Abstract

In this study, an attempt has been taken to identify and measure individual differences in online newspaper reading. In doing so, samples were selected from the target population using the parameter 'Age', under which the age group 25-34 years was selected. For selecting samples, survey was conducted in the Kolkata district, West Bengal. As the population was still large, two Wards of Kolkata were selected by judgement sampling techniques. Among each of the Ward, fifteen individuals (who were found to be online newspaper readers) were selected as per availability and accessibility. So, a total of 30 individuals were selected as samples for conducting the survey.

A structured questionnaire was framed to conduct the survey and each individual was asked certain questions given in statement form regarding five parameters viz: individuals' reasons for preferring online newspaper; choice of news categories of individuals; choice of subject categories of individuals; frequency of reading; and individuals' level of satisfaction in reading online newspaper. Individuals were asked to score each of the statement on a scale of 0-10 where zero (0) denoted lowest score and ten (10) denoted highest score.

The collected data were then tabulated accordingly. Differences between two individuals were measured using 'Measurement of Pair Difference' formula. An algorithm and a C programming code based on the formula were developed for calculating the differences. The results obtained were then interpreted. If the result of a pair was found to be 0 (zero) then they were considered equal and hence showed no degree of difference exist between them. If the result of a pair was found to be in numbers (other than zero) then they were considered different and the result obtained showed the degree to which they are different from each other.

Then, the Mean Absolute Deviation (MAD) was calculated under each parameter, using the results of Measurements of Pair Difference of all the thirty individuals in MS-Excel

to determine the gravity of difference in online newspaper reading which indicated the degree of differences among all the individuals from the average difference (Mean).

After that, R statistical software was used to validate the obtained results. Also, under each parameter, a visual representation of the frequency distributions of 'Measurement of Pair Difference' results were shown using histogram.

The findings of the study showed that the results of 'Measurement of Pair Difference' test of all the pairs were in numbers across all the parameters. So, there existed individual differences in online newspapers reading.

Lowest degree of difference in score among all the individuals in terms of reasons for preferring online newspaper was found to be 16.17% and the gravity of difference was 7.49 from the mean (40.77). Lowest degree of difference in score among all the individuals in terms of choice of categories of news was found to be 13.63% and the gravity of difference was 6.90 from the mean (38.36). Lowest degree of difference in score among all the individuals as per their choice of subject categories was found to be 20.33% and the gravity of difference was 7.04 from the mean (44.29). Lowest degree of difference in score among all the individuals as per their frequency of reading was found to be 22.49% and the gravity of difference was 6.29 from the mean (41.03). Lowest degree of difference in score among all the individuals as per their level of satisfaction was found to be 15.00% and the gravity of difference was 6.27 from the mean (36.59).

After comparing all the parameters, it was found that, in online newspaper reading, differences exist among all individuals. The extent of the differences in scores among all individuals was found at least 13.63% in online newspaper reading. The minimum Mean Absolute Deviation across all parameters observed is 6.27, with a minimum mean value of 36.59 across all parameters. The gravity of difference in terms of online newspaper reading is found to be therefore 6.27. It indicated that among all individuals, the average difference is 6.27 from the mean (36.59) in reading newspaper online.

Keywords: Individual Differences; Measurement of Pair Differences; Online Newspapers; Online Newspaper Reading; Newspaper Reading Habit; Mean Absolute Deviation