RESEARCH ARTICLE

SURVEY RESEARCH ON THE READING HABITS OF MBA STUDENTS OF SAURSHTRA REGION

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ABSTRACT

People differ in their abilities, willingness, interests, choices, styles, methods, practices, and habits of reading. They help in mastering the content of learning. Hence, efforts should be made to develop reading habits since childhood with due planning. Books are the treasured wealth of wisdom in the world and the inheritance of generations and nations. Happy is the person who acquires the habit of reading since childhood. Poor indeed is the person who does not read, and empty is his life. Reading has different forms, e.g., classic reading and online reading. Both have their advantages but as the world is changing and new technologies are seen every day, we see that the online reading is becoming more powerful, preferred, and influencing.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge and awareness are extremely essential for a corporate career and/or entrepreneurship. For gaining the same, reading, listening, observation, reflection, imagination, creativity and envisioning are the processes to be used. Of them, observation and listening may be constructed as results of primary sensations, viz.; visual and auditory sensations. Reading and listening are the vital cognitive processes which help in acquisition of knowledge and awareness acquired. Knowledge and awareness help in building intelligence, skills, abilities, and competencies. In the competitive business scenario, higher the knowledge and awareness in an individual processes, greater are the chances of his success. At the post graduate business education level, hence, it is vital for students to read and listen a lot to gain vast knowledge and awareness. Hence, the importance of reading and listening needn't be overemphasized. Reading is an important component of learning. Learning may be defined as the life-long continuous process for acquisition, retention, recall, and effective utilization of knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, and awareness. Learning may be acquired through various sources, by different methods, times, places, disciplines, degrees, frequencies, speeds, and under various circumstances.

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Acquired learning must be retained; otherwise, it may lead to waste of time, energy and resources. Ability to recall the relevant knowledge at a suitable time and in demanding circumstances ensures its usefulness. Knowledge must be utilized to achieve one's goals and objectives, in whatever sphere of life they may be.

People differ in their abilities, willingness, interests, choices, styles, methods, practices, and habits of reading. They help in mastering the content of learning. Hence, efforts should be made to develop reading habits since childhood with due planning. Books are the treasured wealth of wisdom in the world and the inheritance of generations and nations. Happy is the person who acquires the habit of reading since childhood. Poor indeed is the person who does not read, and empty is his life. Reading has different forms, e.g., classic reading and online reading. Both have their advantages but as the world is changing and new technologies are seen every day, we see that the online reading is becoming more powerful, preferred, and influencing.

Knowledge is very important for people, especially, the ability to read and write. Knowing just only how to speak like in the ancient times is not enough at all. Actually, there is increasing competition among people in the society today because of the developments in the world and the growth of the population. The ability of using language becomes one of the many ways for determining the potential of an individual. A person who is

uneducated or who has received a low education has less chance in life than someone who can read and write well or who has received the higher education.

People who read and write well have the better opportunities in getting jobs. They need to learn and be educated for receiving those chances. As a result, reading and writing skills have an important role on how people become successful. Capacity in reading and writing generates more security in life. How can a person be safe from using the medicine or even hair spray if he or she does not know how to read the label? How can they understand the contract clearly without a skill in reading? They may let others read the contract to them, but it will be risk for a reason that they can be cheated.

Reading is one of the crucial pleasures of life. When a person reads, he or she is simultaneously gaining knowledge and escaping into another world. Anything and everything a person wants to learn about or is interested, it can be found in a book. In today's world, with technology being as it is, there are on-line books (e-books) and audio books so that anyone can stay active in their busy world and still have time for reading. Reading offers something for everyone; knowledge, ideas, information, and pleasure, etc. When someone is reading for information, he is reading in a much different way, than when reading for pleasure. Reading, like so many other things, is an acquired habit.

Literature Review

The topic of reading habits of students seems to be an interesting area for research, as such, the research on this topic has not been substantial. One of the major research work done in this area was published in 'Reading And Library Uasge Habits Of The Students Whose Mother Tongue Was Turkish in Viena, Austria', by Bulent Yilmaz and Mag.Kemal Cindi, Hacettepe university, faculty of Letters, Department of Library Science, Beytepe-Ankara, Turkey. The major findings of the said research were: that the majority of the students had no reading habits. The ratio of the students who were not having any reading habits and a little reading habit reached to 80%. The smallest ratio belonged to the heavy readers. Majority of the students who had a little reading habit reached to 80%. The smallest ratio belonged to the heavy readers. Majority of the students who had reading habits preferred to borrow the books from the public libraries (41.9%). It was interesting that school schools' libraries were not among alternatives. There was no library facility available in most of the schools. It was seen that about two third of the students did not use the public libraries. The proportion of the non-users together with little-users was 77%.

The smallest group was of heavy users. It was found that the problem of library usage was more serious than the problem of reading habits of the students, because the ratio of the non-users was higher than the non-readers. Students usually used the public libraries for borrowing books. Borrowing CDs and cassettes was not as common as borrowing books. One of the most important reasons of students' use of public libraries as places to study was lack of a personal room in their houses. Students Coming from villages did not have any reading habit

and only 2% of them had strong reading habit. It was concluded that those students whose families were from provenance read much more than the others.

Another major study on reading habits has been reported in the research paper titled, "Computer Technology and College students' Reading Habits" by Li-Bi Shen, Department of Applied Foreign Languages, Chia-Nan University of Pharmacy and Science, Tainan, Taiwan 71710, R.O.C. The purposes of that study were to determine if computer technology had an impact on EFL college students' reading habits and if students' online reading habits and their demographic variables, such as gender, age, CJEE scores, employment status, and online hours were related. The results indicated that college EFL students' reading habits changed from paper-based to internet-based reading.

Hsgood (2003, p.387) emphasized, "because new media nad online literacy are part and parcel of our day-to-day lives. Further, Mokhtari and sheorey (1994) explored the reading behaviour patterns of 158ESL students and found that university ESL students' levels of education and English proficiency were associated with their reading behaviour patterns. Subjects in high English proficiency group spent more time reading academic materials than subjects in low English proficient group.

Mikulecky's (1979) study revealed that demographic variables such as race, income, and employment status have little predictive

The Definition of Reading Habits

Reading habits, for the purpose of this paper, are defined as where, how often, how much, why and what subject the students read.

Objectives of the study:

The main aims of the current research paper are:

1. To understand reading habits of the MBA course students of Gujarat Technology University studying in Management Institutes in Saurashtra region
2. To understand individual differences in reading habits of the students.

Research Methodology

For this study, primary data were collected by survey research during January and February 2012, using a structured questionnaire with multiple choices, open ended questions. The secondary data were used from the sources duly acknowledged herein at appropriate places.

For this study, the data were collected from 100 students of five institutes of pass-out batches of the year 2013 &2014. Convenience sampling was done and equal representation was done and equal representation was attempted for.

Age: The frequency distribution of the respondents on the basis of age is shown in the Table1 given below. The average age of respondents is 22.5 years with standard deviation of 1.3 years.

Table 1. Age-Distribution of the Respondents

Age in years	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Not mentioned	Total
	12	22	26	18	11	5	2	4	100

Gender: In 100 respondents, 50 male and 48 female took part. Rest of the 2 respondents did not report on this question. Almost equal representation was given to both the genders to ensure that the results of the study will be from the gender bias.

Batch and Specialization: The data was collected from 46 students from the pass out batch of 2013 and 49 students of 2014 pass out batch. Five students did not report this information. Out of 100 students, 26 were from finance, 15 were from Marketing, 12 from HR, and 2 from operations streams. Rest of the respondents did not report their streams may be due to their non-finalization of choice of specialization till then.

Work Experience: The frequency distribution of the respondents on the basis of number of months of work experience before joining the MBA Course is shown in the Table 2 given below. Out of 100, the 57 respondents who reported on work experience indicted that they have an average work experience indicated that they have an average work experience of 12 months with standard deviation of 12 months.

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents based on Pre-MBA Work Experience

Work Experience (Months)	0	>0 to 6	>6 to 12	>12 to 24	>24 to 36	>36 to 42	Not Mentioned	Total
No. of Respondents	22	5	9	10	9	2	43	100

- **Basic Qualification:** The Table 3 shows the Basic Qualifications of the respondents. The data indicates that almost 60% of MBA course come from engineering or commerce background. Arts, Pharmacy, and Science background students were lesser in number. Some of the educational streams such as law, applied arts, medicine, and architecture seem conspicuous by their absence.

- **Marks Obtained by the Respondents in MBA Semesters:**

  For the 1st, 2nd and 3rd semesters of the MBA course, 68, 40, and 21 respondents respectively reported their percentage of marks as shown in Table 4. It only shows that they scored average 64 and 68 with standard deviation ranging between 3 to 6 marks.

- **Main Areas of Reading:** The following were reported as the main areas of reading interests by the respondents. It is a matter of concern that MBA course students do not read reference books and international news. More preference was given to fictional writing- novels, comics, sports, adventure, and mysteries. This denotes that the students read more for relaxation and pleasure than for useful business and managerial related knowledge.

- **Sources of Reading:** The following were reported as the sources of reading by the respondents. The data indicates that internet dominates as the major source of reading, followed by the libraries at the Institutes, and personal and friends' libraries. It seems that we do not have enough or relevant resources in public libraries for management course students. These findings are in conformity with the earlier researches reported here above on this topic that the internet has overtaken as the most preferred source of reading due to its wide access, coverage, flexibility, convenience, and speed. Similarly, the public libraries even in the cities like Rajkot, Junagadh, Jamangar and Surendranagar do not have enough or relevant stock of books on management to attract the students.

- **Daily Time Distribution of Respondents:** The respondents reported on their daily time distribution at home, for lectures, assignments, etc. As shown in Table 7, 10 hours are spent at home and entertainment. 8 hours are spent on lectures, projects, and assignments. There seems to be no time allotted for reading.

The 76 out of 100 respondents reported that they spend 4 to 12 hours per day at home, with average of 10 hours and standard deviation of 4.1 hours. The average time spent by the respondents for travel per day is one hour with standard deviation of 0.65 hours. The average time spend for lectures per day is 4.9 hours with standard deviation of 2.2 hours.

Table 3. Pre-MBA Course Qualifications of the Respondents

Stream	Arts	Commerce	Science	Engg.	Management	Pharmacy	N.A.	Total
No. of Respondents	4	44	11	18	10	2	09	100

Table 4. Marks Obtained by the Respondents in the First Three Semesters of MBA Course

	No. of respondents out of 100	Minimum % marks	Maximum % marks	Average marks	Std. Deviation of marks
Sem. I	68	58	73		4.235
Sem II	40	53	78		4.987
Sem III	21	62	72		3.123

Table 5. Main Areas Reading Interest of the Respondents (Data in% of Respondents)

Fiction/novels	General News	Business news	Text books	Reference books	Hobby books	International news
38	19	09	22	0	12	0
Comics/Sports Adventure, Mysteries	Self-help books	Science & Technology	Misc. Subject Books/Mags.	Misc. Books/ Magazines	Arts, Drama, Music, Literature	
16	9	7	9	16	4	5

Table 6. Sources of Reading Used by the Respondents (Data in %)

Source of Reading	Institute Library	Personal Library	Public Library	internet	Friends' Library	Other/s	G	N.A.	Total
% of Respondents	24	15	11	29	11	4	5	01	100

Table 7. Subject Matters of Reading Interest in Management Related Articles

Marketing	Finance	HR	Business	Cases	General	Economics	Global	Nil	N.A.
12	14	16	15	28	52	32	1	3	128

Table 8. Subject Matters of Reading Interests in General Knowledge Related Articles

Political	Social	Eco.	Mgnt	Envi.	Health	Entertainment	Sports, Arts	General	Technology	Nil	N.A.
1	9	30	21	18	5	3	8	16	1	3	128

Table 9. Subject Matters of Reading Interests in Text Books

Area	Mktg.	Finance	Operations	HR	Systems	General	Nil	N.A.	Total
No. of Respondents	25	35	09	41	5	65	2	127	

Table 10. Students' Participation in Extra-curricular Activities

Committee	Social	Alumni	Placement	Corporate	Events	Sports	Cultural	Misc.	Yes, N.A.	No
Participants	12	2	13	5	4	2	3	12	15	32

For projects the average time is 1.6 hours with standard deviation of 0.50 hours; and for assignments, the average time spent per day is one hour with standard deviation of 0.68 hours. That indicates that on an average, the respondents spend 7.8 hours per day directly for academic purposes.

- **Reading of Management Articles:** Following are the areas in which students shown interest in reading of management articles. General articles, economics and cases are seen to be dominating readings on management. Negligible reading about global matters/issues and lesser reading of core management subjects are the issues of concern needing further attention.

- **Reading of General Knowledge Articles:** Following are the areas in which students have shown interest in reading general knowledge, economics, environment, management, and general articles are preferred by the students. Students do not seem to be interested in politics, technology, and environment.

- **Reading of Text Books:** Following are the areas in which students have shown interest in reading text books. Amongst the text books, the books on general subjects, HR, Finance, and Marketing are preferred more. Perhaps this is due to the dominance of HR, Finance, and Marketing streams as the favoured specializations. The Operations and Systems specializations are less preferred by the students. Though there are sizable numbers of students with basic educational background in engineering, they seem to prefer non-engineering related post graduation in management.

- **Students' Participation in Extra-curricular Activities:** The data indicates that the popular committees wherein students participate are placement, social, and events committees. Out of 100 respondents, 32 have reported that they do not participate in committees. Such committees provide opportunity to work in group; but many students are not interested in them.

- **Purpose of Reading:** The dominant purpose of reading has been reported to be acquisition of knowledge/awareness. The other purposes of reading are time pass and relaxation/enjoyment. Very negligible numbers of students have reported reading for reference purposes.

Table 11. Purposes for which the Respondents Read

Purpose	Knowledge, awareness	Time pass	Relaxation, Enjoyment	Exam, GD, Pl, Academics	Reference
No. of Respondents	72	18	16	9	4

- Place of Reading: It can be seen from the Table 12 given below that the most preferred places of reading are home, library, reading from the internet, premises, and during travel. Reportedly, a large number of students read during lectures. (40%), and in the canteen (15%). It may be further probed as to what are the reasons for students to read during the lectures. Institute premises and canteens are used for reading, may be in groups by the students to for discussions and project works.

Table 12. Places where the Respondents Read (fig. indicates % of the Respondents)

Home	Hostel	Lectures	Library	Premises	Canteen	Internet	Travel
92	11	40	72	52	15	68	10
Food	Friends' Place	Road	Bus Stop	Garden	Picnic Spot	Native Place	
7	12	1	21	8	4	16	

Table 13. Average Number of hours used for Reading in a Day

<1	1to2	2to3	3to4	4to5	Varies	N.A.	Total
18	38	12	8	2	5	17	100

- **Hours of Reading per Day:** About 56% of the students, who gave clear answers to this question, reported that they read 2 to 3 hours per day, about 18% of the respondents read for less than 1 hour a day. The proportion of heavy leaders as compared to the proportion of poor readers.

Conclusions

The major results of the study are:

1. The respondent students do not have sufficient reading habits. Majority of them merely read for one to two hours in a day. This is too less, considering the complexity and dynamism of the business environment and post graduation level of their management course.
2. They generally read fictional writing, novels, comics, sports, adventure, and mysteries more than the text books. The absence of reading of reference books and international news is definitely a cause of concern. Merely 32% of the respondents read general and business news. That means rests of the students are not up to date with their knowledge of latest event and news.
3. Students usually prefer to read on internet and institute's library. Usage of personal library is limited, whereas public libraries do not seem to have enough or relevant books to offer.
4. The students spend maximum time at home, for lectures, entertainment, travel, and projects. They seem to ignore health, socialization with friends and relatives. The daily waste of average 2 hours is significant. Furthermore, only 29% of respondents have reported on waste of time. That means majority of them are not even aware or conscious about the waste of time.
5. The respondents have displayed preference for general, case studies, economics, environment, management, and general news, politics, technology and general knowledge reading.
6. In the choice of text books, apart from the general texts, the students read on HR, Finance, and Marketing management the most.

7. The respondents have reasonable participation in the committee works at the institutes. They work on the placement committees most, followed by the social, events, and corporate relations. Such preferences may be for improving external interface.
8. Home, institute's library, reading from the internet, and during travel are the major places of reading. Many students have reported that they read on the premises of the institute, during lectures, and in canteen. Further research may be conducted to find out as to why they read so.

Limitations of the Study

This study has been conducted in the cities of Rajkot, Jamangar, Junagadh and Surendranagar of Saurashtra region. Perhaps, the conclusion may be different with inclusion of some reputed institutes of India. This study does not attempted to find out the gender differences in reading habits and was also not attempted to find out the differences in the reading habit that may be arising out of social, economic, cultural, linguistic, religious, familial, and occupational differences among the respondents. These limitations may provide further scope for study in this area.

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