

# READING INTEREST OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN GONDIA DISTRICT: A STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

This research is based on learning the interest of college students of the Gondia district reading. The Reading interest is crucial and assists students in acquiring knowledge, honing language and thinking sharply. The research was carried out through gathering the responses of students in various colleges in Gondia. Structured questionnaire survey method was applied. Hypothesis testing and descriptive statistics were applied to analyse the data. The results indicate that majority of students enjoy reading textbooks during their studies, however, many also read newspapers, magazines literature and storybooks. Reading preferences are also influenced by gender and stream of study. The paper is topped with the recommendations as to how Reading interests should be promoted among students.

**Keywords:** Reading Interests, College Students, Gondia District, Academic Reading, Leisure Reading, Survey Study

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most effective learning and personal Development skills is reading. To students it is not merely a means of preparing to an exam but also preparing to increase knowledge levels, language abilities, creativity, and critical thinking. When a student transforms into a great reader, his/her communication self-esteem is boosted and he/she is more armed with academic and career challenges.

There are numerous numbers of ways of reading in the modern world. Historically, the students resorted primarily to the use of textbooks, reference books and newspapers. Nevertheless, numerous students tend to read online blogs, e-books, research publications and content in social media, with the evolution of digital technology. This change has come along with its own opportunities and challenges. On one hand, students are able to access information fast, rather, students are still attracted to the entertainment-based digital platform at the expense of serious reading behaviours.

College students in India are in a special position, especially in smaller such districts as Gondia. At the same time the tendency to read out of classroom requirement is rather low, although resources, including textbooks, newspaper and journals, are offered by libraries in colleges. A lot of students read just to pass exams and to do set tasks and not many of them read leisurely literature such as novels, storybooks or magazines. This brings up a critical question of; Are the

students in Gondia building reading as lifelong requirement, or are they building reading on mandatory academic reading?

Investigating students reading interest is highly necessary as it is linked to the development of the student attitude, preferences and learning culture. A study like this would also give guidance to colleges and libraries in the way they plan facilities, organize reading programs, and persuading students to read more often.

In Maharashtra district, Gondia is just a semi urban district mostly rural. The families of many students may not attach much importance to reading on economic, social or cultural grounds. Meanwhile, the situation is gradually shifting due to government projects, better libraries and access to online resources. Here, there is a need to look into what college students in Gondia read, the frequency of reading, and the reason behind reading.

Thus, this research paper targets the reading motivation of the college students in Gondia district. It attempts to find out:

Type of reading material the students' favourite (academic or not academic).

- The significance of gender and science major (Arts, Commerce, Science) to May and affect reading preferences.
- The ascendant factor of online reading in contrast to the neat print media.

Through examining these, the research paper will present valuable suggestions into the current reading culture among students as well as give recommendations on how best to support healthy Reading interests towards their overall growth and development.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gambrell (2001) observed that positive classroom culture could help to encourage students to read. Similarly, Guthrie and Wigfield (2004) expounded that there is focus on engagement and motivation when it comes to achieving good reading skills among the students. Krashen (2006) points out that free voluntary reading is very significant in that, when the students are given the choice what they want to read, they feel more interested and in good Reading interests. It was also supported by Clark and Rumbold (2006), who uncovered that one of driving areas in boosting the performance of language and learning is reading-in-platform to support pleasure.

In research comparing very good and very poor readers, McGeown, Norgate and Warhurst (2012) found that personal interest in reading- intrinsic motivation related more than extrinsic pressure. In the same line, Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) noted that self-efficacy and self-regulation are equally important in consolidating reading/writing ability that teachers can foster by acting as role models. Wigfield, Gladstone and Turci (2016) did not limit themselves to mental side of reading but indicated a direct correlation between reading comprehension and motivation.

Pandian (2011), also in Indian context, explored Reading interests and preferences of the students, but noted that most of the students were reading because of some academic necessity, not out of enjoyment. This was also solidified by Bansal (2018) whom he disclosed that reading culture of Indian college students is highly exam-oriented. The outcome of the paper by Singh and Kaur (2019) is that gender does not mean nothing as females read much more novels and magazines, males prefer to use newspapers and web resources. In the study by Deshmukh (2020), the research was conducted in rural colleges in Maharashtra where the researchers indicated that, insufficiency of resources and libraries weakens the reading culture in a rural environment. Kumar (2021) created awareness regarding the online reading platforms and found out that although many students are reading with the help of mobile apps and e-reading materials, printed textbooks still remain the favourite in a serious study. An experiment used to give a comparison of digital and physical reading in the contemporary era suggested that despite the fact that the digital aspect of reading is favoured by students, print books still matter (Chen and Fang, 2022).

The need to make the youth read to personal development is highlighted in other reports like the reports by the National Literacy Trust (2012) as well. Similarly, Suleman, Aslam, and Hussain (2014) found out that positive classroom reading behaviours positively impact the performance at the secondary level.

Overall, the review proves that, despite the general applicability of reading all over the globe, the interests of students vary depending on their gender, resources, and digital learning access. The studies reveal that research is entirely scholarly with focus in India and more is due towards achieving a reading culture based on pleasure and individual improvements.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the reading interests and preferences of college students in Gondia district.
- To examine the influence of gender and stream of study (Arts, Commerce, Science) on students' Reading interests.
- To suggest measures for improving and promoting Reading interests among college students.

### 4. HYPOTHESIS

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in the reading interests of college students based on gender and stream of study.
- **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant difference in the reading interests of college students based on gender and stream of study.

### 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

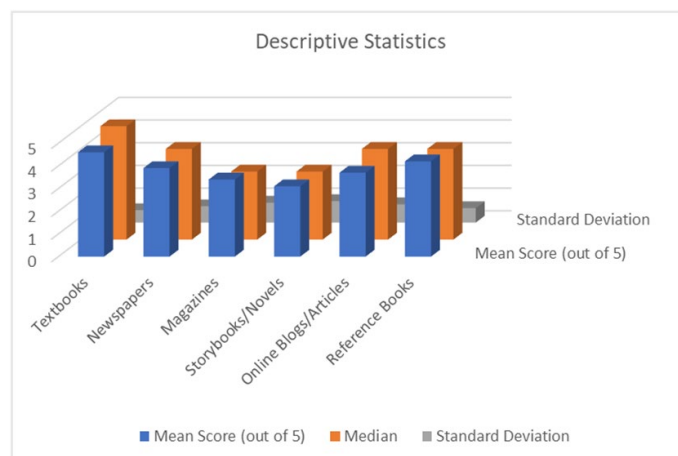
The method applied in this study is descriptive survey whose approach is quite apt when attempting to determine the opinions, habits, and preferences of a collective of individuals. The target study population is made up of the college students of varying streams (Arts, Commerce and Science) in Gondia district. Out of this population, a population size of 200 students was, with the help of random sampling, to ensure that no students were left out and all the students had an equal opportunity of being picked. A questionnaire was created, and it was structured as a questionnaire that had multiple-choice questions, and rating-scales. Data concerning the type of reading materials students are fond of, time taken reading materials, as well as the importance of libraries and digital platforms in reading patterns was collected using this questionnaire. The data gathered was evaluated using the basic descriptive statistics such as percentages and average to get a clue on the overall trends. Moreover, it checked the hypotheses on a Chi-square test and the ways in which such factors as gender and stream of study could influence reading interests.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics

Reading Material	Mean Score (out of 5)	Median	Standard Deviation
Textbooks	4.6	5.0	0.55
Newspapers	3.9	4.0	0.72
Magazines	3.4	3.0	0.88
Storybooks/Novels	3.1	3.0	0.95
Online Blogs/Articles	3.7	4.0	0.81
Reference Books	4.2	4.0	0.64

**Note** Scores are based on students' responses on a 5-point scale: 1 = Very Low Interest, 5 = Very High Interest.

**Figure 1**



## 6. ANALYSIS OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

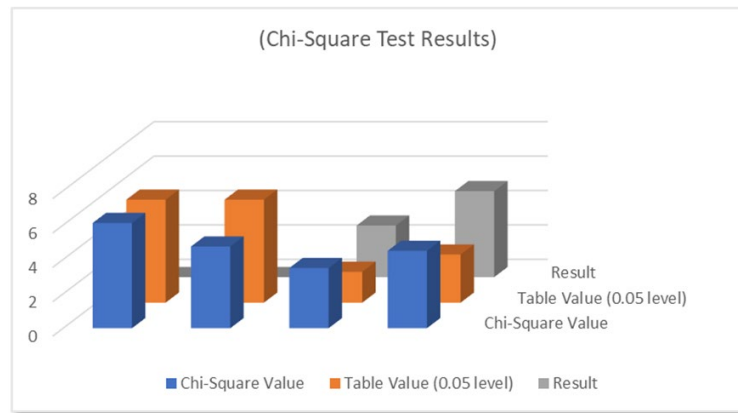
Based on the table, it is observable that with mean score of 4.6, textbooks rank last indicating that students are the most interested in reading textbooks due to academic reasons. The median score of 5 supports the fact that a lot of student's value textbooks to be the highest priority. Reference books (mean 4.2) and newspaper (mean 3.93) rank also high, thus showing that they are instrumental in the studies and general awareness.

The low score (means 3.4 and 3.1 respectively) on magazines and storybooks/novels imply that the status of leisure reading is not popular among students. There is a moderate interest in online blogs and online articles (mean 3.7) and this indicates that, even though digital reading is increasingly becoming popular, it is not yet fully accommodating over traditional reading. These values of standard deviation indicate that answers to textbooks and reference books are more similar, and that magazines and novels are more variable, i.e. the preferences of students towards different techniques are by and large a mix.

**Table 2** Hypothesis Testing (Chi-Square Test Results)

Hypothesis Tested	Chi-Square Value	Table Value (0.05 level)	Result
Gender vs. Reading Interest	6.12	5.99	Significant
Stream of Study (Arts/Commerce/Science) vs. Reading Interest	4.75	5.99	Not Significant

**Figure 2**



## 7. ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The result of Chi-square tests indicate that gender is significant factor to the reading interests or there is a difference in the table value (5.99) with the result of happiness (6.12). This implies that there are gender differences in reading preferences of male and female students. Female students like storybooks and magazines as compared to male students who like newspapers and online materials.

The second hypothesis on stream of study, on the other hand, is not significant because the result of the computation (4.75) is less than that on the table (5.99). This implies that there is not much difference in the reading preferences of Arts, Commerce, and Science students instead they are divided according to their primary reading types which include textbooks and reference materials.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS OVERALL RESULTS

An analysis of college students of Gondia district reveals that reading continues to make a significant aspect of their school studies. Reading materials mostly preferable are the textbooks and reference books, which confirms that students tend to read to not only learn but also to educate. Many students are also reading newspapers as a source of up-to-date information and digital sources such as blogs and articles are gaining momentum. Leisure reading like story books and novels is however minimal.

The analysis also reveals that gender does matter with respect to the reading interest as the female data type students are more inclined towards the magazines and novels, whereas the male students are more inclined towards the newspapers and online reading. Conversely, when compared to Arts students, Commerce students and Science postulates, the difference between students in reading behaviours is non-significant because all heavily rely on actual reading materials and academic texts.

On the whole, the findings can be interpreted to mean that although students do engage in Reading interests, they largely are exam-driven and not as occupied with trying to make reading a life career. This demonstrates that there are more efforts that should be made to motivate reading as a knowledge boosting activity, creativity and personal development.

## 9. OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

- Textbooks as the primary source of reading- Most students use textbooks and reference books as their reading materials since their reading is concentrated on exams and academic work.
- Medical interest in newspapers and internet content- A significant proportion of the leaned students read the newspapers to get up to date news and also access blogs and have read articles as well as other reading content sites.
- Unless high interest in leisure reading Storybooks, novels and magazines is not very popular among students, which indicates that the pleasure in reading does not significantly develop.
- Gender disparities- Females are more likely to be hooked in novel reading and magazine content, whereas males are more attracted to newspapers and online materials.
- There is no significant difference in streams- Arts, Commerce and Science students do not have significant difference in terms of their reading preference as all streams pay significant attention to textbooks.
- Digital reading is on the rise- Traditional reading material is still paramount, but the use of digital platforms is gradually gaining momentum in the reading patterns and styles of the students.
- Exam-seeking reading culture the reading culture is more emphasis on achievement than in lifetime interest in reading.

## 10. FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- Other districts and states can also undertake the same study to draw a comparison between the interest of students with reading interests that represent various regions.
- It can be concluded that in future studies one can concentrate on the inclusion of digital reading platforms, e-books and mobile applications in the way (students) read.
- One can elaborate further on the role of libraries and teachers in affecting the growth of culture of reading among college learners.
- It will be possible to plan such long-term studies to determine how the interests towards reading among students may alter with switching the school to college and then to occupational life.
- To promote leisure reading and building a better reading culture, special attention can also be paid to designing the program and workshops in colleges.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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