

Perception of book lovers towards the Colombo International Book Fair 2016, organized by the Sri Lanka Book Publishers' Association

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Introduction

Colombo International Book Fair (CIBF) is recognized as one of the best organized International Book Exhibitions in the South-East Asian region. This is organized by the Sri Lanka Book Publishers' Associations (SLBPA), as an annual event in Sri Lanka. Consequently, CIBF 2016 was held from 16th to 25th September 2016 at BMICH, Colombo, Sri Lanka. This paper presents the results of a survey conducted among the 278 participants, who partaken in CIBF 2016. By integrating the views of these respondents, the researchers attempt to address the following research problem, through the perspectives of participants. "*What is the perception of book lovers (i.e. book buyers and readers) towards the Colombo International Book Fair? And what are their profile, reading habits, and attitudes to reading?*" In view of that, the aim of the study is to analyze the profiles, motives, attitudes and preferences of book buyers and readers, and to investigate their perception towards CIBF 2016. Further, it examines the relationship between perception of book lovers and their demographic factors such as age, gender, and education.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. A structured questionnaire tagged "*Perception of Book Lovers towards the Colombo International Book Fair 2016*" was used to collect information from the book buyers and readers, who visited CIBF 2016. The questionnaire consists of two parts-part A, required the respondents to provide their demographic information, while section B comprised of open and closed ended questions; on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

The sample comprised with male and female respondents with different levels of previous experiences in CIBF, as well as different ages and educational backgrounds. Interviews were conducted across the 278 participants, using a quota sampling approach to ensuring that the sample represents the population and allowed for analysis by demographic group. A total of 300 questionnaires were administered to the book buyers and readers, and only 278 were correctly returned. Data collected for this study were analyzed using frequency distribution, simple percentages, and correlation analysis using SPSS (*Ver. 17*).

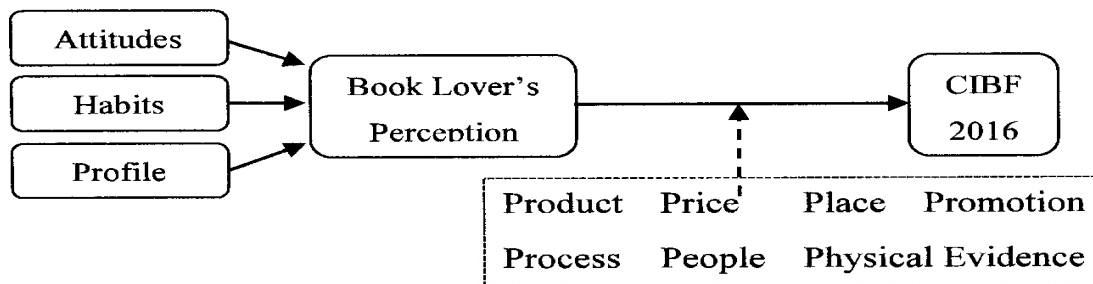


Figure 1 Research model

Results and discussion

As revealed by Table 1, sample is dominated by young (*21-30 years of age: 31%*), female (*53%*), and unmarried (*52%*) respondents. Most of them are studying for their G.C.E. (Advanced Level) examination (*37%*) and the majority is living in Western Province (*39%*), which is followed by Central Province (*16%*) and Southern Province (*15%*).

Table 1 Sample Profile

| Demography | | Freq. | Percent | Demography | | Freq. | Percent |
|------------|---------|-------|-----------|------------|--------------|-------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 130 | 46.8 | Age | < 15 yrs. | 15 | 5.4 |
| | Female | 148 | 53.2 | | 16-20 | 37 | 13.3 |
| M Status | Married | 134 | 48.2 | | 21-30 | 85 | 30.6 |
| | | UM | 144 | | 51.8 | 31-40 | 61 |
| | | | | | 41-50 | 77 | 27.7 |
| | | | 50 yrs. < | | 03 | 1.1 | |
| Province | WP | 107 | 38.5 | Education | < Grade 10 | 9 | 3.2 |
| | CP | 45 | 16.2 | | GCE - OL | 15 | 5.4 |
| | SP | 43 | 15.5 | | GCE - AL | 102 | 36.7 |
| | NW | 37 | 13.3 | | Diploma | 48 | 17.3 |
| | UP | 9 | 3.2 | | Degree | 52 | 18.7 |
| | SB | 16 | 5.8 | | PG | 13 | 4.7 |
| | NE | 6 | 2.2 | | Professional | 39 | 14.0 |
| NC | 15 | 5.4 | | | | | |

Book purchase and reading habits: Reading is an essential tool for lifelong learning. Gleed (2013), in his famous study on “Reading Habits” says that “people who read books regularly are on average more satisfied with life,

happier, and more likely to feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile.” This statement underlines the importance of enhancing reading habits and attitudes to reading among people. According to the data, 93.5 percent of the participants (n=260) who came for CIBF 2016 have purchased at least one book in the past 12 months, and 71.2 percent (n=198) have read at least one book in the past 12 months.

Profile of book buyers and readers: The majority of book buyers are female (53.5%), in the age range of 16-30 years of (39.2 %), and they most of them are engage in their secondary or treasury education' Almost similar profile found for books readers, who came for the CIBF 2016. The printed book continues to be of high relevance to people: 89 percent (n=246) of all respondents state a wish to read only printed books.

Book purchasing behavior: Books are generally bought at the point where they are discovered. They pay greater attention on the publisher of the book ($\bar{x} = 4.83$, $SD= 1.036$), as well as the author ($\bar{x} = 4.21$, $SD= 0.942$). Researchers have proven that people who were encouraged to read as children are more likely to read as adults (Gleed, 2013; Igbokwe et al, 2012; Ikpaahindi, 2008; Shabi & Udofia, 2009). Remarkably, data reveals that the 60.4 percent of the book lovers were accompanied their children.

Preferred genres: Reading is very powerful and indispensable equipment for learning and acquisition of the varied skills and experiences needed by man to develop a satisfactory personal life (Igbokwe et al., 2012). The most commonly read genre is subjected related books (30.6%), followed in second and third places by novellas (27.4%) and crime fiction (26.6%). Nonetheless, the crime novel is shown to enjoy by readers (38%) comprising aged from 31 to 40, while the most of subject-related books buyers (35%) are belonged to 21 to 30 age group (Table 2).

Table 2 Sex, genre and age

| Genre | Sex | Age | | | | | Education | | | |
|-------|--------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-----------|------|------|-------|
| | | <20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41< | Total | UAL | PRO | GRD | Total |
| CRF | Female | 6.1 | 15.3 | 22.4 | 5.1 | 48.9 | 15.3 | 22.4 | 11.2 | 48.9 |
| | Male | 15.3 | 15.4 | 15.3 | 5.1 | 51.1 | 21.4 | 15.4 | 14.3 | 51.1 |
| NOV | Female | 15.8 | 27.7 | 8.9 | 14.9 | 67.3 | 28.8 | 7.7 | 19.2 | 55.8 |
| | Male | 7.9 | 0.0 | 11.9 | 12.9 | 32.7 | 10.2 | 26.9 | 7.1 | 44.2 |
| SRB | Female | 10.6 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 8.8 | 44.2 | 19.5 | 8.8 | 15.9 | 44.2 |
| | Male | 0.0 | 22.1 | 14.2 | 19.5 | 55.8 | 15.9 | 21.2 | 18.6 | 55.8 |

NOV = Novellas, CRF = Crime fictions, SRB = Subject-related books

UAL = up to AL, PRO = Professional, GRD = Degree & PG

7Ps in CIBF 2016: Respondent's perception towards the 7Ps [*Product (PRD)*, *Price (PRI)*, *Place (PLC)*, *Promotion (PRM)*, *Process (PRS)*, *People (PEP)*, and *Physical Evidence (PED)*] used in CIBF 2016 are summarized in Table 3. They have paid their highest attention on the availability of quality books (products), and the lowest attention on basic infrastructure (place).

Table 3 Respondents' perception towards 7Ps in CIBF

| | PRD | PRI | PLC | PRM | PRS | PEP | PED |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Mean | 4.7509 | 4.4083 | 4.2500 | 4.3228 | 4.2923 | 4.5638 | 4.3849 |
| Std. Deviation | .57493 | .60618 | .60084 | .52924 | .56465 | .54509 | .54926 |

Most of the differences of perception towards 7Ps by demographics shown in Table 4 are statistically significant.

Table 4 Correlation between 7Ps and demographics of book lovers

| | | PRD | PRI | PLC | PRM | PRS | PEP | PED |
|-----------------|-----------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| P. Correlation | Sex | .199** | .113** | .133* | .044 | .022 | .105 | .165** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .013 | .466 | .709 | .080 | .006 |
| P. Correlation | Age | .170** | .219** | .067 | .288** | .158** | .163** | .224** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .264 | .000 | .008 | .005 | .000 |
| P. Correlation | Education | .151* | .027 | .096 | .273** | .252** | .273** | .166** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | .012 | .653 | .111 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .006 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Conclusion and recommendations

As the largest trade fair of its kind, the Colombo International Book Fair occupies a special position. Gigantic majority of respondents accepted that they have purchased and read at least one book in the past 12 months, while most of them stated their wish to read only printed books. Book lovers pay greater attention on the publisher and the author of the book. The most commonly read genre is subject related books, followed by novellas and crime fiction. Interestingly, the crime novel is shown to enjoy by readers aged from 31 to 40, while the most of subject-related books buyers are belonged to 21 - 30 age group. Respondents have paid their highest attention on the availability of quality books, and the lowest attention on basic infrastructure of the CIBF. Also, it is proved that the most of the variances in perception of 7Ps by demographics are statistically significant. These findings highlight the need to pursue initiatives to encourage reading (a) from an early age and (b) in disadvantaged areas.

Keywords: Attitudes, book lovers, CIBF, perception, reading habits.

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