

# A STUDY ON ONLINE READING HABITS OF STUDENTS IN KOCHI

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**Abstract** – Reading has been an important exercise for humans to gather knowledge about different domains. Due to Information Technology revolution that happened after 2000, there has a considerable increase the in number of internet users in the world and India is one of those countries which has a high internet penetration, around 45 percentage as per latest reports which shows that nearly half the population had internet penetration. Online Reading has increased among users especially youth who closely follow the updates happening in the world through their mobile phones. The research paper investigated the online reading habits of graduate and post-graduate management students in Ernakulam city. The sample consisted of 105 respondents from both genders. Statistical packages were used to do the analysis. The results of the research showed that Tablets were the most popular electronic device used among the target group while Google was the most preferred reading platform. Among the type of article read, News and current affairs were ranked top by females while the males showed affinity to Business related updates.

**Key Words:** Online reading, Management students, Reading habits, Gender, Electronic Device

## 1.INTRODUCTION

Reading can be summarized as a habit that involves books, printed articles and electronic materials. Reading habits are calculated as how much a person read, how often do they read, when do they read and what do they read. It varies differently of how each material can affect one's reading habits. This paper aims to look in depth and compare the reading habits of Management students from Kerala , India.

Reading makes one proficient in language, making one communicate clearly and concisely. It gives clarity of thought

and streamlines the way one would approach a problem. It also enhances one's analytical and problem- solving skills. It makes one better at reasoning , exposes one to multiple and varied cultures and scenarios thereby broadening one's thinking and making it much more diverse. Reading helps in acquiring useful information, gaining powerful ideas, inspiring stories, and developing deeper insights on every subject under the sun. Since time immemorial, reading has been the prime mode of people interacting with the unseen world and abstract ideas that can change the course of someone's lives. According to Aliye Erdem (2014), the habit of reading is also one of the most important foundations of a robust and developed individual.[1]

Unless one reads and gets in touch with the mass media, it is difficult to know what is going on around us. Not only that, a student has to read books, other than his/her subject books, so that the range of thinking and acting will become broader. 'Reading to learn' is an essential tool for life-long learning. Promoting a reading culture among students is therefore one of the key tasks in the curriculum reform with the aim to strengthen students' learning capabilities.

It is recommended that parents and teachers should work in collaboration with one another and create a healthy atmosphere that increases the interest of students in reading. This self-interest and support of parents and teachers help in promoting the reading habits of students. For a management student, reading helps in having better insights for leading cross-cultural teams for projects in future. It helps with developing creativity which is an integral component of leadership ,as it allows you to "think outside the box". Creativity starts off with a series of questions on how things be made better. Sometimes the best solutions are not found in

black and white and found in the grey areas. Only those with a creative mind can filter and find what others cannot see. A leader must always stay ahead of the curve updated with the latest information. Keeping abreast of trends and developments in your industry or area of interest will help you make educated decisions before anyone else does. Anne Cunningham who is an Associate Professor in Cognition and Development from the University of California, Berkeley, conducted a study which showed readers were excellent in analyzing information. This allowed frequent book readers to become better decision-makers than non-book readers. What separates leaders from followers is that they are able to see opportunity while others see only failure. One may tend to see the author's perspective and compare them to yours. It helps you understand and appreciate the opinions of others.

Thus, whilst dealing with people, you communicate with an open mind. You develop empathy instead of criticism. You allow them the opportunity to contribute and generate feedback. Meetings become more productive instead of a venue for arguments and debate. The fear of risk is comfortably managed because they are able to use their knowledge to weigh costs versus benefits. Before they initiate plans into action, risk management procedures would already be in place. Studies have shown that reading regularly improves your abstract reasoning skills. It is a cycle that involves receiving and assimilating information.

In business, one would frequently encounter situations that require precise decision-making. If you can break down information and process potential scenarios from various courses of action, you will be able to come up with the decision with the most favorable outcome.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many adolescents these days are proficient in technology related communication. Teachers and educators should go beyond from teaching technical skills to integrating ICT in language classrooms where students can truly experience and explore the internet as a resource. (Zainol Abidin , Pour-Mohammedi & Jesmin (2011).[2]

Researchers are captured by the new emergence of the digital environment. Online Reading habits for the purpose of this survey are defined as what , how much and how often the students read. The rapid pace of the information age has resulted in literacy becoming more technologically oriented.(Chauhan & Lal , 2012).[3]

Shastri (2016) have found that the students majorly read online at home , the libraries of their educational institutions and while travelling. They even read in the premises of their institutes and also during lectures.[4]

Somipam et al (2015), investigated the online reading habits using mobile phones among people. The study was able to shed light on the fact that online reading has increased through the use of mobile phones to access various types of online reading materials including e-books.[5]

Technological advances alter people's interests on reading from printed version to digitalized one. Nevertheless , they also have had some preference in choosing such as printed magazines rather than the online ones. Thus , it can be said that they have particular level of reading habits and reading medium based on their preference simultaneously.(Tanjung , Ridwan & Gultom, 2017).Students develop a mode of thinking critically and creatively, as they spend time on skimming and browsing information.[6]

Florence , Adesola, Alaba & Adevumi (2017) have mentioned specifically in their research on online reading of students that they do most of the reading on their specialized subject for academic development. They also put forth many suggestions to be adapted by the parents , teachers and the government at large , in order to improve the reading of the students ; online and offline. Professors should encourage the students to develop interest in reading , create awareness regarding the importance of cultivating reading culture by means of classroom assignments.

Librarians can also help by creating an environment that encourages active reading and also through timely updation of materials available in the library. They can also conduct

symposiums and workshops to cultivate effective reading culture. Mass media can help by conducting programmes for tertiary education for students that would help creative reading and thus , better citizens for future. The government must also promote reading campaigns for students and hold scholarships and awards for excellence in the same. They also suggest that the government bring modifications in the curriculum that promotes active reading as part of daily academia.[7]

Larson & Owusu-Achewu (2014) also asserts on the positive impact of online reading in academics in their study on online reading of students of the Koforidua University.[8]

Hendrikus Male et al (2021), in their investigation have found that undergraduate students were more interested in online reading compared to printed books. Many read to gain knowledge in general information.[9]

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*Problem Statement:* Reading has been one of the most important exercises people have engaged in over the years to gain knowledge about different domains. The spread of technology and especially the IT revolution, has increased the amount of free information available to all which can be accessed through different platforms. This study focuses on the Online reading habits of students and how they engage themselves with the different variety of information spread across the internet.

*Objectives of the study:* The main objective is to identify reading patterns of undergraduate and postgraduate students of business management in Kerala, India.

*Research Design:* The research design adopted for the purpose of study is descriptive in nature.

*Sampling method:* Convenient sampling method used to collect information is convenient sampling through questionnaires. The sample includes undergraduate and

postgraduate Management students in Ernakulam City, Kerala.

*Sample Size:* The sample size selected for this research is 105

*Data Collection method:* A structured questionnaire designed using Google forms were used for executing this survey.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following demographics were obtained. Data was collected using Google forms and the analysis was done using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Software Package, IBM SPSS.

**Table 1:** Demographics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage of Respondents (%)
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-25	91	86.67
26-35	12	11.43
36 -40	2	1.90
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	41	39.04
Female	64	60.95
<b>Education Level</b>		
Graduate	55	52.38
Post Graduate	50	47.62
<b>Year Of Study</b>		
1st year	11	10.48
2nd year	53	50.48
3rd year	41	39.05

The majority of the survey respondents were from 18 to 25 years age group followed by the 26 to 35 years group. The interest in Youth to respond to online reading is evident through this survey. Female respondents were interested to take the survey which formed the major portion of the collected data compared to Male respondents.

Majority the respondents were Graduate students compared to Post Graduate students. 2<sup>nd</sup> year Graduated were more involved the survey followed by Final year students. First year students seem to show less interest in online reading.

**Table 2:** Types of Articles Read Online

What type of articles do you read online?	Frequency	Percent
Beauty & Lifestyle	12	11.4
Business	25	23.8
Health	2	1.9
News & current affairs	33	31.4
Science	6	5.7
Sports	14	13.3
Technology	13	12.4
Total	105	100.0

From the study, it was found that majority of the respondents read news and current affairs compared to other reading materials. The second most favoured reading material is Business related articles. The least preferred was interestingly found to be Science related reading materials among the target group.

**Table 3:** Reading Platforms Used

Do you use any of the following platforms for reading?	Frequency	Percent
Google	60	57.1
Newspaper apps (TOI, Hindu...)	16	15.2
Kindle	28	26.7
Other	1	1.0
Total	105	100.0

Among the different online reading platforms available, the most popular one among the respondents was using google to search for reading materials. Kindle was found to be the next favourite reading platform among the group. Different Newspaper apps were also used among some groups among the respondents.

**Table 4 :** Preferred Time for Reading

When do you mostly read?	Frequency	Percent
Evening	28	26.7
Morning	16	15.2
Both of the above	5	4.8
Whenever leisure time is available	56	53.3
Total	105	100.0

The most preferred time for reading was leisure time available to the target group. Evening time was found to the next most preferred time for reading by the respondents. A minority split their reading time between Morning and Evening of the day.

**Table 5:** Electronic Device Used for Online Reading

Which electronic device do you use?	Frequency	Percent
Mostly Laptop	19	18.1
Mostly Mobile phone	19	18.1
Mostly Tablet	65	61.9
All of the above	2	1.9
Total	105	100.0

The Majority respondents were on Tablets to do their reading engagement while the second preference was shared between

Laptops and Mobile Phones. Very few respondents used a mix of all these gadgets to do their online reading.

**Table 6 :** Gender \* Which Electronic Device Do You Use ?  
Crosstabulation

			Which electronic device do you use?				Total
			Mostly Laptop	Mostly Mobile phone	Mostly Tablet	All of the above	
Gender	Female	Count	9	6	25	1	41
		Expected Count	7.4	7.4	25.4	.8	41.0
		% of Total	8.6%	5.7%	23.8%	1.0%	39.0%
Gender	Male	Count	10	13	40	1	64
		Expected Count	11.6	11.6	39.6	1.2	64.0
		% of Total	9.5%	12.4%	38.1%	1.0%	61.0%
Total		Count	19	19	65	2	105
		Expected Count	19.0	19.0	65.0	2.0	105.0
		% of Total	18.1%	18.1%	61.9%	1.9%	100.0%

The study shows that both males and females used Tablets to access their online reading materials. The second preference for Females on the Electronic device for online reading went to Laptops while the Males preferred Mobile phones. A minority used a mix of all the gadgets to enrich their online reading.

**Table 7:** Gender \* What Type Of Articles Do You Read Online? Crosstabulation

			What type of articles do you read online?							Total
			Beauty & Lifestyle	Business	Health	News & Current Affairs	Science	Sports	Technology	
Gender	Female	Count	9	7	0	19	2	0	4	41
		Expected Count	4.7	9.8	.8	12.9	2.3	5.5	5.1	41.0
		% of Total	8.6%	6.7%	0.0%	18.1%	1.9%	0.0%	3.8%	39.0%
Gender	Male	Count	3	18	2	14	4	14	9	64
		Expected Count	7.3	15.2	1.2	20.1	3.7	8.5	7.9	64.0
		% of Total	2.9%	17.1%	1.9%	13.3%	3.8%	13.3%	8.6%	61.0%
Total		Count	12	25	2	33	6	14	13	105
		Expected Count	12.0	25.0	2.0	33.0	6.0	14.0	13.0	105.0
		% of Total	11.4%	23.8%	1.9%	31.4%	5.7%	13.3%	12.4%	100.0%

The investigation shows that News and Current affairs was the most read article by females, while Business related articles were the ones preferred by Males. Beauty and Lifestyle was given second preference by females while Males split their second preference between News& Current affairs and Sports. The least preference was given to Health-related articles by female respondents and even male respondents.

**Table 8:** Education Level Vs Online Reading increased during Lockdown Period

			Online reading has increased during lockdown due to Covid-19.			Total
			Maybe	No	Yes	
Education Level	Graduation	Count	9	0	46	55
		Expected Count	10.5	1.6	43.0	55.0
		% of Total	8.6%	0.0%	43.8%	52.4%
Education Level	Post-Graduation	Count	11	3	36	50
		Expected Count	9.5	1.4	39.0	50.0
		% of Total	10.5%	2.9%	34.3%	47.6%
Total		Count	20	3	82	105
		Expected Count	20.0	3.0	82.0	105.0
		% of Total	19.0%	2.9%	78.1%	100.0%

The investigation showed that Graduate students have been able to use the Lockdown period to increase their online reading habits compared to Post Graduate students. A few students felt that there has been no change in their online reading habits during Lockdown period. Some students were a bit doubtful on their feeling to whether online reading habits increased during Lockdown period.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The research brings into focus the reading habits of college students in Ernakulam City, Kerala, India. The investigation revealed some interesting facts on the type of devices used, the preferred reading time, the preference for reading material type and compared some of these variables with their gender as well as Education level. The results of the study indicated that the most read online articles were related to News and Current affairs by females while males were more keen to know about Business related information. The most used platform for online reading was Google search engine. Tablets were the most popular device used for online reading. It was found that the Graduate students were able to develop and increase the amount of online reading compared to Post-Graduate students during the Lockdown period related to Covid-19.

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