# Reading Habits of Central Library Users: A Case Study of Alagappa University, Tamilnadu, India

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## Abstract

*"Reading is a vital habit and one kind of tonic to mind and soul". Reading aim is also occupational leisure and pleasure, it will make our hours pleasant, as long as we live. Reading is a basic human skill involving the reader's eyes, his brain and the matter being read. One of the major goals of the university central library is to inspire a love for reading and to promote a reading culture among its users. The present study aims to investigate the reading habits of central library users and their gender variability. The study analyzed majority of the users are reading is preferable place for home (36.67%) followed by library (24.67%) and classroom (21.01%). Majority of the users prefer to read in the morning (29.33%) compared to late-night (24.67%) and evening (24.01%). The gender analysis shows that (32.50%) of females prefer reading during late-night then males (15.71%). This study is clear that users develop reading habit through self-efforts and interest (39.01%) followed by instruction of parents (20.33%) respectively.*

**Keywords:** Reading habit, gender inconsistency, central library, newspapers and internet.

## Introduction

Reading is an art of interpreting printed and written words and it is a basic instrument of education. Reading is particularly important in education as well as for unhindered intellectual growth of a person. A good reading habit is an important tool for the development of personalities and mental capacities. This habit is necessary for a healthy intellectual growth and plays a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve language proficiency[1]. Reading and reading habit are two aspects that have received increasing attention in recent years. Reading is a way to get better knowledge of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting journey to self-discovery. Reading transfers experiences to the individual so that the reader may expand one's horizons, identify, extend and intensify his or her interest and gain deeper understanding of the world[2]. Reading loads the mind with new software[3]. Reading is the passion of the greatest personalities of all times since ages which helped to pass on knowledge through generations. Pandian[4] found that the majority of university students are "reluctant" readers in English language materials. Raeyaeckers[5] is pointed that reading habits are also vital part of lifelong learning concept.

**Reading Benefits:** Reading is both physical and mental process. The movement of your eyes across a line of print/electronic formats is a physical activity, understanding and gathering meaning out of what your eyes see is a mental activity. Basically eyes pickup visual images and transmit them to your brain. Then your brain sort and connect these impressions and attaches meaning to them, using its store of knowledge and experience.

**Literature Review:** Review of literature is indispensable to known as to what extent the works in this area have done. The review of the literature is a vital aspect for planning of the body of research. The researcher reviewed only those studies which are related to the present study.

Thanuskodi[6] noted that indicated that majority of the LIS students (79.53 %) are interested in reading LIS course material frequently. LIS students spend more time for (77.48 %) reading books around 20 percent of the LIS students never read nonfiction, internet publications, comic books, poetry and novels. Bobda[7] investigated that reading habits of some postgraduate high school students and teachers in Yaounde stated that the lack of reading in Africa and specifically in Cameroun is a phenomenon often decried in popular opinion. Hassell and Rodge[8] opined that females more likely read for pleasure than males and this study reveals that reverse trend and identify females are mostly like read for pleasure than males (78% vs. 64%). Abram[9] finds that more women are avid readers than men. Clark and Foster[10] analyzed that girls enjoy reading greater than boys and boys tend to hold more negative attitudes towards reading than girls. Ross[11] identifies females more heavy readers than males and younger rather than older. Cabral and Tavares[12] study concerning the students reading habits reflects that students read for academic purposes (97.8%) almost as much as they use reading as a hobby (97.2%).

**Objectives:** The important objectives of the present study, understand the reading habits of central library users across genders particularly identifying respective preferences. i. To identify primary purpose of reading for library users across identifying gender preferences. ii. To know the total time spend

in the university library for identifying gender variability. iii. To know whether the users spend time on various activities. iv. To know which types of books to refer first preference and which books to prefer maximum time. v. To identify what are the languages of newspapers that read daily. vi. To identified reading obstacles for the users in gender inconsistency.

## Methodology

**Research Methods and Technigues:** A Survey research design was adopted and simple random sampling method was used in the selecting the respondents. A structured questionnaire was the main research tool of data collection. In the present study the questionnaire was designed and distributed among the central library users. The study was limited to finding the reading habits of Alagappa University central library users (AUCL) only. Totally 340 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the Alagappa university central library users. Out of 300 filled up questionnaires were received back. The rate of response is 88%. Among 140 respondents (46.67%) are male, 160 respondents (53.33%) are female. The results of the present study are thus based purely on the responses made in the questionnaire returned by the respondents only.

## Results and Discussion

**Data Analysis and Results:** On the basis of responses received from the alagappa university central library users through questionnaires, the data have been planned and tabulated by using tables of frequency and simple percentage techniques.

**Distribution of Gender-wise Respondents:** The gender wise distribution of AUCL users is shown in Figure 1. It exhibits that among 140 respondents were male users against 160 female users. They represent 47% and 53% respectively. Thus it observed that female users were more than male users.
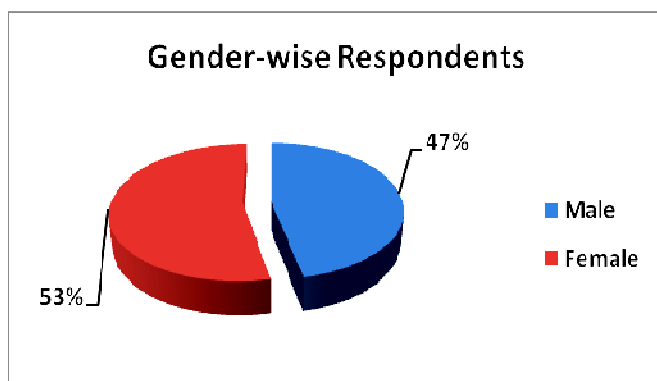


**Figure-1**
**Pie chart showing Gender-wise distribution of respondents**

**Primary Purpose for Reading:** Table 1 exhibits that most of the users read for education purpose (35.33%) followed by information (33.01%) and recreation (16.67). The gender-wise data shows that male users read more than female users for the

prime purpose of education (35.71% vs. 35.01) and female users read more than male users for information (27.14 vs. 38.13) followed by recreation (22.86% vs. 11.25%).

**Table –1**
**Primary Purpose for Reading**

| Purpose | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Education | 106 (35.33) | 50 (35.71) | 56 (35.01) |
| Information | 99 (33.01) | 38 (27.14) | 61 (38.13) |
| Recreation | 50 (16.67) | 32 (22.86) | 18 (11.25) |
| Others | 45 (15.01) | 20 (14.29) | 25 (15.63) |

**Materials for General Reading:** Table 2 reveals that the majority of the users reading text book (32.33%) followed by fiction (25.33%), non-fiction (18.67%) and newspaper/magazine (17.33%). The gender-wise data depicts for female users read more than male users for text book (32.50% vs. 32.14) and male users read more than female users for fiction (25.71% vs. 25.0%).

**Table-2**
**Materials for General reading**

| Materials | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Text Book | 97 (32.33) | 45 (32.14) | 52 (32.50) |
| Fiction | 76 (25.33) | 36 (25.71) | 40 (25.0) |
| Non-fiction | 56 (18.67) | 24 (17.14) | 32 (20.00) |
| Newspaper/ Magazine | 52 (17.33) | 25 (17.86) | 27 (16.88) |
| Others | 19 (6.33) | 10 (6.33) | 09 (5.63) |

**Time Spent for Reading:** Table 3 discloses that the majority of the users (41.67%) spend below 1 hour of reading per day. 26.33% of respondents spend their time for reading up to 2 – 3 hours. Only 14.0% of respondents are spending above four hours for the reading. The gender-wise data depicts that majority of the female users (41.43%) spend below 1 hour for reading per day, whereas most of male users (25.63%) spend 2-3 hours reading per day.

**Table-3**
**Time Spent for reading**

| Time Spent | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Below One hour | 126 (41.67) | 59 (41.43) | 67 (41.88) |
| 2 - 3 hours | 78 (26.33) | 37 (27.14) | 41 (25.63) |
| 3 - 4 hours | 54 (18.0) | 25 (17.86) | 29 (18.13) |
| Above 4 hours | 42 (14.0) | 19 (13.57) | 23 (14.38) |

**Preferred times for Reading:** Table 4 exhibits that users mostly preference to read in the morning time (29.33%) compared to late night (24.07%), evening (24.01) and afternoon (22.0%). The gender-wise data indicates that the most of the male users (36.43%) are preference to read for morning time compared to female users (23.13%) whereas mostly female users reading preference for afternoon (25.63%), late night (32.50%) compared to male users.
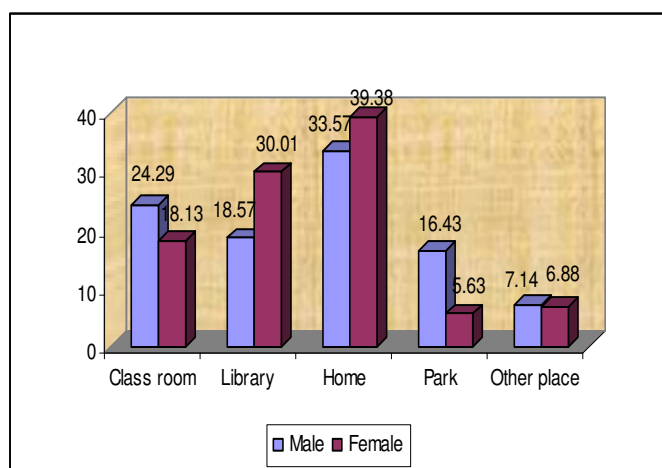
**Preferred Language:** Table 6 exhibits that most of the users reading preference in Tamil languages (47.67%) followed by English (31.33%) and Hindi (12.33%). The gender-wise data reveals that female users read in Tamil language more than male users (50.63% vs. 44.29%) and majority of the male users mostly read in English languages when compared to female users ( 37.86% vs. 25.63%)

**Table-4**
**Preferred times for reading**

| Preferred time | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Morning | 88 (29.33) | 51 (36.43) | 37 (23.13) |
| Afternoon | 66 (22.0) | 25 (17.86) | 41 (25.63) |
| Evening | 72 (24.01) | 42 (30.00) | 30 (18.75) |
| Late night | 74 (24.67) | 22 (15.71) | 52 (32.50) |

**Table-6**
**Preferred Language**

| Language | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Tamil | 143 (47.67) | 62 (44.29) | 81 (50.63) |
| English | 94 (31.33) | 53 (37.86) | 41 (25.63) |
| Hindi | 37 (12.33) | 16 (11.43) | 21 (13.13) |
| Others | 26 (8.67) | 09 (6.43) | 17 (10.63) |

**Favorite place for Reading:** Table 5 shows that the most of the users are favorite place for home (36.67%) their reading, followed by library (24.67%), classroom (21.01%) and park (10.67%). The gender-wise data revealed that the most of the females (39.38%) prefer to read at home when compared male users (33.57%) and male users dominated by female users for class room reading (24.29% vs. 18.13%).

**Sources of Information:** Table 7 displays that the majority of the users information sources retrieved from internet (31.0%) followed by library (24.33%), teachers (21.67%) and friends (19.67%). The gender-wise data presents most female users information retrieved from internet compared to male users (32.5% vs. 29.29%), majority of the male users information retrieved for library when compared to female users (25.0% vs. 23.75%).

**Table-5**
**Favorite place for reading**

| Favorite Place | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Class room | 63 (21.01) | 34 (24.29) | 29 (18.13) |
| Library | 74 (24.67) | 26 (18.57) | 48 (30.01) |
| Home | 110 (36.67) | 47 (33.57) | 63 (39.38) |
| Park | 32 (10.67) | 23 (16.43) | 09 (5.63) |
| Other place | 21 (7.00) | 10 (7.14) | 11 (6.88) |

**Table-7**
**Sources of Information**

| Sources of Information | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Library | 73 (24.33) | 35 (25.0) | 38 (23.75) |
| Internet | 93 (31.00) | 41 (29.29) | 52 (32.5) |
| Teachers | 65 (21.67) | 30 (21.43) | 35 (21.9) |
| Friends | 59 (19.67) | 28 (20.00) | 31 (19.4) |
| Others | 10 (3.33) | 06 (4.29) | 04 (2.5) |



**Figure-2**
**Favorite place for Reading**

**Purpose of Visiting the Library:** Table 8 indicates that the majority of the users visit for library to Read Books (23.33%) followed by Borrow /Return Books (21.0%), respectively. The gender-wise data displays that the most of the female users library visit for read books when compared to male users (24.38% vs. 22.14%) and followed by purpose library visit to female users dominated by male users for read newspapers (20.63% vs. 18.57%). The male users dominated my female users of library visit for the purpose of get some information (17.86 vs. 16.88).

**Table-8**
**Purpose of Visiting the Library**

| Purpose | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Read Books | 70 (23.33) | 31 (22.14) | 39 (24.38) |
| Read Newspapers | 59 (19.67) | 26 (18.57) | 33 (20.63) |
| Get Some Information | 52 (17.33) | 25 (17.86) | 27 (16.88) |
| Borrow /Return Books | 63 (21.0) | 33 (23.57) | 30 (18.75) |
| Internet Access | 56 (18.67) | 25 (17.86) | 31 (19.38) |

**Frequency of Library Visit:** Table 9 depicts that 37.67% of respondents library visit regularly, followed by (25.67%) and once in a week (19.0%) respectively. Only 4.67% of the users are library visit for occasionally in totality. The gender wise data presents that majority of male users library visit regularly when compared to female users (38.57% vs. 36.88%).

**Table-9**
**Frequency of Library Visit**

| Frequency of Library Visit | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Everyday | 113 (37.67) | 54 (38.57) | 59 (36.88) |
| Alternate day | 77 (25.67) | 36 (25.71) | 41 (25.63) |
| Once in a week | 57 (19.0) | 27 (19.29) | 30 (18.75) |
| Twice in a week | 39 (13.0) | 17 (12.14) | 22 (13.75) |
| Occasionally | 14 (4.67) | 06 (4.29) | 08 (5.0) |

**Mechanics of Inculcating Reading Habit:** Table 10 displays that the users develop reading habit self-efforts and interest (39.01%) followed by instruction of parents (20.33%) and teachers (18.0%) respectively (Table 10). The gender-wise data represents that more number of male users developed reading habit for self-efforts when compared to female users (40.0% vs. 38.13%) respectively (Table 10).

**Table-10**
**Mechanics of inculcating reading habit**

| Inculcating reading habit | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Teachers | 54 (18.0) | 24 (17.14) | 30 (18.75) |
| Parents | 61 (20.33) | 29 (20.71) | 32 (21.0) |
| Friends | 39 (13.0) | 18 (12.86) | 21 (13.13) |
| Self | 117 (39.01) | 56 (40.0) | 61(38.13) |
| Others | 29 (9.67) | 13 (9.28) | 16 (10.0) |

**Obstacles for Reading:** Table 11shows that the majority of the users are main obstacle for T.V (36.67%), followed by internet

(22.67%), 21.0% of respondents are responded Unavailability of books. Only 19.67% of respondents are reading obstacles for their reason lack of interesting reading materials. The gender-wise data discloses that most of females are responded in watching T.V when compared to male users (41.88% vs. 30.71%). Male users mostly responded reading obstacles for internet when compared to female users (25.0% vs. 20.63%) respectively.

**Table-11**
**Obstacles for Reading**

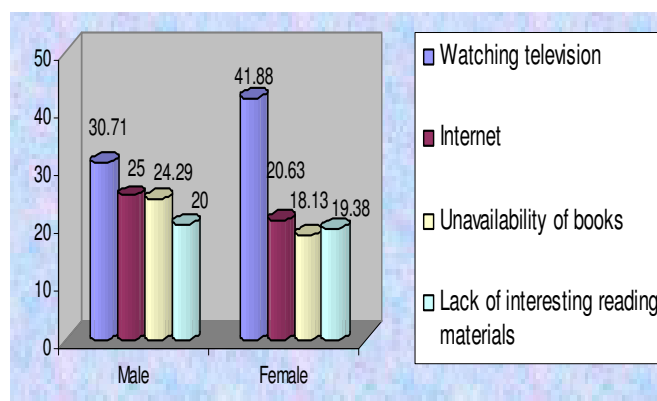| Obstacles | Total n=300 | Gender-Wise Respondents | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Male n=140 | Female n=160 |
| Watching television | 110 (36.67) | 43 (30.71) | 67 (41.88) |
| Internet | 68 (22.67) | 35 (25.0) | 33 (20.63) |
| Unavailability of books | 63 (21.0) | 34 (24.29) | 29 (18.13) |
| Lack of interesting reading materials | 59 (19.67) | 28 (20.0) | 31 (19.38) |



**Figure-3**
**Reading Obstacles in Gender-wise**

**Major Findings of the Study:** i. Majority of the male users reading motives for education (35.71%) and more number of female users are reading for Information purpose (38.13%). ii. Majority of the male users are given to prefer reading in morning time (36.43%) while the female users prefer afternoon (25.63%) for reading in the library. iii. The study displayed that (41.88%) females read more than below 1 hour in a day compared to (41.43%) male users. Male users are read more than 2-3 hours in a day compared to female users (27.14% vs. 25.63%). iv. Majority of the female users (32.50%) read text books compared to male users (32.14%). v. Majority of the users are responded, purpose of library visit to reading books (31.67%). vi. Majority of the users for newspapers reading prefer in Tamil Language (47.67%) while compared to other languages. vii. Majority of users their favorite place and most of reading at home (36.67%) and library (24.67%). viii. Gender-wise analyzed the present study main reading obstacles of male users for Internet (35%) and female respondents are watching TV (41.88%).

**Suggestions Made By Users**: i. The timings of the library should be extended up to 9.00 P.M., ii. Reading Material should be arranged in proper order for easy accessibility. iii. More computers should be added for internet access. iv. Audio visual material should be increased i.e. CD-ROMs/DVDs. v. Books/Magazines should be increased for competitive examination related. vi. Library should provide separate reading room for personal books. vii. The library should provide for photocopy facilities i.e. Reference books, Dissertation/Theses etc.

## Conclusion

Since most of the users purpose of library visit for study, to read newspapers, gets some information to prepare competitive examination and access internet. The library should increase more number of latest books, periodicals/magazines added to requirements of the users. Since most of the library users are not aware with the library collections and services. It is, therefore suggested that proper user education/library orientation Programmes should be provided for the users. Still the library is the best place for quiet study. Reading is a wonderful habit and multi kinds of therapy, which can worked under frenzied minds and frayed nerves. Library and Information Science Professionals can play a significant role in developing reading habits among its users.

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