion

Perception of readers about article components

The information about the needs and preferences of readers regarding the article components (article length, writing quality and information) found in the agricultural magazines are of greater importance for the success of magazine. This enables the concerned reader to make suitable alterations in the contents or suggest effective changes in the format or design and it helps to improve the utility and overall improvement of the magazine. The analysed data presented in Fig. 1 reveal the satisfaction level of respondents about various article components published in agricultural magazines.

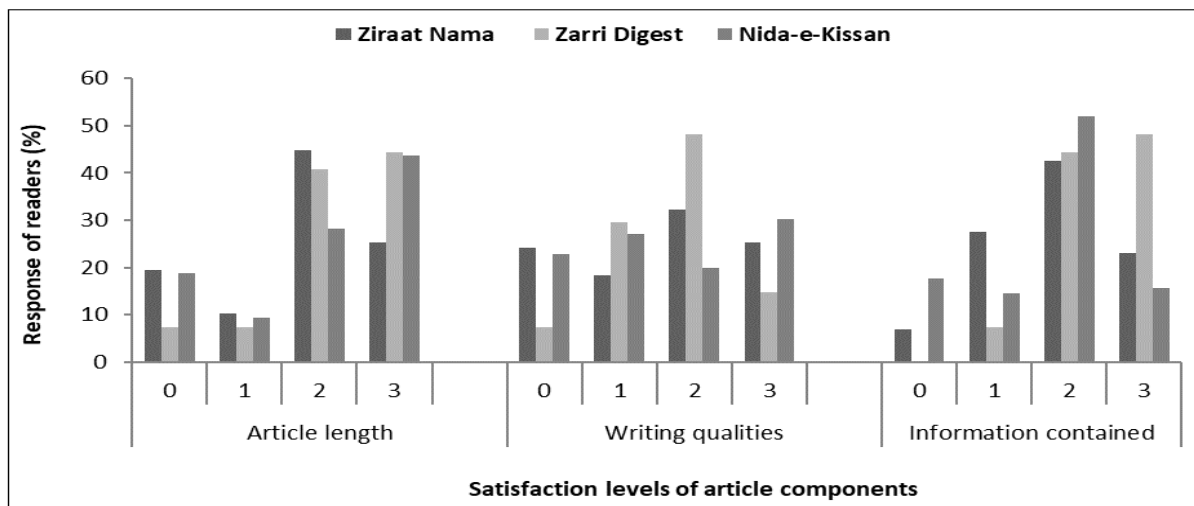


Fig. 1. Response of the readers about the satisfaction of article length, writing qualities and information contained in three agricultural magazines.

Note: Satisfaction levels indicated as; 0=not satisfied, 1=somewhat satisfied, 2= satisfied, 3=very satisfied.

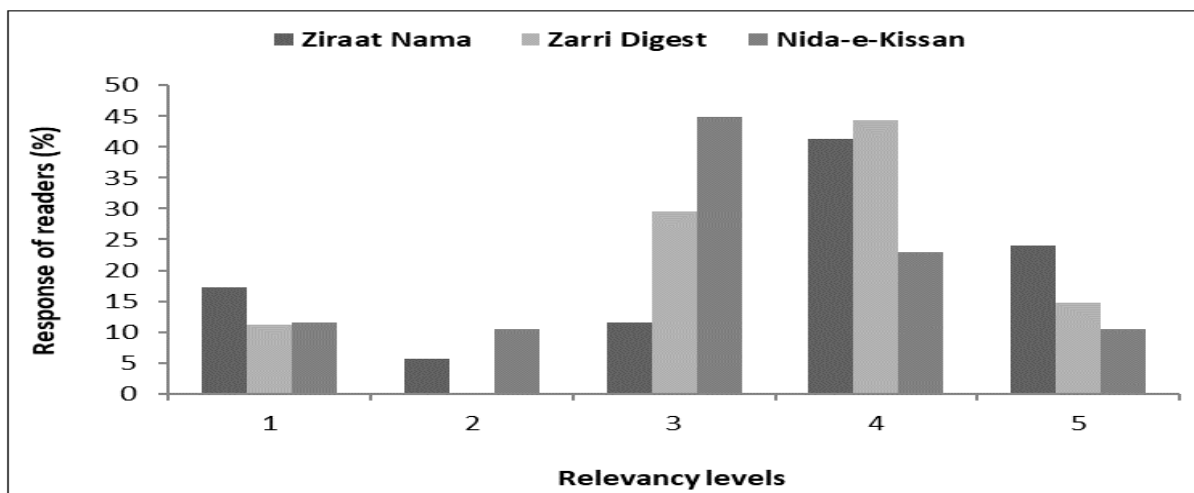


Fig. 2. Response of the readers about the relevancy of articles published in three agricultural magazines.

Note: Relevancy levels indicated as; 1=no comment, 2=not relevant, 3= somewhat relevant, 4=relevant, 5=highly relevant.

The results regarding the length of articles indicate that most(44.80%) of the respondents were satisfied with the articles length published in 'Ziraat Nama' while in 'Zarri Digest' and 'Nida-e-Kissan' almost similar number of respondents (44.4% and 43.8%), respectively were very satisfied with the components of articles published in these magazines. As for as the writing quality of the articles is concerned, majority (48.10%) of the readers were satisfied about the writing quality of the articles published in 'Zarri Digest' than other two magazines (Fig. 1). Similarly, the information found in the agricultural magazines exhibited that majority (52.10%) of the readers were

satisfied with the information published in 'Nida-e-Kissan' followed by 'Zarri Digest' and 'Ziraat Nama' as shown in Fig. 1. The current findings are in agreement with Hanumanaikar *et al.* (2011) they reported that a variable response regarding the reader's satisfaction level of 'Kannada' farm magazine about various components of *Krishimunnade*, *Sirisambuddhi*, and *Krishimitra* was noted. Similar results were found by Krishnakumar (1990) that majority of the farmers preferred to read the messages with illustrations/photos, bold captions, less column lengths and published in boxes, upper and lower portion of the newspaper page.

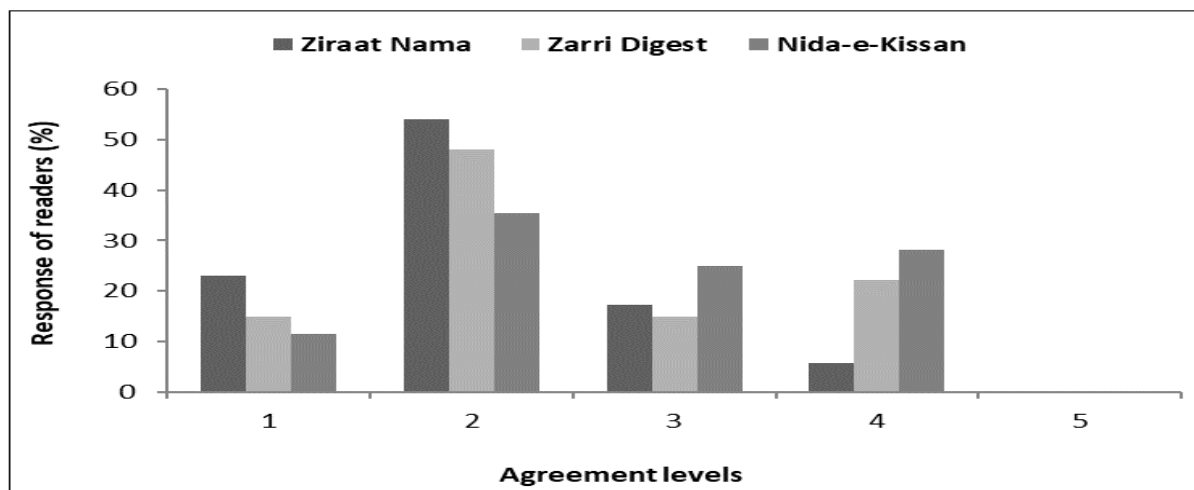


Fig. 3. Perception of readers about the pictures/photos published in three agricultural magazines.

Note: Agreement levels indicated as; 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

Relevancy of articles published in agricultural magazines

The data regarding the relevancy of articles published in three agricultural magazines is depicted in Fig. 2. The results clearly indicate that most of the readers (44.80%) said that the articles published in 'Nida-e-Kissan' were relevant according to the needs farmers. In 'Zarri Digest' and 'Ziraat Nama', similar trend was found regarding the expression of readers about the articles published in these magazines that were highly relevant according to the needs of farmers. Hence, most of the respondents of 'Ziraat Nama' and 'Zarri Digest' said that the articles were highly relevant while the respondents of 'Nida-e-Kissan' expressed their views that the articles published in magazine were relevant to the farmers needs as illustrated in

Fig. 2. The perception of the farm magazine varied from person to person and this may be due to their varied attributes such as personal and socio psychological characteristics. These findings exhibited similar relationship as explained by Gokulraj and Prasad (2009); Kumar *et al.*, (2013).

Perception of readers about the quality of pictures/photos

When words fail, pictures/photos communicate. Written words cannot clearly and precisely indicate everything. Whereas, photos or pictures can be used as a universal language that helps all the readers to obtain the correct meanings of the words than written words. Chinese proverbs such as "one picture is worth more than one thousand words", or "a good picture

draws the viewer's attention at once and arouses interest in the subject matter". The pictures or photos make the subject more realistic and lively as compared to written words.

The analysed data presented in Fig. 3 reveal the level of agreement regarding the pictures or photos presented in agricultural magazines. It is clear from the obtained results that in 'Ziraat Nama', majority (54.0%) of the readers were not agree to the quality of

picture or photos presented in the magazine and similar expression was also seen in 'Zarri Digest' and Nida-e-Kissan. Whereas, none of the respondent was strongly agree to the quality of pictures/photos presented in all three agricultural magazines as illustrated in Fig. 3.

The data depicted in Fig. 4 indicate the satisfaction level about the quality of pictures/photos presented in the agricultural magazines.

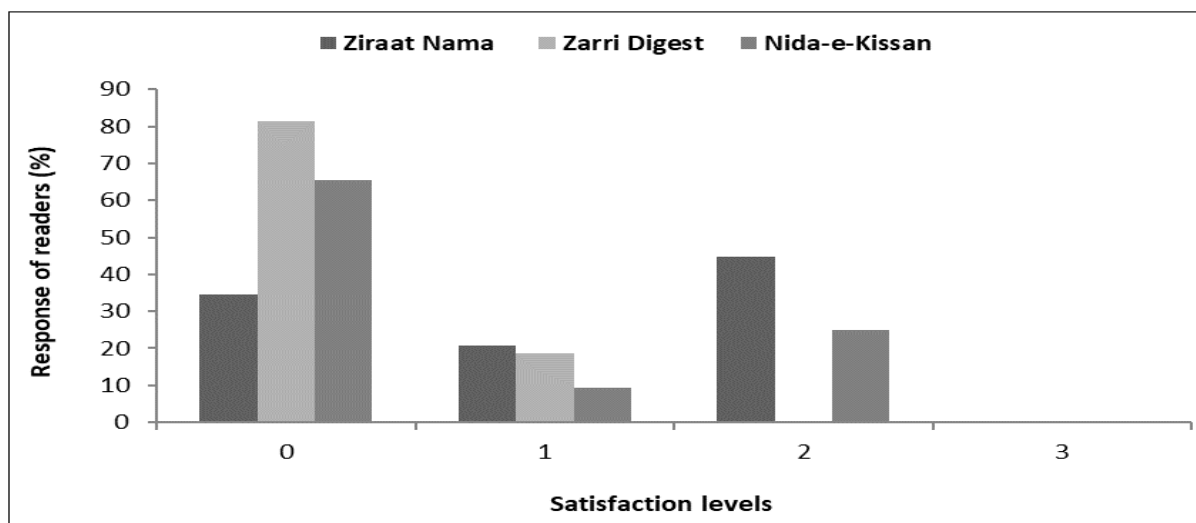


Fig. 4. Perception of readers about the pictures/photos quality published in three agricultural magazines.

Note: Satisfaction levels indicated as; 0=not satisfied, 1=somewhat satisfied, 2= satisfied, 3=very satisfied.

The results clearly indicate that the majority of the respondents (81.50%) of Zarri Digest were not satisfied with the quality of pictures or photos presented in magazines (Fig. 4) and similar response was seen in Nida-e-Kissan. Whereas, in Ziraat Nama, most of the readers (44.8%) told that they were satisfied with the quality of pictures/photos presented in the magazine. In all the three selected agricultural magazines, the quality of pictures/photos was not good. Therefore, the organization which published these magazines must improve the quality of pictures of these magazines so that the farmers could understand the information in an easy and precise way. The use of graphics in agricultural publication can make your printed materials more attractive, clarify your message and extend retention by your audience (Hanumanaikar *et al.*, 2011). Carey (1999) stated that addition of pictures is important because visual aids increased learning ability by up to 35%

and retention of information by 50%. Thus, this aspect of publication needs to be given due consideration, which will improve the existing standard of the magazines. Therefore, the presentation of the pictures/photos in the agricultural magazines should be encouraged so that the farmers may obtain correct and precise information at right time.

Conclusion

The information has a central role in our modern way of living. Print media is the most effective means of disseminating the agricultural information among the farmers at initial stages for creating the awareness about new technologies. From farmer's point of views, agricultural magazines are important sources for a variety of information particularly scientific information that could significantly influence production practices. Agricultural magazine

components i.e. article length, writing quality, information found in articles, relevancy of articles and perception level of readers about pictures or photos published in agricultural magazines have a vital role for the delivery of information in an effective way to the farming community. Hence, there is a need to improve these magazine components so that farmers can get more and more benefit from such type of printed materials.

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