

READING PREFERENCES AND PATTERNS OF COMMERCE STUDENTS OF LRG GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, TIRUPUR : A CASE STUDY

UGC CARE
APPROVED

ABSTRACT

The Reading Habit is the foundation for the student's Academic pursuits. Among the four pillars of learning, Reading is the prime skill based on which the writing, listening, and speaking skills are built. This study tends to identify the preferences and the reading patterns of the commerce students in LRG Government Arts College for Women, Tirupur, Tamilnadu. An Online Questionnaire was distributed among all the Commerce and Commerce (Computer Applications) students. The response rate was only 53.98%. The data collected were analyzed using percentage and simple average calculations. The results revealed that commerce students prefer "Reading" as their time pass activity. Most of them choose to read only 30 minutes per day and the Teachers were the highly motivating persons for reading. The respondents preferred the Humor/comedy genre in the fiction and General Knowledge materials in the Non-fiction category.

Keywords : Reading habit, Commerce students, Reading preferences, online reading, Reading methods.

Introduction

The word "Reading Habit" is formed by the blend of two words - "Reading" and "Habit" in which Reading refers to the act of interpreting the meaning of printed or written words (Devarajan, 1979) and "Habit" may be said as the activity carried out in regular basis. There has been an increased need for online reading as academic endeavors were continued through online mode. The reading pattern and preferences of the students are analyzed in this paper to understand the student's choices.

Review of Literature

Ramasamy and Padma (2020) investigated the effect of gender on reading preferences and attitudes towards reading among the school students of five Matriculation schools in Madurai city. Out of 250 questionnaires, 200 were duly filled and received. The results showed that 58(49.2%) boys and 32(39.0%) girls preferred reading Non-Fiction. Out of 118 students, 29(24.6%) boys and 23(28.0%) girls preferred to read Science Fiction. Boys felt that lack of enough books at home and girls felt extracurricular work was the problem faced in nurturing their reading Habits. Luong (2021) investigated the Reading culture of Vietnamese students at three Universities of Social Sciences and Humanities which are The Hanoi University of Culture, VNUHCM-University of Social Sciences and

Humanities, and VNU-University of Social Science and Humanities. 600 Questionnaires were distributed and the response rate is 98%. 98.8% of students use their free time to access Social Networks. The majority of the students read for Learning (87.58%) and Scientific Research (25%). 65.47% read textbooks and 53.4% read Online Newspaper. Khatri and Walia (2020) investigated the reading interest of the students of select colleges affiliated with the University of Delhi. The results revealed that 89.9% of graduate students like reading. 43.7% out of 46.8% female respondents and 46.2% out of 53.2% were more interested to read which reveals that their female counterparts are more inclined to read. 73.5% of students read books for academic purposes. The highest number of respondents 64.8% read newspapers for current information purposes.

K.ANURADHA

Research Scholar, Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal & College Librarian, LRG Government Arts College for Women, Tirupur, Tamilnadu, India.

Dr. K.RAMASAMY

Research Supervisor, Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal & College Librarian, M.V Muthiah Government Arts College for Women, Dindigul, Tamilnadu, India.

Kori and Shwetha (2020) surveyed the Reading Interests and study Habits among the UG students of the Government first-grade college, Mudipu, Mangaluru, Karnataka. 172 out of 175 questionnaires were filled out with a response rate of 98.28%. Simple frequency calculation was used. Teacher's recommendation 14(8%) was the basis to choose for reading. The purpose of reading was to pass exam 70(41%). The influence of reading on Academic Performance was strongly agreed by 35(20%).

Amaravathi (2020) analyzed the reading habits and the Library usage of UG students of Government College for Women Library, Chinthamani. Around 100 questionnaires were distributed and 88 responded. The majority of the students visited the library weekly 46(52.27%). The purpose of visiting the library is mostly to read books 35(39.77%) followed by reading newspapers 40(45.45%). Abdullah et al. (2021) conducted a study with second-year students of the Department of Islamic Studies at the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. The Reading habit of the students was analyzed in 97% of students before university admission. After the initiation of University studies, 67% of students felt that their Reading habits increased. During the Virtual Education due to the pandemic 88% of students felt a change in their Reading habits. 77% of students felt that their Reading habits declined and 88% of students experienced a positive impact on their Reading during the Pandemic.

Objectives

This study was conducted with the following objectives:

- i. To list out the Preferred hobbies of the students and thereby the percentage of students preferring Reading as their favorite time pass.
- ii. To identify the Reading preferences of the students like preferred Genre, time duration, Timings in a day, type of reading material, and motivators for reading.

Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is the survey method.

A Simple structured online Questionnaire was distributed among all the Commerce and Commerce CA students of the LRG Government Arts College for Women, Tirupur. The total strength of Commerce and Commerce CA discipline is 797 students in the Academic year 2020-2021. Out of which only 430 have responded, leading to a response rate of 53.95%. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and simple Frequency calculations.

Sample Feasibility : The Raosoft Sample size calculator has been used to ensure whether this response rate is fine to proceed with the research work. It is found that the minimum recommended sample size for the population of 797 respondents is 363 when the margin of error is set as 5% and the confidence interval is set at 99%. (Source: <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 : Favorite Time Pass/Hobby of the students

S.No	Time pass /Hobbies	YES	Percentage	NO	Percentage
1	Reading	385	89.53%	45	10.46%
2	Watching TV	325	75.58%	105	24.41%
3	Browsing Online	225	52.32%	205	47.67%
4	Chat with friends	325	75.58%	105	24.41%
5	Social Media	302	70.23%	128	29.76%

Table 1 represents Reading (385, 89.53%) as the first choice for time pass among the respondents, followed by watching TV (325, 75.58%) and chatting with friends (325, 75.58%). Social Media (302, 70.32%) comes next which is followed by browsing online (225, 52.32%).

Table 2
Time spent for Reading per Day by the students

S.No	Time spent for Reading per Day	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	15 Minutes	76	17.70%
2	30 minutes	178	41.40%
3	45 Minutes	99	23%
4	45 minutes to one hour	77	17.90%

Table 2 shows that most students (178, 41.4%) tend to read 30 minutes per day followed by 99 (23%) students who do 45 30 minutes reading. Only 77 students read above 45 minutes to one hour daily and just 15 minutes reading is done by 76 (17.7%) students.

Table 3 : Criteria for the Selection of Reading materials

S.No	Selection Criteria	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Content	229	53.50%
2	Outer Cover	10	2.30%
3	Author	123	28.60%
4	Publisher	68	15.80%

Table 3 exhibits the students' idea on the criteria for the selection of Books or other reading materials. 229 (53.5%) students choose to read based on the content of the material. Selection based on Author is done by 123 (28.6%) students, followed by 68 (15.8%) students who select the reading material based on the publishers. Only a meager number of 10 students (2.3%) select the reading material based on the outer cover.

Table 4
Preference of different Online Reading materials of the students

S.No	Online Materials	YES	percentage	NO	Percentage
1	Online Newspaper	277	64.41%	153	35.58%
2	Online Books	276	64.18%	154	35.81%
3	Online Magazines	202	46.97%	228	53.02%
4	Databases	190	44.18%	240	55.81%
5	Reading in Social Media	328	76.27%	102	23.72%

The table reveals that the most preferred online material is Reading in Social Media by 328 (76.27%) students, followed by Online Newspapers by 277 (64.41%) students. Online Books are preferred only by 276 (64.18%) students. The next preferred item is online magazines (202, 46.97%). The least preferred online reading material is the database 190 (44.18%).

Table 5 : Favourite Ranking of Places

S. No	Places of Reading	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Percent age of top rank
1	Home	297	43	26	22	10	32	69.06%
2	College	38	263	54	35	31	9	61.16%
3	Friend's home	20	22	234	45	37	72	54.41%
4	Public Library	18	27	48	238	68	31	55.34%
5	College Library	23	48	40	63	226	30	52.55%
6	While Travelling	34	27	28	27	58	256	59.53%

Table 5 depicts the students preferred place of reading by their ranking for each place. Home is ranked number one with 297 (69.06%) students followed by the college with 263 (61.16) students. The third Ranking is for reading in a friend's home, which might be for having group study or combined study to discuss among them and learn. Public Library is ranked fourth by 238 students (55.34%) followed by college Library (226, 52.55%). The students who rank sixth in reading while traveling are 256 (59.53%).

Table 6
Genre of Books preferred

S. No	Genre of Books/Reading material	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Real News or Incidents/Historical Incidents	148	34.40%
2	Fiction / Stories	83	19.30%
3	Both Fiction & Nonfiction	199	46.30%

Table 6 shows that most of the students (199, 46.3%) prefer to read both fiction and Nonfiction while 148(34.4%) students prefer to read only Real stories/ Incidents or Nonfiction. Fiction reading is preferred only by 83 students (19.3%).

Table 7 : Types of stories/Novels or Fiction preferred

S. No	Types of Fiction	No of Students Responded			
		Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Crime/Detective	298	69.3	132	30.69%
2	Humor/Comedy	347	80.69	83	19.30%
3	Thriller stories	325	75.58	105	24.41%
4	Horror stories	281	65.34	149	34.65%
5	Science fiction stories	247	57.44	183	42.55%
6	Adventurous stories	281	65.34	149	34.65%
7	Imaginary Historical stories	342	79.53	88	20.46%
8	Short stories	279	64.88	151	35.11%

Table 7 reveals the students' interest towards Humor/Comedy stories (347, 80.69%) as their first preference followed by Imaginary Historical stories (342, 79.53%) as their second preference. Thriller stories are preferred by 325(75.58%) students followed by Crime or detective fiction liked by 298(69.30%) respondents. Horror and adventurous stories are preferred by 281(65.34%) students. Short stories are opted for by 279(64.88%) students. The least opted type is science fiction stories (247, 57.44%).

Table 8

Type of Non-Fiction preferred by students

S. No	Types of Non-Fiction Reading Materials	No of students Responded			
		Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Biography	334	79.52%	96	22.32%
2	Autobiography	241	56.04%	189	43.95%
3	Current Affairs	359	83.48%	71	16.51%

4	Self-Development	331	76.97%	99	23.02%
5	Historical	301	70%	129	30%
6	General Knowledge	376	87.44%	54	12.55%
7	Essays	208	48.37%	222	51.62%
8	Religious/Spiritual	215	50%	215	50%
9	Competitive Exam Books	325	75.58%	105	24.41%
10	Employment News	320	74.41%	110	25.58%

Table 8 exhibits the reading preferences in the Non-fiction category of reading materials. The most liked Category is General Knowledge preferred by 376(87.44%) students. The Second most preferred item is Current Affairs (359, 83.48%). Religious books or spiritual books are equally liked and disliked by students (215, 50%).

Table 9

Motivator of Reading for students

S. No	Motivator	No of students responded			
		Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Mother	381	88.60%	49	11.39%
2	Father	343	79.76%	87	20.23%
3	Brother	215	50%	215	50%
4	Sister	243	56.51%	187	43.48%
5	Grandparents	222	51.62%	208	48.37%
6	Teachers	392	91.16%	38	8.83%
7	Friends	318	73.95%	112	26.04%

Table 9 reveals the motivator of students and the foremost is said to be the Teacher (392, 91.16%) followed by mother (381, 88.6%) and next good motivator is "Friends" (318, 73.95%). Brothers are equally motivating (215, 50%) and non-motivating (215, 50%) for reading. Grandparents are highly said to be the non-motivators (208, 48.37%).

Table 10
Purpose of Reading by the students

S.No	Purpose	No of students responded			
		Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	To gain Knowledge	408	94.88%	22	5.11%
2	To prepare for competitions in College and district Level	239	55.58%	191	44.41%
3	To update oneself	392	91.16%	38	8.83%
4	To get Job	357	83.02%	73	16.97%
5	For Timepass	218	50.69%	212	49.30%
6	To score in Academics	350	81.39%	80	18.60%
7	To succeed in competitive Exam for career	354	82.32%	76	17.67%

Table 10 points out the reason or the need for which the students read. Most students (408, 94.88%) read to gain knowledge. "To update oneself" is the next need to read for the students (392, 91.16%), followed by "To get a job" (357, 83.02%) and to succeed in Competitive Exams for a career in Government and other sectors (354, 82.32%). Reading to pass time is done by 218 (50.69%) students and the students who do not read for time pass 212(49.30%).

Table 11
Preferred time for Reading by students

S.No	Timings in a day for reading	No of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
1	Early Morning	191	44.40%
2	During or After Breakfast	30	7%
3	Lunchtime	8	7.40%
4	Evening	167	38.80%
5	Dinner time	2	0.50%
6	Late night	32	7.40%

Table 11 clarifies that the most preferred time for reading is the Early morning hours by 191(44.4%) students followed by evening time (167, 38.8%). Other timings are not much preferred. During or after breakfast hours is preferred by 30(7%) students.

Table 12
The method of Reading adopted

S.No	Methods of Reading adopted	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Silent Reading	245	57%
2	Loud Reading	70	16.30%
3	Lips Reading	115	26.70%

Table 12 indicates that Silent reading is most preferred (245, 57%) among the students. Lips reading is done by 115(26.7) students. Only 70 (16.3%) students prefer to do the loud reading.

Table 13
Source of Reading Materials for the students

S.No	Source of Reading materials	No of students Responded			
		Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Purchase of the reading materials	315	73.25%	115	26.74%
2	Borrowing from friends	259	60.23%	171	39.76%
3	From Public Library	207	48.13%	223	51.86%

Table 13 explains the source from where the students get books or other reading materials. Own collection at home (296, 68.83%) and "Borrowing from friends" (259, 60.23%) are the most preferred methods to get reading materials. Purchase of the reading material (315, 73.25%) is the most used way.

Major findings of the study

The study brings out the following major findings about the reading preferences of the respondents : The favorite time pass/Hobby for majority of the respondents (385, 89.53%) is reading ; Most of the students (178, 41.4%) spend 30 minutes per day for reading ; The

Respondents (229, 53.3%) mostly select the reading material by its content ; The preferred online reading for most respondents (328, 76.27%) is “Reading the social media content” ; The favorite place of reading is “Home” (297, 69.06%) ; Most of the Respondents (199, 46.3%) read both Fiction and Nonfiction ; In the fiction category, Humor/comedy stories (347, 80.69%) are the highly sought genre ; The General Knowledge category is the most read Non- fiction genre, followed by Current Affairs and Competitive Exam Books ; The Teacher (392, 91.16%) is the best motivator followed by mother 381(88.6%) and Friends (318, 73.95%) ; Most of the respondents (191, 44.4%) read during morning hours followed by evening (167, 38.8%) ; Silence Reading is the highly used method of reading (245, 57%); Purchasing the required reading material (296, 68.83%) is the source of reading for most of the respondents. “Borrowing from friends” (259, 60.23%) is the next preferred method to get reading materials.

Conclusion

Though the college is located in an urban area, the students hail from diverse socio-economic and demographic backgrounds and the parents of the students mostly belong to low literacy levels hence the teacher is the best motivator for a reading followed by the mothers. Silent Reading is the preferred method and home is the best place for reading. Libraries, be it College libraries or Public libraries, are least preferred compared to other venues as the students are not aware of the Libraries and their services. The college should build a congenial atmosphere so as to emulate the reading interest of the students on campus. The faculty members and the library staff should play a pivotal role in promoting the reading habits of college students.

References

1. Abdullah, M.M.A., Farhan, M.Y.M., & Mazahir, S.M.M. (2021). Undergraduate Students Reading Habit: A Study based on Department of Islamic Studies at the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. *Shanlax International Journal of Tamil Research*, 5(4), 61-73.
2. Ahmed, Z. (2020). Parents Role in promoting the Reading Habit among the Children: An Empirical Examination. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 3958. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3958>.

3. Amaravathi, A. (2020). Use and Awareness of Reading Habits among the UG students of Government College for Women Library Chinthamani: A Survey. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 3981. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3981>.
5. Devarajan, G. (1979). Reading habits of the secondary school students in Trivandrum. *ASLIB Bulletin*, 6(1), 93-94.
6. Khatri, D., & Walia, P.K. (2020). Exploring the Reading Interest of College students of the University of Delhi. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 3933. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3933>.
7. Kori, D., & Shwetha, B.K. (2020). Reading Interest and Study Habits among the graduate students: A Study at the Government First Grade College, Mudipu, Mangaluru, Karnataka. *Library Progress (International)*, 40(1), 126-132
8. Luong, T.D. (2021). Current Situation of Reading Culture of Vietnamese students in some Universities of Social Sciences and Humanities. *European Science Review*, 3(4), 13-19.
9. Raosoft, (2021) Raosoft sample size calculator <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>
10. Ramasamy, K., & Padma, P. (2020). Does the Gender Influence the Reading Habits, Preferences, and Attitudes of School Students?: A Case Study. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 3549. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3549>.