

## Factors affecting the apathy towards access and awareness of information in traditional newspapers among Vietnamese university students

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**Abstract:** The present research examines the contributions to the apathy of Vietnamese university students toward seeking and consuming information from traditional newspapers. Using a sample of 200 university students in Hanoi, a multivariate linear regression analysis was conducted to assess five main factors: digital preference, perceived relevance, engagement with content, lifestyle and mobility, and environmental concerns. The results indicate that all five factors have a significant influence on students' disinterest in traditional newspapers. The results suggest that the tendency of students to prefer digital access, along with the perception that newspapers are neither relevant nor engaging, has contributed to apathy toward traditional newspapers. In addition, students' mobile lifestyles and environmental concerns have likely driven them away from print media. The results of this study suggest that traditional newspapers need to adapt to the market by enhancing their digital footprint, improving relevance of content, and addressing sustainability issues. These research findings will be helpful for media practitioners as they attempt to engage younger audiences within rapidly digitizing Vietnam.

**Keywords:** *Content engagement, Digital preference, Environmental concerns, Media consumption, Traditional newspapers, Vietnamese university.*

### 1. Introduction

Driven by swift advances in digital technology as well as new cultural paradigms, shifts in the means through which we experience media are unfolding globally [1, 2]. It is noticeable that this transition is most pronounced amongst late teens and those in their 20s [3]. Maturing into one of the most important demographic segments of our economy, they increasingly dictate where society is going [4, 5]. However, there is a disturbing trend among young people in Vietnam, particularly those at university: Fewer and fewer within this demographic read a conventional print newspaper [6]. Comprehending this shift is thereby crucial not only for the survival of journalism, but also to ensure newspapers function as a support for a democratic society.

Traditionally, newspapers played an important role in fostering public opinion, boosting democratic debate, and keeping people in touch with what their government is doing [7]. But this trend towards shrinking readerships among younger people, particularly in newspapers and magazines with a generally high informational content, is a potential threat to societal levels of informational quality and broader public communication networks. Therefore, such trends raise urgent questions about the future viability of traditional newspapers in the digital age and their capacity to meet modern users' changing needs.

The Vietnamese situation is unique with respect to how their culture, economy, and technology align [6]. While studies have focused on non-Western contexts in general, there remains a large research gap in understanding what affects media use among Vietnam's youth [8]. This gap reminds us of the necessity for localised media research to be undertaken in Vietnam.

The study aims to identify and analyze factors negatively influencing traditional newspapers' information access and perceptions of relevance among university students in Vietnam. Drawing on robust multivariate linear regression analysis, this research quantitatively dissects various determinants including digital preferences, perceived content relevance and engagement levels, compatibility with the lifestyle, and environmental considerations, each of these factors being examined for its individual and cumulative impact on traditional newspaper readership.

The objectives of this research are several. First, it aims to identify specific factors that preclude this segment of the population from reading traditional newspapers. Second, it seeks to provide genuine data to publishers, academics, and politicians, which will prove useful in crafting strategies tailored to today's young people. By bridging present research gaps, this study will contribute significantly to scholarly literature about media use trends in Southeast Asia, particularly as reflected in Vietnam's rapidly changing media environment.

Furthermore, the academic import of this study has practical implications. Analysis from this research can guide rearrangements of content strategy, enhancing traditional newspapers' appeal and continuing their role as a respected information medium in life. In doing so, not only does this research serve to preserve the integrity of traditional media. It will also promote a more informed citizenry and thereby further strengthen the democratic foundations of Vietnamese society.

## 2. Literature Reviews

### 2.1. Digital Preference

The choice to read digital media and information rather than traditional newspapers is an issue critical to media studies today [9]. For younger people, it is the rise of this preference for digital media platforms that better fit's students' 'technologically enhanced habits and lifestyles, meaning that understanding this shift is important for media producers and educators, as they strive to sustain their relevance in the digital age [10].

Research shows that digital preference has helped drive the decline in traditional newspaper readers. For example, a study by Saad [11] found that 75% of university students prefer to access news on their cell phones because of its immediacy and convenience. A higher level of engagement and information retention is achieved through new media features: highlights of other research include multimedia content offered in in-depth articles and links back to related sources or information, all of which is more attractive than print media, which cannot provide this kind of 'on-the-fly' news rollout Saad [11].

Relatedly, some studies argue that the preference for digital media is not the single major cause of traditional newspaper readership's waning appeal. For instance, Yanardağoglu [12] maintains that the decreasing number of student readers who pick up newspapers is influenced equally by financial factors: the cost of buying a paper these days compared with free alternative on-line news sites that one can visit any time. Brock [13] suggests this trend is due to time pressures and a general decline in reading behaviors among which alternatives such as free digital media are available with no paywalls or interruption.

Despite research into digital media preference, the whole question of why this trend is growing among Vietnamese university students has yet to be addressed [14]. Existing work focuses mainly on people living in Western countries, and there are few comprehensive studies of factors tied to Vietnamese students' local culture, economic conditions, education, or anything else. At the same time, we need to investigate how these digital preferences correspond with outcomes and citizen participation in developing countries.

### 2.2. Perceived Relevance

The difference between digital media and traditional newspapers is a significant issue in media consumption studies, especially among youth who generally think of newspaper reading as belonging to an earlier period [15, 16]. Such a trend leads to these young people preferring digital platforms that can

make reading multimedia content comparatively easy [17]. This shift is highly significant to media producers and educators as it allows them to remain relevant in the information age [18].

Many studies support the idea that the preference for digital editions is the main reason behind the declining readership of traditional print newspapers in universities [13]. For example, among undergraduates 75 per cent now prefer reading their news online as it is both quick and convenient; another study brings this home even more emphatically [19]. Research by Johnson [20] finds that digital media is more efficient than print, the interactive features, accompanying multimedia music and added hyperlinks possessed by such platforms offer users a sense of control over their access to information - as well as making them retain it better afterward [21].

In contrast, there are studies that show that the decrease in sales of newspapers cannot be solely due to digitalisation. Tagomori, et al. [22] asserts that loneliness and an absence of financial means are the main reasons students today are reading less. Subscription prices continue to rise while young people's incomes are basically unchanged, thus the daily habit of reading newspapers disappears. This happened abruptly and left little time for adaptation or an organised response. Feather [23] corroborates this issue in her description of the neglect it received, even from editors. George [24] proposes that factors beyond the mere availability of digital news may play a more significant role in shaping this trend. Specifically, he points to time constraints, which exert pressure on individuals, or a diminished interest or capacity for engaging with additional reading materials. In his study of first-year undergraduates enrolled in general education courses, George [24] found that the majority of students rarely engage with the books assigned for their required reading. In contrast, digital newspapers, offering immediate access to information, are readily available online, often bypassing traditional means of access [21].

Despite the many studies on digital preference, what causes this phenomenon with Vietnamese university students in the first place is still unknown. Most already existing research focuses on populations in Western countries and more comprehensive studies are clearly needed to take into account specific trends and characteristics unique to Vietnamese culture, economics and education. In what follows, we will also study how these digital media preferences interact with educational or national development outcomes in order to design well-based policies accordingly.

### 2.3. Content Engagement

Lunenfeld [25] describes the emerging media ecology where the traditional print newspaper, despite its hybrid digital model, struggles to remain relevant for the upcoming generation, specifically its university students. More time than imaginable is occupied by students in potential leisure and learning time through 'browser gazing', utilizing blogs, bulletin boards, and video where the newspaper must seem irrelevant [26]. As patterns of media consumption evolve, we need to investigate how newspapers will continue to maintain the interest of university students [27].

Supporting research makes all the more urgent the need for change and there is plenty of evidence, for example, in studies like those quoted by Pérez-Escoda, et al. [28] who point to a global tendency among young people today to favor digital outlets for their interactivity and easy access. In Vietnam, again at university level, research from Pérez-Escoda, et al. [28] shows that media-consumer numbers are on the rise among those who inhabit digital realms instead of hard copy newspapers.

However, not all conclusions tally with this trend towards digital dominion. Williamson, et al. [29] point out that there are still some groups within young people who can be influenced by the facts, depth and authority provided in traditional newspapers. This suggests that whilst many young readers may find the interactive features of digital platforms fulfilling, depth and trustworthiness remain two things traditional newspapers still have to offer [30].

Despite the insights of existing research, there is an important gap: We do not yet understand which specific features or benefits in online media delivery will most effectively increase engagement with traditional newspaper content for Vietnamese university students. A broader investigation of this issue

holds the potential to offer practical insights on how best to adapt such papers to meet the tastes of their digital-native readers.

#### *2.4. Lifestyle and Mobility*

In today's fast-moving life, it is increasingly difficult for traditional newspapers to keep up with the pace of university students [31]. High-speed mobile phones, computers, and other digital devices have made conveying information far more convenient. But this state of affairs requires us to examine how traditional newspapers might change their formats to make them acceptable and portable [32].

Several supportive studies have found that the media tastes of young people are very much affected by the convenience of news consumption. One study Bhuller, et al. [33] for example, explicitly identifies mobile news consumption as having more or less entirely displaced other media in the view of young consumers who place a premium on accessing any information they want at any time they choose to. Additional support for this 'need for speed' derives from Mitchell and Holcomb [34] which shows that the global trend towards mobile news consumption is particularly marked among college-aged readers who want access to information as conveniently and quickly as possible. Furthermore, Hayton [35] research conducted in Vietnam, sees a primary demand for pace: modern students favoring news platforms that are easily accessible, and suited to a 'fast' lifestyle.

On the other hand, evidence suggests that some sections of students still appreciate the analysis and detailed coverage, such as newspapers traditionally featured. Taking Viet Nam as an example: Lan Thi Dang [36] and Mattsson [37] witnessed an ongoing trend of college-educated women among whom changes were already underway; a consensus emerged that people who were theoretically university graduates should continue to get their information from traditional newspapers on paper in much the same way as they always had done. Similar observations have been made by Fisher, et al. [38] notwithstanding that some young readers, particularly in Europe or North America, continue to wish for news reporting of traditional depth and methodology: not all students set aside convenience in favor of quality of content.

Despite such insights, there is no comprehensive understanding of how traditional newspapers can effectively become digital platforms that cater to the needs of university students. Researchers might, therefore, wish to explore the development of mobile strategies that can combine the volume of newspapers' authoritative coverage with today's young people's demand for convenience.

#### *2.5. Environmental Concerns*

A growing concern for environmental sustainability drives the generation towards digital media replacing traditional, paper-based newspapers - a trend also reflected in broader environmentally friendly consumption habits particularly as seen in the media preferences of younger audiences [39, 40]. And a body of research provides empirical backing to this trend. Zhghenti and Kapanadze [41] cited the value of environmental motivations as a significant driver for young consumers who are moving towards digital media platforms, while Hasebrink and Popp [42] found that among European university students also environmental concerns weighed heavily in their preference for digital news. Similarly, Buckingham [43] observed students selecting new media based on how much it conformed with ecological standards; and these points are borne out by data at a global level from Mitchell and Holcomb [34], who reported that concerns about the environment had led young people to forsake more traditional media for digital alternatives. In this line, other studies such as those undertaken by Buckingham [44] in the USA or Kaur, et al. [45] in India, all show a general increase towards digital media consumption because of the lower environmental costs involved compared to traditional print media.

However, in regions where digital technology is scarce, traditional newspapers are an indispensable source of information. Ahmed, et al. [46] observed that in some developing countries, the continued use of traditional print media is not because students prefer it to digital forms but wholly out of need, thus indicating a lack of decisive impact for digital media on any particular group of students.

However, despite all this variety of research, there remains a notable gap. There is no systematic research to date that observes in what ways young people's attitudes toward traditional newspapers correlate with new problems such as environmental questions and the parameters of their underlying system of values. More pin-point studies are needed to delve into the latent patterns and to reveal just how much the greening of everyday lives is making people under certain conditions turn away from traditional newspapers. Such investigations would provide practical knowledge that is applicable not only in theory but also action - to journalists, newspaper editors, marketing men or anyone else whose job it is to satisfy readers.

*Based on literature reviews, the following research hypotheses are proposed:*

Hypothesis 1: Digital preference positively and significantly affects traditional newspapers' indifference to access and awareness of information.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived relevance positively and significantly affects the indifference to access and awareness of information in traditional newspapers.

Hypothesis 3: Content engagement positively and significantly affects the indifference to access and awareness of information in traditional newspapers.

Hypothesis 4: Lifestyle and mobility positively and significantly affect the indifference to access and awareness of information in traditional newspapers.

Hypothesis 5: Environmental Concerns positively affect and significantly affect the indifference to access and awareness of information in traditional newspapers

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Instrument and Participant*

The survey was distributed to 200 university students in Hanoi in the first half of 2024. The students were randomly selected on the basis of their interaction with the media, both traditional and digital. The data collection method was through paper-based survey questionnaires. Each element pertaining to analyzing the factors contributing to indifference to traditional newspapers was carefully addressed throughout the development of understanding the rationale for the proposed study. The first survey questions were generated after an exhaustive review of literature related to digital media, youth engagement, and readers' media consumption behaviors [47]. In order to capture a wide range of responses, the survey contained both scaled items and open-ended items to allow for quantitative and qualitative input [48]. A pilot study was conducted with 30 students to assess the clarity, application, and reliability of the questions.

All research activities followed ethical standards. The students made an informed choice to participate voluntarily, knowing that they could withdraw anytime and their responses would be anonymous or known only by the researchers.

**Table 1.**  
Demographic characteristics of survey participants.

		Primary Source News					
		Digital news platforms		Social media		Traditional newspapers	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Age	over 23 years old	7	38.9%	6	33.3%	5	27.8%
	18 20 years old	31	43.7%	22	31.0%	18	25.4%
	21 23 years old	43	38.7%	35	31.5%	33	29.7%
Gender	female	50	42.7%	34	29.1%	33	28.2%
	male	31	37.3%	29	34.9%	23	27.7%
Major	Business and Economics	12	40.0%	8	26.7%	10	33.3%
	Engineering	7	36.8%	6	31.6%	6	31.6%
	Humanities and Social Sciences	29	36.7%	27	34.2%	23	29.1%
	Information Technology	7	43.8%	5	31.2%	4	25.0%
	Natural Sciences	12	37.5%	9	28.1%	11	34.4%
	Other	14	58.3%	8	33.3%	2	8.3%
Year_Study	1st Year	13	41.9%	8	25.8%	10	32.3%
	2nd Year	42	39.3%	37	34.6%	28	26.2%
	3rd Year	18	46.2%	11	28.2%	10	25.6%
	4th Year	8	34.8%	7	30.4%	8	34.8%
Reading_Newspapers	Daily	44	37.6%	37	31.6%	36	30.8%
	Several times a week	37	44.6%	26	31.3%	20	24.1%

### 3.2. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha is used to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, which sought to explore factors underlying Vietnamese university students' indifference toward traditional newspapers. Results of the reliability and validity testing for the questionnaire instrumentation are summarized in Table 2. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are greater than 0.7 for all items, which demonstrates strong evidence for each item's internal stability [49]. The validity testing for the questionnaire was established by construct validity, including exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses [49]. All items demonstrated a satisfactory level of convergent validity, indicating that the items greatly represent the same construct [50]. Discriminant validity was distinguished as each item had greater correlations with its own construct than with other constructs [49, 50]. Thus, the study has clearly established a strong level of reliability and validity when assessing factors associated with Vietnamese university students' indifference to seeking and consuming information in traditional newspapers.

**Table 2.**  
Summary of Reliability.

Scales	Number of variables observed	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
Dig_Preference	4	0.771	0.543
Per_Relevance	4	0.782	0.564
Co_Engagement	4	0.756	0.544
Life_Mobility	4	0.771	0.539
Envi_Concerns	4	0.777	0.533
Indifference	4	0.785	0.662

### 3.3. Factor analysis

Table 3 demonstrates the results of a factor analysis procedure that was beneficial in the validity procedures of the research questionnaire factors under investigation for investigating indifference among university students in Vietnam toward the use of traditional print newspapers. Again, Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated the statistical significance of the scree plot (Sig. = 0.000, confirming eigenvalue; KMO coefficient of 0.915 (>0.50), which means that observed variables were suitable in terms of correlation when conducting exploratory factor analysis. The factor loadings of all variables were 0.50 or greater, providing evidence that conducting the exploratory factor was valid. Extraction sums of squared loadings = 61.359 - the aggregate variance explained from the dimensions derived from the analysis was 61.359 % (>50%), confirming that at 6 factors as explained and derived from the constructs and factor relationships and varimax rotations [49, 51].

**Table 3.**

Result of factor analysis.

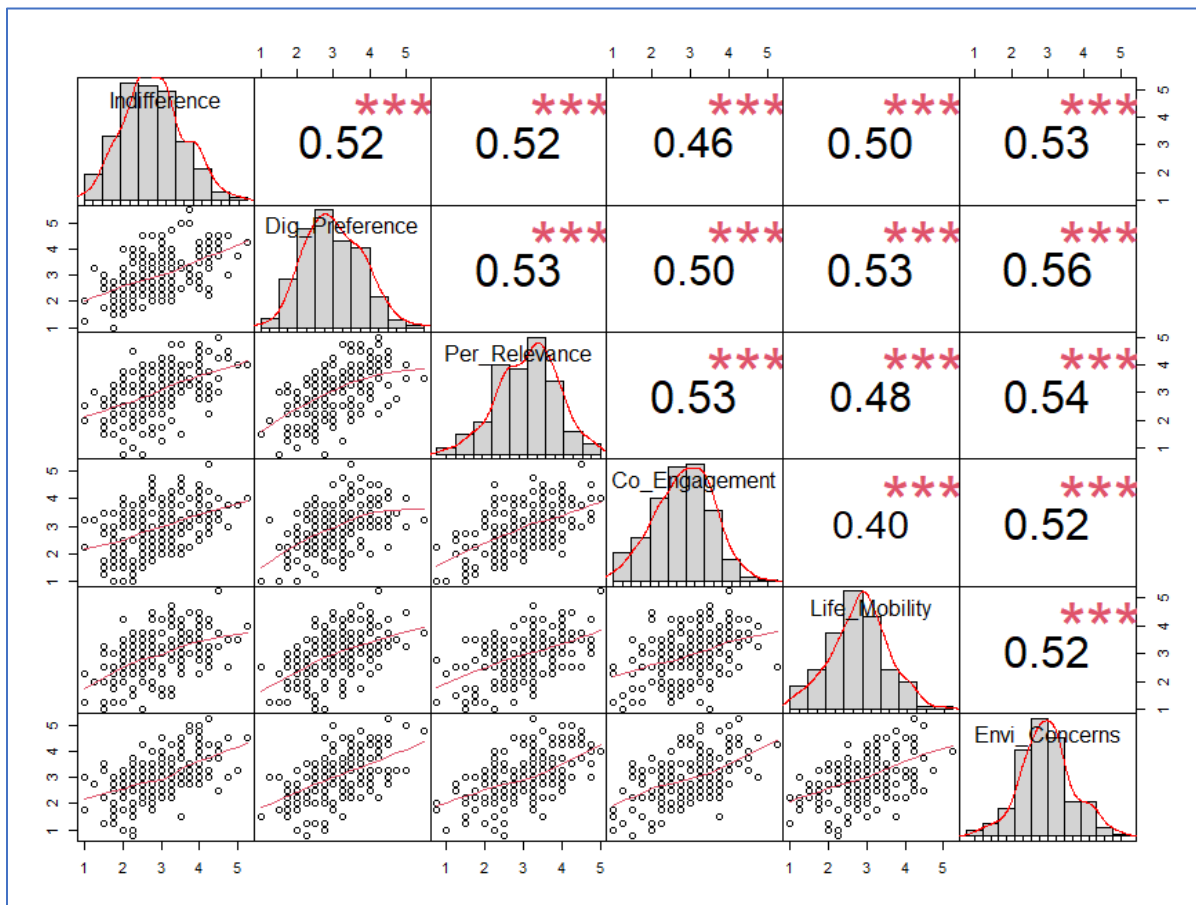
<b>Rotated Component Matrix</b>						
	<b>Component</b>					
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Indifference2	.744					
Indifference3	.722					
Indifference1	.691					
Indifference4	.605					
Envi_Concerns1		.757				
Envi_Concerns2		.671				
Envi_Concerns4		.653				
Envi_Concerns3		.559				
Life_Mobility2			.778			
Life_Mobility1			.701			
Life_Mobility4			.654			
Life_Mobility3			.645			
Per_Relevance4				.771		
Per_Relevance3				.693		
Per_Relevance2				.627		
Per_Relevance1				.618		
Dig_Preference2					.747	
Dig_Preference4					.639	
Dig_Preference3					.624	
Dig_Preference1					.618	
Co_Engagement3						.721
Co_Engagement4						.677
Co_Engagement2						.675
Co_Engagement1						.657

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 Rotation converged in 7 iterations.  
 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) = 0.915.  
 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square = 1833.668; df = 276; sig. = 0.000)  
 Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings = 61.359; Initial Eigenvalues = 1.091

### 2.4. Correlation Analysis

The findings of the correlation analysis (Figure 2), to a 95% confidence level, indicate that a correlation coefficient for variables examined was statistically significant (Sig. = 0.050). The magnitude of correlation coefficients indicates that both variables can be used in further investigations moving forward, such as multiple linear regression and variable control regression models [52]. Correlation analysis allows the exploration of the association (quantifiably) between factors impacting the indifference of Vietnamese university students to engaging with traditional newspapers. Furthermore,

the correlation coefficient is an essential aspect of this analysis in the context of determining whether the extent of the relationship between variables might represent a statistically significant relationship [53]. Through multiple linear regression and control regression, this will help clarify the factors most strongly influencing students' awareness and engagement with traditional newspapers. The multiple linear regression in the next step will delineate independent variables most likely to be associated with the dependent variable. In contrast, the control regression will account for any extraneous variables affecting this relationship [53]. Thus, this will provide an in-depth accounting in the analysis of insights leading to indifference amongst university students to traditional newspapers.



**Figure 1.**  
Correlation analysis results.

### 3.5. Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis

The results of the multivariable linear regression analysis (Table 4) indicate that the regression model is valid to explain the results, as evidenced by the statistical significance of the F-test (p.value = 0.000, df = 5.194) [49]. The model also does not have multicollinearity, as the variables in the model have a VIF of 1.436 [54]. This suggests that the variables are not highly correlated with each other, and the regression coefficients can be estimated with high precision.



**Table 4.**  
Results of multivariate linear regression analysis.

<b>Dependent variable:</b>	
<b>Indifference</b>	
<b>Model</b>	
Dig_Preference	0.180** (0.076)
Per_Relevance	0.172** (0.072)
Co_Engagement	0.117*** (0.071)
Life_Mobility	0.157** (0.072)
Envi_Concerns	0.230*** (0.075)
Constant	0.370* (0.219)
Observations	200
R2	0.425
Adjusted R2	0.410
Residual Std. Error	0.630 (df = 194)
F Statistic	28.650*** (df = 5, 194)
VIF:	Dig_Preference = 1.812, Per_Relevance = 1.773, Co_Engagement = 1.624, Life_Mobility = 1.600, Envi_Concerns = 1.845

**Note:** \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## 4. Results

The multiple linear regression analysis conducted for this study reveals a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the indifference of Vietnamese university students toward accessing and being aware of information in traditional newspapers. The analysis demonstrates that digital preference, perceived relevance, content engagement, lifestyle and mobility, and environmental concerns are key variables significantly affecting this indifference, each contributing to a nuanced understanding of changing media consumption habits among university students.

Firstly, the analysis (Table 4) indicated that digital preference has a positive and statistically significant effect on the indifference to traditional newspapers. The regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.180$ ) was significant at the 95% confidence level (p.value = 0.001). This suggests that students who prefer digital media over traditional formats are more likely to display indifference toward newspapers. The ease of access, interactivity, and personalized content that digital platforms offer may explain why students gravitate toward them, reducing the perceived need for traditional newspapers [9, 55]. This result supports Hypothesis 1, indicating that the digital consumption habits of students play a critical role in their disengagement with traditional media.

Secondly, perceived relevance was found to be another significant factor affecting indifference to traditional newspapers, with a regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.172$  and a p.value of 0.001. This finding suggests that students who perceive traditional newspapers as less relevant to their daily lives are more indifferent to accessing them. In the context of rapid technological advancements and the evolving information ecosystem, students may perceive traditional newspapers as outdated or disconnected from their contemporary interests and academic or social needs [15, 16]. Thus, this result validates Hypothesis 2, reinforcing the idea that the perceived relevance of content is a crucial determinant of media consumption choices among students.

The results also demonstrate that content engagement positively and significantly influences the indifference to traditional newspapers, as evidenced by a regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.117$  and a p.value of 0.000. This implies that students who are less engaged with the content in traditional newspapers are more likely to exhibit indifference toward them. Engagement here refers not only to the depth of interaction with the content but also to how well the content aligns with students' interests, preferences, and reading habits [30]. Given that digital media often provide more engaging, multimedia content, traditional newspapers may struggle to capture the attention of younger readers, who may find them less interactive and less stimulating [28]. This result confirms Hypothesis 3, highlighting the critical role of content engagement in determining students' attitudes toward different media platforms.

Additionally, lifestyle and mobility emerged as a significant predictor of indifference, with a regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.157$  and a p.value of 0.001. This result suggests that the busy and mobile lifestyles of university students may contribute to their indifference toward traditional newspapers. As students increasingly lead fast-paced lives, they may find digital platforms more convenient, allowing them to access news on-the-go via mobile devices, rather than committing time to reading printed newspapers [32]. Traditional newspapers, being less portable and often less immediate in delivering news, may be seen as incompatible with the mobile and dynamic lifestyles of students [38]. This finding supports Hypothesis 4, emphasizing the growing influence of lifestyle factors on media consumption patterns.

Finally, environmental concerns were found to have the strongest positive influence on indifference to traditional newspapers, with a regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.230$  and a p.value of 0.000. This result indicates that students who are concerned about environmental issues, such as the ecological impact of paper production and waste, are more likely to be indifferent to traditional newspapers. In the context of increasing awareness about sustainability and the environment, it is plausible that students view digital media as a more environmentally friendly alternative, contributing to their declining interest in print media [34, 46]. This finding supports Hypothesis 5 and underscores the significance of environmental values in shaping media consumption behaviors, particularly among younger generations who are increasingly attuned to global sustainability challenges.

In conclusion, the multiple linear regression analysis confirms that all five hypotheses are supported, demonstrating that digital preference, perceived relevance, content engagement, lifestyle and mobility, and environmental concerns significantly influence Vietnamese university students' indifference to accessing and engaging with information in traditional newspapers. These results offer valuable insights into the shifting media consumption habits among students and provide a foundation for further exploration into how traditional newspapers might adapt to better engage the interest of younger audiences. The findings suggest that without significant adaptation to digital trends, content relevancy, and environmental consciousness, traditional newspapers will continue to face challenges in attracting the university student demographic.

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the factors that contribute to the indifference of undergraduate university students from Vietnam in reading and engaging with information in print newspapers. The results of multiple linear regression analyses revealed significant relationships between several aspects used in this study. Namely, digital preference, relevancy of content, content engagement, lifestyle & mobility and environmental considerations all showed significant positive relationships with indifference. These results expand previous findings from the literature for deeper and more affordable understanding in a specific institutional and media context.

The benefit that digital preference has on indifference to print newspapers shows a common condition in media engagement and consumption, particularly with younger generations. Various previous studies have established an increased level of acceptance and embrace for people to use and access news in a digital format (news, daily information, and other productive means of engagement...) for some amount of time in comparison to print media sources - simply put - the convenience, speed and interactiveness involved was executed through newer digital sources of media engagement and interaction [47]. The purpose of this study reinforces that Students United in Vietnam (Vietnam University students to be precise) are no different; in fact, students have a far greater degree of digital preference as compared to print formats. Considering the findings, digital preference was closely associated with almost no engagement whatsoever with print newspapers as an example - supporting previous studies that push for a better understanding of the relation between individuals (today's generation, college students) digital acceptance of their news and accessing reports considering their given context and lived experience [56]. The case here, with regard to print newspapers, is the suggestion to attract, consider and replace an idea of retention and think, based on what will attract a

college-aged audience, and recruit (draw them in) in order for them to engage. As found in this research, the priority focus will have to be on digital development of the organization and more consideration of the constructed environment of student's lived experience, and the directional change occurring in their engagement in media consumption [57].

Understanding relevancy and news interests perceived relevancy pertains to student indifference to print newspapers since, as noted in previous studies, media has to contain content that feels relevant to the audience's life, combined with students' perennially limited attention to their interests [58]. In this study that was underwritten, we conclude that when students (the stakeholders above) do not feel an element of relevancy (relating to their life experiences) to what the printed content proposes, they act and express indifference. When the context is based on everyday experiences, and time is given towards those priorities, the students systematically prioritize whatever they perceived, designed, ran, operated towards navigating sometimes immediate, efficient, timely, and indiscernibly relevant content (students' words, as opposed to content they "picked" just because, it adds one more product on top of, adding to an already stacked backload of days of daily walking through life) [58]. This indicates, as suggested previously, that traditional newspapers must change their content method and type in order to cover topics that are increasingly relevant or more relevant to a younger readership or purposely written to appeal to this demographic market.

Findings around content engagement also lend support to the notion that interactivity and relevancy are factors (or priorities) of capturing readership attention and perhaps retention. Ashley and Tuten [59] along with other studies, addressed media consumption and observed similar methods, determining that the more engaging and interactive the content was, the more engaged and 'captured' the readership found it to be. For university students, it was noted that traditional newspapers lacked engagement when compared to digital newspapers that involved highlighted multimedia components, social sharing components, and a more recent extended time component (immediacy) [60]. This corroborates studies suggesting that static forms of presentation in a print medium will attract younger audiences who are accustomed to a more dynamic and interactive society given to each facet of digital media [61]. For traditional newspapers, increasing content engagement (by possibly increasing online space or by adding interactive articles, video, and multimedia) has become a core respective function due to this growing sense of indifference [62].

The influence of lifestyle, as well as mobility factors associated with students, on media consumption practices relates to students' preferences for convenience. Prior studies also suggested that modern consumers, especially university students, integrate convenient media experiences that chime with their fast-paced mobile lifestyle [27]. The findings of this study reaffirm that traditional print newspapers, while good, are not as easily accessible 'on the go' through mobile applications as those that are accessible 'live' online [63]. Such findings suggests an inconvenience, or incompatibility, for young digital consumers, based on their idea of 'convenience', that routinely challenges traditional newspapers' ability to compete on relevance [64]. If traditional newspapers wish to sustain their role as news providers, there will need to be new forms of flexible and convenient access to news, (either or both from and/or involving the development of the app/mobile access) that meets the demands of these young, mobile consumers [64].

A notable finding of this study suggests that environmental concerns related to sustainability influence students' indifference toward reading traditional newspapers [65]. This finding aligns with qualitative studies that suggest an uptick in young people's interests towards sustainability related values where reading choices can be involved [66]. Students who are mindful of sustainability concerns related to environmental considerations likely reason about the realistic environmental costs of consuming or produced paper/material waste associated with traditional newspapers and therefore may presume avoiding print media in favor of a digital alternative [39]. This finding has implications for any media that still relies on paper, suggesting that this 'print-based' sector may need to look at options to address sustainability concerns, through utilizing recycled materials in traditional newspapers, or distributing digital subscriptions rather than delivering 'newsprint'.

Implications of the findings overall, the study findings provided a host of important exploitations. First, we established that traditional newspapers facing considerable challenges retaining a younger readerships unless they adapt to and expand into, the preferred habits, norms, and values of the digital generation [38]. In media organizations generally, there continues to be a push to enhance the digital experience, relevance and engagement of the content, and values related to sustainable practices and changes in the media ecosystem [67]. Second, the findings in the study appear to illuminate the need for media organizations to look at audience segmentation as younger consumers may have differing values than older generations [68]. Finally, if newspapers need to remain, or be relevant to compete in the digital economy, this study suggests they need to innovate both product and delivery. In summation, results from the current study shed some insight into the elements affecting apathy among Vietnamese university students toward traditional newspapers.

Digital preference, perceived relevance, content engagement, lifestyle/mobility, and concern for the environment are identified as significant contributors to student apathy, and these factors affect attitude. These findings reaffirm the conventional trend identified with media consumption and may afford traditional newspapers an opportunity to change to become relevant to younger audiences, university students in the current instance. Considering these classrooms could provide the opportunity for traditional newspapers to reconnect with students taking university classes that value newspapers as credible information sources.

## 6. Conclusion

Concerning understanding and engaging with traditional newspapers, this research has provided insight into these behaviors with university-age students in Vietnam. This research is valuable in understanding the emergent generations' media consumption habits in a fast-evolving, engaged society like Vietnam. In order to understand the emerging media consumption behaviors, media entities, policymakers, and educators need to understand the emergent media consumption behaviors to then engage the young consumer.

Given the Vietnam context, where traditional media is still present and plays an important part in informing the public, the findings are of much surprise and indicate growing issues for the relevance of print newspapers to young or perhaps first time consumers. As Vietnam becomes more digitized, engagement with and access to information needs to adapt to meet newly emergent consumer behaviors that are becoming more digitized in order to have a continued semantic engagement with media. This study addresses the very limited research on youth media consumption in Vietnam specifically in relation to traditional newspapers, and provides a richer understanding of media literacy to practitioners of media and media psychologists. This research intends to address a gap in current literature and understand what the underlying factors of university student indifference to print newspapers. It focused on one primary purpose identifying the determinants through a structured approach - Identifying other trends and issues for the determination of digital preference, perceived relevancy, engagement with the content, lifestyle and mobility and environmental issues and students disengagement from print materials. The research also assessed the complex nature of behaviors - the multivariate linear regression allowed for exploration of the outcomes based on what factors and the relationship with consumption practices and ultimately students indifference.

This research provides evidence for all five hypotheses for identifying digital preferences, perceptions of relevance, content engagement, lifestyle and mobility, and environmental consideration play a role in students' inactions to read traditional newspapers. There are meaningful ramifications for Vietnam's media industry where traditional newspapers should make changes toward the digital life, where their newspapers cater more towards the values and practices of the younger generation, along with considerations of sustainability. With that being said, there are limitations to this study. This preliminary research did not extend to the participants sampled beyond university students from the capital city of Hanoi, Vietnam, which is a more restrictive population of university students to represent students across the demographic and education population of Vietnam. Future research

should expand to university student participants outside of Hanoi and engage with other relevant influences such as socioeconomic level or field of study, as well as factor differences in media practice.

This research focused exclusively on traditional newspapers and research relating to university students, and engagement of other types of traditional media that exist without digital forms of engagement would be beneficial to explore for future research focus. For example, engagement with or reading of television or radio news is just one idea for expansion of the research focus to include university students. Lastly, another consideration for future research could be identifying media engagement by specific forms of content for media engagement to clarify if students engage different forms of media from specific types of traditional versus digital media (i.e. political type news versus entertainment type media). Future research could also explore tracking the patterns of consumption students develop and how they change over time in relation to consumption, risk, and media influences, not just on student motivations but also on what digital platforms have changed their engagement habits as the digital world continues to develop as a socializing tool.

Finally, qualitative research could enhance some depth of understanding of students' motivations or beliefs toward some specific form of media. Ultimately, this research has contributed to an understanding of the dynamic shifts of how student engagement in relation to consumption of media, has become greater since the pandemic. By documenting and understanding the most salient factors leading to the feelings of indifference toward newspapers brings new and valuable discussions into the future of news coverage in the media industry. Supporting the need for the media industry to make changes in order to not fall behind in a technological world. However, with the support of the previous recommendations, this study contextualizes the need for ongoing research and innovation to engage the next generations as traditional media is adopted in relation to the next generations of society.

### Transparency:

The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

Your profile: *Please select ONE answer from each statement that best describes you.*

Age:

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 21-23
- ☐ 24-26
- ☐ 27 or above

Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Major/Area of Study:

- ☐ Business and Economics
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Humanities and Social Sciences
- ☐ Natural Sciences
- ☐ Information Technology
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Study:

- ☐ 1st Year
- ☐ 2nd Year
- ☐ 3rd Year
- ☐ 4th Year
- ☐ 5th Year or above



## Frequency of Reading Newspapers:

- ☐ Daily  
☐ Several times a week  
☐ Once a week  
☐ Less than once a week  
☐ Never

## Primary Source of News:

- ☐ Traditional newspapers  
☐ Digital news platforms (websites, apps)  
☐ Social media  
☐ Television  
☐ Radio  
☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_:

This survey aims to identify the factors affecting Vietnamese university students' indifference to access and awareness of information in traditional newspapers. On this scale, there is no correct or incorrect response. Instead, mark the number that best represents your viewpoint on each survey topic on a scale of 1 to 5, as shown.

Dig_Preference	Digital Preference					
Dig_Preference1	I prefer to receive news updates through digital platforms rather than traditional newspapers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Dig_Preference2	Digital news sources are more convenient for accessing up-to-date information.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Dig_Preference3	I use digital news apps or websites daily.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Dig_Preference4	The availability of multimedia content (videos, interactive graphics) makes digital news more appealing to me than traditional newspapers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Per_Relevance	Perceived Relevance					
Per_Relevance1	The content in traditional newspapers is relevant to my daily life and interests.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Per_Relevance2	Traditional newspapers provide information that I cannot find on digital platforms.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Per_Relevance3	The topics covered in traditional newspapers reflect my current need for information.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Per_Relevance4	Traditional newspapers keep up with the issues important to young people today.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Co_Engagement	Content Engagement					
Co_Engagement1	Traditional newspapers engage me with their depth of reporting.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Co_Engagement2	I find the stories in traditional newspapers compelling and thought-provoking.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Co_Engagement3	I am likely to discuss articles from traditional newspapers with my peers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Co_Engagement4	The quality of writing in traditional newspapers holds my attention.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Life_Mobility	Lifestyle and Mobility					
Life_Mobility1	My lifestyle requires news sources that I can access from anywhere at any time.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

<i>Life_Mobility2</i>	I frequently read news on mobile devices while commuting or in between activities.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Life_Mobility3</i>	Convenience is a critical factor in choosing where to get my news.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Life_Mobility4</i>	I prefer news sources I can quickly check multiple times throughout the day.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Envi_Concerns	Environmental Concerns					
<i>Envi_Concerns1</i>	I choose digital news over traditional newspapers to reduce paper waste.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Envi_Concerns2</i>	My concerns about environmental sustainability influence my decision to avoid traditional newspapers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Envi_Concerns3</i>	I actively look for environmentally friendly news sources.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Envi_Concerns4</i>	The sustainability practices of a news source are important to my choice of media.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Indifference	Indifference to access and awareness of information in traditional newspapers					
<i>Indifference1</i>	I seldom feel motivated to pick up a traditional newspaper to find information.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Indifference2</i>	I am indifferent to whether I receive news from a traditional newspaper or not.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Indifference3</i>	Accessing traditional newspapers does not fit conveniently into my daily routine.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Indifference4</i>	I rarely consider traditional newspapers as a primary source of news.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

*Thanks for participating!*