

# Online Consumer Purchase Intention for Digital Newspapers in Sri Lanka

<sup>1</sup>Samsudeen Thowfeek Ahamed\* <sup>2</sup>Sithy Safeen M.G.H <sup>3</sup>ALMA.Shameem

<sup>1</sup> Sri Lanka Institute Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE)

<sup>2,3</sup> Faculty of Management and Commerce, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka-  
stahamed@sliate.ac.lk, ssafeena@seu.ac.lk,  
alma\_shameem@seu.ac.lk

**Abstract:** Unparalleled development in information communication technology (ICT) has led people to live in the virtual world. Smartphone has made peoples' life more comfortable as they do purchase goods and services while they are on the move. People likely to buy the products online from candy to newspaper. Purchasing newspaper online is currently in a blunder stage, however, steady growth has been reported in the recent past on the purchase of e-newspaper around the world. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the factors that influence the purchase intention of consumers towards digital/e-newspaper in Sri Lanka. Data were collected for this purpose via a structural questionnaire from those who involve online purchasing either in their home or office in Ampara districts of Sri Lanka. 305 sample response were collected and analysed further with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using AMOS. The results revealed that Website Quality (WEBQUAL) and Online Customer Reviews (OCR) post a significant positive influence on the Online Consumer Purchase Intention (OCPI) of the digital newspaper. Meanwhile, Paid Content (PC) was negatively associated with the purchase intention of the digital newspaper which indicates that consumer was not ready to pay the content if it is charged. On the other hand, Trust was not a significant factor as long as e-newspaper purchase is concerned which is a noteworthy finding of this study unlike in the other context such as B2B market or B2C market. The findings of this provide some useful contribution to the literature of consumer behaviour and practitioners like newspaper companies to make a strategic decision on the future business model for digital/e-newspaper in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Digital/e-newspaper, Website Quality, Trust, Online Consumer Reviews, Paid Content and Online Consumer Purchase Intention.

## 1. Introduction

The unprecedented spike in Information Communication Technology (ICT) has prompted numerous shifts in people around the world's everyday practices. It has become an important part of the information economy and the foundation of global internet technology (Balloffet & Boulaire, 1999; Feartherstone & Burrows, 1995). ICT has created a tremendous avenue for people around the world to purchase products and services online from candy to newspaper irrespective of their physical presence.

As a result, Online Consumer Behavior (OCB) was recently fascinated with the greater deal of interest by many scholars, and substantial studies were also carried out in line with OCB. The behavior of online consumers is also believed to have its characteristics and to be inherently distinct from the behavior observed in the physical world (Hoffman & Novack, 2000). Meanwhile, Online Consumers Purchase Intention (OCPI) allows consumers to assess a purchasing behavior specific to the internet

(Salisbury, Pearson, Pearson, and Miller, 2001) which has been subject to extensive research.

The e-newspaper/digital newspaper was an important industry that has been affected due to the increase in internet penetration is now being completely transferred from the printed version to online. Meanwhile, the theoretical implication of online purchasing of e-newspaper/digital newspaper has also attracted substantial scholarly attention very recently (Bhat, 2016; Tewari, 2016). The e-newspaper is completely different from the traditional printed version of the paper in terms of several aspects (Eriksson & Kalling, 2007). Journalistic format, the visual aspect with more graphic elements and constant update are some of the versions that e-newspaper differ from traditional printed paper version (Bucher et al., 2005; Tewari, 2016). However, purchasing e-newspaper online by their customers was a terrible challenge for all the digital newspaper companies during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as news subscribers look for a free news site which makes them switching from fees charged website to a free news website (Chyi et al., 2010). This indicated that consumers desperately needed free digital news/ e-news as there is a substantial number of free news alternatives available in which they allow potential readers to provide them free news content (Chyi, 2005; Chyi et al., 2010; Pettersson & Söderström, 2015). As a result, the majority of the newspaper companies decided to abandon charge subscription fees for accessing their website (Fidler, 2003).

However, e-newspaper companies did not stop the industry in the least interested. As the Internet was commonly being used, newspapers continued to reach customers by being a medium for gathering information (Fidler, 2003). These electronic screens allowed users to keep up with more content by charging fees including more personalized news and information services (Fidler, 2003). These innovative changes made potential subscribers think of purchasing e-newspaper online. For example; Only the Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times have successfully subscribed to a competitive online subscription model with some innovative technologies (Green, 2010). As these two-news paper's business model is quite different from their counterparts, with some unique content

consumers were attracted and keen to purchase online. For decades the newspaper business has managed to maintain its activities largely by distributing news to subscribers and its properties to advertisers.

However, the entire print sector is troubled by decreased circulation and decreasing advertising sales (The Economist, 26 August 2006), prompting media publishers to look for new markets. With the unparalleled growth of the World Wide Web (www) during the nineties, the printed newspaper industry finds itself in a negligible position with lower purchase intention among its readers. According to Thurman and Herbert (2007), over the past two decades, there was a substantial decrease in printed circulation of newspapers and a rise in the use of internet-based news. Nonetheless, the business model for e-newspaper with paid content strategies is more like in the experiment stage rather than definitive methods that monetize the exponential growth of the audience (Goyanes & Sylvie, 2014). However, during the last ten years subscription for e-newspaper has been increased substantially all over the world with the reflection of being purchased through online ( (Suijkerbuijk, 2014).

Meanwhile, Online Consumer Purchase Intention (OCPI) has received significant attention within the sphere of consumer behavior research for the last two decades. Therefore, OCPI has to be studied in association with e-newspaper in the context of Sri Lanka is the primary motivation of this paper. More importantly, Online newspaper companies rely on both consumer purchases and advertisement revenue structures. However, as the newspaper firms have faced dwindling newspaper circulation rates and advertisement revenue, they have sought to boost it by providing online news services. Hence, it must be important to investigate the attractiveness of the industry, and customer intention to purchase the e-newspaper is a very key feature of this study. Therefore, this issue led the way to investigate the customer purchase intention towards the digital newspaper in the context of Sri Lanka. Prior surveys, however, have not empirically examined the significance of customers of online newspapers purchase intention with money as critical to their online value proposition (Goyanes & Sylvie,

2014). However, scholars have neglected the Online Consumer Purchase Intention of e-newspaper with several factors that influence the online purchasing decision.

Purchase Intention is the result of multiple signals that affect the shoppers' final purchasing decision either offline or online purchase. There is a discrepancy between the intention to purchase and the real purchasing conduct where the customer chooses either to delay or discourage a purchase (Wani & Ali, 2016; Rishi & Khasawneh, 2017). However, (Chyi, 2005; Tarkiainen et al., 2014) argued that people are not yet ready to pay news/content with the option of being paid content, which represents a poor intention for online news. Notwithstanding, none of the research has been investigated the paid content as the predominant factor which influence the purchase intention of e-newspaper. Hence, the contradictory findings from different scholars from the past studies, it is important to shed light on the following research question: why consumers are not ready to purchase e-newspaper/digital newspaper? What are the main factors that trigger the development of online newspaper models for news organizations with paying content strategies? The results of lower purchase intention of e-newspaper, It was also considered to be trivial concerning to carry out further research on which factors could influence online buyers' intention to purchase e-newspaper?

on the other hand, (Chyi et al., 2010) argue that hybrid user of who access both online and offline newspaper offset more than only online user of newspaper, this argument validate that still online purchase intention is to validate in the newspaper industry. Through doing so, these results offer new insights into the existence of news consumption when multiplatform audiences weigh relative news items and information. Despite, several studies conducted across the globe investigating digital newspaper reading, digital journalism, e-newspaper towards the readers. Meanwhile, online purchase intention was extensively researched generally in line with purchasing from an online store in the context of Sri Lanka. However, the online consumer purchase intention towards digital newspaper, as long as, a researcher is concerned, is new to the

literature. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the consumer purchase intention towards digital newspaper in Sri Lanka. Hence, a dearth of knowledge has been emerged to fill the gap through the empirical survey. As a result, this study brings a novel contribution to the area of online consumer purchase intention of e-newspapers. Hence, from a practical perspective, this study helps to make this work as a guiding tool for the service of digital newspaper companies to increase consumers' purchase intentions.

## 2. Literature

Purchase intention or purchase intention is defined as the customer's probability of buying a product or service (Roudposhti et al., 2018; Wani & Ali, 2016). It also named a deliberate (planned) brand-building campaign formed by a consumer to attempt to purchase a product (Law et al., 2016). It is an inclination the buyer will purchase the commodity, and as a significant predictor for actual buying decisions (Roudposhti et al., 2018). The concept of purchasing intention was initially rooted in psychological studies and commonly used in behavioural studies (Chyi et al., 2005). Further, (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018; Ketabi et al., 2014) states that purchase intention is claimed to be a key factor in the evaluation of purchasing behavior. The first step in any type of behavioural action is deciding what to do; thus, it tells something about the intention of that behavior is being shown (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). I line with the above review, it could be discussed the Theory of reasoned action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) are well-documented concepts that are executed in the studies of purchasing behavior.

## 3. Theory of Planned Behaviour

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is the extension of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) both are the foundation for studies related to online purchasing behavior (Ketabi et al., 2014; Law et al., 2016). Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) describes an individual's performance of a certain behavior is dictated by his or her intention to conduct that behavior. More importantly, TPB is a well-known framework used to explain the behavioural intention of a purchasing action which states that purchasing intention is

essentially a mentality, subjective standard, and perceived behavioral influence. These three predict behaviors: purpose, resulting, and actions (Ajzen, 1991). Purchase intention is evaluated by analyzing the possibility of buying a good or service. As a result, the TPB framework is used here in this study to evaluate the online purchasing intention of e-newspaper. In addition, paid content news is another variable which continuously studied by recent scholars with regards to digital newspaper research. Hence, paid content also taken into consideration in this study to evaluate the factors influence the online consumer purchase intention of e-newspaper

There are several definitions developed by prominent scholars where Shapira et al., (2009) and Deacon (2007) are the key scholars who define “an e-newspaper is an electronic version of news which can be searched, viewed, browsed, and acquired on a computer, mobile devices like a tablet or smartphone”. As an alternative to a book, it has the shape of a website or mobile application”. Meanwhile, according to TPB, many factors affect the Online purchase intention of online such as Perceived ease of use and Perceived Usefulness, Trust, Reputation, Word-of-mouth, and Willingness to customize on consumer’s purchase intention (Pettersson & Söderström, 2015).

Besides, the following factors also influence the Online Consumer Purchase Intention for retail shopping both in the B2B market and B2C markets such as Website design, Online reviews, and Trust (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018; Haleeme & Raisal, 2017; Sabesan & Haleem, 2016). However, paid content was not studied so far in the survey of online consumer purchase intention in any of the context (Pettersson & Söderström, 2015). Hence, the researcher attempts to investigate the factors such as Quality of Website design, Online customer reviews, Trust and paid content which desperately affect the Online Purchase Intention of e-newspaper in Sri Lanka. To validate this argument (Suijkerbuijk, 2014) suggested that Future research could be carried out with some other factors which affect the intention to purchase digital news online and compare the results both with Swedish and other countries and see whether any discrepancies in the factors. As a result, the

following factors are to be tested in the context of online purchase intention of e-newspaper in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is important to discuss all the variables that are identified as influencing factors on the purchase intention of the online newspaper. Subsequently, the hypothesis also developed of each variable from the literature.

### 3.1 Quality of Website Design

Website quality is the overall effectiveness or appropriateness of the message the website intends to deliver to its target audience (Wang et al., 2015). Moreover, website quality plays an important role in the process of online purchasing behavior which helps to increase the purchase intention of the consumer (Ali, 2016). Website design is an effective advertising strategy that has positive effects on online purchasing intention and influences online purchasing intention (Ganguly et al., 2010; Octavia & Tamerlane, 2017) They further demonstrated that Online stores should apply the correct details, graphics, and website design concepts to be effective in marketing strategies from which purchasing intention can be improved. On the other hand, (Hasanov & Khalid, 2015) concluded that the quality of the website has an indirect effect on purchase intention of healthy food in Malaysia with the mediating effect of customer satisfaction.

Moreover, Stroud, Curry, Cardona, Peacock (2015) surveyed the home page attractiveness of the newspaper companies’ website and found that site traffic could be increased ninety per cent (90%) if the site has appealing look. They also found that simply incorporating elements that communicate a greater novelty, such as contemporary design could improve viewer recognition of the news content. Moreover, Stroud et al., (2015) suggest that “layout matters, and it is consequential in terms of page views and what people recall from the news. Broadly, these results support news organizations experimenting with changes to their homepage, and considering a move from a more classic to a more contemporary design”. Hence the hypothesis was developed as follows

*H1: The quality of the website design has a positive impact on the purchase intention of e-newspaper*

### 3.2 Online Customer Reviews or comments

The virtual world with the intensive use of the internet has enabled users to post their views, thoughts, suggestion and recommendation about a product to prospective buyers. This online information which is called Online Consumer Reviews( OCR) is believed to be one of the important contributions which significantly influence the online consumer purchase intention (Elwalda & Lu, 2016). Several studies show online reviews significantly influence consumer purchase intention and becoming an important tool that provides a free advertisement about the product or service of the organization (Park & Lee, 2009; Chang & chin, 2010; Yali & Bayram, 2012). The amount of online reviews published about a product has a positive effect on the customer's purchase intentions as well (Adams, 2018; Obiedat, 2013). These reviews often assist the consumer in gaining influence over his purchasing intentions and actions.

Online Customer Reviews (OCRs) are defined as the customer-generated evaluative information shared on the company's or third-party web pages (Mudambi & Schuff 2010). Before making a purchase, 61 per cent of consumers consulted online reviews, blogs, or other types of consumer input, according to an eMarketer study (2008). On the other hand, (Biswas, 2021) argued that online reviews help to identify the potential sellers and buyers to purchase their product with great confidentiality. Meanwhile, expanding on this concept, (Adams, 2018) evoked that online reviews have significant a positive impact on the probability of convert for online purchase intention. (Obiedat, 2013) his research has shown that the quality of online review and argument relative to the amount of online review argument has influenced the online purchase intention. In supporting this argument concerning online news consumption is concerned, (Green, 2010) documented that 25% of Internet users have commented on a news article or blog topic about the news before the online news consumption. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed

*H3: Online Consumer Reviews has a positive influence on the purchase intention of consumer towards e-newspaper*

### 3.3 Paid Content

paying content pages in the digital newspaper currently like in the test stage, it more aims to expand audience than profitable sales. In reality, none of the examined organizations will survive without assistance from the outside world (Goyanes & Sylvie, 2014). Meanwhile, (Green, 2010) argued that the unique content of the e-newspaper also one of the determining factors that motivate consumers and willingness to purchase an online newspaper which footprint The Wall Street Journal and The Financial Times have been able to effectively introduce online subscription models. Previously, (Herbert & Thurman, 2007) documented that paid content has mostly failed as a business model in the online news industry, however, new technologies and online culture could result in a return to paid media as a strategy of newsgathering. Meanwhile, (Chyi, 2005) found that users are not ready to pay the online content news currently, on the other hand, (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2017) argue the payment for offline news thus increases the chances of paying for online news. Hence, paid content in the online news platform is an important variable that must be studied in greater detail.

Much of the Internet's users think they need not pay for content in most cases. It would seem that iTunes has successfully charged its contents continuously. When content is useful, there is potential for a lot of consumers to spend money if a payment method is available. Content, however, is usually featured in online newspapers in the manner of opinion, feature, and game content. To validate this argument, Goyanes (2014) also found that there is a strong relationship between paid content such as Online TV content, e-book, and software application with purchase intention. It is one of the important questions to be raised that what kind of content is being charged by e-newspaper companies in Sri Lanka? Why they charge their content Hence, paid content is one of the influencing factors on the intention to purchase e-newspaper. As a result, paid content in the news website is been

growing for the last 10 years as technology advances with greater usage of the internet. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed for the above variable

*H3: Paid content has a negative influence on the online consumer purchase intention of e-newspaper*

**3.4 Trust**

As e-commerce has been at the forefront in the era of the information communication technology world, people would prefer to make an online purchase if they see that the e-commerce site having a safe transaction. Thus, Trust is the most important factor which guides the customer to purchase online (Wijesundara, 2008). Previous studies found that trust in online purchase plays a

Chen and Barnes, (2007) argue that it is essential for organizations providing services online to build trust as it affects consumers purchase intentions. Once the consumer gains confidence in the online retailer, the customer's readiness to purchase shall improve. A significant number of well-reported studies have demonstrated that there is a link between consumer trust and online purchase intention such as (Boudhayan Ganguly, 2009; Dash and Saji, 2007; Liat & Shi Wuan, 2014). Though, there is a significant number of research studies evidence indicated that the trust of the online company is the most important factor that influences the purchase intention of the customer. Here the trust lies with the online transaction

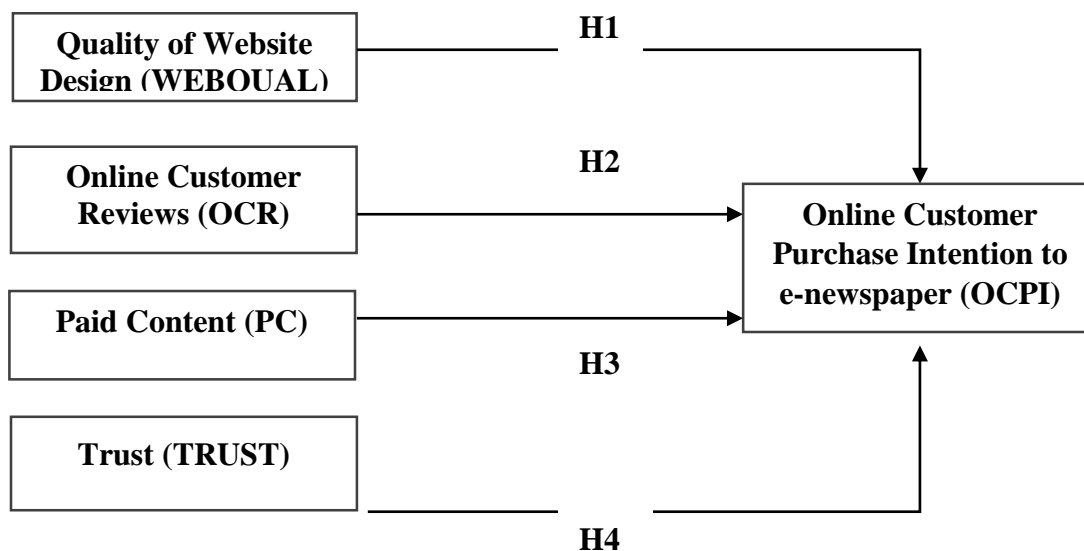
critical role as it has a limited interaction online between retailers and customers (Mohseni & Sreenivasan, 2014). Trust refers to the perception of the consumers regarding their online retailers' activities which leads to creating the honesty, security, reliability and privacy that the vendor develops throughout the e-commerce business (Mohseni & Sreenivasan, 2014, Guo, Wang, & Wang, 2012). Since online transactions are considered to be riskier, a sense of confidence may help to minimize the fear of confusion in online purchases, removing consumers' psychological concerns about e-retailers conduct. As a result, online retailers can concentrate on building long-term relationships with their customers by providing value in the form of confidence and accountability.

which is the key obstacle for an online store (Ganguly et al., 2010). However, these studies were conducted for general products and service companies in a different context and no research evidence shows that trust is an important factor in the digital media usage or purchase of paid content news or e-newspaper. Hence the following hypothesis was developed.

*H4: Trust of the newspaper website has a positive influence on the Consumer Purchase Intention of e-newspaper.*

Based on the above review of the literature the following conceptual model has been developed

**Conceptual Model**



### Figure 1: Research Model Developed for this study

#### 4.0 Research Methodology and Data Collection Method.

The study was based on a positivistic paradigm where the researcher tries to find out the truth that prevails in the actual world. Hence, primary data were collected via a structured questionnaire which consisted of 38 questions in English and translated into Tamil. The items for measurement of the questionnaire were obtained from thorough critical reviews of the existing literature. The questionnaire was sent to 450 respondents who use the internet either in their home or workplace.

#### 4.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). It is strongly recommended that it provides the framework to measure the mediating effects and interactions of complex relationships between exogenous and endogenous variable (Hair et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2011). Subsequently, the current study exerts Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software used to test the hypothesis. the sample size is relevant in SEM because Hair et al. (2014) recommend that five indicators should be present when the latent variables are numerous and the number of cases required for research is exceeded in the present study which consists of 305 effective response received. Therefore, measurement model, structural model and Hypothesis testing were carried out and presented as follows

#### 5.0 Measurement Model: Model Fit

It is paramount important to test the assumption of multivariate analysis before the drawing of the measurement model. Having checked all the multivariate assumptions (Normality, Linearity, Homoscedasticity, Multicollinearity), the next of this study was to move with the inferential statistics. Four latent variables were brought to the study which influences the online consumer purchase intention of e-newspaper as depicted in the conceptual model- i.e, Quality of Website Design (WEBQUAL), Online Customer Review (OCR), Trust (TRS) and Paid Content (Paid) and Online

The questionnaire was also sent through e-mail, google form and Facebook link. The e-mail addresses of the respondents were found in social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and through personal contact. However, only 320 response were received of which 305 responses are in the usable condition and represented as the sample. Respondents were selected from Ampara District through the convenience sampling method. The convenience sampling method according to Sekaran (2016) is a likely sample method that refers to the collection of data from the population who can provide it conveniently.

Customer Purchase Intention (OCPI). All the given constructs were permitted to correlate with each other for confirmatory factor analysis (Byrne, 2013). The model fit indices of the various structures must be measured to determine the overall fit of the model. If the alteration indices have a high value, the model fit does not occur which construct a weaker model fit. Thus, error covariance must be interconnected to boost the overall good model fit and the revised model fit demonstrated the anticipated good fit of the model.

All the items in the construct with uniform factor value were above 0.5 so that no items from the model were excluded. Meanwhile, multicollinearity was tested to identify whether independent variables are overly correlated among them and it was identified that all the correlation co-efficient values show below 0.9 which indicates that there is no Multicollinearity problem exists (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). On the other hand, all the items in the constructs were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Meanwhile, Chi-square, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Approximation Errors (RMSEA) were used to assess the fitness of the measurement model which eventually fetch Goodness of Fit (GFI) in the overall model. As suggested by Bentler (1990) that the following values are considered to be appropriate in order to have GFI: (i) CMIN/df <3, (ii) RMR <0.10 (iii) (CFI > 0.90 (iv) RMSEA <0.05. The measurement model showed an optimal fit with

appropriate values: CMIN/DF=1.333, CFI=0.922 and RMSEA=0.059 which came through the measurement model. Furthermore, the Chi-square statistic of 480.125 with 367

degrees of freedom, and a probability value greater than 0.05, both indicate that indices meet their respective requirements, hence, the model has an adequate fit as shown in Figure 2.

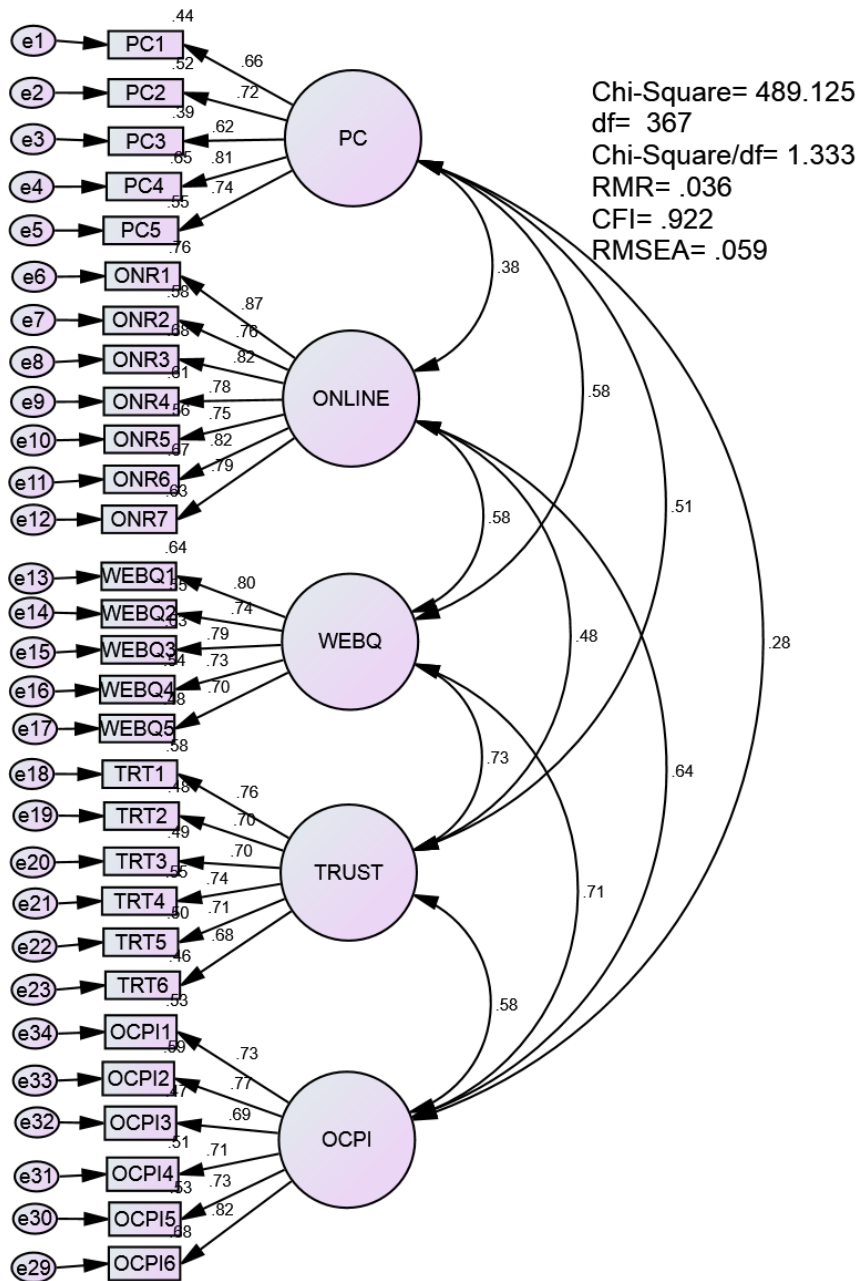


Figure 2 Measurement Model



### 5.1 Reliability and validity

Reliability measure the Internal consistency of the items as a group to measure a single construct. Hence, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the data, as shown in Table 1, all the constructs depicted a value of more than 0.7 which indicates the internal consistency is met in the study. Measuring validity is one of the important aspects which stresses the ability of the instruments to measure what is supposed to be measured for a construct. Three types of validity are required for each measurement model (construct validity, discriminant validity and convergent validity) and Assessing validity is very important in order the get the best fit model before proceeding with the structural model. Hence, a comprehensive review of the literature on the area of online consumer purchase intention was steered into this study to warrant content validity.

Subsequently, Construct Validity is measured using fitness indexes which needed

to be assessed using Discriminant and Convergent Validity. Where Convergent Validity is measured using AVE and computed using factor loading. Similarly, Composite Reliability (CR) is also computed using factor loading to assess discriminant validity. As long as the present study is concerned, AVE is greater than and equal to 0.5 in all the constructs suggesting an accepted value based on the past literature. Meanwhile, examining of standard factor loading of all the items is another way to evaluate discriminant and converging validity. To confirm the discriminant validity, the rule of thumb is Composite Reliability (CR) should be greater than the AVE value which is satisfied in our analysis see Table 1. Further, the actual discriminant validity is measured based on the Diagonal value which should be greater than the internal value  $R^2$  (Square of correlation) for adequate discriminant validity. Hence, both discriminant and convergent validity are verified and satisfied. As a result, the reliability and validity of the measurement model are confirmed as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1 – Summary of the Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR	WebQual	OCR	Trust	PC	OCPI
PC	0.836	0.510	0.838	0.510				
OCR	0.925	0.616	0.921	0.147	0.616			
Trust	0.861	0.510	0.862	0.258	0.227	0.510		
WEBQUAL	0.867	0.567	0.867	0.339	0.341	0.508	0.567	
OCPI	0.878	0.552	0.880	0.076	0.407	0.336	0.497	0.552

### 5.3 Structural Equation Model

Subsequent to the analysis of the measurement model and the verification of validity and reliability, a formal equation modelling test was performed to assess the proposed causal relationship among latent exogenous variables.

Followed by hypothesis testing was performed using the structure model which is discussed continuously. This structural model was developed to assess the factors that influence the Online Consumer Purchase Intention (OCPI) of

e-newspaper in Sri Lanka. The exogenous latent constructs are Quality of the Website Design of Newspaper company, Trust, Paid content and Online Customer Review which influence the OCPI is the endogenous construct. The estimated results of the structural model from AMOS software are shown in Figure 3. The structural model depicted a perfect level of good fit with

acceptable range where (CMIN/df =1.333, CFI= 0.922, RMR= 0.036, RMSEA= 0.059). The observed value indicated that the model fit indices meet their required values, as a result, it could be concluded that the GOF of the structural model was at the acceptable level and it can be seen in figure 2.

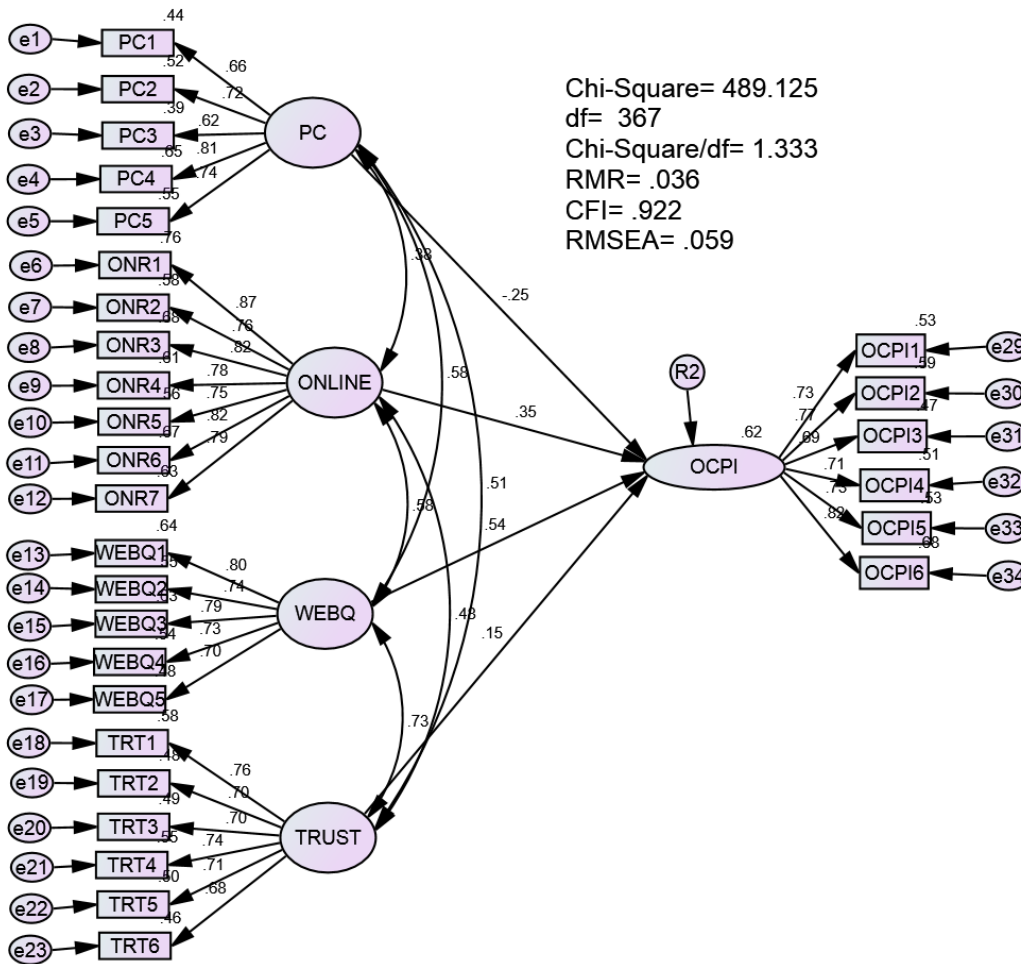


Figure 3. Structural Model

**5.4 Hypothesis Testing proof**

To inspect the path coefficients, the consistency of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables was evaluated to examine the path coefficient (Beta weights). Hypotheses (paths) were found to be significant in the following independent variables to the dependent variable: The path from WEBQUAL to OCPI ( $\beta= 0.538, t=2.966, p<0.05$ ), OCR to OCPI ( $\beta= 0.349,$

$t=3.091, p<0.05$ ). Nevertheless, the path coefficient of PC to OCPI was significant negatively ( $\beta = - 0.246, t=2.093, p<0.05$ ). However, the path coefficient of Trust to OCPI not statistically significant and it shows the results ( $\beta = 0.145, t=1.012, p< \text{not significant}$ ). Thus, the model fit indicates that all the latent variables are statistically significant with dependent variable except Trust. This proves that trust is not an important factor in the purchase of

an online newspaper. The summary is given in Table 2.

Table 2 – Regression Weights

Variables	Std.Estimate	Un.Std Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
OCPI <--- PC	-.246	-.275	.131	-2.093	.036
OCPI <--- TRUST	.145	.193	.191	1.012	.312
OCPI <--- OCR	.349	.309	.100	3.091	.002
OCPI <--- WEBQUAL	.538	.618	.208	2.966	.003

Another estimate of explained variance was calculated, known as the squared multiple correlations. In the view of (Hernandez et al., 2006), the expected  $R^2$  may never reach 100 per cent if the predictive ability of the proposed model is reduced. Here, in the proposed model, the  $R^2$  is not far from 100 per cent. Therefore, it can be noted that the explanatory power of the

exogenous variable is  $R^2 = 0.619$  which indicates that it has 62% variation that can be explained by the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable. The interpretation tells us that Website Quality, Online Customer Review, Paid Content and Trust together explain 62% of variation on the Online Consumer Purchase Intention of the digital newspaper.

## 6.0 Findings and Conclusion

The findings of the study state that the Website Quality of the newspaper and Online Customer Review has a positive influence on the purchase intention of e-newspaper. Meanwhile, Paid content display a negative influence on the purchase intention of consumers towards e-newspaper in Sri Lanka. These are the noteworthy findings of this study and consistent with the findings of (Pettersson & Söderström, 2015). Contradictory to the findings of a similar type of survey, it was documented that trust was considered as the important factor which affects the purchase intention of the online consumer in the B2B market, B2C market and online retail consumption ((Mohseni & Sreenivasan, 2014, Guo, Wang, & Wang, 2012), this study finds that Trust does not have any positive impact on the online customer purchase intention and the finding is consistent with Lien *et al.* (2015). Further, Trust was analyzed as a mediating effect of online purchase intention in the context of online retail shopping, B2B market and B2C market in the Sri Lankan context (Wijesundara, 2008; Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018) but not in the context of online newspaper consumption. However, this study finds that trust was not a

significant variable in-terms of digital newspaper purchase intention which is notable evidence in the survey. As a result, this study confirmed that Trust is an insignificant factor in the purchase intention of the consumer to the e-newspaper which is inconsistent with the majority of the previous studies.

Hence, it could be concluded that the Trust of the website is not an important factor to the digital newspaper companies. Overall, it could be concluded that the Quality of the website of newspaper companies and Positive Online Consumer Reviews find a more positive relationship which indicates that newspaper companies that sell their news content through their website or online must consider enhancing their website quality and should work to create positive e-word of mouth from the existing subscribers to recommend potential subscribers. On the other hand, newspaper companies must consider the paid content pages on their website as it has a negative relationship with online consumer purchase intention.

## 7.0 Limitations and directions for future research

This study limits in many aspects, it examined the factors affecting online consumer purchase

intention towards e-newspaper. Hence, this study was not focused on either B2C or B2B context rather it was purely considered the variables based on the reviews of literature by searching e-newspaper or digital newspaper articles. The variables that were taken into consideration for this survey consist mainly related to the purchase of e-newspaper online. However, these factors may change into different contexts such as online retail purchase intention, B2C context and B2B context like Alibaba.com, amazon.com and so on so forth. Therefore, future research may include some other variables in the context of online retail shopping. On the other hand, this study limited to website characteristics and social characteristics but future research would need to include specific characteristics to the e-newspaper variables. Moreover, this study purely concentrated on

quantitative methodology, hence, future research could have conducted by using mix method approach which will bring some more insights in terms of e-newspaper purchase intention is concerned and it would provide useful information to the newspaper companies or practitioners to make an effective decision. Another possible area for future research is to survey the paid content of e-newspaper and customer satisfaction. As subscribers increasingly pay the content news, the satisfaction level must be investigated to further strengthen the concept which would provide e-newspaper companies' a sustainable competitive advantage. Finally, this study would provide paving to the future model of e-newspaper in Sri Lanka

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