

**READING HABITS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A SURVEY OF
SMT.MMK COLLEGE OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMICS, MUMBAI**

Ligimol Benny

Librarian

Smt. MMK College of Commerce & Economics,
Mumbai (M. S.) India

ABSTRACT: - *The present study investigates the reading habits of undergraduate students of Smt.MMK College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai. The paper also aims to explore the difference in reading habits in terms of gender. The researcher used a survey approach to collect the data. The result shows that less than half of the undergraduate students use the college library regularly and most of them spend one to two hours daily. They read mainly for education and to improve general knowledge. Most of the students prefer to read print material over e-resource and majority of them agreed that the reading habits have diminished due to the usage of internet and social media. Some differences in reading habits were observed between male and female participants.*

KEYWORDS: *Reading habit, Undergraduate Students, User Study*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the art of interpreting printed and written words. It is the basic tool of education and learning. Reading promotes one's personal development and social progress too. Reading

is generally accepted as a way for reaching new information an assumed to be consistent with the comprehension capabilities of individuals (Ozbay, 2006). Developing reading habits in college students in the modern technological era is a challenge. Earlier, students spent their leisure time by reading or participating in other activities such as sports and games. These days, with the advancement of information and communication technologies, the reading habits are visibly diminishing. The students are spending their time more on internet and social media than in the library.

THE COLLEGE LIBRARY

Smt. MMK College of Commerce and Economics was established in the year 1961 by the Hyderabad (Sind) National Collegiate Board. The college library also started functioning in the same year. The college imparts education from Higher Secondary Commerce up to Postgraduate level. The college also offers BMS, BMM, B.Com (Banking and Insurance), B.Com (Accounting and Finance) and B.Com (Financial Market) courses. The college library has a collection of around 47000 books and 850 CDS. It subscribes to 93 periodicals including 42 journals and 10 e-journals and 20 leading newspapers in different languages. It also subscribes to N-LIST. The library timing is from 7.30am to 4.30pm on all working days except Sunday and public holidays. The library extends its timings during examination. The reading room can accommodate 74 students at a time. The library is fully automated and provides OPAC. The library also provides internet facility to the students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study carried out by **Cabral & Tavares (2002)** on reading habits of higher education students found that students read for academic purposes almost as much as they use reading as a hobby. The study was conducted in an urban middle school in a large northeastern city in the United States by **Hassell & Rodge (2007)** revealed that female students were more likely to read for pleasure than male. A study conducted by **Igun & Adogbeji (2007)** disclosed that nearly two-third (61.5%) of postgraduate students are motivated primarily by the desire for knowledge and skills, while 22.5% study mainly to pass their examination and test and for self development.

OBJECTIVES

Reading habit has been an area of interest among the library professionals. It is essential for the librarian to identify the reading habits of their users. The objectives of this research study are as follows:

1. To identify the reading habits of the undergraduate students of Smt. MMK College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai.
2. To find out the frequency and the purpose of their library visit.
3. To determine the types of library material they use.
4. To ascertain their opinion about the library timings, collection and library staff.
5. To assess their preference of format of reading material.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is to identify the reading habits of undergraduate students. The study is limited to the undergraduate students of Smt. MMK College of Commerce and Economics, Bandra, Mumbai.

METHODOLOGY

A well-structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to 200 undergraduate college students of Smt. MMK College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai. Out of that 185 college students fully completed the questionnaire given to them. The data received from the respondents was tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The findings are given below.

FINDINGS

The data was collected from 185 undergraduate students of Smt. MMK College of Commerce and Economics. 53% of the respondents were female and the remaining 47% were male. 95% of the respondents are from urban area while 5% of them are from rural area.

Frequency	Response in %		
	Total	Male	Female
Almost daily	44	44	45
Once in a week	32	32	33
Once in two weeks	8	9	6
Once in a month	2	3	1
Rarely	12	9	15
Never	2	3	0

Chart No. (1): Frequency of visit to the college library

The chart no. (1) indicates the frequency of visit to the college library by the respondents. 44% of the respondents visit the library almost daily while 32% visit the library once in a week. 8% of the respondents visit the library once in two weeks whereas 2% of them visit once in a month. 12% of the students visit the library rarely and 2% of them never visit the library.

The data on the basis of gender shows that 45% of the female students and 44% of the male students visit the library on a daily basis. 33% of the female students and 32% of the male students visit the library once in a week while 6% of the female students and 9% of the male

students visit the library once in two weeks. 1% of the female students and 3% of the male students visit the library once in a month whereas 15% of the female students and 9% of the male students rarely visit the library. 3% of the male students said they never visit the library.

The result shows that less than half of the undergraduate students visit the library on a regular basis. The study finds no significant difference between male and female students as far as visit to the library is concerned.

Purpose of Library Visit	Response in %		
	Total	Male	Female
To locate materials for study purpose	41	33	49
To locate books for recreational reading	8	4	13
To look at magazines and newspapers	11	16	6
Pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere	6	10	2
Quite study area (self study)	49	56	43
To use reference materials	15	15	15
Others (Pl. specify)	2	0	2

Chart No. (2): Purpose of Library Visit

The respondents were asked to mention the purpose of their library visit and different options were given to them. The chart no. (2) shows that 49% of the respondents visit the library for self study followed by 41% to locate library materials for study purpose. 15% of the respondents visit the library to use reference materials while 11% to read magazines and newspapers. 8% of the respondents visit the library for recreational reading while 6% of

them visit the library for its pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere. 2% of them visit the library for other reasons such as referring question paper.

The comparison between male and female responses reveal that 43% female students and 56% male students visit the library for self study while 49% female and 33% male respondents visit the library to locate material for study purpose. 13% of the female students visit the library for recreational reading whereas only 4% of the male students visit the library for the same. 15% female as well as male students use the library for reference materials. 16% of the male students visit the library to read magazines and newspapers whereas only 6% of the female students use the library for the same. While 10% male students said that they visit the library for its pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere, only 2% of the female students agreed to that.

The result indicates that the majority of the college students visit the library for self study and to locate library materials for study purpose. The result on the basis of gender illustrates that majority of the male students visit the library for self study whereas female students visit the library to locate the library materials for study. The study also revealed that more male students prefer to read newspaper and magazine as compared to female students while more female students prefer to read for recreation as compared to male students.

Methods Used to Locate Library Materials	Response in %		
	Total	Male	Female
I browse through the shelves	15	16	14
I ask a friend for help	21	21	19
I ask library staff for assistance	50	49	53
I use internet	11	10	12
I visit another library	3	4	2
Other	0	0	0

Chart No. (3): Methods Used to Locate Library Materials

The respondents were further asked to specify what they do when they cannot find the material they are looking for in the library. Different options were given to them. The chart no. (3) indicates that 50% of the respondents ask library staff for assistance while 21% of them take their friends' help. 15% of them replied that they browse along the shelves while 11% said that they use internet. However, 3% of them visit another library if they are unable to get the required reading material.

The gender wise data reveals that 53% of the female and 49% of male respondents seek library staff's assistance. 19% of the female and 21% of the male respondents said that they ask their friend for help. 14% of the female and 16% of the male respondents said that they browse along the shelves. While 12% of the female and 10% of the male use internet, 2% of the female and 4% of the male respondents said they visit another library.

The result revealed that most of the students seek the assistance of the library staff when they cannot find the required material in the library. No significant differences were observed between male and female students while searching the required material in the library.

Who encourages to use the library	Response in %		
	Total	Male	Female
Teachers	35	30	42
Friends	47	47	47
Librarian	1	1	0
Parent/Guardian	6	8	4
Brother/sister	1	1	1
Self-motivated	10	13	6

Chart No. (4): People Encourage to Use the Library

The respondents were asked to mention who encourage them to use the college library. The chart no. (4) illustrates the result. 47% of the respondents said that their friends encourage them to use the college library. 35% of them responded that the teachers encourage them to use the library while 10% said they are self motivated. Again 6% of the respondents are encouraged by their parents while 1% of the respondents are encouraged by their sibling and librarian to use the college library.

Gender wise data shows that 47% of the female as well as male respondents are encouraged by their friends to use the college library. 42% of the female and 30% of the male respondents are encouraged by their teachers while 6% of the female and 13% of the male

respondents are self motivated to use the library. 4% of the female and 8% of the male respondents are encouraged by their parents while only 1% of male and female respondents are encouraged by their sibling to use the library. 1% of the male students are encouraged by the librarian to use the library.

The result of the survey indicates that friends and teachers encourage and motivate the students in a considerable manner to use the college library. Although friends encourage most of the male and female students to visit the library, differences do occur in their behavior. More female students are encouraged by their teacher to use the library as compared to male students. However, more male students are self motivated than female students to use the library.

Time spend in the library	Response in %		
	Total	Male	Female
Less than one hour	25	22	29
One to two hour	54	56	52
Two to three hour	17	16	16
More than three hours	4	6	3

Chart No. (5): Time Spend on Reading

The respondents were further asked to specify the time spend in the college library for reading. The chart no. (5) indicates that 54% of the students spend one to two hours in the college library every day. 25% of the respondents spend less than one hour whereas 17% of

them spend two to three hours in the library. Only 4% of the respondents spend more than three hours in the library.

The data based on gender shows that 52% of the female and 56% of the male respondents spend one to two hour in the library. 29% of the female and 22% of the male students spend less than one hour in the library. 16% of both female and male students spend two to three hours while 6% of male and 3% of female students spend more than three hours in the library every day.

The survey revealed that most of the students spend one to two hours in the library for reading daily. Very few students spend more than three hours in the library for reading. No significant variations were observed in time spend for reading in the library between male and female students.

Types of reading materials consult	Response in %		
	Total	Male	Female
Textbook	70	75	66
Reference Book	26	24	28
Magazines	8	8	7
Newspapers	18	21	14
Story Books	11	7	16
Other	1	0	1

Chart No. (6): Types of Reading Materials Used

The chart no. (6) revealed the types of library materials used by the respondents. 70% of the respondents consult textbooks while 26% of them use reference books in the library. 18% of the students read newspaper while 11% of them read storybooks. 8% of the respondents consult magazines while only 1% respondents said other category like question paper.

The data based on the gender reveals that 75% of the male students refer textbooks in the library as compared to 66% of the female students. 28% of female and 24 % of male respondents consult reference books while 14% of female and 21% of the male students read newspapers in the library. 16% of the female respondents read story books as compared to 7% of the male students. Again 7% of female and 8% of male students consult magazines while 1% of the female students refer question papers.

The result shows that majority of the students refer textbook in the library followed by reference books. Very few students read magazines and newspapers. Some differences exist on the type of library materials used between male and female students. More male students read textbooks as compared to female students while more female students read story books as compared to male students.

Reading purpose	Response in %		
	Total	Male	Female
For education	68	70	67
To improve general knowledge	37	42	33
For recreation	3	2	5
Hobby	13	13	14
Other	0	0	0

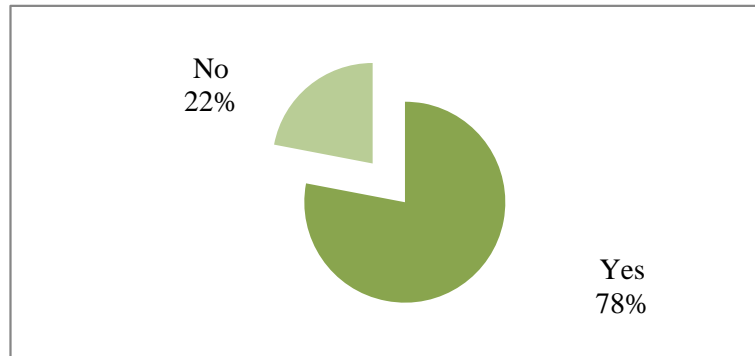
Chart No. (7): Purpose of Reading

The respondents were further asked to mention the purpose of their reading. The chart no. (7) shows that 68% of the respondents read for education and 37% of them read to improve their general knowledge. 13% of the respondents read since it is their hobby while 3% of them read for recreation.

The data on the basis of gender depicts that 67% of the female and 70% of the male respondents read for education purpose. Male students (42%) read more than female students (33%) to improve their general knowledge. However, more female students (5%) read for recreation as compared to the male students (2%). Almost same number of male (13%) and female (14%) students consider reading as a hobby.

The survey discloses that the main purpose of reading by the students in the college library is for education followed by improving their general knowledge. It is found that a very few students read for recreation. Moreover very few students consider reading as a hobby. Minor variations were found in the purpose of reading between male and female

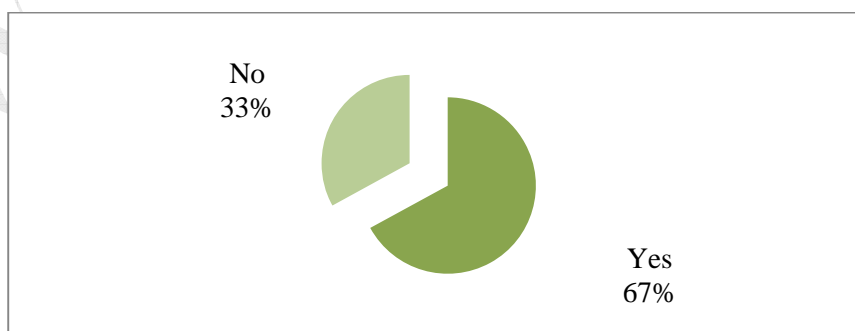
students. More male students read to improve their general knowledge as compared to female students while more female students read for recreation as compared to male students.



Pie Chart No. (8): Adequacy of Library Hours

The pie chart no. (8) shows that 78% of the respondents found the timings of the library adequate whereas 22% of them found it is inadequate. The gender wise data shows that 79% of the female and 77% of the male respondents found the library timings adequate whereas 21% of the female and 23% of the male respondents considered it inadequate.

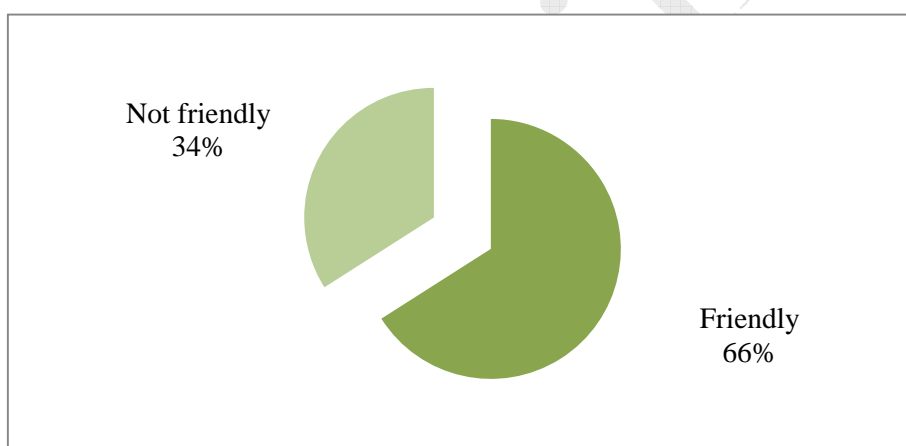
The survey finds that the library timings is adequate. No variations were observed in the responses given by the male and female respondents.



Pie Chart No. (9): Adequacy of Reading Space

The pie chart no. (9) indicates that 67% of the respondents believed that the reading space in the college library is adequate while 33% of the respondents found it inadequate. The data based on gender indicates that 65% of female and 69% of male opined that the reading space is adequate whereas 35% of the female and 31% of the male said that it is inadequate.

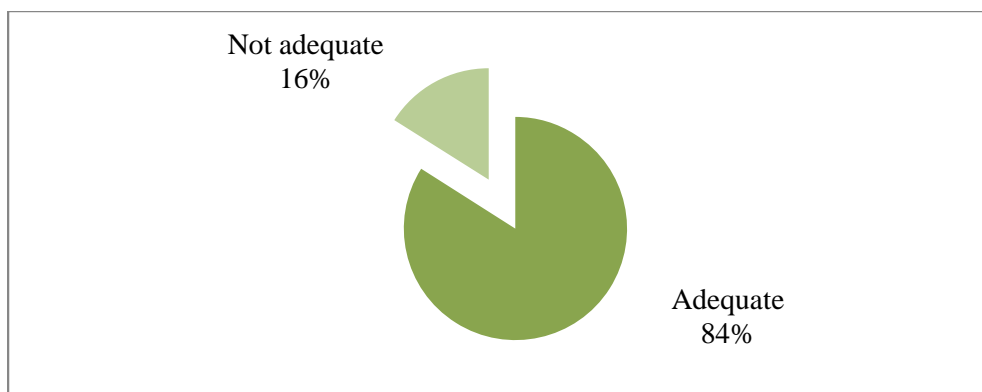
The survey revealed that the reading space in the college library is adequate. No significant difference was observed between male and female students opinion regarding reading space of the library.



Pie Chart No. (10): Opinion about the Library Staff

Respondents were requested to provide feedback about the library staff. The pie chart no. (10) indicates that 66% of the respondents felt that the library staff are friendly while 34% of them said that they are not friendly. 62% of female and 71% of the male respondents considered the staff friendly while 38% of female and 29% of male respondents said they are not friendly.

According to the survey result the library staff are friendly. However, some variations are visible about the library staff between male and female respondents. More male students found the library staff friendly as compared to female students.



Pie Chart No. (11): Adequacy of Library Collection

The pie chart no. (11) shows that the library collection is adequate according to 84% of the respondents. Only 16% respondents felt that the collection requires improvement. Gender wise data shows that 85% of the female and 84% of the male respondents find library collection adequate whereas 15% of the female and 16% of the male respondents found them inadequate.

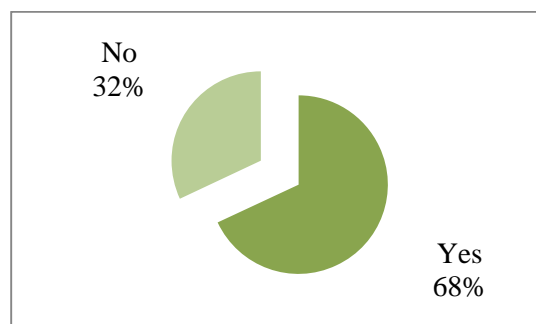
The survey reveals that majority of the students consider that the collection of the library is adequate. No significant difference was observed about the adequacy of the library collection between male and female students.



Pie Chart No. (12): Format of Reading Materials

The respondents were asked to specify whether they prefer to read print material or e-resources. The pie chart no. (12) shows that 74% of the respondents prefer to read print material and the remaining 26% of them prefer e-resources. The gender wise data shows that 74% of both female and male respondents prefer to read print material over e-resource. 26% of female and male students like to read e-resources.

The survey reveals that majority of the students prefer to read print material over e-resources. No difference was observed between male and female student regarding the format of reading material.



Pie Chart No. (13): Decrease of Reading Habits

The respondents were further asked to mention whether their reading habits have decreased due to internet and social media. The pie chart no. (13) shows that 68% of the respondents agreed that their reading habits have declined due to internet and social media while 32% of them did not agree with it. Gender based data shows that 74% of the female and 62% of the male students believed that their reading habits have declined due to internet and social media usage. 26% of the female and 38% of the male students did not agree with it.

The survey indicates that most of the college students agree that their reading habits have declined due to internet and social media usage. Some differences were observed between male and female students opinion. More female students agree that the reading habits have declined due to internet and social media as compared to male students.

CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that undergraduate college students depend upon the college library mainly for their study material. The main purpose of their reading in the library is to get information for their studies and to improve their general knowledge. A very few students read for recreation. Students find the library as the best place for quiet study. The findings of the survey indicate that the college students need to improve their reading habits. The survey revealed that majority of the college students still prefer to read print material over e-resources. The survey also exposed that reading habits of college students have declined due to the internet and social media usage. The study found some variations in

reading habits between male and female students. The findings of this study will help the library to modify its services in order to encourage reading habits of the students.

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