

Adoption of mobile reading applications (Apps) and their influence on reading practices in Sri Lanka

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The book has historically served as a central medium for recording, transmitting, and preserving human knowledge, evolving in form and appearance in response to technological and cultural changes. In the contemporary era, however, the traditional printed book is increasingly giving way to digital platforms and mobile reading applications, prompting fundamental shifts in global publishing practices. This transformation has also affected reading cultures in Sri Lanka, where print and digital formats now coexist in complex ways. The present study examines the impact of the transition from print to digital books on Sri Lankan readers, with a focus on technological acceptance, generational differences, and the role of global platforms in shaping local practices. The research is guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). A structured questionnaire was administered to 200 respondents, aged between 10 and 60 years, who access books through online platforms. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22 and NVivo 14. For generational analysis, respondents were categorized as Generation Z (10–18), Generation Y (19–40), Generation X (41–50), and Baby Boomers (51+). Findings indicate that Baby Boomers predominantly prefer printed books, citing limited digital literacy, physical constraints, and a strong cultural attachment to the printed medium. In contrast, Generations Z and Y demonstrate hybrid reading behaviours, engaging with both print and mobile applications, with a marked preference for digital formats due to their convenience and accessibility. Generation X occupies an intermediate position, reflecting gradual adaptation to digital technologies. Notably, most Sri Lankan readers rely on foreign-developed mobile reading applications, revealing a lack of locally tailored digital publishing solutions. The study concludes that while print retains cultural and emotional significance, digital reading is reshaping reader behaviour in Sri Lanka, presenting both challenges and opportunities for publishers, educators, and policymakers.

Keywords: *Book publishing industry, Printed books, e-books, Mobile phone reading applications, Reading practice*