



Reading Habits among Pre-University Students: A Study of District Anantnag- J&K

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Abstract

One of the main functions of Library system at Secondary school is to inculcate the Reading habits among the Students. Today's students are the future citizens and also the nation builders. It is primary and binding duty of all those concerned with Education to train the students so adequately that they face the challenges of the future. Reading ability is recognized as an important factor that contributes to students success in school. Students who read frequently tend to become skillful readers. Their reading skills support them in deeply understanding information and knowledge, and prepares them for college academics. This study investigates reading attitudes and reading habits among Pre-University students in the Anantnag District of J&K-India. The study shows dwindling nature of reading habits among the Students and major disparity among the selected Faculties.

Keywords: Reading Habits, Pre-University Students, Reading Attitudes, Information, learning, Information Literacy

1. Introduction

Reading is the passion of the greatest personalities of all times at all ages which helped to pass on knowledge through generations. Thus reading habit influences in the promotion of one's personal development in particular and social progress in general. Regular and systematic reading sharpens the intellect, refines the emotions, elevates tastes and provides perspectives for one's living thereby prepares a person for an effective participation in the social, religious, cultural and political life. Reading fires the imagination of the person by adding new sight to eyes and new wisdom to



mind. Reading loads the mind with new software (Satija, 2002). The individual who reads well has at his command a means for widening his mental horizon and for multiplying his opportunities of success. Reading is a vital factor affecting intellectual and emotional growth. Reading is an activity engaged in most people throughout their life time. It is an interactive activity as readers not only get to share the thought of the author, but also are able to interpret the thoughts of the author. The concept of reading is of particular interest. At the same time, reading is basic to learning and earning is basic to survival. Now, the reading has gained its own value and important place, reading is the royal road of knowledge. It is the key to learning and personal enjoyment. While schools and colleges are educating students through the help of teachers. Reading ability is recognized as an important factor that contributes to students success in school (Kim & Anderson, 2011). Students who read frequently tend to become skilful readers (Krashen, 2009). Their reading skills support them in deeply understanding information and knowledge (Annamalai & Muniandy, 2013). Reading occupies a pivotal role in the life of a man. Reading opens the doors of the treasures of knowledge. It is an important means of introducing the child to the world that surrounds him. It is the very foundation on which the edifice of the child is to be built. Reading is one of the most important components of our language and it is an essential tool for lifelong learning for all learners. Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development. Students who comply with reading assignments will be advantaged in their exams (Sappington, Kinsey, & Munsayac, 2002). According to Kim and Anderson (2011), the more time students spend on reading, the more skilful they become; and the better students are at reading, the more success they achieve in their courses. Reading activity leads to important cognitive outcomes and may result in habits that affect the rest of students' academic lives (Schutte & Malouff, 2007). Indeed, students develop their critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through reading processes as a result of regularly using their abilities of thinking such as imagination, analysis, judgment and creativity (Igwe, 2011). Because regular reading facilitates the development of reading competence (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012). Students who read frequently become autonomous and independent readers (Tse, Lam, Lam, Loh, & Westwood, 2005). Reading, therefore, can be seen as an important factor that contributes to the growth of students' intellect and emotion; and paves the way to life-long learning (Lone, 2011). We are currently experiencing the exponential growth of information and entertainment being created in a digital format. These resources are gaining importance particularly among younger people in Information society. This phenomenon may change the way people perceive about reading and how printed materials are being utilized to facilitate reading.



2. Review of related literature

The review focuses on reading habits and reading interest in order to enhance the understanding of the area to provide a conceptual framework for future study. The scope of this literature is a review extracted from books, journals articles, conference papers, theses and dissertations, technical reports, bibliographies, speeches and talks in both print based and electronic media on the subject of reading habits and reading interests. Lim (1974) carried out a study of the reading habits and interests of sixth form students in English medium schools and their use of the school library facilities. Findings revealed that the students read regularly outside school hours. They also read mainly for acquiring knowledge and for study purposes only. The relationship of the library and reading habits appears to be not statistically significant. Students do not know well to utilize the library facilities. Mohammad (1982) carried out a survey on reading interest among secondary school students in Rompim, Malaysia. The survey aimed at investigating students reading interest on newspapers, books, magazines and comics on how often they read those materials. Respondents gave priority to reading text books in order for them to get the best exam result followed by newspapers and magazines because they wanted to improve their general knowledge. Walia and Sinhav (2014) made an attempt to answer the questions like what, why and how do the school-going teenagers in Delhi read. The findings of the study reveal a decline in sports and outdoor recreational activities during leisure. The study reveals that the reading preferences of the children are affected by their age, gender and the type of schools they attend. Singh (2011) investigated academic achievement and study habits of higher secondary students. The study depicts that girls and boys differ significantly in their study habits and academic achievement. Gupta (2010) examined study habits and academic achievement among the Students belonging to different categories. The study reveals that gender has no significant impact on the study habits and academic achievement of the students. Karim (2006) carried out a study to understand the reading habits and attitudes at the Bachelor of IT students and the Bachelor of Art students from the International Islamic University Malaysia. Findings reported that significant differences exist between the two groups of students in terms of types of material and reading resources used. Haliru et al (2015) carried out a study on an assessment of reading habit among secondary school students in Kaduna Metropolis. The study highlighted that out of 480 respondents (54%) read textbooks, followed by (20%) respondent who affirmed they read novels/fiction, another (5%) read reference books while (21.0%) indicated all of the above. Rajput.(2014) analyzed the reading skills prospects and challenges of the students of Government Arts and Commerce College, Indore, M.P., India. The study shows that, majority of the respondents spend 2 – 4 hours daily for reading. Many of the students have got guidance to



promote reading skills. The problems faced by the students in reading are mainly the lack of latest information, insufficiency of time due to busy schedule of classes, etc.

3. Scope and limitations of the study.

This study is aimed at knowing the use of Higher Secondary School libraries by students only. The study endeavors to investigate the reading habits and interests among the Students at Pre-University in Anantnag District of J&K-India. The scope of the study is limited to six (6) major Higher Secondary School of the district including three Urban and three Sub-Urban institutions. The Urban institutions are Government Boys Model Higher Secondary School Govt. Girls Model Higher Secondary School and Govt. Higher Secondary School Dialgam. The Sub-Urban institutions are, Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School Seer Hamdan, Govt. Higher Secondary School Wanpoh, and Govt. Higher Secondary School Mattan. The major limitation of study being, the number of students as very large, only a sample of the total students' population is considered here. Although, there are 20 (Twenty) Higher Secondary schools in the district, but majority of them are newly upgraded and rural with minimum library system, hence excluded from the study.

4. Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to ascertain the reading habits among the students at Pre-University level in the selected institutions. The specific objectives of the study are:

- I. To investigate reading habits among the students at Senior Secondary School level.
- II. To analyze reading interests and attitudes among the selected students.
- III. To find out the library resources and services and their utilization by the students.
- IV. To ascertain factors hindering reading among students.

5. Hypotheses

- I. Pre University Level students are fully aware about the various digital and print information resources and there is no significant difference in the reading habits of male and female students.
- II. All the Pre University Students use the library resources and services and there is no significant difference in the use of such resources and services in male and female students.

6. Methodology

For the purpose of the study, descriptive survey research method has been adopted. The survey method with the instrument of questionnaire was used for data collection. The population of the study is students in the selected Secondary Schools of the Anantnag District of J&K-India. The total population of selected

six (6) institutions for the study was 2500, comprising of Medical, Non-Medical, Arts and Humanities, Commerce and Home Science Faculties. Descriptive statistic techniques like tables of frequency counts and percentages were used in the analysis. ANOVA, Chi Square and Wilcoxon Rank Sum tests were used for hypothesis testing. To improve the reliability and validity, errors, and corrections observed were affected and incorporated into the study.

Table 1
Population of the Study

a. Population profile

Name of the School	No of Students
Govt. Higher Secondary Model School (Boys) Anantnag	650
Govt. Higher Secondary School Seer Hamdan	300
Govt. Girls Model Higher Secondary School Anantnag	700
Govt. Higher Secondary School Wanpoh	350
Govt. Higher Secondary School Dialgam	300
Govt. Higher Secondary School Mattan	200
Total	2500

6.1 Sample Size:

For present study Sample size was statistically determined by using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

S= required sample size

X^2 = the table value of chi square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level
(1.96x1.96= 3.841)

N= population size

P= The population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

d= degree of accuracy expressed as proportion, (0.05)

The population of the students and faculty under study was 2500. Further, to ensure an optimal sample size, the 95% confidence level was pre-assigned and a small sampling error (0.05) was fixed. Let the population distribution be 50%, and then applying the above formula:

$$S = 3.841 \times 2500 \times 0.5(1-0.5) / 0.0025(2500-1) + 3.841 \times 0.5(1-0.5)$$

$$S = 333.33$$

S= 334

Thus, the Sample size for the present study is 334.

6.2. Administration of the Tool

Total no of 334 questionnaires were distributed Among the students under study. The sample size was divided into two equal halves for male and female students. As such 167 questionnaires were administered among the male and equal no of questionnaires were administered among the female students . Simple Random Method was adopted for the questionnaire distribution among each group.

Table 2

Questionnaire distribution and response

No of Questionnaires Distributed		No of Questionnaires Collected Back		Response Rate
Male Students	Female Students	Male Students	Female Students	100%
167	167	167	167	

6.3. Background of the Respondents

Table 3

Background of the Respondents

Gender	Background			
	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural	Total
Male	58	71	38	167
Female	66	72	29	167

6.4. Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Table 4

Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Age Group					Total
	16-17	18-19	20-21	22-23	More than 23	
Male	102	51	09	05	00	167
Female	116	45	04	02	00	167

7. Data analysis and interpretation

Primary data collected through the questionnaire is presents and analyzed in the tabular form as under:

Table 5

Use of Information Resources in the Library

Gender	Always	Sometimes	Neutral	Seldom	Never	N
Male	15	19	47	46	40	167
Female	18	21	36	53	39	167
Total	33	40	83	99	79	334

Table 5 depicts that maximum no of male and female students seldom use library resources, followed by the never option, least no of students use library resources always. T Test was employed upon the table between the two groups of users, i.e. Male and Female students and the results are as under:

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Mean	33.40	33.40
Variance	233.30	203.30
Observations	5.00	5.00
Df	8.00	
t Stat	0.00	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.50	
t Critical one-tail	1.86	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1.00	
t Critical two-tail	2.31	

The results of the T Test give enough evidence to accept the Null Hypothesis as the calculated value of T is less than the Critical value at the given degree of freedom. The results of the test suggest that there is no significant difference in the use of library information resources by the male and female students.

Table 6

Preferred Sources of Information by the Students

Gender	Print Sources	Digital Sources	N
Male	103	64	167



Female	127	40	167
Total	230	104	334

Table 6 depicts that most of the male and female students prefer print resources over the digital resources. However the number of male students using the digital resources is significantly more compared to their female counterparts.

Table 7
Barriers in the use of Digital Information Resources

Gender	Lack of Awareness	Lack of Skills	Lack of Time	Other Reasons	N
Male	48	51	40	28	167
Female	38	47	55	27	167
Total	86	98	95	55	334

Table 7 depicts that lack of skills and lack of awareness about the information sources is the main hurdle in the use of information resources by the student. T Test was employed upon the table between the two groups of users, i.e. Male and Female students and the results are as under:

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Mean	41.75	41.75
Variance	105.58	144.92
Observations	4.00	4.00
Df	6.00	
t Stat	0.00	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.50	
t Critical one-tail	1.94	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1.00	
t Critical two-tail	2.45	

The results of the T Test give enough evidence to accept the Null Hypothesis as the calculated value of T is less than the Critical value at the given degree of freedom. The results of the test suggest that there is no significant difference in the opinion male and female students regarding the barriers of use of information sources.



8. Suggestions and recommendations

Based on the findings and analysis of the study, the following recommendations are made for effective and effect use of library resources by the students:

- Teachers should encourage students for maximum use of Library and its resources by assigning projects and assignments that would necessitate frequent visits to institutional library.
- Faculty should motivate students to visit library and read not only lecture notes, but novels, and fiction and biographies of renowned personalities of the world.
- Provision of a balanced collection of enjoyable and interesting books should be acquired which can attract students towards library, thus promoting reading culture.
- Organizing library tours and exhibitions on important days, during which students should be introduced to the library services and collections. This will in turn make potential readers as habitual readers.
- School students can be motivated to reading through storytelling, shared reading, creating reading clubs and other such pleasure or fun reading programs.
- Efforts should be made by the Education Department to enact the implement a stringent and appropriate library legislations to enforce compliance of reading habits with education policy of the State.

9. Conclusion

The development of life-long reading interests and reading habits is a constant process which begins at home, improves systematically in the school. Reading habits is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Becoming a skilled and habitual reader enhances the chances of success at school and other endeavors of life. Reading is not just for school, it is for life. Reading in all its variety, is vital to be better informed, having better understanding of ourselves and others, and for our intellect as thoughtful, constructive, responsible contributor to a democratic and cohesive society. In short, a reading nation is an informed nation. Poor reading habit has very bad consequences on the academic performance of the students. The study shows that majority of the students engage in reading to pass examinations. Also, the study reveals that there is dwindling trend of reading habits due to the emerging social media and Internet. The study further pinpoints that, insufficient collection, outdated collection and some Non-cooperative Librarian staff as the major hindrances to reading among the Students.



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