

**Research Article**

## Factors Affecting Adaptation Towards Online Newspaper Reading with the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Buddhika Prabhath Ranaweera**

*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies,  
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka  
[buddhika@mgt.rjt.ac.lk](mailto:buddhika@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)*

### Abstract

*This study aimed to apprehend the adaption to online newspaper reading with COVID-19 pandemic by focusing on staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Online newspaper is the easiest and best way to get news today. Online newspaper facilitators create a new path for online newspaper readers. During this pandemic, people face difficulties such as lockdown, travel restriction, quarantine or isolation, etc. Thus, most of them are at home and do work under the work-from-home concept meantime demand for online news is also increased harshly. Literature survey revealed that a handful of studies were done in the Sri Lankan context related to the present study. Accordingly, data were collected from 291 academic and non-academic executive staff members at the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The collected data were analysed using statistical techniques; reliability test, descriptive analysis, Andrew F. Hayes moderation process analysis, correlation coefficient and regression analysis with SPSS. Respondents are from all six faculties and are in various age groups with different educational qualifications. However, even though most staff members heard about online newspapers, online newspaper usage is low. Results of correlation and regression analysis confirmed that online habit, internet experience and social influence positively influence adoption of online newspaper reading. Furthermore, moderating influence of gender, age and education were tested with Andrew F. Hayes moderation process analysis and revealed concerning demographic factors moderate only the relationships between internet experience and online habit with the dependent variable. The Study recommends and gives insights into developing a creative and effective plan for online newspaper providers to increase the usage of online newspaper reading among online users.*

**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic, internet experience, online habit, online newspaper reading, social influence

## Introduction

Today, newspapers are the most critical media for information sharing among the general public, and newspaper reading has increased in 2019. COVID-19 plays a critical role in this behavioural change (Hultén, 2021). People are reading newspapers to search daily incidents that happened in and out of the country. Generally, people tend to browse the internet to search for the information they require as the spread of internet all over the world is easy. By looking at the behaviour of people and the new trend for online platforms and adhering to the prevailing situation raised by COVID-19, key newspaper companies in the industry have taken steps to introduce e-newspapers to provide all aspects of news quickly for their target audience (Eastern Daylight Time, 2020). Thus, this has become a new industry which is timely and important for people as most people, especially in the education sector are at home during the time of COVID-19 and have faced many challenges (Pan et al., 2020; Rajhans et al., 2020). So that people expect to get relaxed with the required information. Newspapers are helpful for people to get information about the holiday, investment report, culture, entertainment activities, finance, the stock market, day-to-day news and events etc. Concerning mass media channels in Sri Lanka, newspapers including various tabloids have become prominent channels with affordable prices as they are available throughout the country. So that readers can be satisfied with one paper. For instance, Sunday Times contains various tabloids such as Fun-day Time for children, Financial Times and Hit ads for the business sector. The supplements and other sections in newspapers are proliferating among all weekend newspapers and some daily newspapers.

Traditional newspaper printing was started in Sri Lanka 180 years back. “Colombo Journal” was the first newspaper published in 1832. First Sri Lankan online newspaper was the Daily News, published by Lake House in 1992. Nonetheless, the online version of that paper was stopped in 1993. The online version of Sunday Times was commenced in 1996 by Wijeya Newspapers Ltd. and continues its work to date. Later, an online version of Daily Mirror was commenced. Then, Lake House introduced the online version of Daily News, Dinamina, Silumina and Sunday Observer. Divaina and The Island were converted online by Upali Newspapers Ltd. Later on, Rivira, Lakhbima News, Ceylon Today, and Ravaya available online (Hettiarachchi, 2017). Thus, the newspaper industry has married to the internet to introduce an online version of newspapers. Mbachu (2003) noted that integration between the newspaper industry and information and communication technology (ICT) had greatly changed people.

Spyridou and Veglis (2008) and Yau and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) said that the internet has marked a significant shift in producing and presenting news. This has created a threat for newspaper producers to survive in the industry and retain readers. Consequently, the profit margin has been reduced. Advent of ICT has brought a set of opportunities and challenges for conventional media (Nguyen, 2006). The newspaper industry has faced challenges with the improvements of using new technology and new technology improvements (Domingo and Heinonen, 2008). Though Radio and Television are spreading over the country, those that are not widely affected by the traditional newspaper

cannot be replaced to traditional newspaper. Even though the radio and television supply news, people cannot get rid of reading newspapers. Chaudhri (1998) said that the growth of online newspapers is inevitable for many reasons; the high costs involved in producing print copies and physical delivery. Accessing online portals, which consist of news and entertainment, also depends on the knowledge levels of users. So, online users' browsing behaviour may vary with their knowledge (Kobayashi and Inamasu, 2015).

Chaudhri (1998) has highlighted that online newspapers always support getting, supplying and creating new information to readers; however, readers constantly adapt to printed newspapers. The same idea has been highlighted in a study as more readers are familiar with printed newspapers than online newspaper (Schoneville, 2007). Newspaper companies have also faced challenges in attracting more readers to stay reading their news online (Nielsen et al., 2016).

Lack of user acceptance of online news media has been identified in the study done by (Wijayarathne and Marikar, 2012). Printed newspapers have generated costs for individual readers as readers have to buy them at their own cost, while online newspapers are provided freely for readers and reduce printing costs (Hettiarachchi, 2017). Nevertheless, online newspaper provides more benefits to readers, such as easy access, low cost, and any-time update news. Several internet media provide news and other types of necessary data link as hybrid newspapers, e-books etc. News website creators always try to use a better way to all the news than traditional newspapers to attract people to visit again. When concerning not only foreign people but also Sri Lankan people tend to use the internet for

seeking information. However, practically in Sri Lanka, the technology is not familiar to every level of people though people have the facility to use the internet. Wijayarathne and Marikar (2012) noted that in Sri Lanka, progress in the development and application of ICT have increased. However, it was revealed that there is no study to test public adoption of online news media. People in every stage do not use online news for their needs. They also read a range of online materials due to the availability of the wide choice, efficiency, accessibility, low cost, and environmental considerations (Herath, 2010).

Generally, in the Sri Lankan context, it has been reported that newspaper reading is low while the highest number of non-readers among teenagers (Ruwanpathirana, 2018). Several kinds of factors may affect reading the online newspaper. Some of them cannot use online facilities, no suitable devices to log in internet, and some aged people do not know to browse the internet. Hence, above noted count arguments encourage to formulation of a research problem to be investigated as to what are the factors which affect online newspaper reading with the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to explore the factors that affect adaption towards online newspaper reading with COVID-19 among the staff members of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

This forward point paper is structured as follows. After giving a brief introduction to the study, summarised literature is presented in the second section, while the methodology, and analysis with results is discussed in the third section of this paper. The fourth section allocates to a discussion to compare the findings of this study with

previous findings. Finally, fifth section gives a brief conclusion by looking at the overall view of the study followed by recommendations based on the findings in the last section.

## **Literature Review**

### **Conventional Mass Media and Online newspapers**

Technology and mass media are combined to share information. There are more mass media such as television, radio and newspaper that transmit information electronically as well as in printed form (Hettiarachchi, 2017). Wireless communication is the transfer of information from any place without cables. The data transmissions without cables are widely used in every field, and one of the principal technologies involved in wireless communications is the radio frequency (Arimany, 2011). According to Arimany (2011), radios use wireless communication of signals electromagnetic radiation of a frequency significantly below that of visible light, in the radio frequency range, from a few Hz to 300 GHz. These waves are called radio waves. Electromagnetic radiation travels using oscillating electromagnetic fields that pass through the air and the vacuum of space.

Wijayarathne and Marikar (2012) have shown that television is a telecommunication medium typically used in 2000 for transmitting and receiving moving colour metaphors and sound. In the broader sense, television can also refer to images that can be black and white or with or without associated sound. Television has usually offered general materials for conversation and several functions of a “window to the world” for a reasonably sedentary public (Summa, 2011). Late 1920 the television has become

commercially available and common place in homes, businesses and every kind of institutions, particularly in a vehicle for advertising, source entertainment, and news. Since 1950, television has been the primary medium for moulding public opinion. Since the mid-1960, colour televisions have been widely available (Deacon, 2013).

Newspapers became a standard mass media in the 16th century. The newspaper industry was around for four centuries. Perera (2018) noted that the newspaper is an invention of Europe. The first printed newspaper was published in 1609 in Germany. Since then, the newspaper industry has gradually developed. However, Perera (2018) further mentioned that the newspaper industry was impacted due to the invention of the radio in the 1930s, and then television from 1950s. Afternoon papers were critically hindered by television. Further, the newspaper industry faced many challenges with the growth of the internet after 2000 and with sophisticated mobile phones after 2010. Printed newspaper circulation has been fallen down in Sri Lanka and many other countries over the past decades due to the higher utilisation of online media and cable news (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2019).

Consequently, online newspapers have been widely used, at least since early 1990, to refer to communication media on the worldwide-web (WWW), which is so spring an internet application that it is often taken almost synonymously as the internet (Nguyen, 2006). Reading online news represents to a different experience for online newspaper users since the users have an active role in their relations with the news industry. Previous generations mainly read the news in the form of printed newspapers; most people today, with the rise of the internet, complement their research for the latest news

stories by reading news online. It creates a trend called “online newspaper” (Sünnen, 2012). Online newspapers are always like hard copy newspapers; not only that, the online newspaper has the exact legal boundaries, such as laws regarding libel, privacy and copyright, which also apply to online publications in most countries (Schoneville, 2007). Patel (2010) argued that the internet began to take shape as the ‘World Wide Web, and the online newspaper began circulating news. Ever since the impact it has had on newspapers has been twofold. Directly, the internet has increased competition to the newspaper industry and revised how news is distributed; indirectly, the internet has influenced advertising trends and consumer behaviour. According to Nnagbo (2011), on the online newspaper, the users can interact with the news provider, immediately sending comments on articles.

Traditionally, people read printed newspapers to get to know the current happening in the country and around the world. The internet provides many services such as watching television, making phone calls, looking up information or reading online news (Schoneville, 2007). Universities and schools tend to offer more online classes during this COVID-19 pandemic; meantime, news corporations provide online newspapers, and publishers release more online books and journals. As a result, the amount of text-based information available online is steadily increasing. People use the internet to seek information, read news, communicate, and entertain (Vermeer et.al., 2020). With this improvement, more people have been encouraged to use the internet further.

According to Sequeira (2014), conceptualisation is breaking research ideas into common meanings to develop an

agreement among other users. This study was mainly focused on finding the factors to the adaption of online newspaper reading with the COVID-19 pandemic among the staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The researcher found some influencing factors that affect the adaption of online newspaper reading (Hettiarachchi, 2017; Kumar, 2018; Lu and Zhang, 2018; Schoneville, 2007; Zukowski and Brown, 2014).

### **Social Influence**

Social influence is the degree to which an individual perceives that significant others believe he or she should use the new (Venkatesh et al., 2003). According to Zukowski and Brown (2014), social influence is the degree to which the individual confides that significant other confides that they should use the technology (Zukowski and Brown, 2007).

Social influence occurs in online spaces, and is supported in a range of devices such as smartphones, computers, and tablets (Kim and Hollingshead, 2016). According to Hettiarachchi (2017), however, social influence can be an essential motivation for adopting new technologies. Early research, for example, investigating the role of social influence in e-services, has found a direct effect on adaption (Hettiarachchi, 2017). The customer has supported social influence for online adaptation services (White, 2009). According to Schoneville (2007), social influence is related to behavioural intention to use online newspaper reading and Schoneville said social influence significantly affects online newspaper reading behaviour. Yang (2011) also noted that social influence significantly affects online reading especially news in blogs. Paying attention into above

evidences, the researcher was motivated to present the following hypothesis;

*H1: There is a significant relationship between social influence and adoption to online newspaper reading with the COVID-19 pandemic among the staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

### **Online Habit:**

Different people have a different kind of habits. According to Schoneville (2007), habit is the extent to which online newspapers have become automatic in response to certain situations. According to Schoneville (2007), the habit significantly affected online news reading behaviour. In addition, Heather (2011) mentioned a short definition: particular practice, custom, or usage inhabit or experience that may be converted into a habit. According to Kumar (2018), habit mainly affects to using e-services example e-book, e-newspapers.

Accordingly, individuals' habit mainly affects online services more than the time before the COVID-19 pandemic. Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) studied newspaper reading habits among post-graduate students of Karnataka University. Krishnamurthy and Awari noted that the habit makes influences online newspaper reading. Yadamsuren and Erdelez (2011) also emphasised that, most of the time, online reading is materialized on an individual's regular basis. Accordingly, above noted arguments were supported by the researcher to develop a hypothesis as mentioned below;

*H2: There is a significant relationship between online habits and adoption of online newspaper reading with the COVID-19 pandemic among the staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

### **Online Experience:**

Flavian and Gurrea (2007) concluded that the internet experience influences the relationship between the reader's goal and reading in the digital medium. The study by Lu and Zhang (2018) revealed that online user experience mainly affects online reading behaviour. All of the electronic services sometimes depend on the user's online experience. So, usage of online services had been increased due to the online experience already users have. Furthermore, it has been highlighted that the internet experience significantly affects consumers' choices and final preferences (Flavián and Gurrea, 2006). Same argument can be found in the study done by Beyers (2018). According to his findings, users' online experience may be mainly affected by reading materials available on the internet.

Hence it implies that users who have less online experience, they who have less online experience, could not adapt easily to the online environment. According to Constantinides (2014), it was found that the experience of suffering web has been stimulated the adaption to online customer behaviour. Subsequently, the researcher was encouraged to have the below noted hypothesis for the study;

*H3: There is a significant relationship between Internet experience and the adoption of online newspaper reading with the COVID-19 pandemic among the staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

### **Demographic Factors and online reading**

Most studies have taken age, gender, education and income as demographic factors (Nguyen, 2006). His study reveals that

age, education and income moderately affect online news reading. In addition, being a male, being a professional, being in the labour force and living in a metropolitan area, users play various roles and can be observed for online platforms. According to Stoneville (2007), age, gender and experience moderately affect the reading of online newspapers. Well-known and cited model of Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) shows the moderating effect of age on social influence (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis and Davis, 2003).

Females and males differ in their attitudes toward accessing online services. Females are often more concerned about the control of personal information, and they cannot use online services (Zukowski and Brown, 2007). Individuals with lower levels of education may perform fewer online services because they don't know how to use e-services.

According to the study by Spyridou and Veglis (2008) emphasised that among demographics, one was partially confirmed as education was found to be the only variable influencing online news consumption, demonstrating that the higher the level of education, the more likely students are to resort to the web for news retrieval.

Schoneville (2007) studies suggest that demographic factors of age moderately affect social influence and habit. Different age limits have different newspaper reading choices. Wijayaratne and Marikar (2012) revealed that 15 and 30 age limit readers mostly use online newspapers but 50 years above age limit readers cannot accept online newspapers. Considering the literature evidence noted above, gender, age and

education are treated as moderating variables in the relationships toward adoption of online newspaper reading. Accordingly, social influence, online habit, and internet experience are treated as independent variables, and demographic factors are the moderating variables. Adaption to online newspaper reading is the dependent variable. The following research model draws the relationships between dependent and independent variables.

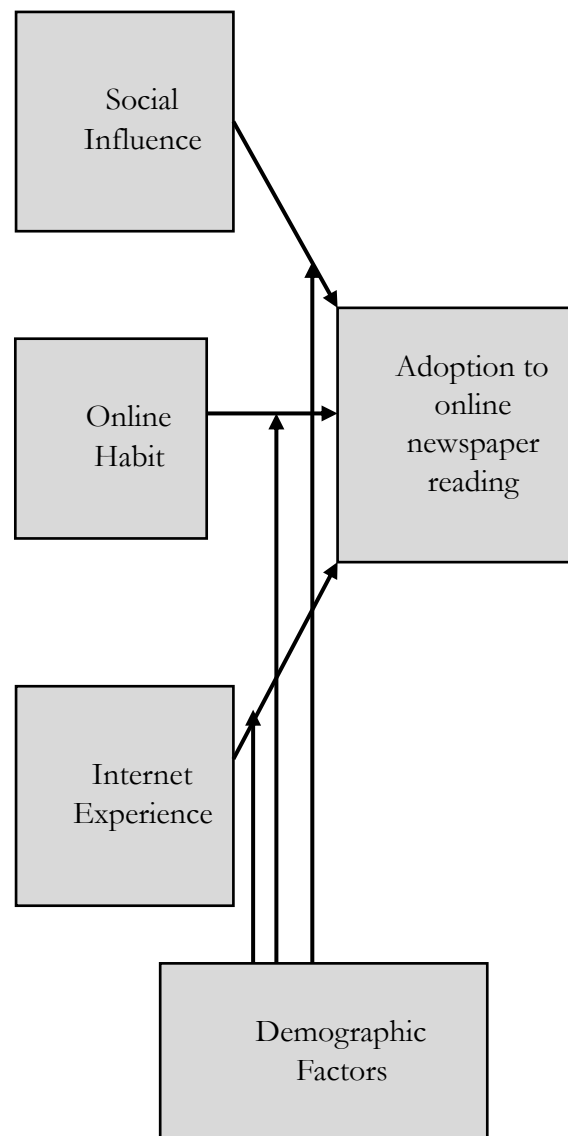


Figure 1: Research model

**Methodology, Analysis with results**

A quantitative research method was applied for the study. Study explored the factors that affect adaptation to online newspaper reading with the COVID-19 pandemic. Explanatory variables were measured numerically by fulfilling the essential criteria of quantitative study. Individual respondent carries the role of a unit of analysis. The quantitative methods helped generate numerical data, which was statistically manipulated to meet required objectives through descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and hypotheses were tested by correlation analysis (Amin, 2005). A multicollinearity test was carried out and

confirmed that all VIF values (3.574) for variables are less than ten and tolerance is in the acceptable range of 0 to 1 (Senavirathna and Cooray, 2019). Hence, it was confirmed that the model is free from biases. In addition, multiple regression analysis was carried out to identify the importance of the predictors on the dependent variable. All statistical techniques were executed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Staff members (academic and non-academic executives) of all six faculties of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka were selected for the study. Hence, the sample was equal to the population.

**Table 1: Population and Sample Distribution**

Faculties of Rajarata University	Academic Permanent Staff Members	Non-Academic Executive Staff Members	Total
Faculty of Management Studies	47	1	48
Faculty of Medical and Allied Science	54	2	56
Faculty of Applied Science	40	2	42
Faculty of Technology	20	1	21
Faculty of Agriculture	44	2	46
Faculty of Social Science and Humanity	55	1	56
Non-Academic Staff members (Admin)	-	22	22
Total Staff Members	260	31	291

Source: official records, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Standardised structured questionnaire was used to collect data, and questionnaires were distributed as follows. Validity is the state or quality of being valid (Sekaran, 2006; Vogt, 2007). Validity was checked to ensure the quality of the instrument. The expert in the field ensured face validity and content validity. Internal consistency can be checked by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha (Sekaran, 2006). According to Shuttleworth (2015),

reliability is the degree of consistency of a measure, and a test will be reliable when it gives the same repeated result under the same conditions. Taherdoost (2016) says there is no constant value for internal consistency. However, the minimum internal consistency coefficient is 0.7. According to Straub, Boudereau, and Gefen (2004), reliability should be equal to or above 0.6 to proceed with the analysis.



**Table 2: Reliability Test**

Variable	No. of item	Cronbrach's alpha
Online Habit	6	0.929
Social Influence	6	0.908
Internet Experience	5	0.868
Adaption of Online Newspaper Reading	6	0.933

Cronbach's alpha value of all variables are ranged from 0.868 to 0.933. Generally, values should be located between 0.700 - 1.000. If the alpha value lies between that range, it concludes that all variables have high reliability ensuring internal consistency.

**Test the moderating effect of demographic factors**

Three demographic factors (gender, age and education level) were considered to check the moderating impact of relationships of independent variables to the dependent variable. Andrew F. Hayes moderating variable analysis was applied to check the moderating impact. Moderating variable effect is determined with a significant (p)

value, and it should always be less than 0.0005 ( $p < 0.0005$ ) and the R Square Change value represent how much moderating variable affect the relationship between independent and dependent variable (Aguinis, 2004; Jaccard and Turrisi, 2003; Jose, 2013).

The values shown in Table 3 revealed that only the relationships between internet experience and online habits with adoption of online newspaper reading are moderated. There is no moderating impact on the relationship between social influence and the dependent variable. The highest moderating effect (10.7 percent) is reported with online habit and adoption of online newspaper reading.

**Table 3: Summary Values of Andrew F. Hayes Moderating Variable Analysis**

		R2- Chng	F	df1	df2	P
Social Influence	X*W	0.000	0.278	1.000	156.000	0.598
Internet experience	X*W	0.061	18.018	1.000	156.000	0.000
Online habit	X*W	0.107	20.743	1.000	156.000	0.000

Source: Analysed values from survey data

**Hypotheses Testing**

Correlation analysis explains the relationship between variables (Sekaran, 2006). Hence, Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. It indicates the strength and the direction of the relationship. For example,

the sign of the Correlation coefficient shows the direction of the relationship between - 1.000 and +1.000. Variables may be positively or negatively correlated. Thus, the values below Table 4 confirm that all relationships with the adoption of online newspaper reading are positively correlated. Accordingly, all hypotheses were supported.

**Table 4: Correlation Coefficient Values**

		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>A</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.838	0.822	0.868
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>B</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.838	1	0.904	0.915
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000
<b>C</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.822	0.904	1	0.887
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000
<b>D</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.868	0.915	0.887	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	

**A** - Online Habit, **B** - Internet Experience, **C** - Social Influence, **D** - Adaption to Online Newspaper Reading, **N** – 160

**Table 5: Results of Regression Analysis**

Model	Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	Significant value
Constant	-0.241	0.115	.	-2.084	0.039
Online Habit	0.318	0.058	0.290	5.500	0.000
Internet Experience	0.549	0.082	0.469	6.658	0.000
Social influence	0.255	0.077	0.225	3.328	0.001

**R Square** – 0.880, **F** – 382.115, **P** – 0.000

**Regression analysis**

Multiple regression analysis was executed to measure the impact of independent variables (Social Influence, Internet Experience, Online Habit) on the adaption of online newspaper reading. The results of analysis are summarized as shown in following Tables 5. According to the regression analysis results, all predictors positively influence the adoption of online newspaper reading. With the coefficient values derived from the analysis, internet experience (0.549) is the most ng factor towards the adaptation of online newspaper reading.

The second significant factor is the online habit of readers. Considering the overall result of the regression analysis (R square – 0.880) it can be concluded as an adaptation towards online newspaper reading with

COVID–19 pandemic is explained with 88 per cent by selected independent variables, and the most influencing factor is the internet experience readers have. In addition, the following regression equation was adapted with regression results.

$$Y = a + bA + bB + bC$$

where Y = adaptation to online newspaper reading, A = Online habit, B = Internet experience and C = Social influence, thus regression equation is derived as below with real values.

$$Y = -0.241 + 0.318A + 0.549B + 0.255C$$

## Discussion

Mainly, social influence, internet experience and online habits were recognised as factors which significantly impact adaption to online newspaper reading with COVID-19 among the staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Schoneville (2007) highlighted that social influence significantly impacting the adoption of online newspaper reading. Findings of this study also confirmed the same. Hettiarachchi (2017) also has proved that social influence is the main factor in the adaption of online newspaper reading. According to the study of Snook (2005), social influence has theorised under three determinants; perceived social norm, motivation to comply with practical use, and perceived social norm, and his finding is matched with this study findings. According to Schoneville (2007), internet experience moderately affects to Schoneville (2007), while internet experience moderately affects the adaption of online newspaper reading. However, this study confirmed that internet experience significant impacts the adaption of online newspaper reading. According to Nguyen (2006) and Zhang (2018), internet experience significantly impacts online newspaper reading behaviour. They identified that internet experience mostly impact reader adoption of online news reading and developed a conceptual framework. Confirming Nguyen and Zhang's conceptual framework, the results of this study also revealed that the internet experience significant impacts the adaption of online newspaper reading. When readers have high internet experience, they always tend to adopt online newspaper reading. Krishnamurthy and Awari (2015) studied newspaper reading among the postgraduate students of Karnataka University. They noted that student's online habits highly

impact reading online newspapers. According to Schoneville (2007), habit highly impact on intentions and behaviour. Schoneville (2007) applied online habits to the UTAUT model by reading online newspapers. Finding pointed out that online habit significantly impacts online news consumption. Hettiarachchi (2017) results also confirmed that online habit significantly impacts on online newspaper reading. So, the above-noted findings are well matched with the finding of the present study.

Schoneville (2007) studied demographic factors and identified that demographic factors moderately impact the adaption of online newspaper reading. Nguyen (2006) has proven that age, education and income moderately affect online newspaper reading. Zukowski and Brown (2007) studied how age, education level, gender affect online service usage. Results show that males highly adapt on online service and demographic factors significantly impact the adapt online service. Findings of the current study revealed that the demographic factors moderately impact only the relationships of online habit and internet experience with an adaption of online newspaper reading. Thus, this study is somewhat different with this study's findings are somewhat different from previous studies since demographic factors do not moderately affect the relationship between social influence and adoption on online newspaper reading. Reasons behind this scenario maybe location, time and cultural differences.

## Conclusion and policy implications

Findings have shown that three factors of social influence, internet experience and online habit influence the adoption of online newspaper reading during the COVID-19

pandemic. So, social influence, internet experience and online habits of readers can be considered as influencing factors in the adoption of online reading with COVID-19 among the staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The most significant factor is the internet experience, while online habit takes the second. Contribution of these factors to the adoption of online newspaper reading is 88 per cent. Thus, as a whole, it can be concluded that the selected model is well explained the factors which affect adaptation to online newspaper reading with COVID-19 among the staff members of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The meantime study focused to examine on examining the moderating effect of selected demographic factors on the relationships of independent variables to dependent variables. Accordingly, analysis revealed that only the relationships between internet experience and online habits with adoption of online newspaper reading are moderated. Staff members were categorised into two as academic and non-academic. Among them, academic staff members are highly motivated to adopt online newspaper reading during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, it was revealed that males are more like to read online newspapers than females

Based on the study's findings, online newspaper providers can minimize advertisements published on their websites since readers are concerned about their time spent. Since social influence is a significant factor in the adoption to of online newspaper reading, contents of the contents of online newspapers can be created attractively, giving more confidence in published news. Then readers may push their peers toward online newspaper reading. So that benefits of peer pleasure could be attained. At the same time, readers' Internet experience plays a

significant role in this scenario. Hence, arranging free webinars, awareness sessions, etc. by online newspaper providers to provide internet experience might be helpful for aged people and the fewer educators. According to findings, the online habits of readers also is significant. So that news providers can follow behavioural targeting when they provide news. Especially generation Y or millennials (Digital Natives). Further, focusing on generation Z or the post-millennial generation also would give more benefits and vice versa.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dr. Buddhika Prabhath Ranaweera** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Information Systems attached to the Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka. His research interests are in the field of Adaptation to Information Technology, Information Systems, Management Information System and e-government. His publications have appeared in journals such as Springer Plus, Journal of Business & Financial Affairs, International Journal of Social Science and Technology, International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management United Kingdom, IFRSA Business Review etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

## References

- Aguinis, H. (2004). Regression analysis for categorical moderators. New York: Guilford Press.
- Amin, M.E. (2005). Social Science Research: Conception, Methodology and Analysis. Makerere University Press, Kampala.
- Arimany, G. (2011). Radio frequency communication for modular Robots. Master Thesis, Mærsk Mc-Kinney

- Møller Institute University of Southern Denmark Odense, Denmark.
- Beyers, H. (2018). Tomorrow's newsp @ pers: online or still made out of paper? A study on perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards online newspapers. Congress International Communication, 5, 347-362.
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka. (2019). Annual Report. Cantal Bank of Sri Lanka.
- Chaudhri, V. (1998). Pricing and efficiency of a circulation industry: The case of newspapers. Information Economics and Policy, 10(1), 59-76.
- Constantinides, E. (2004). Influencing the online consumer's behavior: The Web experience. Internet Research, 14(2), 111-126.
- Deacon, D. (2013). Yesterday's Papers and Today's Technology: Digital Newspaper Archives and 'Push Button' Content Analysis. Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling, 53(9), 1689-1699.
- Domingo, D., and Heinonen, A. (2008). Weblogs and Journalism. Nordicom Review, 29, 15-3.
- Eastern Daylight Time. (2020). Newspaper Publishers Have Found That COVID-19 is Often Being Treated as an Ad-Free Topic—Research and Markets.com.
- Flavián, C., and Gurrea, R. (2006). The choice of digital newspapers: influence of reader goals and user experience. Internet Research, 16(3), 231-247.
- Heather, B. (2011). Exploring User Engagement in Online News Interactions. New Orleans, LA, USA., 9-13.
- Herath, C. (2010). How do we Read Online: The Effect of the Internet on Reading Behaviour, Master Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.
- Hettiarachchi, D. (2017). Factors affecting sustainability of an Online Newspaper in Sri Lanka, Master Thesis, University of Moratuwa.
- Hultén, S. (2021). COVID-19 Changes and renews the newspaper reading. Research and Analysis of Media. Available: <https://www2.rampanel.com/covid-19-changes-andrenews-the-newspaper-reading/>
- Jaccard, J., and Turrisi, R. (2003). Interaction effects in multiple regression (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Jose, P. E. (2013). Doing statistical mediation and moderation. New York: Guilford Press.
- Kim, Y.J. and Hollingshead A.B. (2016). Online Social Influence: Past, Present, and Future. Annals of the International Communication Association, 39(1), 163-192.
- Kobayashi, T., and Inamasu, K. (2015). The Knowledge Leveling Effect of Portal Sites. Communication Research, 42(4), 482-502.
- Krishnamurthy, C. and Awari, V. H. (2015). Newspaper reading habit among postgraduate 20 students of Karnataka University Dharwad. Journal of Library and Information Technology, 35(1), 25-29.
- Kumar, A. (2018). Reading habit of online newspapers among students of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. International Journal of Information Movement, 2(12), 172-176.
- Lu, H., and Zhang, M. (2018). Between Clicks and Satisfaction: Study on Multi-Phase User Preferences and Satisfaction for Online News Reading. The 41st International ACM SIGIR Conference, 435-444.

- Mbachu, D., (2003). Changing technologies and the Nigerian media. In R. A. Akinfeleye and I. E. Okoye (Eds). *Issues in Nigerian media history: 1900-2000 AD*. Victoria Island-Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited.
- Nguyen, A. D. (2006). *The diffusion and social impact of online news: Studying the past and present to understand the future of the Internet as a news medium*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Queensland.
- Nielsen, R.K., Cornia, A., and Kalogeropoulos, A. (2016). *Challenges and opportunities for news media and journalism in an increasingly digital, mobile, and social media environment*. Council of Europe report DGI, University of Oxford.
- Nnagbo, E.O. (2011). *Internet Impact on UNT Traditional Newspaper*. Master Thesis, Uppsala University.
- Pan, S.L., Cuib, M. and Qianc, J. (2020). Information resource orchestration during the COVID-19 pandemic: A study of community lockdowns in China. *International Journal of Information Management*, 54, 59-76.
- Patel, A. (2010). *The Survival of the Newspaper in the Digital Age of Communication*. Master Thesis, New York University.
- Perera, K.K.S. (2018). *A brief history of local and foreign newspapers*. Daily News e-paper. Available: <http://www.dailynews.lk/2018/01/03/features/138779/brief-history-local-and-foreign-newspapers>.
- Rajhans, V. Memon U., Patil V. and Goyal A. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on academic activities and way forward in Indian Optometry. *Journal of Optometry*, 13, 216-226.
- Ruwanpathirana, I. (2018). *Business Model of Free newspaper and Sri Lankan Newspaper Industry (A study on the behavior of newspaper readers)*. 4th National Research Conference on Applied Social Statistics, Social Statistics Students' Association, Department of Social Statistics, Faculty of Social Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
- Schoneville, S. (2007). *This just in: Analysis of factors influencing online newspaper reading behaviour*. Master Thesis, University of Twente.
- Sekaran, U. (2006). *Research methods for business A Skill-Building Approach (4th Edition)*, Wiley India Pvt. Limited.
- Sequeira, A. H. (2014). *Conceptualization in Research*. SSRN Electronic Journal. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2489284>
- Senaviratna, N.A.M.R. and Cooray, T.M.J.A. (2019). Diagnosing Multicollinearity of Logistic Regression Model. *Asian Journal of Probability and Statistics*, 5(2), 1-9.
- Snook, J. S. (2005). *Socionormative Influence in Software Adoption and Usage*. Doctoral Dissertation, Blacksburg, Virginia.
- Spyridou, P.L., and Veglis, A. (2008). Exploring structural interactivity in online newspapers: A look at the Greek Web landscape. *First Monday*, 13(5). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v13i5.2164>
- Spyridou, P.L., and Veglis, A. (2008). The contribution of online news consumption to critical-reflective journalism professionals: Likelihood patterns among Greek journalism students. *Journalism*, 9(1), 52-75.
- Straub, D., Boudreau, M., and Gefen, D. (2004). *Validation Guidelines for IS*

- Positivist Research. Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 3(1), 1-67.
- Summa, G. (2011). The future of Television in the Internet age. Master Thesis. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Sünnen, D. (2012). New ways of browsing and reading news. Master Thesis. ETH Zurich - Distributed Computing Group.
- Taherdoost, H. (2016). Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument; How to Test the Validation of a Questionnaire/Survey in a Research. International Journal of Academic Research in Management, 5(3), 28-36.
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M., Davis, G., and Davis, F. (2003). User Acceptance of Information Technology: Toward a Unified View. MIS Quarterly, 27(3), 425-478.
- Vermeer, S., Trilling, D., Kruikemeier, S. and Vreese. C.D. (2020). Online News User Journeys: The Role of social media, News Websites, and Topics. Digital Journalism, 8(9), 1114-1141.
- Vogt. W.P. (2007). Quantitative Research Methods for Professionals. Pearson Publishers.
- White, K. M., Smith, J. R., Terry, D. J., Greenslade, J. H., and Blake, M. (2009). Social influence in the theory of planned behaviour: The role of descriptive, injunctive, and ingroup norms. QUT Digital Repository: 48, 135-158.  
<http://eprints.qut.edu.au/%0AWhite>.
- Wijayarathne, W.A.M.C., and Marikar, F.M.M.T. (2012). Communication Revolution: Online Newspaper Media in Sri Lanka? Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism, 2(9), DOI: 10.4172/2165-7912.1000128.
- Yadamsuren, B., and Erdelez S. (2011). Online news reading behavior: From habitual reading to stumbling upon news. Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology.
- Yang, K.C.C. (2011). The Effects of Social Influence on Blog Advertising Use. Intercultural Communication Studies XX: 2, 131-147.
- Yau, J.T.K., and Al-Hawamdeh, S. (2001). The Impact of the Internet on Teaching and Practicing Journalism. Journal of Electronic Publishing, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0007.102>.
- Zukowski, T., and Brown, I. (2007). Examining the Influence of Demographic Factors on Internet Users' Information Privacy Concerns. Proceedings of the 2007 annual research conference of the South African institute of computer scientists and information technologists on IT research in developing countries, Port Elizabeth South Africa.