Trends of Digital Reading Behaviour among Students in Kolkata, West Bengal, India

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the trends of reading behaviour among the college students in Kolkata, West Bengal, in the context of the digital paradigm. The study evolves that majority of the students (48.75%) who use the internet have done so for more than five years, compared to 42.5% of pupils who have been using it for between one and five years. The use of Tablet for reading was very poor in number (13.75%) in comparison with using mobile phone (90%) and using laptop (60%) and desktop (45%). The study concludes that the use of e-books and other digital reading materials by college students appears to be changing in line with the global rise of digital culture. This has been made possible by the simplicity with which students can access and exchange materials online, the cost and practicality of digital forms, and the growing prominence of multimedia content in education.

Keywords: Reading trends; College Students; Reading behavior; Kolkata; Reading devices

1. Introduction

A healthy reading habit is essential for intellectual development, which in turn fosters the development of creative and original thinking. Reading habits appear to be changing in line with the global rise of digital culture. Academics and library professionals need to take into account how the digital environment affects people's reading habits. A paradigm shifts from utilising traditional methods of doing things to using ICTs has resulted from the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in a variety of spheres of life. The publishing industry and libraries have both been impacted by this paradigm change. The ways in which information is created, managed, and accessed has changed, and there has been a noticeable shift in the reading behaviours and habits of readers, particularly young adults, as recorded in international literature. This is a result of reading material becoming readily and directly accessible in electronic form. The exponential rise and acceptance of digital contents has also caused a transitional change in the media and publishing sectors in this regard.

The technical advancements under the digital paradigm seem to be causing rapid changes in reading behaviour. The rise of the Internet and improvements in information technology as a whole have significantly changed reading habits of the Teenagers (Chauhan & Lal, 2012). As a result, electronic books and electronic resources are gradually supplanting traditional books (Chaudhry & Low, 2009). Due to the requirement for digital access to full text content, libraries have been undergoing transformations and evolving into hybrid institutions. International scholars have started to show interest in the study of digital reading formats and how it affects contemporary reading behaviour in the past ten years. Numerous studies have been conducted on the topics of e-reading, reading in a digital environment, the influence of ICT on reading habits, print vs. digital, and the evolving role of libraries in a digital environment.

There is not much evidence of research on the topic in the literature currently available in databases like Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), Indian Library Science Abstracts (ILSA), Information Science Abstracts (ISA), Web of Science, Scopus, Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA), and ProQuest Dissertation & Theses Global. There was, therefore, a clear knowledge gap in this area.

2. Review of Literature

The reading culture is also greatly influenced by other elements, such as studying for exams, parental disapproval, the difficulty of finding public libraries, the cost of books, and a lack of interest in reading serious literature (Pandian, 1997). Nowadays, customers favoured using electronic resources for reference, such as e-books, search engine websites, and digital libraries (Guthrie, 2002). The ethnicity, language utilised, and level of education have an impact on the readership patterns of newspapers and magazines (A. Long, 1984). In addition, Long (2003) discovered that readers preferred reading digital books as their reference materials rather than hardcopy books from cover to cover (S. A. Long, 2003). As a result, it was discovered that electronic media was more practical, could save time and money, and could be accessed online anywhere, at any time (Ismail & A.N., 2005).

In their study of adult readers, Karim and Hasan (2007) discovered that reading has a significant impact on career development, employment success, and the capacity to adapt to change (Abdul Karim & Hasan, 2007). But the rise of the Internet and improvements in information technology as a whole have significantly changed reading habits (Chauhan & Lal, 2012). Technology is still advancing quickly, and reading habits are still changing. Many urban kids today have access to new technology, and they are using it to its fullest potential (Kaur &Medury, 2011; Rangaswamy & Cutrell, 2012). Electronic books and other resources are gradually taking the role of traditional books (Chaudhry & Low, 2009; Low & Sattar Chaudhry, 2009; RAMAIAH, 2006). The time available for reading has also been reduced by urban lifestyle, travel time, and the fatigue it causes. Nowadays, young people have less time to read at a study table. There is a paucity of work examining the effect of the altered environment on the reading choices of Indian teenagers, despite the observation that Indian college students are shifting from reading on paper to reading online (Chauhan & Lal, 2012).

Since libraries are usually thought of as sources of information and knowledge, it is crucial that they comprehend and adapt to the evolving nature of knowledge acquisition (Dali, 2010). To accomplish the overall goals of the school, the school library must provide the necessary atmosphere by fully integrating itself into the educational system (Kumar & Ansari, 2010).

It has long been known that various user groups of information, such as scientists, social scientists, and persons in the arts and humanities, have various information needs. For each of these groupings, subject manuals and reference materials have been created with this objective in mind (Blazek & Aversa, 1994). The comparison of reading habits between faculty and students from various areas demonstrates that consumers who are interested in the arts and humanities prefer print information to that of social sciences, according to Christianson and Aucoin saw a trend toward electronic content (Christianson & Aucoin, 2005).A study conducted in Kashmir by Loan (2011) contrasted the reading preferences of students majoring in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences (Loan, 2011). He asserted that one of the elements determining reading preferences is subject background. According to the survey, students who major in humanities and social sciences read more books than students who major in sciences, who read more from electronic reading sources. According to a study conducted by Lincoln (2013) among 2,500 humanities students and faculty members, the majority of respondents favoured the library purchasing at least some reference volumes, Bible commentaries, out-of-print publications, and textbooks in electronic format (Lincoln, 2013).

It is possible to reach the conclusion that although a number of studies have been conducted on different aspects of reading trends of various community, the majority of these studies have concentrated on groups of individuals after conducting an in-depth analysis and observation of all of the data gathered about previous research.However, the readingbehaviourof the students in Kolkata is not taken into consideration in these studies.

A significant knowledge gap has been identified in this field as a result of an in-depth examination of the observations that were made possible as a result of the earlier studies that were conducted on the topic of information behaviour. A significant knowledge gap has been identified in this field as a result of an in-depth

examination of the observations that were made possible as a result of the earlier studies that were conducted on the topic of reading trends.

3. Objectives

The main purpose of the study was to track the attitudes of college students reading behaviors toward reading in West Bengal. Additionally, the study was conducted with the following objectives:

  i. To find out the students' experience of Internet use and electronic devices for reading.
  ii. To find out students' satisfaction with the use of electronic reading resources and their sources.
  iii. To find out their preferred format of reading.

4. Methodology

The survey method was used in order to investigate the problem of the proposed research work and to accomplish the objectives of the proposed research study. College students were questioned for their input in order to compile the necessary information. The survey's samples would be chosen at random before being analysed. Interviews with users would be conducted in order to collect the necessary information. The first step was to devise a questionnaire containing specific questions that were connected to the topic that had been suggested. The entire survey would be carried out with the assistance of questionnaires in addition to interviews. The interview would be conducted whenever it was feasible to do so, and whenever it was not, questionnaires would be emailed to the users. The information that was obtained through the survey was tabulated, and then it was analysed with the goals in mind.

5. Analysis

The analysis of the study are given below:

Table1: Experience of Internet Use

Year	Frequency	Percentage
More than 5 Years	39	48.75
1 to 5 years	34	42.5
Less than 1 years	7	8.75

The Table makes it quite evident that the majority of teenagers (48.75%) who use the internet have done so for more than five years, compared to 42.5% of pupils who have been using it for between one and five years. On the other side, a very tiny percentage of pupils (8.75%) have only recently started using the internet.

Table 2: Access of Electronic Devices for Reading

Devices	Frequency	Percentage
Desktop	36	45
Laptop	48	60
Mobile Phone	72	90
Tablet	11	13.75

This Table 2 demonstrates that the vast majority of teenagers nearly 90% use mobile phones as reading devices. And only 13.75 percent of students use tablets as a reading device, compared to 45% of students who use desktop computers and 60% of students who use laptops for reading.

Table 3: Using Electronic Resources to Access Reading Materials

Devices	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Desktop	42.5	18.75	2.5	21.25	15
Laptop	23.75	41.25	11.25	7.5	16.25
Mobile Phone	12.5	16.25	31.25	25	15
Tablet	2.5	3.75	1.25	7.5	85

According to Table 3, 42.5% of students always use desktops, compared to 15% who never do, 21.5% who do so rarely or frequently, 18.75% who do so frequently, and 2.5% who do so sometimes to access reading materials.

In the case of laptops, 41.25% frequently use laptops, 16.25% never use laptops, and 23.75% usually use laptops, compared to 11.25% and 7.5% who occasionally or seldom use laptops for reading materials.

It has been shown that 31.25% of students occasionally use their mobile phones to access reading materials, compared to 16.5 % and 25 % who frequently or seldom use their phones for this reason.

In the case of tablets, approximately 85% of students never use them, 7.5% rarely use them, and 1.25% occasionally use. Only 2.5% of students always utilize tablets to acquire their reading materials.

Table 4: Searching Electronic Resources for Getting Reading Material

Electronic Resources	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Search Engines	32.5	33.75	16.25	12.5	5
Open Access Platform	17.5	28.75	23.75	21.25	8.75
Library Websites	12.5	20	32.5	21.25	13.75
Discovery Tools	13.75	20	25	23.75	17.5
Publisher's Websites	33.75	32.5	16.25	12.5	5

This table shows that 32.5% of students constantly use search engines to find their reading material, compared to 33.75% and 16.25% who occasionally or regularly use search engines, 12.5% of students who hardly ever use them, and 5% of students who never do.

In comparison to the 28.75%, 23.75%, and 21.25% of students who frequently, occasionally, and seldom use open access resources to obtain reading materials, just 17.5% of students always use them and 8.75% never do.

Only 12.5% of students constantly use library websites to get reading materials, while 20%, 32.5%, and 21.25% use them frequently, occasionally, or infrequently, respectively. Only 13.75% of students never use library websites.

Only 13.75% of students constantly use Discovery Tools, 17.5% never use it, 23.75% seldom use it, and 20% and 25% of students use it regularly or occasionally.

In the case of Publisher's websites, 33.75% of students use it exclusively for obtaining reading material, while 32.5% use it regularly, 16.25% occasionally, and 12.5% never. 5% of students never utilise Publisher's catalogue.

Table 5: Preferred Format for Reading

Devices	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Paper	12.5	15	28.75	20	23.75
Electronic	45	20	7.5	16.25	11.25

Table 5 makes it quite evident that only 12.5% of students always use paper for reading, compared to 45% who consistently use electronic forms, 23.75% who never use paper, and 11.25% who never use electronic media.

It is notable that only 20% of students seldom use paper formats and 16.25% of students rarely use electronic formats, with just 28.75% of students occasionally using paper formats and 7.5% occasionally using electronic formats.

Table 6: Preferred Format of Reading According to the Information Need

Information	Print	Electronic
Political	73.75	26.25
Personal	48.75	51.25
Entertainment	27.5	72.5
Sports	15	85
Academic	52.5	47.5
Leisure	76.25	23.75
Problem Solving	11.25	88.75

Table 6 demonstrates that in order to obtain personal information, 26.25% students prefer electronic format whereas 73.75% of students prefer print format for political information. For entertainment, 51.25% of students utilise electronic format, while 48.75% use print format. While 27.5% of students utilise print format, 72.5% select electronic. Only 15% of pupils select the print format when it comes to sports, while 65% choose the electronic format.

It is also evident that 52.5% of students utilise print media for academic purposes, while 47.5 % use electronic ones. 76.25% of students use print media for pleasure, while 23.75% use electronic media. Only 11.25% of students utilise print media for problem solving, compared to 88.75% of students who use electronic media.

6. Discussion

The main objective of the study was to investigate the trends of reading behaviour among the college students in Kolkata, West Bengal in the context of the digital paradigm. Students' reading habits have changed significantly during the previous few decades. Students today have access to a wide range of information and entertainment alternatives because to the development of technology and the rising popularity of digital media.

The study evolves that majority of the students use mobile phone for reading electronic resources as the students are using Internet for a long time. Majority of the students are using Internet for more than five years (48.75%) and a good percentage of students (42.5%) were using Internet from one to five years. The use of Tablet for reading was very poor in number (13.75%) in comparison with using mobile phone (90%) and using laptop (60%) and desktop (45%). The reason for using mobile device for reading is probably most of the students have a smart phone with internet facility. The cost of using Internet provided by different service provider now-a-days is not expensive. They search/ browse information through Internet and read whenever they want. On the other hand, using Internet in desktop or laptop is somehow expensive as in these cases students have to have a broadband facility for internet connectivity.

Table 4 shows that maximum students use search engine for searching electronic resources, as maximum students use mobile phone devices for reading and using search engine is more convenient way in mobile phone. Publisher's websites were also widely used in searching information. Open access platforms, library websites and discovery tools were used less by the students while searching online academic resources. In this situation, library should take initiative to promote these platforms. Library websites should be designed in such a way that the discovery tools should be highlighted and promote open access by listing open access platforms in library webpage. Library should conduct orientation on open access and use of discovery tools.

It is quite evident that maximum number of students preferred electronic media for reading over print media (Table 5). Students preferred electronic media for reading information related to problem solving, sports, entertainment and personal information. Whether, preference was high in print media for reading information related to political, academic and reading at leisure time.

7. Conclusion

One of the most important changes in recent years is the rise in the use of e-books and other digital reading materials by college students. This has been made possible by the simplicity with which students can access and exchange materials online, the cost and practicality of digital forms, and the growing prominence of multimedia content in education. Another recent development is the elevated value of critical reading and digital literacy among college students. It is also important to recognise the wide variances in reading preferences and practices among college students. While some students might prefer reading physical books, others could prefer reading on a screen. Similar to this, some pupils may like traditional tale formats while others may favour more interesting multimedia-based information. Overall, it is clear that reading habits among college students are always evolving in response to a changing environment. It is our responsibility as publishers and educators to remain aware of these developments and to provide original strategies and materials that satisfy the diverse demands of today's students. Since educators and employers alike recognise the importance of these competencies in the modern workforce, many colleges are investing in programmes and resources geared at helping students develop these competencies.

One of the most important steps we can take in this direction is to accept the potential for technology to alter how we read and learn. By utilising digital platforms and resources, we can create engaging and dynamic reading experiences that appeal to a range of learners. But, we must also accept that many children's lives continue to be greatly impacted by traditional reading methods and print-based materials. By offering a range of options and formats, we can help to ensure that all students have access to the resources they need to succeed.

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