

Online Newspaper Reading Habit of Young and Elderly People: A Comparative Study

Atanu Mondal¹; Goutam Maity²

Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Jadavpur University, Kolkata¹; Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India²

atanu.mondal001@gmail.com, goutammaityju@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the reading habits of young and old people who read newspapers online, as well as the degree of difficulty they experience in doing so. A suitable methodology for the study was used to choose a total sample of 60 respondents. According to the findings, reading patterns and levels of difficulty differ between young and older people when it comes to online newspapers.

KEYWORDS: Reading habit, Online newspaper, Newspaper reading habit, Elderly people, Young people.

INTRODUCTION

While the role of printed newspapers as a source of information can be traced back to history; online newspapers are becoming relevant and important in today's world. One of the main reasons for its popularity is its authenticity in the age of the Internet. Furthermore, online newspapers are much more up-to-date and interactive. According to the report of Statista-2022, "Online news consumption has been growing at pace with the traditional media in India." The traditional print newspaper reading habit is still present, but the online newspaper reading habit is growing steadily.

Stone & Wetherington (1979) opined that any individual's house is significant in shaping his/her reading habit. The habit of newspaper reading is dependent on how it is practised in individual's home during his growing up period. Tewari (2015) conducted a survey to show the reading habits of online newspaper readers from a gender perspective. He found that women and men consume online news in a marginally different manner. Women preferred to read information on regalement, health, development, inculcation, and features; whereas men preferred political, sports, defence, and business news. Bharucha, (2017) analysed the newspaper reading habits of the youths of Mumbai. He stated, "reading of newspapers is very serviceable for young denizens to develop their language competency and to assimilate erudition of current events and the world." Kothainayagi and Karthikeyan (2019) in their study proved that "to increase the newspaper reading, respondents should depend more on online medium of newspaper rather than printed medium". On the other hand, Akanda & Haque (2013) pointed out the difficulties of

print and online newspapers readers and suggested ways to overcome the hurdles. In their study, Makananise and Madima (2021) found that people prefer accessing and consuming news on digital and online media platforms to conventional media. The results established that demographic factors such as gender, age, level of education, and financial status have a significant influence on the youth's preference for media and the type of news they consume daily.

However, existing literary warrant did not reveal any evidence of study on difficulties of young and elderly people in online newspaper reading. Therefore, a significant knowledge gap had been found in the area and a study was needed to be carried out.

OBJECTIVE

The primary goal of the study was to compare the online newspaper reading habits among young and older people, as well as the difficulties they encounter in doing so. To accomplish the objective, this study attempted to-

- ✓ to determine and compare the primary device used in reading online newspaper;
- ✓ to compare and identify the frequency of reading online newspaper;
- ✓ to compare and identify the preferred primary language when reading an online newspaper; and
- ✓ to determine and compare the degree of difficulty encountered when reading online newspaper.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the above-mentioned objective, survey method was employed. At first, an attempt was made to select the sample from the target population. However, as the population was voluminous and heterogeneous, covering the entire population was not convenient for the study. Among the 144 wards under Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), two wards (Ward Numbers, 86 and 101 of KMC) were selected by using judgment sampling technique. From each of the ward, 15 young people (Age group between 18-40) and 15 elderly people (Age group between 41-60) were selected at random. So, a sample of 30 young people and 30 elderly people were selected from Kolkata district who were found to read online newspapers.

To gather the required data, a structured questionnaire was framed. Collected data was then tabulated, analysed and interpreted, keeping in view the object of the study. For analysing the collected data on primary motive for reading online newspapers, primary devices used, frequency of reading and primary language preferences, the 'percentage method' was used and to analyse the difficulty level a '5- point Likert scale' was used. The final calculations were done using MS-Excel. While using the Likert scale, if the mean level was found to be low (i.e., 0-2.3) then, the readers were considered to have low difficulty level; if the mean level was between 2.4-3.7 then the readers were considered to have medium level difficulty; and if the mean level was between 3.8 -5.00 then readers were considered to have high-level of difficulty against each statement asked.

DATA ANALYSIS AN INTERPRETATION

Analysis and interpretation of collected data are given below.

(i) Primary motive of reading online newspapers

Table-1 given below shows the primary motive of reading online newspapers.

Online Newspaper Reading Habit of Young and Elderly People: A Comparative Study

Table-1: Primary motive of reading online newspapers

Motives	Young People (%)	Elderly People (%)
To improve knowledge	6.67	3.33
To get real-time update news	33.33	10
To develop reading /writing /vocabulary skills	16.67	00
Hobby	20	26.67
Time pass	00	60
Academic / career news	23.33	00
Total	100%	100%

Table 1 reveals that the maximum number of young people (33.33%) reads online newspapers 'To get real-time updated news'; but only 10% of elderly people reads newspapers for this reason. The maximum number of elderly people (60%) reads online newspaper for 'Time pass'. In the contrast, none of the young people reads newspapers to 'Time pass'. 20% of young people and 26.67% of elderly people read online newspapers as a 'Hobby'. 16.67% and 23.33% of young people read online newspapers for 'Developing reading /writing /vocabulary skills' and for 'Academic and career news' respectively. But none of the elderly people from the selected sample chose 'Developing reading /writing /vocabulary skills' and 'Academic and career related news' as their primary motive for reading the online newspaper. 6.67% of young people chose that they read online newspapers 'To improve knowledge'; whereas 3.33% of elderly people read online newspapers 'To improve knowledge'.

(ii) Primary device used in reading online newspapers

Table-2 given below shows the preferred primary device used in reading online newspapers.

Table-2: Primary Device used in reading online newspapers

Devices	Young People (%)	Elderly People (%)
Computer	10	23.33
Mobile Phone / iPad	90	76.67
Total	100%	100%

It is seen in Table 2 that 90% of young people preferred 'Mobile phone/iPad' as their primary device for reading online newspapers and 10% of elderly people choose 'Computer'. But, 76.67% of elderly people chose 'Mobile phone/iPad' as primary preference, whereas 23.33% of elderly people chose 'Computer' as their preferred primary device.

(iii) Frequency of reading online newspapers

Table-3 given below shows the frequency of reading online newspapers.

Table 3: Frequency of reading online newspapers

Frequency of Use	Young People (%)	Elderly People (%)
------------------	------------------	--------------------

Very frequently	36.67	3.33
Frequently	16.67	13.33
Occasionally	30.00	10.00
Rarely	10.00	56.67
Very rarely	6.66	16.67
Total	100%	100%

Table 3 shows that 36.67% of young people read online newspapers ‘Very frequently’ whereas only 3.33% of elderly people read online newspapers ‘Very frequently’. 16.67% of young people and 13.33% of elderly people read ‘Frequently’. 30% young people and 10% elderly people read ‘Occasionally’. 10% and 6.66% of young people read online newspapers ‘Rarely’ and ‘Very rarely’ respectively. But 56.67% and 16.67% of elderly people read online newspapers ‘Rarely’ and ‘Very rarely’ respectively.

(iv) Primary language preferred for reading online newspapers

Table-4 given below shows the preferred primary language for reading an online newspaper.

Table 4: Preferred primary language for reading an online newspaper

Language	Young People (%)	Elderly People (%)
Bengali	36.67	46.67
English	63.33	53.33
Total	100%	100%

It is seen from Table 4 that among all the young people, 63.33% chose ‘English’ language and 36.67% chose ‘Bengali’ language as their preferred language while reading online newspaper. On the other hand, 53.33% & 46.67% of elderly people read ‘English’ and ‘Bengali’ newspapers, respectively.

(v) Difficulties faced by young and elderly readers in reading online newspapers

Table-5 given below shows the perception towards the difficulties faced while reading online newspapers by both young and elderly readers.

Group	Statement	Total (%)					Mean	Difficulty Level
		SDA	DA	N	A	SA		
Young	Poor Internet connectivity hampers my reading	43.34	33.33	10	13.33	00	1.9	Low
Elderly		13.33	10	13.33	40	23.34	3.5	Medium

Online Newspaper Reading Habit of Young and Elderly People: A Comparative Study

Young	Too much advertisement blocks my content	10	20	6.67	50	13.33	3.3	Medium
Elderly		00	6.67	00	40	53.33	4.4	High
Young	Staring at a device creates eyestrain and discomfort	33.33	13.33	20	6.67	26.67	2.8	Medium
Elderly		3.33	10	13.33	23.34	50	4.0	High
Young	I feel uncomfortable adjusting screen (zoom in-zoom out of article) as per my need	53.33	46.67	00	00	00	1.4	Low
Elderly		13.33	16.67	13.33	33.33	23.34	3.3	Medium
Young	Searching for a particular article is not easy for me	33.33	20	36.67	3.33	6.67	2.3	Low
Elderly		6.67	00	13.33	20	60	4.2	High
Young	I feel uncomfortable using online platform for reading newspaper	30	60	10	00	00	1.8	Low
Elderly		10	3.33	26.67	43.33	16.67	3.5	Medium

Table 5: Difficulties faced by young and elderly online newspapers readers

SDA= Strongly disagree, DA= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly agree

Indicator (Mean) level: Low level difficulty 0.1-2.3 Medium level difficulty 2.4-3.7, High level difficulty 3.8 -5.00

The Table-5 shows the difficulty level of young and elderly people regarding online newspaper reading. In this study, a comparison is made between these two groups. Six statements were asked to them.

For the statement 'Poor Internet connectivity hampers my reading' it is found that 43.34% of young readers 'Strongly disagree' and 33.33% of them 'Disagree' to it. The mean level is 1.9 thereby indicating that the difficulty level for young readers relating to poor internet connectivity is 'Low'. But in the case of the elderly readers, it is seen that 40% 'Agree' and 23.34% 'Strongly agree' to the statement. The mean here is 3.5 indicating a 'Medium' level difficulty for elderly readers regarding poor internet connectivity hampering their reading.

For the statement 'Too much advertisement blocks my content' 50% and 13.33% of young readers 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' respectively to the statement. Here the difficulty level found is 'Medium' with mean of 3.3. Among the elderly readers, 53.33% chose to 'Strongly agree' and 40% chose to 'Agree' that too much advertisement blocks their content. The mean for them is 4.4 showing a 'High' difficulty level.

For the statement 'Staring at a device creates eye strain and discomfort' it is found that 33.33% of young readers 'Strongly disagree' and 13.33% of them 'Disagree' to it. Also, 26.67% of readers chose to 'Strongly agree' to the statement. The mean level for them is 2.8 thereby indicating a 'Medium' difficulty level for young readers. But for elderly readers, it is seen that 23.34% 'Agree' and 50% are 'Strongly agree' to the statement. The mean here is 4.0 indicating a 'High' level of difficulty for elderly readers while staring at a device for reading an online newspaper.

For the statement 'I feel uncomfortable adjusting the screen (zoom in-zoom out of article) as per my need' it is seen from the table that 53.33% and 46.67% of young readers 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree', respectively to the statement and thus have 'Low' difficulty level with a mean of 1.4. For the elderly readers, the mean is 3.3 representing a 'Medium' difficulty level.

The table reveals that for the statement 'Searching a particular article is not easy for me' the difficulty level for young readers is 'Low' (mean is 2.3) but the difficulty level of elderly readers is 'High' with a mean of 4.2.

For the statement 'I feel uncomfortable using online platform for reading newspaper', the difficulty level for young readers is 'Low' with a mean of 1.8 whereas the difficulty level of elderly readers is medium with a mean of 3.5 in using online newspapers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings obtained from the study are summarized below:

- i. As revealed from Table-1 the primary motive for reading online newspapers of young people differs from that of elderly people. Maximum number of young people (33.33%) reads online newspapers 'To get real-time updated news' whereas maximum number of elderly people (60%) reads online newspapers for 'Time pass'.
- ii. 'Mobile phone/iPad' is chosen as the primary device used in reading online newspaper by majority of young as well as elderly people (Table 2). However, the number of elderly people (23.33%) choosing 'Computer' as primary device is more in comparison to young people (10%).
- iii. The frequency of reading online newspapers when compared between young and elderly people differs from each other. Table 3 shows that out of all elderly people within the taken sample, more than half 'Rarely' (56.67%) and 'Very rarely' (16.67) reads online newspapers whereas out of all young people within the sample considered 36.67% and 16.67% reads online newspapers 'Very frequently' and 'Frequently' respectively.
- iv. Table 4 shows that 'Bengali' as the primary choice of language of online newspaper is higher among elderly people (46.67%) in comparison to young people. 63.33% of young people within the taken sample chose English as their preferred language, which is little higher than the number of elderly people (53.33%) who chose English as preferred language for reading an online newspaper.
- v. The study also reveals the difficulty levels of the young and elderly readers in reading online newspapers. From Table 5 it is clear that 'Poor Internet connectivity' issue creates 'Medium' level difficulties for elderly readers in comparison to young readers having 'Low' difficulty level. Similarly, the difficulty level created because of 'Too much advertisement' in reading online newspapers is 'High' for the elderly readers than young people ('Medium' difficulty). The difficulty level while 'staring at the device' also differs between young readers ('Medium' difficulty) and elderly readers ('High' difficulty). The difficulty level for elderly readers ('Medium' difficulty) is more than that of young readers ('Low' difficulty) while doing 'zoom in or zoom out of the screen' according to their need. While 'Searching for a particular article' Elderly readers are seen to face 'High' difficulties than young people ('Low' difficulty). Elderly readers have a 'Medium' difficulty level when compared to young readers ('Low' difficulty) regarding their 'comfort in reading online newspapers'.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to compare the online newspaper reading habits of young and elderly people. From the study, it is seen that there are differences in the online newspaper reading habits among young and older people. The findings of the study on the 'motive,' 'choice of device,' 'preferred primary language,' and 'frequency' of reading online newspapers clearly establishes the difference.

The study also reveals that reading online newspapers is somewhat more difficult for the elderly people than the young people. The choice made by the respondents while answering the questions, further reveals the major areas of difficulties that elderly readers face while reading online newspapers. While some of these difficulties, such as "poor internet connectivity" and "problems due to staring at devices," can be addressed on a personal level by having a better internet data pack, adjusting the screen light, etc., difficulties brought on by "too much advertisement" and problems with "finding articles," on the other hand, can only be fixed if "newspaper websites" make an effort to make them more user-friendly. In light of the findings of the study, it can be concluded that young readers' online newspaper reading habits differ from those of older readers.

REFERENCES

- [1] Akanda, A. K. M. E. A., & Haque, M. A. (2013). Newspaper reading habits of university graduate students in Bangladesh: A case study. *International Journal of Research in Applied, Natural and Social Sciences*, 1(3), 1-8. Retrieved from <https://docplayer.net/3366571-Newspaper-reading-habits-of-university-graduate-students-in-bangladesh-a-case-study.html>
- [2] Bharucha, J. (2017). An analysis of newspaper reading patterns among the youth. *International Journal of English and Education*, 6(1), 138-146. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324798122_An_Analysis_of_Newspaper_Reading_Patterns_Among_the_Youth
- [3] Fulufhelo, O. M., & Shumani, E. M. (2021). Exploring the Demographic Information on News Media Consumption Preferences among the Youth at a Rural-based University, South Africa. *Journal of African Films and Diaspora Studies*, 4(1), 77.
- [4] Kothainayagi, T., & Karthikeyan, C. (2019). Newspaper reading behavior among the college students. *Agribusiness*, 5(22), 8-3. Retrieved from <https://iaraindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/9-NEWSPAPER-READING-BEHAVIOR-AMONG-THE-COLLEGE-STUDENTS.pdf>
- [4] Statista (n. d.). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1026647/india-online-news-platforms-weekly-use/>
- Stone, G. C., & Wetherington Jr, R. V. (1979). Confirming the newspaper reading habit. *Journalism Quarterly*, 56(3), 554-566.
- [5] Tewari, P. (2015). The habits of online newspaper readers in India. *Intermedia International E-Journal*, 2(2), 295-304. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/720445>