

# Reading habit among college students studying social science, science and commerce

**Dr. P Arora<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Anuradha Seth<sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Sr. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology,  
Government College for Women, Parade, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, (India)*

*<sup>2</sup>Librarian, Department of Education,  
Government College of Education, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, (India)*

## **ABSTRACT**

*Reading gives pleasure, knowledge and understanding. It is the basic tool for academic success and higher education is no exception. Thus, it is important to know the reading habit of college students in order to develop better academic skill in them. A total number of two hundred (N=200) students participated in the study with gender and subjects opted by students as the moderating variables. Findings of the study are encouraging; female students prefer to read novel during leisure time and also take interest in newspaper, magazine, keep up with current affairs whereas male students are interested to read technology related reading material. Majority of female consider library to be the most favourable place for reading. Further, the study revealed that students from Social Science, Science and Commerce has preference to read material related to their field of study.*

**Key words:** *Reading habit, reading preference, reading interest, college students*

## **I.INTRODUCTION**

The reading habit has a significant impact on reader's personality and social development. Regular reading also enhances cognition, language expression, brings emotional maturity, improves perspective of everyday living and makes a person better adjusting in everyday life. Fondness towards reading develops from the very early years of life, especially during school days. It comes from the way the individual is motivated by teachers, parents, friends and others around them and also by visiting school or community library. Libraries provide the ideal place where different categories of book are systematically displayed under one roof and also students get an ambient environment to read. Attitude and interest toward reading can be related with learner's feeling and learner's spirit to learn. Positive attitude towards reading help students get the satisfaction of reading various types of books and not merely reading for the sake of academic fulfillment. Students in Higher Education are more focused with their education and career goals. They are more involved with the subjects they opt and their academic success is dependent on their good reading habit. Studies conducted on reading habit of college students reflected different types of findings. In a study on gender differences in reading habit among college students of Kashmir found that both the gender have positive attitude towards reading, preferred reading at

home and read books written in English language. Male students showed greater preference towards books on politics and females read books on science and technology [1]. In yet another study on reading habit and library use conducted among Nigerian students of information resource management [2]. They reported that students engage in reading for entertainment and preferred reading newspapers and magazines, but most of the reading took place outside the university library. Study conducted in Ghana on reading habit among students of polytechnic revealed that although most of the students acknowledged the importance of reading, majority neither read novel or fiction in their last two semester and students mostly concentrated on reading academic books for the purpose of passing examination. [3] In their survey of reading habit among colleges of education students revealed that almost all the respondents understand the importance of reading. 65.5% love to read from their various fields of specialization on a daily basis while 25.0% love reading from their fields of specialization every week [4]. The study confirmed that good reading habits enhance academic performance.

In the era of technological advancement students are gradually deteriorating in their reading interest as they are easily getting distracted by social networking sites, attractive mobile phone applications, television and different other activities in the social media. Moreover, the effect of digital media on reading has increasingly been an area of exploration among all discipline due to which in-depth reading through print media is diminishing. Earlier literature review [5] reflected that in the era of technological advancement, e-books and digital libraries are attracting readers and decreasing print reading due to the introduction of Internet. However, it has been rightly stated, “the shift from print to the computer does not mean the end of literacy itself, but the literacy of print, for electronic technology offers us a new kind of book and new ways to write and read”[6].

There is dearth of literature suggesting college students reading habit, interest and preferences, thus we intended to conduct this study with special emphasis on gender and course opted by students in college on reading habit. Male and female develop their academic outlook based on their personality and way they perceive the world, also students undergoing different courses like social science, science and commerce also have different perspective as each of these subjects also have great contribution in developing students’ knowledge and understanding. Further, the study finding will help us to understand the reading interest of the youth of today and how they can develop as knowledge seekers of tomorrow.

## II.METHODS

### *Participants*

The study was conducted on 200 male and female college student pursuing Social Science, Science and Commerce from recognized Government Degree Colleges of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir.

### *Tools*

‘Reading interest’ of students was generated through semi-structure information schedule [7]. The Reading Habits Questionnaire [2] was used to study the reading habits of the participants. It is a 4 point scale which generates responses on ‘strongly agree’(1), ‘agree’(2), ‘disagree’(3), ‘strongly disagree’(4) categories, respectively.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The data obtained was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 for Windows (SPSS Inc., Chicago). The group differences was examined using Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) for the categorical variables and independent 't' test and ANOVA used for the continuous variables.

### III.RESULT AND TABLE

Table 1, gives description of participants (N=200), who were of age  $20.18 \pm .85$ , 97(48.5%) were male and 103 (51.5%) were female. Sixty seven (33.5%) students were from social science, 69 (34.5%) students from science and 64(32%) students from commerce.

'Reading information' depicted in Table 2, revealed gender difference in context to how they spend their leisure time (p value .004,  $p < .01$  level). Female students are more inclined to reading novels during leisure times. Whereas male students are more interested in sports and socializing with friends. Factors affecting their reading habit (p value=.012,  $< .05$  level) where male students consider 'mere laziness' and female students consider 'academic pressure' as main hindering factor towards developing reading interest. Students studying different subjects also differ among them regarding importance of reading (p value=.023,  $p < .05$  level) and factors hindering reading (p value=.000,  $p < .01$  level). Students of social science feel they develop better self-expression, learn new things, imagine things and give them space from getting bored. Students of science believe that their 'home –environment' is major hindering factor and students of commerce believe 'academic pressure is the major hindering factor in developing reading habit'.

Table 3, reflected that both gender difference and stream opted by students have significant impact in majority of the components of reading habit. Significant group difference have been obtained by male and female students in statements like: "I read only as the need arises"(p value= .012,  $p < .05$  level), "I find time to read newspapers and other general interest magazines" (p value= .037,  $p < .05$  level), "I am interested in reading materials that are technology related" (p value= .001,  $p < .01$  level), "I find time to read for entertainment (p value= .002,  $p < .01$  level), "I read to keep up with current affairs" (p value= .005,  $p < .05$  level) and the library is my favourite reading place (p-value= .032,  $p < .05$  level. Scores in remaining items were comparable between the groups.

Students from different streams also showed significant group difference on the statements like: "I find time to read newspapers and other general interest magazines" (F value= 12.371,  $p < .01$  level), "I am interested in reading materials that are technology related"(F value=18.158,  $p < .01$  level), "I read mostly general literature" (F value= 15.118,  $p < .05$  level), "I read to keep up with current affairs" (F value= 24.498,  $p < .01$  level), other items were comparable between the groups.

**Table 1: Description of college students**

Study variables	College students /n(%)	
	mean	Sd
Age, Mean (SD)	20.18	.85
Gender, n (%)	n	%

Male	97	48.5
Female	103	51.5
<b>Stream</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Social Science	67	33.5
Science	69	34.5
Commerce	64	32

Table 2: 'Reading information' of college students on Gender and Subjects opted by students

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Male</i> n(%)	<i>Female</i> n(%)	$\chi^2$ - value	<i>P</i>	<i>Social</i> <i>Science</i> n(%)	<i>Science</i> n(%)	<i>Commerc</i> <i>e</i> n(%)	$\chi^2$ - value	<i>p</i>
<b><i>Importance of reading</i></b>			.694	.952	25(12.5)	24(12)	25(12.5)	17.82 1	.023*
a)Better self-expression	36(18)	38(19)			)				
b)Learn new things	28(14)	34(17)			24(12)	19(9.5)	19(9.5)		
c)Imagine things	11(5.5)	19(9.5)			11(5.5)	10(5)	9(4.5)		
d)Compliment studies	11(5.5)	9(4.5)			7(3.5)	9(4.5)	4(2)		
e)Get space from getting bored	7(3.5)	7(3.5)	7(3.5)	3(1.5)	4(2)				
<b><i>Leisure time activities mostly spent</i></b>			33.85 6	.004* *				.564	.786
a)Visit social media sites	20(10)	24(12)			20(10)	8(4)	16(8)		
b)Read novels	4(2)	13(6.5)			9(4.5)	4(2)	4(2)		
c)Watch movies	16(8)	18(9)			12(6)	8(4)	5(2.5)		
d)Listen to music	28(14)	33(16.5)	20(10)	22(11)	19(9.5)				

e) Others (sports, games, social visits, etc.)	39(19.5)	12(6)			13(6.5)	20(10)	18(9)		
<b>Hindrance to reading habit</b>									
a)Home Environment	18(6)	22(11)	31.33	.010*	10(5)	26(13)	4(2)	39.212	.000*
b)Mere laziness	38(19)	27(13.5)	7		27(13.5)	25(12.5)	13(6.5)		
c)Academic pressure	35(17.5)	59(29.5)			30(15)	18(9)	46(23)		

\*p value <.05 level, \*\* p value <.01 level

Variables	Male	Female	t-value	p	Social Science n(%)	Science n(%)	Commerce n(%)	F-value	p
<i>I spend less than an hour reading every day</i>	3.227±.715	3.608±.718	1.568	.119	3.269±.729	3.100±.747	3.172±.655	2.4778	.087
<i>I read on weekly basis</i>	3.659±.659	3.495±.712	1.693	.166	3.716±.545	3.696±1.35	3.750±.471	45.118	.122
<i>I read only as the need arises</i>	3.116±.500	3.555±.631	4.603	.012*	3.701±.493	3.572±.648	3.625±.577	24.498	.563
<i>I read mostly print textbooks in my field of study</i>	3.288±.706	3.252±.479	.427	.870	3.403±.719	3.348±.637	3.306±.555	.177	.838
<i>I am more interested in reading my class notes</i>	3.020±.594	3.087±.595	.793	.429	3.423±.523	3.572±.648	3.525±.577	6.168	.086
<i>I find time to read newspapers and other general interest magazines</i>	2.407±.809	2.185±.682	2.092	.037*	2.209±.749	2.058±.802	2.656±.569	12.371	.004**
<i>I am interested in reading materials that are technology related</i>	2.484±.561	2.592±.748	1.148	.001**	2.656±.749	2.765±.791	2.101±.489	18.158	.003**
<i>I read mostly general literature</i>	3.288±.659	3.126±.979	4.655	.222	3.716±.545	2.695±1.03	3.250±.471	15.118	.021*

<i>I find time to read for entertainment</i>	3.505± .631	3.106± .592	4.603	.002**	3.701± .492	3.672± .648	3.625± .577	24.49 8	.112
<i>I read to keep up with current affairs</i>	3.505± .631	2.941± .623	6.349	.005**	3.423± .719	3.347± .637	3.416± .545	24.49 8	.002**
<i>I read mostly for class assignments</i>	2.855± .594	2.786± .456	.919	.120	3.503± .523	3.472± .648	3.425± .577	6.168	.213
<i>I read to research specific topics of interest</i>	2.258± .506	2.116± .547	1.891	.287	2.716± .54512	2.695± 1.03	2.650± .471	45.11 8	.452
<i>I prefer reading electronic materials to print materials</i>	2.587± .554	2.631± .481	.591	.555	3.072± .648	3.701± .492	3.125± .577	.277	.838
<i>The library is my favorite reading place</i>	3.475± .557	3.475± .557	2.385	.032*	3.403± .719	3.347± .637	3.406± .555	1.177	.634

Table 3: 'Reading habit' of college students on Gender and Subjects opted by students

\*p value &lt;.05 level, \*\* p value &lt;.01 level

#### IV.DISCUSSION

The present study assessed the reading habit among male and female college students undergoing Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Commerce. The study intended to find out their interest towards reading, acquiring knowledge and developing excellence in their subject in specific. The study finding brought forth certain interesting facts. Earlier studies have conducted study on reading habit on students undergoing professional courses [2][3][8][9], thus we made an attempt to conduct the study on college students undergoing undergraduate degree which in future open doors for post-graduation and other professional courses.

Previous studies have documented individual difference in reading habit that differ in terms of interest, attention, aptitude and situation thus it was important to understand the effect of gender difference in reading habits.[10] In the current study, although, both male and female students give equal importance to reading, even then, female students in our study enjoy reading novel at leisure time and experience academic pressure which hinder their reading habit. There was significant difference between them in certain aspects of reading habit as they not only read when need arises but also keep interest in reading newspapers, magazines, keep track of current affairs and find time to read for entertainment. This finding was supported findings of previous research [2]. However, male students in our study showed inclination in reading material which are technology related and for female students library is considered to be favorite reading place as resources are readily available to fulfill their reading, both these findings contradicted earlier research findings [1].

Our study specially highlighted the importance of reading habit in context to students studying different subjects which has not been attempted by earlier studies. In the study participants from social science and science stream are interested in newspapers, magazines, apart from regular academic books. Students of social science also prefer reading general literature, students of Science take interest in reading material related to technology and students of Commerce are more keen in reading about current affairs and changes in the social and economic world. This attitude towards reading helps them in developing their creativity, imagination and expression in their respective field.

Majority of the earlier studies [5] have found significant difference on choice of reading material print versus digital medium, however in our study the finding is comparable between the groups. Students, by the time they reach college level, realize the advantages and limitations of both print media and digital media and choose to read either of them according to their requirement. For example, electronic media tend to be more useful for searching, while paper-based media are preferred for actual consumption of information, digital medium depends on internet facility where as print medium is ready to use anytime and anywhere, etc.

The current study has its limitation as it is restricted to Jammu province. Library information and library habit of students holds importance to reading habit. A comparative study among students from different professional colleges could have added weightage to the study.

## V.CONCLUSION

Reading habit will hold unique place in the learners mind. Students must be encouraged to read from diverse field and should not get restricted to their own subject preference in order to widen their vision. Student's regular visit to the institution library will help them get oriented to old and new literatures and help them get involved with the environment of reading.

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