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The Role of Digital Media in Shaping Online Reading Trends among Youth

Abstract: Digitalization has changed society and is contributing to unforeseen developments. As the world grows more technologically sophisticated, more individuals are searching for digital reading material sources, which has transformed their reading culture and surroundings. There is a growing amount of digital stuff available nowadays. The purpose of this study was to determine how young people's online reading habits are shaped by digital media. The quantitative approach was employed in this study to gather data. A closed-ended questionnaire was given to each responder as part of a survey. Purposive sampling was used to choose 200 persons in the sample population who were between the ages of 18 and 45. We came to the conclusion that the majority of people consume and appreciate digital and conventional information on equal terms. Reading's place in education is evolving along with digital technology.

Key Words: Digitalization, Digital media, Reading, Reading Culture, Information and Communication

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Introduction

The internet has a profound impact on the way people read nowadays. Today, individuals live in a digital world engulfed by technology. Digitalization is playing a role in unpredictable changes and has transformed society. The emergence of written language around 3000 years ago marked a pivotal moment in human history, laying the foundation for a literate society. The

subsequent Industrial Revolution witnessed a leap forward with the invention of paper and printing, democratizing and accelerating the reading experience (Vedechkina & Borgonovi, 2021). The present era, however, is witnessing a seismic shift in the publishing landscape, driven by the relentless tide of digital technologies. Print media, though experiencing a gradual decline, continues to find its niche, while the design focus has

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transcended physical pages, squarely embracing the realm of digital content. This digital revolution has fundamentally reshaped reading habits, potentially ushering in the era of "digital only," as eloquently captured by Eric Pearson's observation: "It's no longer the big beating the small, but the fast beating the slow (Baye et al., [2013](#))."

The digital revolution has irrevocably altered the landscape of reading culture and environment. As technological advancements surge, audiences increasingly gravitate towards digital sources of information, seeking knowledge and entertainment through screens rather than bound volumes (Graafland, [2018](#)). The once-ubiquitous handwritten essay has morphed into the meticulously crafted digital document, while the venerable encyclopedia has ceded its throne to the boundless realm of online searches. This shift towards the digital sphere reflects a fundamental transformation in our relationship with information, demanding new modes of engagement and literacy (Zweiffel, [2021](#)).

While the traditional paper book remains a treasured companion for many, offering unmatched portability and intimacy, the rise of digital devices has opened the door to even greater versatility in reading experiences. Devices like iPads and Kindles, surpassing mere e-readers, transform into virtual libraries, holding vast collections within their sleek frames. Smartphones, too, have carved a niche in the reading landscape, becoming the preferred platform for audiobooks thanks to the convenience of streaming services and hands-free accessibility (Bus, [2020](#)).

Three decades into the digital age, the undeniable game-changing impact of apps, ebooks, and digital content on the reading landscape is crystal clear. The once-dominant reign of traditional print media and television programs is rapidly ceding ground to digital experiences delivered through diverse electronic devices (Twenge et al., [2019](#)). Having initially disrupted the print ecosystem, digital has now evolved into the primary

driving force, setting new benchmarks for content creation and distribution. In essence, embracing digital is no longer a mere option, but rather an imperative for survival in the evolving media landscape (Zweiffel, 2021).

This paper signifies the impact of changes that are observed in reading trends due to the rapid thickening of the claws of digitalization. It aims to cover the loopholes present in the research that is already done regarding this topic. The researches that is already present regarding this topic only discuss the change in reading trends while we aim to cover the factors causing this shift. This research provides the reasons for the shift and a glimpse of where digitalization will take reading trends over the next decade (Bus, 2020).

Research question

1. Does exposure to digital media play a role in shaping reading trends among youth?
2. Is the exposure to digital content moulding the youth's interest in reading?

Hypothesis

- Digital modes are initiating the pattern change in reading trends
- Digital mass media is not producing the paradigm move in reading trends
- Youth is being persuaded towards online content because of ongoing innovations regarding digitalization

Objectives

1. To explore the impact of digitalization on reading trends
2. To look into the difference between traditional and digital reading content

3. To understand how youth engage with online literature
4. To have insight into the reading practices of digital users

Literature Review

Reading is a cognitive activity that humans developed with the concept of writing. A survey of 41 randomly selected respondents aged 17 to 21 was conducted and showed a shift in reading culture based on gender, time, reading patterns, and reading repetition. They observed that the shift to online media is also due to some aspects that print media lack, such as books, newspapers, magazines and tabloids. However, this research also highlighted the disadvantages that online media lack, such as the inaccuracy of information. The results of the survey reflect the trend that the audience of new media is not only the object to which the news is directed. Changes in media technology and the meaning of media have renewed the role of the audience to become more interactive with news, and consumers of new media, dominated by young people, can determine the mode of access based on their wants and needs (Sayilgan, [2023](#)).

The ubiquitous effects and significant role of unpredictable changes have revolutionized the world along with the technology revolution. It was found that the strengthening of technology and new media trends have pushed people to online reading trends and reading habits that are growing intensively. This study focuses on the reading habits of individuals due to the availability of the Internet. The survey was conducted among first-semester students of University Technology MARA Sarawak aged 17 to 21 years. 2340 students out of 10060 diploma students completed the questionnaire. The results show that most people like to read from websites and mobile phones (Krismayani, [2022](#)).

The Book Tok trend was examined in the reading culture of the younger generation.

Due to the successful publicity of Colleen Hoover's novel, it ends with us in 2016. Various theories such as Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Platformization Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, and Participatory Culture Theory were studied. Two thematic content analyses were performed, one from the "for you" TikTok page and the other from the #itendswithus hashtag trend. Book Tok creates a digital space between like-minded people. It was found that people are likely to find more reading just by scrolling on TikTok. It was found that the most popular literary genre on TikTok is romance (Sridhar, [2021](#)).

Digital media has evolved, and without a doubt, IT technology now controls everything. The notion of digital-first. Printed books are not the best solution from a practical, economic, and even ecological viewpoint. He solves current problems through case studies and cognitive methodologies. In this article, two issues were raised: does printing books decline as a result of the digital medium, and does printing books lack certain features that the online medium has? It was found that print material is still important amid the digital revolution. Now, hybrid reading, which combines conventional and digital reading, has taken control (Yusof, [2021](#)).

Different print media platforms are overviewed. Results show that people are conducting research for books at retail prices on various digital sites. This paper also studies consumer research behaviour. A fascinating new field of study regarding e-books has developed. This paper identified a number of new innovations in pricing methods for publishers and retailers and offered the first insights into how some of these changes affected book prices. More studies are needed to understand how different sales formats (such as agency and wholesale models) affect price in general, both theoretically and empirically (Kondrateva, [2022](#)).

The readers were asked whether the "digital revolution" had changed their reading habits. According to this paper the presence of

"different ways of reading" depends on the type of material read and the use associated with the act of reading. Reading novels on an e-reader remains "thick reading" and the result is a mundane inventory of the pros and cons of digital texts. Reading news on the Internet (starting with print) supports "segmented reading" from many sources. While too much distraction can lead to addiction, it doesn't seem to cause real confusion. This research looks at how to integrate the 'audiovisual revolution' with the 'digital revolution': are we experiencing a broad return to 'oral culture'? (Amirtharaj, [2023](#))

Methodology

In this research, the quantitative method was used to collect data to understand how digitalization is impacting consumers' attitudes regarding reading. The mode of survey was used and a closed-ended questionnaire was distributed among the respondents.

Disagree.

Statistical Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistical software was also used for the Hypothesis testing.

Findings and Discussion

To Analyze the role of digital media in shaping online reading trends among youth we performed the *statistical tests* to prove our hypothesis.

Table 1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	30.615	2.491 12.290	.000		
Digital media usage	.025 .037	.313	.006	.079	

Dependent Variable: Shifting in reading trends

Sampling and Population

The population selected for this study was active consumers of digital media and somehow consumed digital content.

A sample population of 200 people 18-45 years of age were selected *via* purposive sampling to collect the data.

Research Tool

The survey included questions about demographics and close-ended questions. The results will show the percentages of people agreeing and disagreeing with a statement. The data will also be analyzed to find out how many percentages of males and females agree or disagree with a statement.

Likert response scale was included in this study which has five points, showing the rate of satisfaction of participants; *starting from Strongly Agree to Strongly*

Test of Linear Regression was run on all hypotheses to depict the relationship between the cause and effect, of Change *via* the following level of significance:

Confidence level of 95%.

The level of significance is 0.05.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: Digital media is not causing the paradigm shift in reading trends H₁: Digital media is causing the paradigm shift in reading trends

The above table shows that the p-value is 0.037 which is less than 0.05. It means that there is a strong relationship between Digital media and Paradigm shift in reading trends. It does not support our Null hypothesis. However, our alternative hypothesis is accepted which says

that digital media is causing the paradigm shift in reading trends.

H: Youth is being persuaded towards online content because of ongoing innovations regarding digitalization

Table2

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	39.941	4.029			
Innovations in Digital media	-.024	506	-.003	9.914	.000
				-.048	.028

Dependent Variable: Persuasion of Youth.

The above table depicts that the p-value is 0.02 which is less than 0.05 so, it proves that there is a significant strong relationship between the persuasion of youth towards online content and innovations regarding digitalization. As this significant relationship is positive, it means that an increase in the independent variable (innovation regarding digitalization) produces a positive change in the dependent variable (persuasion of youth towards online trends).

variety of content available, portability etc. It was also evident through our survey that those saying that digitalization will continue to shape reading trends in the future believe that it will be followed by more interactive and immersive reading experiences, greater accessibility to diverse content and increased reliance on digital platforms for reading and the decline of traditional printed material (Spjeldnæs,2022).

Discussion

The survey was taken from **124 females** and **76 males** between 18-45 years of age. Out of 200 people, almost everyone (91%) uses digital media for reading purposes. Our survey proved that most people read and enjoy both traditional and digital content equally. It also proved that the daily users of digital content think that digital media has contributed to a shift from traditional printed reading materials to online reading materials among young people (Jerasa & Boffone, 2021).

Through the responses we collected, we came to know that interest in reading is somewhat increased in people who have exposure to digital media as compared to before they started using digital media due to factors like convenience and accessibility,

Conclusion

Digitization has grown over time, Undoubtedly. It has permeated every aspect of our lives, from education to technology. The digital revolution has had a significant impact on how youth read, write, and access information. As digital technologies improve, the role of reading in education is changing. Media has altered how individuals communicate as well as how information is exchanged and received. People's reading habits have also been greatly influenced by the media and digitalization.

The importance of digital media in determining online reading tendencies among young people cannot be overstated. It has democratized literary access, made reading more comfortable, and community, and incorporated multimedia components into the

reading experience. There is little question that electronic books are simple to read, portable and conveniently accessible. Despite these beneficial changes, it is critical to recognize certain possible downsides, mainly the potential loss of the traditional reading experience. However, it is critical to address the issues that accompany this digital revolution and ensure that young readers continue to value the depth and immersion that traditional reading provides. As technology advances, the interaction between digital media and teenage reading habits will remain dynamic and fluid, affecting the future of literary consumption in unprecedented ways.

Limitations

1. First and foremost, this research work is limited to a small sample size and does not reflect the entire population.
2. There is the possibility of bias among individuals who are more willing to join due to an existing interest in digital media or online reading.
3. Data collection approaches such as questionnaires and web analytics may not cover the full range of youth reading habits.
4. Due to a lack of time to conduct this research work, the findings may not be generalizable beyond specific demographics or regions.
5. The research might fail to adjust for differences in technological availability, which may impact teenage engagement with digital mediums and online reading.
6. Finally, and most importantly, the age grouping. Individuals mature at different speeds; thus, the chosen age bracket could not accurately capture the diversity of youth.

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