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Reading Habits in Digital Era during Lockdown among Adolescent

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Abstract

Objectives : To assess the reading habits in digital era during COVID-19 lockdown period and to find the association between reading habits with selected demographic variables. **Methods**: A descriptive study design was adopted among 300 undergraduate students of Chennai, India using three tools such as Reading Attitude Scale, Self-Report Habit Index Questionnaire and Self-structured questionnaire on Reading Habit in Digital Era. The data was collected by using Google Forms considering the surge in COVID-19. **Findings**: Most of the samples 132 (44%) were reading newspaper during the lockdown. Many of the samples 114 (38%) were using google classroom for their academic activity, 131 (44%) samples were spending 1 to 3 hours per day for academic work. Half of the samples 151 (50.33%) accepted that reading online increases access to information sources. LinkedIn is famous among UG students. The study concluded that the undergraduate students are interested in digital reading during this lockdown period. The undergraduate students spent most of their time in digital reading, and they are connected with their studies during lockdown. **Novelty**: Many review articles have been published in online learning and related to education. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, many are forced to be away from direct books and started online reading. Therefore, our current review article highlights reading habits among adolescent during lockdown.

Keywords: Key Word: Reading Habits; Reading Attitude; Digital Era; Reading Attitude Scale; SelfReport Habit Index Questionnaire; Lockdown; Adolescent

1 Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the WHO declared an outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and repeated the call for countries to act immediately and increase responses to treatment, detection and reduction of transmission to save lives [1].

COVID-19 is a pandemic disease that has widely affected the world. It makes a sudden twist in everyone's life, thereby challenges on different live spheres such as political, scientific, education, religious, economic, public health and so forth in the countries concerned [2].

In view of the pandemic situation, on 25 March 2020, the Prime Minister of India announced that most commercial activities and mass gatherings, including schooling and public institutions, were locked down countrywide and social distancing was

encouraged [3]. As of 05 May 2021 in India, 47% of new cases reported globally and 276 daily cases reported per million populations [4].

In the unusual circumstance of the century, it is vital to see how people adapt to the government's constraints due to the lockdown owing to the pandemic and the effects on their different habits. Staying at home for a long time may change lifestyles of many individuals. Moreover, it may even lead to boredom and redundancy. In other words, people spent many days indoors and it influence their daily routine. Learning was the basis for life pleasure and is closely connected to vocational effectiveness [5].

In particular, the provision of information or news regarding the pandemic disease or the lockdown was essential. Reading is an entertainment that inspires thought and imagination. This means, in a period that they are essential, reading offers hybrid benefits of information and entertainment (Merga, 2017) [6].

Today, in the 21st Century, we are experiencing revolution of digital technology with easy access to internet, smart-board, e-newspaper, e-reading material. In upcoming days, we can expect a more number of students carry electronic gadgets, which may carry thousands of books instead of one or two books. With this rise of technology, e-readers benefited from that, however, the reading habits are also affected in general [7].

According to National Survey of India (2020), the literacy rate of India is 77.7%. The report also shows that almost 4% of rural households and 23% of urban households had computers. Among 15-29 years, almost 24% were able to operate a computer in rural and 56% in urban areas [8].

A survey on digital lifestyle found that 71% are e-readers, since 29% are purchasing physical books. (Sanika Diwanji, 2019) [9]. Reading habits had increased to 36% during lockdown comparatively 21% before lockdown. Since people working from home were forced to use internet for various purpose like work, education, entertainment etc. (Mahendra Kumar,2020) [10].

In India, the pandemic is currently different from one place to another, in terms of mortality and infection spread. It is an opportunity to find out how people adapt their habits and routines while in the home. We think it is important to explore ways in which the pandemic situation could have been handled and to explore reading habits among adolescents during lockdown.

1.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to find the reading habits among adolescents during lockdown period

1.2 Objectives

- to assess the reading habits in digital era during lockdown period among adolescent
- to find the association between reading habits with the selected demographic variables

1.3 Reading Habit

Reading habits of adolescents are closely associated with their emotional vocabulary. The learners who are frequent readers can produce more emotional words, than those who are less frequent in reading [11].

Adolescent reading habits and preferences suggested that females read more digital. Better awareness of adolescent reading pattern will aid academicians and parents to guide teenagers reading habits [12]. A recent survey suggested that reading enjoyment has increased during lockdown from 47.8% to 55.9%. Around 35% young adults agreed that their reading habits are improved during lockdown [13].

1.4 Reading Attitude

Reading attitudes are defined as reading feelings by students that lead to read tasks being approached or avoided [14]. Adolescent attitude towards academic digital reading are positively associated whereas negative association with recreational digital reading [15].

In the beginning, most pupils felt positive about reading but often negative attitudes towards reading are developed, according to Ofsted. This then leads to a ferocious strengthening circle in which students who fail to progress are widening the gap between their readings and their peers and thus hardening their negative attitudes [16].

An exploratory study by Clark and De Zoysa shows that reading pleasure and reading attitudes were directly linked to the way they read and were indirectly linked to their readings. Young people had positive reading attitudes and most of them agreed it was important. In general, young people reading at or above their age levels are more positive about reading than young people reading below their age levels. Significantly more young people that read below the age level in comparison with more young people agree that it is more important for girls than for boys to read. Similarly, they are far less likely to agree with statements that reading is a life skill, and that reading tells them what they need or want to know [17].

1.5 Reading Habit in Digital Era during Lockdown

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus highlighted that joy of reading can influence young adults, to reduce worries and developing hope. Read the World program initiated by International Publishers Association (IPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF in 2020, with the aim of upgrading the mental health of young minds. Hand in hand of it, across the world many authors provide extracts of their publications to millions of young readers[18].

One of the effective strategies to overcome the emotional imbalance with healthy activities can be by developing appropriate reading habit. Hence, medical and health experts of government of India started motivating citizens to focus on reading during lockdown[19]. The latest report of Amazon China concluded that 70% readers agreed that they read more books during lockdown[20].

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Design of the study

This study focuses on reading habits in digital era during lockdown period among adolescent at selected colleges in Chennai. The descriptive survey design was adopted due to the spread of the population of the study.

2.2 Sample and sampling technique

Total of 300 responses were collected from undergraduate students of selected colleges in Chennai, who aged 17 to 19 years. Non – probability purposive sampling technique was adopted. During selection of samples, verified the inclusive as well as exclusive criteria. The inclusive criteria included the students who can read and understand English and who have internet accessibility.

2.3 Instruments

The tool consists of four sections:

Part A: Demographic Variables such as age, gender, course of study, year of study, family income and area of residence.
Part B: Reading Attitude Scale. It consists of 7 items with 5-point Likert scale
Part C: Self-Report Habit Index Questionnaire. It consists of 5 items with 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree.
Part D: Reading Habit in Digital Era. It is a self-structured questionnaire which consists of 11 items.

2.4 Data collection method

Ethical clearance was obtained from Institutional Ethical Committee of ACS Medical College & Hospital, Chennai. A formal informed consent was obtained from the study participants. The investigator collected the data using the e-generated tools through web. The link to the web-based questionnaire was generated in the month of July, 2020 and was shared on respondents on WhatsApp. Data was collected for four weeks between the months of July, 2020 and August, 2020 and an intermittent follow-up and reminder was given to the respondents

2.5 Data analysis

The descriptive statistics, frequency count, simple percentage and inferential statistics were used to analyse the collected data.

3 Results and Discussion

The survey responses are analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The centre of the work is to analyse the reading habit of adolescent in the digital era during the lockdown of COVID – 19 pandemics. The solitary purpose of the study was to find the change of reading habit among undergraduate students. Three hundred undergraduate students responded to the online questionnaire.

3.1 Socio – demographic factors associated with reading habit

More than half of the samples 161 (54%) were from 20-22 years of age. Majority of the samples 226 (76%) were female, more than half of the samples 179 (60%) were from medical domain, 109 (36%) were II year students, and nearly half of the samples 147 (49%) were living in urban area.

Table 1. Distribution of samples regarding reading activities

Sl. No	Questionnaire	Almost every day		Once/Twice a week		Once/Twice a month		A few times a year		Never or hardly ever	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Read on your own outside of college subjects during the lockdown	86	29	140	46	44	15	18	6	12	4
2	Read the newspaper during the lockdown	132	44	74	25	37	12	18	6	39	13

Table 2. Distribution of samples regarding reading habits

Sl. No	Questionnaire	Almost always		More than half the time		About half the time		Less than half the time		Never or hardly ever	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Reading habit helps me learn about myself in lockdown period	112	38	88	29	67	22	23	8	10	3
2	Reading helps me to understand why people feel or act the way they do	111	37	91	30	70	23	17	6	11	4
3	I believe that reading will help me get ahead during lockdown when I am no longer in college	146	49	78	26	49	16	21	7	6	2
4	I can understand what I read in college subjects at home during lockdown	99	33	83	28	80	27	22	7	16	5
5	I learn worthwhile things from reading books in lockdown	107	36	100	33	60	20	23	8	10	3

3.2 Self-Report Habit Index Score among undergraduate students

The lock-down isolates students from regular academic activities at home. However, many digital libraries afford remote access to students for accessing digital resources from home. The digital resources have inspired the students to read more content during lockdown days[21], however among 300 samples, 19 (6%) were reading frequently, 26 (9%) samples were feeling as odd if they do not read something, 25 (8%) considered reading as their daily routine and whereas 26 (9%) were interested in reading from school age onwards.

Table 3. Distribution of Reading Habit in the Digital Era.

Sl. No	Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
	What are the items read most frequently by you, in online during the lock-down		
	a) Newspaper	43	14
	b) Magazine	9	3
	c) Textbook	22	7
1.	d) Novel	26	8.5
	e) Email	11	3.5
	f) Online information	101	34
	g) Whats-app	68	23
	h) Fitness	20	7
	What is the most priority activity carried by you, when you are in online		
	a) Listen to music	93	31
	b) Play games	44	15
	c) Look at photos	9	3
2.	d) Shop online	6	2
	e) Chat with friends	75	25
	f) Check emails	37	12
	g) Download the movies	36	12
	What internet package used by you for online reading activity		
	a) VPN	1	0.5
	b) Dial Up	1	0.5
3.	c) WiFi	41	14
	d) Mobile data	244	81

Continued on next page

Table 3 continued			
	e) Hotspot	8	2.5
	f) Broadband	5	1.5
	Which type of internet facility you have?		
4.	a) 2 GB	133	44
	b) 3 GB	20	7
	c) 4 GB	82	27
	d) Unlimited	65	22
	Which electronic gadget do you use for online reading activity?		
	a) Smart Phone	249	83
5.	b) Laptop	30	10
	c) Personal Computer	3	1
	d) Tablet	9	3
	e) Others	9	3
	How much GB, did you spend per day?		
	a) 1 GB	108	36
6.	b) 1.5 GB	110	37
	c) 2 GB	46	15
	d) 3 GB	10	3
	e) Unlimited	26	9
	How many hours you spend on accessing the internet for academic activity daily		
7.	a) Less than 1 hour	61	20
	b) 1 – 3 hours	131	44
	c) 3 – 6 hours	62	21
	d) More than 6 hours	46	15
	How many hours you spend apart from your regular demic work given by your college on online		
8.	a) Less than 1 hour	68	23
	b) 1 – 3 hours	147	49
	c) 3 – 6 hours	56	19
	d) More than 6 hours	29	10
	In which virtual platform, you are spending maximum time for your academic activity		
	a) Google Classroom	114	38
	b) Zoom	88	29
	c) Moodle	1	1
9.	d) Google Meet	30	10
	e) Whatsapp	61	20
	f) MedWhiz LMS	0	0
	g) Impartus Virtual classroom	6	2
	The highest impact of Internet sources on your reading habit is		
	a) Increases access to information sources	151	50
	b) Increases use of Foreign source	13	4
10.	c) Increases contact with worldwide readers	20	7
	d) Increases time spend on online reading	68	23
	e) Decreases reading of printed material	29	10
	f) Decreases reading in local language	19	6

3.3 Distribution of samples in professional network platform

There are many professional network platforms that are available worldwide. Amongst these platforms, LinkedIn is the vast professional network platform. More than 610 million users from 200 countries and territories worldwide were in the world's largest professional network[22]. It was found out that 41 (14%) were using LinkedIn professional network platform, 8 (3%) were on Research Gate and 14 (5%) were in both platforms. This indicates that LinkedIn is more popular among undergraduate students than Research Gate.

3.4 Mean and standard deviation of Reading attitude and reading habit in the digital era during lock down

The Mean and standard deviation of Reading attitude and reading habit in the digital era during lock down were 27.3 ± 4.89 and 14.7 ± 3.9 respectively.

3.5 Discussion

In the present study, most of the samples 132 (44%) were reading the newspaper during the lockdown. Nearly half of the samples 146 (49%) believed that reading will help them to get ahead during lockdown when they were no longer in college.

Nonetheless, 51% of young people like reading, more than a third enjoy reading only a little while, while 10% don't really like reading. Whereas 18.8% of young people agreed strongly that reading is boring, while a quarter of people agreed strongly that they only read because they had to and major group disagreed strongly that they read only in class. On the other hand, 59% of young people strongly agreed to read[17].

The study results revealed that majority of the samples use 249(83%) smartphone, 30(10%) use laptop, 9(3%) tablet and only 3(1%) use personal computer to read during the COVID-19 lockdown. This is similar to the findings of Ismail Olatunji Adeyemi (2021), the most common reading device among 97.8% respondents was phone. Whereas notebooks were read by 68.8% and computer/laptops was used to read by 54.1%[23].

The current research showed that many of the samples 114 (38%) were using google classroom for their academic activity, 131 (44%) samples were spending 1 to 3 hours per day for academic work. Nearly half of the samples 147 (49%) were spending 1 – 3 hours per day for other activities apart from college activities. A survey among teenagers at Indian Public School found that teenagers of both sexes spent 1-2 hour, with a small sex difference 69% girls and 65% boys. Whereas 32% of the teenagers spent 2 to 3 hours in the Online Readings Platform[24].

However, it was found that reading hours was improved during lockdown. Around 31.7% of the respondents read between 1 to 2 hours/day, 39.2% read for 3 to 4 hours/day, 21.9% read for 5 to 7 hours/day and 7.2% read for more than 7 hours/day[24]. It was revealed that, as for reading out-of-class behaviour, most young people read out every day (32%) or two to three times a week (29 %), while 7% do not read outside of class material[17].

In the recent findings, half of the samples 151 (50%) accepted reading on online as an increase access to information and among it LinkedIn was more famous among UG students. Various studies supported that majority read to gather information on current situation and it was stated by Ismail Olatunji Adeyemi (2021) that 86.5% Nigerians focused on reading to seek COVID -19 information. On other hand, 61.1% engaged in reading to meet their academic purposes[23].

This present study result is consistent with the study conducted by Firima Zona Tanjung, et. al, (2017), concluded that the students were paying their attention on reading materials which are accessible in anytime and anywhere. Thus, the easy access to websites and other online sites enable them to keep their interest in reading[25]. In China, 95.9% adolescence has high prevalence of internet addiction by the high usage rate of social networks[26].

Akanbi et al. reported that intensive internet psychosocial consequences were evident among undergraduate students. They were creating a new relationship through online platforms and spending more online time than going out[27].

In contrast, studies conducted in Asian and Western countries showed that use of social networking sites became an online dominant activity, among adolescence[28,29].

In the current research, the association between reading attitude and the demographic variable family income has statistically significant at $p<0.05$ level. The present study findings are consistent with previous research work of Farooq Mubarak (2020), there was a strong positive association of income and education with levels of information communication technology penetration across the entire world[30].

4 Conclusion

In view of the presumably continuing lockdown for weeks, the usual habits and well-being of the population should be monitored. The current study concluded that the undergraduate students are interested in digital reading during the COVID-19 lockdown period. They spent most of their time on digital reading, and also they are connected with their studies even though they are in lockdown.

Recommendations

As a part of technology advancement, the widespread use of technology among the students should come with increased awareness of the pros and cons of the technology. Research data can be collected in order to develop strategies to lessen the

adverse effects and impacts of the unprecedented lockdown changes in people's lives. So, in the recent study, a more extensive research group is recommended.

Limitations

The current study was confined to the collection of online data and further research was only done on general reading and adolescent attitudes. The date was collected only from undergraduate students of a part of South India and sample is not nationally representative.

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