

A Survey of Reading Habits among University Students of Assam

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the reading habits of university students in Assam. A survey was conducted among 280 students of Sibsagar University using a structured questionnaire. The study aimed to investigate students' reading habits, preferred reading materials, time spent on reading, and factors affecting their reading behaviour. The findings show that most students read daily and spend 2–3 hours on reading. Textbooks were the most preferred reading materials, and academic purposes were the main reason for reading. While printed materials were preferred by many students, electronic resources were also widely used. Academic overload and social media usage were identified as the major factors affecting reading habits. The study concludes that students generally have positive reading habits and acknowledge the role of reading in improving academic performance.

Keywords: Reading Habit, University Students, Assam.

1. Introduction:

Reading is an essential aspect of human life and one of the most effective means of acquiring knowledge and understanding. It stimulates imagination, strengthens reasoning and analytical abilities, and encourages independent thinking. Effective reading requires concentration, comprehension, and active engagement with the text, making it a valuable tool for learning and self-development. Through reading, individuals gain exposure to new ideas, cultures, experiences, and perspectives that broaden their understanding of the world. For students, regular reading enhances communication skills, creativity, critical thinking, and academic performance.

The habit of reading plays a significant role in intellectual and personality development. Reading habit develops from the childhood, later it contributes to lifelong learning and personal growth. Books provide knowledge, guidance, inspiration, and valuable insights that help individuals understand themselves and the world around them. Regular reading nurtures curiosity, creativity, observation, and emotional maturity while developing the skills necessary for academic and professional success.

In today's knowledge-driven society, reading remains a gateway to information and personal enrichment. It enables individuals to participate more effectively in educational, social, cultural, and civic life. Moreover, reading preserves and

transmits the ideas and contributions of scholars, writers, and thinkers across generations.

Traditionally, reading materials were available mainly in printed form. However, rapid technological advancements have transformed the reading environment. Students now have access to a wide range of digital resources, including e-books, online journals, websites, blogs, and digital libraries. While these developments have increased access to information, they have also influenced the reading preferences and habits of young people. Therefore, examining the reading habits of college students has become increasingly important in understanding their learning practices and reading behaviour in the digital age.

2. Literature Review:

A study carried out by Akabuike, I. G. & Asika, I. E. (2012) was an attempt to find out the reading habits of undergraduates and their academic performances involving a total number of 200 undergraduates of NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka and Anambra State University who were randomly selected. Data was collected through reading test, structured-interview and questionnaires. This study revealed that majority of the students depend on printed text books read only to pass their examinations and not necessarily for pleasure and for acquiring knowledge.

Annamalai, S & Muniandy, B (2013) in a study examined the reading habits and attitude of 119 polytechnic students from Engineering and Business departments in a Malaysian Polytechnic using questionnaires. The study revealed that the students under study have low interest in reading and students do not enjoy reading as much as they enjoy doing other technology related activities.

Erdem, A.(2015) attempted to determine the reading habits of students studying at the Ankara University and Erciyes University of Turkey involving 326 students using questionnaires found that students enjoyed reading literary works, historic, romantic, entertaining humorous

and psychological genres the most though the also read novels, newspapers and magazines as well in their spare times. However, it was found that students spent less time for reading text books mainly because of busy social life, preparation for examinations and spending time on the internet.

Florence, F.O. et al (2017) investigated the reading habits of 200 college students in Oyo town and found that majority of the students read offline as well as online mainly for gaining knowledge.

Ameyaw, S.K & Anto, S. K (2018) in their study to assess the effects of reading habits on the academic performance of Eastbank Senior High school students in Ghana involving 128 students found that only 45.19% of the respondents valued reading in gaining knowledge as well as for better performance in the examinations.

In another study, B, Kumara & Sampath Kumar, BT. (2019) assessed the impact of reading on academic achievements of the university students, research scholars and faculty members in Karnataka State involving 2463 respondents using questionnaires and found that regular reading habit enabled them in gaining real knowledge.

Yusof, D.A.A (2021) in his study try to determine the reading habit among students in the digital era which changes the trends and behaviour among students. The result shows that increase the growth of information and technology, changes the trends and behaviours of reading habits, which moving away from printed book to electronic materials.

In a study, Pandey, J. & Chandra, S. (2024) assessed the reading habits among college students where 137 numbers of students participated the survey. And in the finding it showed that maximum numbers of students like to reading as well as both printed and digital material.

3. Objectives of the study:

- To examine the reading habits of university students in Assam.

- To identify the types of reading materials preferred by university students.
- To determine the amount of time spent on reading by university students.
- To explore the factors influencing the reading habits of university students in Assam.

4. Research Methodology:

In the present study the survey method to investigate the reading habits of university students of Assam. The sample consisted of 280 college students selected from Sibsagar University of Assam. Data for the study were collected through the questionnaire method. A structured questionnaire was designed to the respondents to obtain information regarding their reading habits, reading preferences, time spent on reading, and factors influencing their reading behaviour. The collected data were analysed for the findings.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

5.1. Demography of the study:

Table 5.1: Distribution of sample according to demographic characteristics

	Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Gender	Male	112	40%
	Female	168	60%
Age	18-20	112	40%
	21-23	112	40%
	24-27	56	20%

The Table shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Out of the total 280 students surveyed, 40% were male and 60% were female. Regarding age distribution, 40% of the respondents belonged to the 18–20 years age group, while another 40% were in the 21–23 years age group. The remaining 20% of the students belonged to the 24–27 years age group. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were within the age range of 18–23 years.

5.2. How often the read?

Table 5.2: Distribution of Students According to Their Reading Frequency

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Daily	224	80%
Twice in a week	42	15%
Weekly	14	5%
Rarely	0	0

The table shows the frequency of reading among the students surveyed. Out of 280 students, the majority (80%) reported reading daily. A further 15% of the students stated that they read twice a week, while 5% read weekly. None of the respondents reported reading rarely.

5.3. How much time do you spend reading per day?

Table 5.3: Distribution of Students According to Time Spent on Reading per Day

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	42	15%
1- 2 hours	84	30%
2-3 hours	126	45%
More than 3 hours	28	10%

The table shows the amount of time spent on reading by the students each day. Out of 280 students, 45% reported spending 2–3 hours on reading daily, which constitutes the largest proportion of respondents. About 30% of the students spent 1–2 hours reading per day, while 15% spent less than 1 hour. Only 10% of the students reported spending more than 3 hours on reading daily.

5.4. What type of reading materials do you prefer most?

Table 5.4: Distribution of Students According to Preferred Reading Materials

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Textbook	154	55%
General Book	56	20%
Journal and Magazines	56	20%
Newspaper	14	5%

The table shows the preferred reading materials of the students. Out of 280 students, 55% preferred reading textbooks, making it the most popular reading material among the respondents. General books and journals and magazines were each preferred by 20% of the students. Only 5% of the respondents preferred reading newspapers.

5.5. What is your main purpose of reading?

Table 5.5: Distribution of Students According to Purpose of Reading

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Academic Purposes	140	50%
Competitive Examinations	70	25%
General Knowledge	42	15%
Entertainment	28	10%

The table shows the purpose of reading among the college students surveyed. Out of 280 students, 50% reported that they read mainly for academic purposes, making it the most common reason for reading. About 25% of the students read to prepare for competitive examinations. Reading for general knowledge accounted for 15% of the respondents, while 10% read primarily for entertainment.

5.6. Which format do you prefer for reading?

Table 5.6: Distribution of Students According to Preferred Reading Format

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Print Material	112	40%
Electronic Material	98	35%
Both	70	25%

The table shows the preferred reading format among the college students surveyed. Out of 280 students, 40% preferred print materials, making it the most preferred reading format. About 35% of the respondents preferred electronic materials, while 25% reported using both print and electronic formats for reading.

5.7. Do you visit the library regularly?

Table 5.7: Distribution of Students According to Regular Library Visits

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	244	80%
No	56	20%

The table shows the frequency of regular library visits among the college students surveyed. Out of 280 students, 80% reported that they visit the library regularly, while 20% stated that they do not visit the library regularly.

5.8. Do you think reading improves your academic performance?

Table 5.8: Distribution of Students According to Their Opinion on Whether Reading Improves Academic Performance

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	196	70%
No	70	25%
Not Sure	14	5%

The table shows the students' opinions regarding the impact of reading on academic performance. Out of 280 students, 70% believed that reading

improves academic performance, while 25% felt that it does not have a significant effect. A small proportion of students (5%) were not sure about the relationship between reading and academic achievement.

5.9. What factors affect your reading habit?

Table 5.9: Factors Affecting the Reading Habits of College Students

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Lack of Time	56	20%
Social Media Usage	84	30%
Academic overload	98	35%
Lack of Interest	28	10%
other	14	5%

The table 5.9 reveals the factors that affect the reading habits of students. Among the 280 respondents, 35% reported academic overload as the major factor affecting their reading habit, making it the most significant challenge. 30% of the students indicated social media usage as a hindrance to regular reading. 20% cited lack of time, while 10% reported lack of interest in reading. The remaining 5% mentioned other factors. The findings suggest that academic pressure and excessive use of social media are the primary barriers to developing consistent reading habits among college students.

5.10. Would you like to develop a stronger reading habit?

Table 5.10: Distribution of Students According to Their Willingness to Develop a Stronger Reading Habit

Categories	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	182	65%
No	14	5%
May be	84	30%

The table shows the willingness of college students to develop a stronger reading habit. Out of 280 respondents, 196 students (70%) expressed their desire to develop a stronger reading habit. Meanwhile, 70 students (25%) indicated that they were not interested in developing a stronger reading habit, and 14 students (5%) were not sure about it.

6. Findings:

The findings of the study are:

Objectives 1: To examine the reading habits of university students in Assam:

- The study found that 80% of the students read daily, 15% read twice a week, and 5% read weekly.
- About 80% of the respondents reported visiting the library regularly.
- A majority (70%) believed that reading improves academic performance.
- Around 65% expressed willingness to develop a stronger reading habit.

Objectives 2: To identify the types of reading materials preferred by university students:

- Textbooks were the most preferred reading material, chosen by 55% of the students.
- General books and journals/magazines were each preferred by 20% of the respondents.
- Only 5% preferred newspapers.

Objectives 3: To determine the amount of time spent on reading by university students:

- The largest proportion of students (45%) spent 2–3 hours reading daily.
- About 30% spent 1–2 hours on reading.
- Fifteen percent spent less than one hour, while only 10% spent more than three hours per day.

Objectives 4: To explore the factors influencing the reading habits of university students in Assam:

- Academic overload was identified as the major factor affecting reading habits by 35% of the students.
- Social media usage affected 30% of the respondents.
- Lack of time was reported by 20%, while 10% cited lack of interest.
- Other factors accounted for 5% of the responses.

7. Conclusions:

The study concludes that university students in Assam generally possess positive reading habits and recognize the importance of reading in their academic and personal development. Most

students engage in reading regularly, primarily for academic purposes, and spend a reasonable amount of time on reading activities. Textbooks remain the most preferred source of reading, although both print and electronic formats are widely used. Despite these encouraging trends, factors such as academic overload, social media distractions, and lack of time negatively influence reading habits. Therefore, educational institutions should encourage reading through library services, reading programmes, and awareness activities that promote balanced use of technology and effective time management. Strengthening reading habits among students will contribute to improved academic performance and lifelong learning.

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