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CONCEPTUAL PAPER ON DRONE USAGE IN JOURNALISM: A STUDY IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Drone usage in journalism is becoming popular in the world. The usage of drones in journalism is surrounded with its own advantages and disadvantages. Hence as an attempt to gain a depth of understanding usage of drones in journalism, this research aims to investigate the predictive nature of performance expectancy, effort expectancy and social influence on intention towards the usage of drones as well as the impact of the intension of drone usage on actual drone usage in journalism with the use of the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT). In addition, in line with the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) it is determined to gain an understanding on the impact of facility conditions on the actual usage of drones in journalism. The study was conducted using a structured questionnaire along with the sample of journalists in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Drone Usage, Drone Journalism, Unified Theory of Acceptance, Use of Technology (UTAUT)

Introduction

Technological evolution has influenced the journalism in several ways such as the way of journalists conducting their work, nature of the content of news, the structure and organization of the newsroom and the news industry, nature of relationships that are maintained among new organizations, journalists and public (Pavlik, 2000). As one of the technological impacts, it can be noted that different types of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) or drones are used in professional media institutions and freelancers (Ntalakas, Kalliris, Dimoulas & Veglis, 2017). There is a tendency of using drones in journalism in Sri Lanka at present and there are training sessions which are organized for journalists (Internews, n.d). A Sri Lankan journalist has used a drone to cover a human-elephant conflict in Hambantota (Internews, n.d). According to the Media Ministry it can be expected that an increase of usage of drones for journalism in Sri Lanka (Daily News, 2017).

According to Bonneau (2017), there are significant advantages of drones to the world of media world. With the usage of drones without the support of a plane or a helicopter sky shooting, capturing 360 images, 4K images can be taken at a low cost, with minimum risk for human life and in a unique way. In Sri Lanka also there is a tendency of using drones including journalism (Daily Mirror, 2017) and that has been impacted by the rules and regulations for drone usage introduced by the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (CAASL) in 2016 (Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka 2017). It is recorded that in Sri Lanka at present there are eleven (11) TV channels (Lanka TV, n.d) and eighty-three (83) newspapers (online newspapers.com, n.d). Some media organizations and journalists in Sri Lanka currently have begun to use drones to provide aerial

footage for news (Internews, n.d).

Many researches (Ntalakas et al., 2017; Lauk, Uskali, Kuutti & Hirvinen, 2016) can be identified on drone journalism under international context, but it can be identified a limited number of researches have been conducted on drone usage in journalism in Sri Lanka. Further it can be recognized many researches which have been conducted on technology adoption on different technologies such as mobile banking (Vijayakiruthika & Maheswaranathan, 2015; Loane, Bradley & Mullan, 2017), internet banking adoption (Gunatilake & Premarathne, 2016; Priyangika, Perera & Rajapakshe, 2016; Shanmugum, 2016) etc. both in international and Sri Lankan context. At the same time there are researches conducted on the usage of drone in several sectors such as drone delivery (Yoo, Yu & Jung, 2016), drone adoption (Chamata, 2016), drone in libraries (Fernandez, 2016).

Since there are limited number of researches on drone technology adoption in journalism both in international and local context, it is worthwhile to explore drone usage among journalist in Sri Lanka as a contribution to the empirical gap.

Similarly, according to literature there are large number of researches which have been conducted under technology adoption models. According to Venkatesh, Thong & Xu (2016) UTAUT has been applied in the areas of Web-based learning environment (Liao et al., 2004), Social media and smartphone (Workman, 2014), Internet (Gupta et al., 2008) and many other. Yoo, Yu & Jung (2016) have conducted a research on drone delivery using TAM. Chamata (2016) has conducted a research on Adoption of Unmanned Aerial Technology in Malaysia, using TAM. However, it is hard to find any researches which have been conducted in the area of adoption of drones in journalism any part of the world using the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT).

Hence through this study it is addressed the research question of “What are the impacting factors of usage of drones in journalism?” with the application of the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT).

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: the literature review on the current topic; commencing from the drone journalism and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT). The conceptual framework of the study is explained in the same section. Methodology that is expected to follow in conducting the research is explained in the third section. In the following two sections significance of the study and conclusion of the study are explained.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Drone Journalism

As it is mentioned by Block (2007), the activities of reporting, writing, editing, broadcasting and the photography of news are concerned under journalism. In modern days journalism is not limited to print journalism but also it is expanded to photojournalism, radio, television broadcasting, public relations and telecommunications which are considered as a part of mass media (Block, 2007).

The term drone is known as an unmanned aerial vehicle which is a robot that combines flights with the sensors allowing unprecedented freedom in observing and interacting with the world (Ferdinandez, 2016). At the same time unmanned aerial vehicles are known by the general public as drones (Wollert, 2018) Drones can be flown fully autonomously along preprogrammed flights and actions or as a partially autonomous tool which is operated by an operator and they are utilized on ground, marine and space for military and commercial purposes (Culver, 2014).

Ntalakas et al., (2017) have stated that using drones for gathering of news in journalism and mass communication services is referred as drone journalism. Matt Waite has been said that the usage of a small unmanned aircraft with the purpose of gathering photo, video, and data for journalism as drone journalism (Whitaker, 2016). Journalists can use this technology to assess the damage of an area after a natural disaster, instead of awaiting satellite companies to provide images of the event (Summer, 2017). Further, pilots and newsmen are in a position of avoiding the risk of life in covering events with the usage of drones in journalism (Salvo, 2012).

According to Salvo (2012) for the first-time drones have been used in journalism to cover an incident in Moscow in 2011 and BBC has been there to report the incident with the images captured through drones. Channel Nine, an Australian news outlet has used drone technology in news reports as the first news channel (Salvo, 2012). Justin Gong an Australian manufacture of drones has mentioned that Australian and Chinese companies are among

buyers of drones from Gong for journalistic purposes (Salvo, 2012). Journalists in Bangkok have used to cover protests in 2013 (The Economist, 2014) According to Matt Waite of the Drone Journalism Lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln rules for drone journalism are tighter in America than other countries (The Economist, 2014).

In Sri Lanka, drones are used by TV journalists along the surveyors and the photographers (Daily Mirror,2017). As a mode of going beyond press releases and conferences, drones are required and in Sri Lanka photojournalist and journalists have been trained in the year 2016, according to Dr Kalansooriya (Daily Mirror,2017).Requirements for Operation of Pilotless Aircraft (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles/Remotely Piloted Aircraft) have been introduced by the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (CAASL) in 2016 for all drone users in Sri Lanka including journalists (Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka 2017). Code of ethics for drone journalists formulated by practitioners and researchers in United States is available for Sri Lankan journalists to follow (Daily Mirror,2017). In comparison with the drone regulation in other countries', Sri Lankan regulations can be considered as not tough according to Kalansooriya, the Director General Government Information (Daily Mirror,2017).

Ferdinandez (2016) has mentioned drones are used by news agencies in taking photos and investigating dangerous situations or expensive situations which are costly for using a human reporter. Drones are used in the fields of agriculture, aerial product delivery, environment, homeland security, geographic mapping, pollution control, and crisis management including journalism (Linchant et al., 2013; McNeal, 2014; Schiffman ,2014 as cited in Holton, Lawson & Love, 2014). The advantages of using drones in journalism can be identified as; aerial images, live streamed video, digital mapping and analytical data according to Culver (2014). Four ethical considerations have been identified by Culver (2014) with relevance to journalism as safety, accuracy and context, privacy and ethical of interest. Kaufman & Somaiya, 2013 as cited in Holton, Lawson & Love, 2014 have mentioned the advantages drone journalism are safety, cost saving and effectiveness in reporting on events.

Theory of UTAUT

Technology adoption has been defined as the implementation of the software and hardware technology within an organization with the purpose of increasing productivity, gaining competitive advantage, improving processing speed, and making information readily available (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989 as cited in Momani & Jamous, 2017). To date, in literature it can be recognized several models and theories with respect to consumer perception and technology adoption. Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), Theory of Planned Behavior(Ajzen, 1985), Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (Taylor & Todd, (1995), Technology Acceptance Model (Davis,1986), Technology Acceptance Model 2 (Venkatesh & Davis,2000), Combination of Technology Acceptance Model and Theory of Planned Behavior (Taylor & Todd, (1995), The Model of PC Utilization (Thompson, Higgins & Howell, 1991), the Innovation Diffusion Theory(Rogers,1983), the Motivational Model(Deci & Ryan,1985) and Social Cognitive Theory(Bandura,1986 as Cited in Momani & Jamous, 2017) are the theories and models that can be identified. Further Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (Venkatesh, Thong& Xu, 2012) have been developed (Aswania et al., 2018).

According to Venkatesh, Morris, Davis and Davis (2003) as cited in Vermaut, (2017) the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) is an integration of eight models which are about acceptance of new technologies by individuals. In the theory of reasoned action (TRA), as the first theory which contributes to the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT), it is mentioned that the attitude towards behavior and the subjective norm in the close environment determine the behavioral intention. The aim of the technology acceptance model is to predict the acceptance and use of information technology. Further it is explained the influence of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on the behavioural intention to use a technology and on the attitude towards using it (Venkatesh et al. (2003) as cited in Vermaut,2017). As another contributor of the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT), in the motivational model it is described how extrinsic and intrinsic motivation it used to get an understanding about the new technology acceptance and use (MM; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1992 as cited inVermaut,2017). The theory of planned behavior which has been introduced by Ajzen, (1985) and also which is an extension of theory of reasoned action with an addition of perceived behavioural control is another contributed theory in the development of the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Vermaut, 2017). The next contributed model is a hybrid model which is a combination of technology acceptance model and theory of planned behavior (Taylor & Todd, 1995 as cited in Vermaut, 2017). The construct of perceived usefulness in technology acceptance model is combined with the predictors of theory of planned behavior under this model (Vermaut, 2017). The innovation diffusion theory is another theory that has been used to develop of the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT).

The theory is consisted of five components of innovation that will influence the individual acceptance behavior such as relative advantage, ease of use, image, visibility, compatibility, results demonstrability and voluntariness of use. Social cognitive theory which explains the reciprocal influence of environmental factors, personal factors and behavior; has been referred by Venkatesh et al. in 2003 in developing the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Vermaut,2017).

Under the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT); four key factors are identified namely performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions; and also four moderators such as age, gender, experience, and voluntariness which are used to predict behavioral intention towards the usage of a technology and actual technology usage primarily in organizational contexts (Venkatesh, Thong & Xu, 2016). performance expectancy, effort expectancy and social influence are considered as the determinants of intension to use while facility conditions is a determinant of actual usage (Vermaut,2017). Performance expectancy is considered as one of the most important predictors of intension to use of technology based on past researches (Vermaut,2017). Venkatesh et al., (2003) have defined performance expectancy as up to which extent the user expects the using system is useful to gain job performance. Effort expectancy is defined as predicted complexity to use a particular technology and the amount of energy that is required to use it (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Belief of other that a particular individual mandatorily accepts the new system is defined as social influence (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The extent to which that the currently available infrastructure can be used to apply the new system or technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

UTAUT has been applied in researches both in organizational settings and non-organizational settings and it can be identified many researches done for adoption and use in different parts of the world for different technologies such as E-government services (Al-Shafi et al.,2009), Tablet PC (El-Gayar & Moran,2007), Internet (Gupta et al. , 2008); (Venkatesh, Thong & Xu, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

The degree to which individuals believe that the usage of a technology will increase individual task performance is identified as performance expectancy (Celik, 2017). This has been formulated for UTAUT with five constructs namely embodied perceived usefulness, job-technology fit, extrinsic motivation, relative advantage and outcome expectations in the different models (Venkatesh et al., 2003, as cited in Celik 2017). In previous researches, it has been shown that behavioural intension is influenced by performance expectancy Boonsiritomachai & Pitchayadejanant, 2017). Therefore, it is proposed that behavioural intention to use drones in journalism is impacted by performance expectancy.

H1: Performance expectancy positively affects behavioural intention to use drones in journalism.

An individual's assessment on the degree to which technology usage is free without any effort, is explained by effort expectancy and this has been constructed through integrating the effort-oriented constructs such as ease of use complexity (Celik,2017). Venkatesh et al. 2012 as cited in Celik 2017 studied and identified the significance of the relationship between effort expectancy and behavioral intension from customer perspective. Therefore, it is proposed that behavioural intention to use drones in journalism is impacted by effort expectancy.

H2: Effort expectancy positively affects behavioural intention to use drones in journalism.

Social influence is identified as an individual's perception that other people think he or she should use an information technology artefact (Venkatesh et al., 2003 as cited in Celik 2017). According to Venkatesh et al., 2012 as cited in Celik 2017, subjective norms, social factors and image constructs; which are somewhat similar in concepts are included under social influence. Further, the normative pressure is also reflected within social influence (Venkatesh et al., 2003 as cited in Celik 2017). Normative pressure is an individual's persuasion to accept a technology along the motivation from the group members by being obeyed with the shared social meaning (Venkatesh et al., 2003 as cited in Celik 2017). There is an argument that social influence has a direct impact on behavioural intension with social rewards and punishments for engagement or non- engagement with the technology use and at the same time there is a suggestion that social influence has a direct impact on personal beliefs of the technology in voluntary settings, as a result of internalization and identification caused with personal desire to maintain a favourable image and gain social status within the reference group by using the technology (Venkatesh and Morris, 2000; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000 as cited in Celik, 2017). Therefore, it is proposed that behavioural intention to use drones in journalism is impacted by social influence.

H3: Social influence positively affects behavioural intention to use drones in journalism.

Facility conditions is identified as the degree to which an individual believes the availability of support from organizational and technical infrastructure facilitate to use an information technology artefact (Venkatesh et al., 2003, as cited in Celik, 2017). This is consisted of perceived behavioural control, facilitating conditions and compatibility (Venkatesh et al., 2012; Zhou, 2012, as cited in Celik 2017) It has been identified that facility conditions has an impact on technology usage (Venkatesh et al., 2008; Venkatesh et al., 2012 as cited in Celik, 2017). Therefore, it is proposed that usage of drones in journalism is impacted by facility conditions.

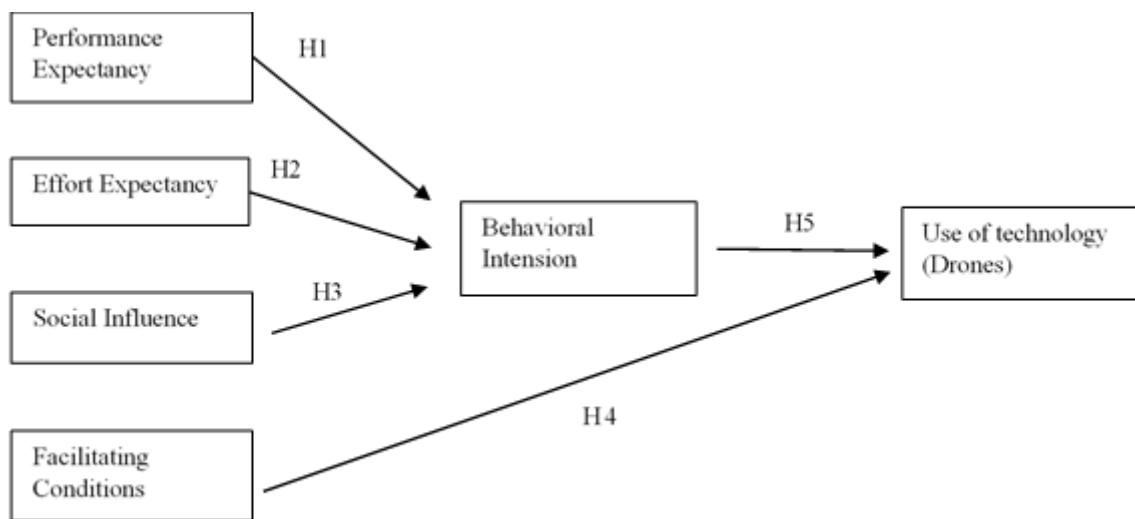
H4: Facilitating conditions positively affect use behaviour towards drones in journalism.

There are two outcomes of UTAUT namely behavioural intention and actual use or behavior (Vermaut, 2017). In simple terms the behavioral intension is desire or purpose (Vermaut, 2017). Further it is known as that actual usage is determined directly by behavioral intension (Vermaut, 2017). It is identified behavioural intension as a transition between the individual- and social-related variables and the personal use of an information technology artefact in UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003 as cited in Celik 2017). Usage is defined as the actual use of technology or system based on type of use, time utilized on a system and frequency and variety of use (Aswania, Ilavarasana, Kara & Vijayana, 2018). In researches (Aswania, Ilavarasana, Kara & Vijayana, 2018) it has been identified behavioral intension as the mediating the use of a technology. Therefore, it is proposed that usage of drones in journalism is impacted by behavioral intension.

H5: Behavioural intention positively affects use behaviour towards drones in journalism.

Methods

This is a deductive research with positivism as it is expected to apply UTAUT to test the usage of drones among journalist. It is planned to use Stratified Simple Random Sampling, as there are several TV channels and newspapers in Sri Lanka and to make sure representation of each.



Source: Author

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

To gather data, it is planned to prepare a structured questionnaire with three parts. Under the first part demographic details are gathered. Second part is prepared to measure behavioral intension and use of the drones as a journalist. Third part is focused on effort expectancy, performance expectancy, social influence and the facilitating conditions which effect the behavior. To gather information on the variables' statements are used on a five-point Likert scale representing 1 for 'strongly disagree' and for 'strongly agree'. Panwar & Tak (n.d) have tested this model through a structured questionnaire with three parts and using 5 scale Likert scale.

With the purpose of identifying and evaluating the research model, it is planned to use the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (SEM). Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena (2011), have identified researchers' usage of SEM's ability to assess latent variables at the measurement model and test relationships among the latent variables on the structural model. Relationships between the latent variables (LVs) and the manifest variables (MVs) and measuring their corresponding LVs are allowed simultaneously (Haenlein and Kaplan, 2004 as cited in Celik 2016).

Significance of the Study

Most of the researches that have been conducted on drone journalism are qualitative and it is rare to find any quantitative researches on drone journalism (Pavlik, 2000; Ntalakas et al., 2017; Lauk et al., 2016). At the same time, it is hard to find researches on drone journalism in Sri Lankan context, although there are qualitative researches in international context (Pavlik, 2000; Ntalakas et al., 2017; Lauk et al., 2016). Moreover, rarely it can be recognized any research that has been studied in the field of drone journalism using UTAUT model. Hence academically by conducting this research; an opportunity is created to contribute to the theoretical, literature and empirical gaps.

Similarly, through conducting this research it is focused to identify the factors impacting adoption of drone usage in journalism in Sri Lanka. This will be supportive for the journalism industry to improve the identified negative areas which demotivate the usage of drones in journalism and enhance the usage of drones in journalism.

Further in Sri Lanka, until recent past vantage point was possible through helicopters, but with the usage of drones journalists and the audience of them (public) are privileged to make sense of complex situations such as impacts of climatic changes, conflicts over resources and political agitation (Daily Mirror, 2017). There is a trend of using drones for capturing images with the purpose of gathering information resulting an increase of sales in drones around the world and in Sri Lanka (Daily Mirror, 2017). The high demand of drones will create the opportunity for new opportunities in the market for drone supply, repairs and sale of spare parts.

Conclusions

The unexplored reason for the popularity of the usage of drones in journalism is expected to study in the current study. In order to answer the research question of what factors influence the usage of drones in journalism, the researcher has used the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) which has identified the facility conditions and behavioral intention as the determinant of actual usage of technology. Hence, by adopting the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT), this study will identify the impact of behavioral intention and facility conditions for the usage of drones in journalism. In order to get the results, the study follows the survey research strategy and an administrative questionnaire with the support of literature will be distributed among the sample of journalists in Sri Lanka.

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