# Non-English Majored Students' Attitudes Toward Developing Digital Reading Practices on Online Newspaper Websites

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to explore Vietnamese accounting students' attitudes toward using online newspaper websites to develop digital reading practices. Based on Sudiran's (2015) framework, the research employed a mixed-methods approach by using questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The results indicated that students generally had positive attitudes toward online newspaper websites, particularly regarding their academic benefits, such as improving reading skills and enhancing academic performance. However, students showed varied preferences for usage frequency, with a preference for weekly access rather than daily use. While students acknowledged the role of online newspapers in communication and information retrieval, challenges related to digital literacy and user confidence were highlighted. The study suggests that online newspapers have potential as educational tools but that efforts to improve digital literacy and platform accessibility are needed to increase student engagement. The findings provided valuable insights into the nuanced views of students, which have important implications for both educators and developers seeking to integrate digital tools into learning environments.

*Keywords:* *Vietnamese students' attitudes, online newspaper websites, digital reading practices, Accounting*

## INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the way students engage with reading materials has dramatically shifted. Traditional paper-based texts are increasingly being supplemented or replaced by digital content, including online newspapers. The use of online newspaper websites has gained prominence as a platform for accessing current events, developing critical thinking, and honing reading skills. As digital literacy becomes increasingly vital, it is essential to understand how students, particularly in the context of language classrooms, engage with these resources (Quyen & Nguyen, 2025).

In Viet Nam, where the integration of digital tools into educational settings is still developing, understanding students' attitudes toward online reading platforms is crucial (Chanh, 2021a, 2021b). The role of these platforms in enhancing reading skills in Vietnamese language classrooms remains an area that warrants further investigation (Chanh, 2023). Accounting students, in particular, often require both discipline-specific reading materials and general reading practice, making them an interesting group for this study. While many studies have explored the use of digital tools in education, there is a gap in research specifically addressing students' attitudes toward the use of online newspaper websites for developing reading skills.

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This study aims to explore the attitudes of Vietnamese accounting students toward online newspaper websites as tools for developing reading skills in a language classroom setting. Additionally, it seeks to identify the factors that influence these attitudes. Understanding these factors can provide valuable insights into how online platforms can be effectively incorporated into language education to promote reading proficiency, digital literacy, and engagement with contemporary global issues.

By addressing these questions, the study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital reading practices in educational contexts and offer practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and developers of digital educational resources. Ultimately, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Vietnamese students perceive and interact with digital reading tools, particularly in the form of online newspapers, and how these perceptions can shape future educational practices in Viet Nam.

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are students' attitudes of online newspaper websites in developing digital reading practices in a Vietnamese language classroom context?

2. What factors influence students' attitudes of online newspaper websites in developing digital reading practices in a Vietnamese language classroom context?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Digital Reading Habits and Skills Development

With the advent of digital technology, students' reading habits have shifted significantly. Many studies suggest that digital texts, including online newspaper websites, have a transformative effect on students' reading practices, especially in developing language and comprehension skills.

Oh, Krish, and Hamat (2022) explored how smartphones shape reading habits in EFL students in Malaysia. Their study found that students developed flexible reading habits, such as using skimming and scanning techniques, and they preferred shorter, more engaging texts. These behaviors align with trends observed among students engaging with online resources, where lengthy texts are often avoided. Similarly, Nguyen and Tuamsuk (2023) found that access to digital reading materials in Vietnamese universities greatly influenced students' reading practices. The availability of digital resources, such as online newspapers, can enhance students' ability to develop reading comprehension skills, as these resources provide a variety of topics that engage students' interests.

Moreover, Robbani and Khoirotunnisa (2021) examined how digital comics could enhance students' reading comprehension and critical thinking. Their findings suggest that online reading materials, even in non-traditional formats like comics, can support skills such as vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and creative thinking. These benefits likely extend to other forms of digital reading, such as online newspapers, which could play a similar role in enhancing students' reading abilities, including those of Vietnamese accounting students.

### Factors Influencing Digital Reading Engagement

The factors that influence students' engagement with digital reading materials, particularly online newspaper websites, have been extensively explored. These factors include the availability of digital devices, students' prior knowledge, and the support provided by educational institutions.

Kiili et al. (2024) examined the role of students' prior knowledge and reading comprehension skills in evaluating online texts' credibility. This highlights that students' cognitive abilities are crucial when engaging with digital materials. The quality of the reading experience is enhanced when students have strong reading comprehension skills and are able to critically assess the content they engage with. This is particularly relevant for Vietnamese accounting students, who may need to evaluate the credibility of financial news or articles when using online newspaper websites.

Furthermore, Abang Yusof (2021) found that students in Malaysia preferred to read online materials, especially on mobile devices, over traditional print sources. This preference for digital platforms is mirrored in other regions, including Viet Nam, where students increasingly choose online resources, such as newspaper websites, over printed texts. Nguyen and Tuamsuk (2023) also found that the support provided by universities and lecturers in fostering digital reading environments plays a significant role in students' engagement with digital texts. Thus, the institutional support in Viet Nam for digital reading, including online newspapers, could positively influence students' attitudes and behaviors towards using these resources to enhance their reading skills.

**Challenges in Digital Reading Practices**

While digital reading presents many opportunities for enhancing reading skills, it also introduces challenges that can impede students' ability to engage deeply with the material. Distractions, the need for multitasking, and difficulties in evaluating the credibility of digital content are significant concerns.

Liu et al. (2021) highlighted how social media addiction negatively affects students' reading concentration and the depth of their reading. In the context of online newspaper websites, students might be easily distracted by social media links, advertisements, or pop-up notifications. This finding emphasizes the need for students to develop strategies to mitigate these distractions when using online platforms for academic purposes.

Coiro (2021) argues that digital reading is a multifaceted activity that requires students to be not only literate in traditional reading skills but also proficient in navigating digital texts, evaluating credibility, and managing digital environments. The ability to shift between different reading strategies is crucial in digital spaces, where text structures and formats vary. For Vietnamese accounting students, the ability to critically assess the credibility of online news sources, especially those related to financial matters, is particularly important. This highlights a significant challenge: ensuring students have the skills to navigate and engage with complex digital texts effectively.

Additionally, Spjeldnæs and Karlsen (2024) found that e-books and audiobooks, although popular, often promote lighter reading and multitasking behaviors, which can detract from the depth of reading. This trend may be mirrored in students' interactions with online newspapers, where students may read headlines or summaries rather than full articles, potentially limiting their comprehension and deeper engagement with the material.

Despite the growing body of research on digital reading habits and practices, several key gaps remain in the literature. First, while studies have examined the general impact of digital reading on students' reading skills, there is limited focus on specific student populations, such as accounting students, who may engage with digital texts in a specialized context (e.g., financial news). Additionally, while research has explored the influence of smartphones and social media on reading habits, less attention has been paid to how students navigate these distractions when using specific online resources like newspaper websites. Furthermore, existing studies often focus on general reading comprehension and cognitive skills but fail to examine how students critically assess and engage with the credibility of digital content, especially in academic contexts. Finally, while institutional support has been acknowledged as an influential factor, more research is needed to understand how different educational settings, particularly in Viet Nam, integrate and support digital reading practices, including the use of online newspaper websites, in fostering students' academic success. These gaps point to the need for more focused research on the specific reading behaviors, skills, and challenges faced by students in specialized fields, like accounting, when engaging with digital texts.

**METHODS**

### Research design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches to explore Vietnamese accounting students' attitudes toward online newspaper websites and the factors influencing their digital reading practices. A combination of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews was employed, drawing on Sudiran's (2015) framework for understanding reading habits and attitudes in digital environments.

### Research participants

The participants in this study were Vietnamese accounting students enrolled in undergraduate programs at a university in Viet Nam. A total of 350 students were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that participants had experience with digital reading, specifically online newspaper websites. The sample was diverse in terms of gender, age, and academic year to provide a comprehensive view of student attitudes and practices.

### Data collection

A structured questionnaire was administered to gather quantitative data on students' attitudes toward online newspaper websites and their digital reading habits. The questionnaire was designed based on Sudiran's (2015) framework, which included sections on students' frequency of use, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and overall attitude toward digital reading materials. It also explored factors that influenced students' reading behaviors, including personal preferences, technological accessibility, and the role of social media in shaping reading choices. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and Likert-scale questions, allowing for the measurement of students' attitudes on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was distributed online to all participants through a university-based platform, and students were given one week to complete it. A total of 350 completed responses were expected, providing a strong dataset for analysis.

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 participants who were selected from the original pool of questionnaire respondents. The selection was based on the diversity of responses in the questionnaire, ensuring a variety of perspectives on digital reading habits. The semi-structured interview protocol was designed to delve deeper into the participants' personal experiences, attitudes, and challenges related to using online newspaper websites. The questions were open-ended, allowing participants to express their thoughts and opinions freely. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted in person or via video conferencing platforms. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

### Data analysis

The responses from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, including correlation and regression analysis, to explore the relationships between students' attitudes toward digital reading and the factors influencing these attitudes. SPSS software was used for statistical analysis. The Likert-scale responses were coded and analyzed to identify patterns in students' reading habits, perceived usefulness, and the influence of technology on their learning.

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis was applied to identify common themes and patterns in the responses. Using Sudiran's (2015) framework as a guiding tool, the data were coded and categorized into major themes, such as students' perceived benefits and challenges of online newspaper reading, their strategies for managing distractions, and their views on how digital texts impacted reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

## RESULTS

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed to explore Vietnamese accounting students' attitudes toward online newspaper websites. The data revealed a range of attitudes, with some participants showing strong agreement with the benefits of using these platforms, while others were less enthusiastic, as illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1. Students'' Attitudes towards Online Newspaper Websites**

| No. | Items | Min | Max | Mean | SD |
|-----|-------|-----|-----|------|-----|
| 1 | I feel more excited in using the online newspaper websites. | 1 | 5 | 2.99 | .94 |
| 2 | I like to use the online newspaper websites from home. | 1 | 5 | 1.99 | .89 |
| 3 | I believe using the online newspaper websites is worthwhile. | 1 | 5 | 4.09 | .88 |
| 4 | The online newspaper websites help me to find information. | 2 | 5 | 3.67 | .94 |
| 5 | I believe the online newspaper websites makes communication easier. | 1 | 5 | 4.00 | .93 |
| 6 | The online newspaper websites are helpful to understand online information. | 1 | 5 | 2.84 | 1.11 |
| 7 | I believe the online newspaper websites have potential as a learning tool. | 2 | 5 | 3.79 | 1.18 |
| 8 | The online newspaper websites can offer online learning activities. | 1 | 5 | 3.02 | 1.22 |
| 9 | Learning how to use the online newspaper websites is worthwhile | 1 | 5 | 2.77 | .92 |
| 10 | Learning the online newspaper websites enhances academic performance. | 1 | 5 | 4.47 | .95 |
| 11 | The online newspaper websites are important to access information. | 1 | 5 | 4.23 | .99 |
| 12 | The online newspaper websites are essential to access reading materials. | 1 | 5 | 3.45 | .97 |
| 13 | The online newspaper websites are important to improve reading skills. | 2 | 5 | 3.09 | .82 |

| 14 | The online newspaper websites are very important to learn reading. | 1 | 5 | 1.99 | .86 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | The online newspaper websites are important to solve reading problems. | 1 | 5 | 3.49 | .96 |
| 16 | The online newspaper websites are important to increase knowledge. | 1 | 5 | 3.67 | .86 |
| 17 | The online newspaper websites are essential to promote creativity. | 1 | 5 | 2.99 | 1.01 |
| 18 | Students should often access the online newspaper websites. | 1 | 5 | 4.25 | 1.23 |
| 19 | Students should access the online newspaper websites two hours a day. | 1 | 5 | 3.08 | 1.22 |
| 20 | Students should access the online newspaper websites once in a week. | 1 | 5 | 4.01 | .93 |
| 21 | I feel confident using the online newspaper websites. | 1 | 5 | 2.79 | .88 |
| 22 | I like to use the Internet-based learning media websites from home. | 2 | 5 | 3.00 | .97 |
| 23 | I believe using the online newspaper websites is worthwhile. | 1 | 5 | 4.34 | .95 |
| 24 | The online newspaper websites help me to find information. | 1 | 5 | 2.93 | .91 |
| 25 | I believe the online newspaper websites make communication easier. | 1 | 5 | 3.00 | .99 |

**Overall Attitudes toward Online Newspaper Websites**

The majority of students expressed a positive attitude toward the usefulness of online newspaper websites. The highest mean score was observed for the statement regarding the value of using online newspaper websites, with a mean score of 4.09 (S3: "I believe using the online newspaper websites is worthwhile"), indicating that students generally saw value in using these platforms. Similarly, students appreciated the role of online newspapers in enhancing communication, as reflected in the high mean score of 4.00 (S5: "I believe the online newspaper websites makes communication easier").

S14 pointed out: "I think online newspapers are useful for getting news, but I don't always feel excited to use them. I mostly use them to get information quickly." This sentiment aligns with the relatively neutral response to S1: "I feel more excited in using the online newspaper websites," with a mean score of 2.99, showing that excitement about using online newspapers was not particularly strong.

S9 mentioned: "Online newspapers help me get information fast, and I think they are good for communication. But, I don't really enjoy using them that much," which is reflected in the lower excitement score.

**Perceived Importance and Academic Usefulness**

Students rated the academic utility of online newspaper websites highly. The item related to the enhancement of academic performance received a particularly high mean score of 4.47 (S10: "Learning the online newspaper websites enhances academic performance"), suggesting that students believed using online newspapers had a positive impact on their academic performance. Furthermore, students recognized the role of online newspapers in information retrieval and skill development, as evidenced by the strong ratings regarding their importance for accessing information, with a mean score of 4.23 (S11: "The online newspaper websites are important to access information") and improving reading skills, with a mean score of 3.09 (S13: "The online newspaper websites are important to improve reading skills").

S5 stated: "I think online newspapers are helpful for schoolwork. I can find information for my assignments and learn about topics I need."

S4 shared: "Online newspapers help me with my studies because I can get information quickly. But, I still need books or other sources for more details."

**Usage Frequency and Access Preferences**

When it came to the frequency of use, students showed varying preferences. While students generally agreed with the idea of frequent use, they did not generally support intensive daily use. For example, the mean score for S19 ("Students should access the online newspaper websites two hours a day") was 3.08, indicating less support for prolonged daily use. However, they were more comfortable with the idea of accessing online newspaper websites on a weekly basis, with a mean score of 4.01 for S20 ("Students should access the online newspaper websites once a week"), indicating a preference for occasional use rather than frequent, long-duration sessions.

S2 stated: "I don't think we need to use online newspapers every day. I prefer to check them once a week when I need some information."

S11 highlighted: "It's good to read online newspapers, but not every day. Once a week is enough for me to get the news."

**Perceived Challenges and Limitations**

Despite the generally positive attitudes, some items revealed challenges and limitations in the students' perceptions of online newspapers. Excitement about using online newspaper websites was rated relatively neutral (mean score 2.99 for S1), indicating that students did not feel particularly enthusiastic about using these platforms. Similarly, while students did not strongly associate online newspapers with fostering creativity, with a mean score of 2.99 (S17: "The online newspaper websites are essential to promote creativity"), they were less confident in their ability to navigate these platforms effectively. This was reflected in their lower self-assurance regarding their skills in using online newspaper websites, with a mean score of 2.79 (S21: "I feel confident using the online newspaper websites").

S7 shared: "I don't always feel excited about using online newspapers. Sometimes, I find it hard to use the websites because they are not easy to navigate."

S4 pointed out: "I think online newspapers are useful, but I don't feel very confident using them. I find it hard to use them well sometimes."

**General Perceptions of Digital Learning**

Students generally believed in the potential of online newspaper websites as learning tools, though the extent to which they felt these platforms helped them understand online information was somewhat less certain. The statement regarding the online newspaper websites' ability to help students understand online information received a mean score of 2.84 (S6: "The online newspaper websites are helpful to understand online information"), which suggests that while students recognized the utility of online newspapers for information retrieval, they were less confident in their effectiveness for deep comprehension.

S13 shared: "I think online newspapers can be helpful for learning, but sometimes it is hard to understand everything. They are good for finding basic information."

S6 mentioned: "They are useful for getting quick information, but I don't always understand everything. I prefer using other resources for more detail."

## Discussion

The results of this study provide insights into students' perceptions of online newspaper websites, with a generally positive outlook regarding their academic value and usefulness for communication. However, certain challenges were identified that may hinder students' engagement with these platforms. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have explored students' digital reading habits and behaviors in various contexts.

### Overall Attitudes toward Online Newspaper Websites

The majority of students expressed a positive attitude toward the usefulness of online newspaper websites. This finding aligns with previous studies, such as those by Oh, Krish, and Hamat (2022), which demonstrated how digital reading, particularly on smartphones, is perceived as an important tool for enhancing reading skills and academic achievement. Students in this study generally viewed online newspapers as valuable, particularly in terms of accessing relevant information and communication. This corresponds with findings by Kiili et al. (2024), who noted that online texts serve as important resources for reading comprehension and that prior knowledge plays a key role in shaping students' ability to evaluate the credibility and usefulness of digital materials. While students recognized the value of these websites, some students expressed neutral feelings about their excitement in using them, suggesting a lack of enthusiasm despite their perceived usefulness.

### Perceived Importance and Academic Usefulness

Students highly rated the academic utility of online newspaper websites, especially regarding their contribution to improving academic performance. The high mean score for the item suggesting that using online newspapers enhances academic performance aligns with Kiili et al. (2024), who emphasized that digital texts, when used effectively, can significantly impact reading comprehension and critical thinking. Furthermore, the students in this study recognized the role of online newspapers in skill development, particularly in terms of improving reading skills and accessing information. This finding supports the work of Abang Yusof (2021), which highlighted how students' engagement with digital reading materials can contribute to the enhancement of academic knowledge and abilities, including reading comprehension and information retrieval skills.

### Usage Frequency and Access Preferences

When it comes to frequency of use, students in this study demonstrated varying preferences, with a majority expressing comfort in accessing online newspapers weekly, rather than engaging with them daily. This suggests that students preferred more occasional use rather than intensive daily engagement. These results are consistent with the findings of Loh, Sun, and Lim (2023), who found that adolescents integrate digital reading into their routines but often in a more sporadic and flexible manner, balancing other activities with digital reading. While students acknowledged the utility of online newspapers, they did not strongly support the idea of using them intensively every day. This reflects an ongoing trend where students engage with digital platforms, but not necessarily on a constant, daily basis, as discussed in other studies such as Mirza et al. (2021), where the digital reading habits of students show flexibility and adaptability based on their academic and personal needs.

### Perceived Challenges and Limitations

Despite the overall positive perception, several challenges and limitations were identified. Students expressed relatively neutral feelings toward the excitement of using online newspaper websites, with many reporting that they did not feel particularly enthusiastic about engaging with these platforms. This echoes the concerns raised in Spjeldnæs and Karlsen's (2024) study, which explored the challenges digital reading presents, particularly in terms of lack of excitement and difficulty navigating digital platforms. Students also expressed limited confidence in their ability to effectively use these websites, which suggests a gap in digital literacy or familiarity with online platforms. The lower ratings regarding the ability of online newspapers to foster creativity align with the findings of Coiro (2021), who noted that digital reading environments often fail to fully engage students in creative and interactive learning experiences. This highlights a need for platforms that are not only informative but also engaging and creative, fostering deeper interactions and learning opportunities.

### General Perceptions of Digital Learning

In terms of general perceptions of digital learning, students expressed a belief in the potential of online newspaper websites as valuable learning tools, although they were less confident about their ability to use these platforms to understand complex online information. This finding is consistent with Mirza et al. (2021), who suggested that while digital platforms like online newspapers provide important resources for accessing information, they might not always support deeper comprehension of complex topics. Moreover, Liao et al. (2024) proposed that dynamic reading strategies, such as integrating multiple sources and engaging with content interactively, could improve comprehension and critical thinking. This points to a need for online newspaper websites to offer more interactive and engaging content that encourages critical thinking and deeper understanding, beyond merely presenting information.

## CONCLUSION

The study found that students generally held positive attitudes toward online newspaper websites, particularly regarding their academic usefulness, such as improving reading skills and enhancing academic performance. While students recognized the value of these platforms for information retrieval and communication, they showed a preference for moderate, weekly use rather than daily, intensive engagement. Despite their acknowledgment of the potential benefits, students expressed challenges in navigating online newspapers, with some indicating a lack of excitement and low confidence in their digital

literacy skills. These findings suggest that while online newspapers are viewed as valuable educational tools, students face barriers that limit their full engagement with these resources.

The findings highlight the importance of promoting digital literacy skills and increasing student engagement with online reading platforms. Educators and developers of online newspaper websites can focus on improving the user experience to make these platforms more interactive and engaging, which could lead to enhanced confidence and excitement in using them. Additionally, strategies for fostering more frequent use—without overwhelming students with daily demands—should be explored, such as incorporating digital newspapers into classroom activities or assignments. By addressing these issues, online newspaper websites can be better positioned to support students' academic development and improve their digital reading practices.

This study was limited by its reliance on self-reported data, which may not fully capture the complexity of students' actual engagement with online newspaper websites. The study's scope was also limited to a specific student population, which may not be generalizable to other educational contexts or age groups. Future research could explore a more diverse sample of students and incorporate observational or experimental methods to better understand how students interact with online newspapers in real-world settings. Additionally, investigating the role of online newspapers in promoting critical thinking, creativity, and deep learning could further contribute to understanding their potential as effective educational tools.

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