

Enriching Professional Career with Reading Habits: Opportunities & Challenges

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Abstract

There are multiple skills required as a professional or non-professional, some of the skills fostered in an individual is reading habit, which happens at the primary class level, this further becomes the building block for almost all type of career. Reading habit is one of the skills required by almost all professions in order to take decisions based on the published facts and foresee what could be the future but still this skill does not reflect in the list of high profiled skills such as creative problem solving, quantitative ability, critical thinking, soft skills etc... Reading and comprehension if one thinks deeply can become pillars on which one's career may rest. We spend considerable time in reading emails, reports, financial reports, presentations etc. Reading is more than just reading the words on the page; it is more of connecting the dots and giving a creative thought to what is being read. The process of reading also develops other high profiled and spoken about skills in the individual such as being empathetic, creative, solution maker and an extremely good communicator. There are few professions such as academics, media, public relations, marketing which requires superior reading ability. The researchers have tried to map the reading habit in students from colleges of Navi-Mumbai to evaluate if reading habits have a positive influence on one's career learning process and the study emphasises on what could be the reasons for students not liking to read. The study had around 200 plus students between the age group of 17-30 especially those who were undertaking business management courses to shape their career. Interestingly the research brings evidence that reading as a habit does increase the professional career proficiency and one of the biggest challenges to get into reading as a habit was boredom or laziness felt during this activity.

Keywords: Reading habits, Learning opportunities, Challenges, Students.

Introduction

It is best said, "You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture, just get people to stop reading them" Ray Bradbury. The world progressing into a machine age there is an overall increase in technology, originally beginning with black and white television and later moving into an internet age, there has been research and literature, which prove that there has been a downfall in the written text reading habits. This poses a question on the Gen Z learning adaptability and skill set of the students. Reading habits can be called as a process when

individuals can answer “how often, how well, and what” Rhee (2001). Few research have co-related the relationship between reading habits and good academic performance (Mwangi & Bwire, 2020; Petrus & Shah, 2020).. Reading habits are essential in achieving positive learning outcomes. Thus, reading habits are crucial, particularly in the field of education (Endris, 2018; Krashen, 2004; Makotsi, 2005). suffer amongst students could be the study skills. Reading is a tool which brings, information, knowledge to the students as well as create a literate society. It can also be considered as an activity which brings creativity from books to the real world, it brings emotional stability and many happy moments in an individual’s life (Ogunrombi, 1995). Previous studies have examined the influence of reading habits on the students academic performance in schools. It is required for mastery and understanding of all subjects in an academic world. Besides this as people start working they need to become better readers as the requirement of information seeking increases for better decision making increases for professional performance. As it is noticed that the reading habits and practices are many a times neglected in higher educational institutions, the research becomes an understanding to design new interventions for developing this habit. A process in which there is decoding of symbols to meaning and acquiring knowledge through it is referred as reading (Bormuth, 1973; Sandhu, 2016). A repeated and an automatically action is defined as habit (Clark, 2000). Hence reading habit is a continuous process of symbolic information being decoded to give a meaning which is done very frequently or regularly by an individual. This habit need not always result into professional enrichment or academic excellence. People employed in higher designations and positions spend a lot of time with books and reading as an activity this creates a great amount of positive attitude to their behaviour. M. Cecil (2010). One of the research also proves that reading habits have positive impact on income and is very important for growing in one's career (Maki Kato, Akinobu Nagira, 2021).

Literature review

Reading when done consistently it is called a habit (Erdem 2015). The number of times reading is done by an individual determines if it is a habit in a person (Fatiloro, et al 2017). Reading has a positive effect on the students was claimed by many researchers as it updates the knowledge of the students, increases their curiosity levels and develops good or improved academic habits, it increases general knowledge and has an impact on the vocabulary of the student Sallabaş (2008). Reading has great effect on increased vocabulary was asserted through research nation (2015) Consistent reading can be used as a progressive learning pedagogy Jones (2002). Diwan (2020) has in his research proved that most of the students who study in University and colleges only study text material and follow this habit only during exams.

Objectives

1. To study and analyse the impact of regular reading habits on enriching professional performance.
2. To determine the challenges faced by the students in developing reading habits.
3. To determine gender and age variables influence reading habits.
4. To understand and analyse whether reading habits can reduce stress.

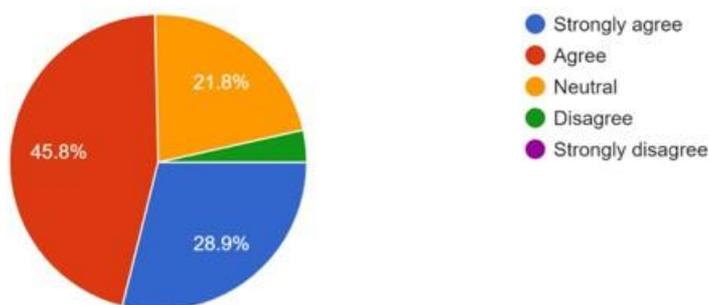
Research Methodology

The researchers have used both the secondary and primary data for doing the research. The secondary data was collected through review of multiple articles, research papers and

newspaper articles. The secondary data enabled the researchers to broadly define their research questions and the objectives of the study. The primary research was conducted in Navi Mumbai colleges. Around 200 plus collegestudents between the age group of 17 and 30 were shared with the survey questionnaire which was the research tool. The research tool was divided into three main parts -Part1-Demographics (Personaldetails), Second part consisted of questions pertaining to reading habits, its likes and outcomes pertaining to professional career. The third part of the questionnaire consisted of dislikes to reading, reasons and limitations. The sampling technique was a purposive sampling method. Students who had opted for professional courses were only picked up, especially the researchers focused on the students of management course. The number of responses received for running the survey tool was around 167 and post filtration the number of responses were 142. The limitations for the researchersto run the study was time management and getting a completely filled survey form.

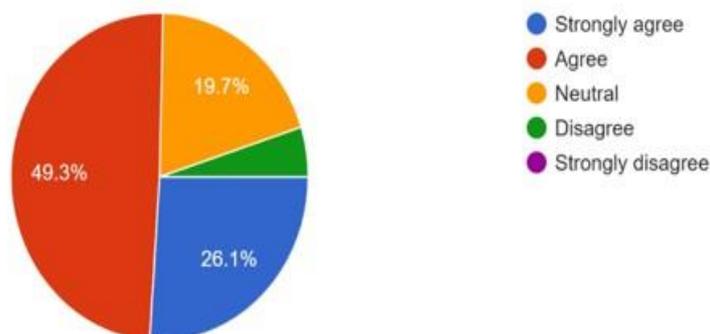
Analysis -

Have you experienced a rise in your knowledge, after practicing reading regularly?
 142 responses



When 142 students were asked whether they experienced rise in their knowledge after practising reading regularly, 28.9% students strongly agreed, 45.8% agreed and 21.8% were neutral. Therefore we can say that maximum number of students have experienced rise in their knowledge after practising reading regularly.

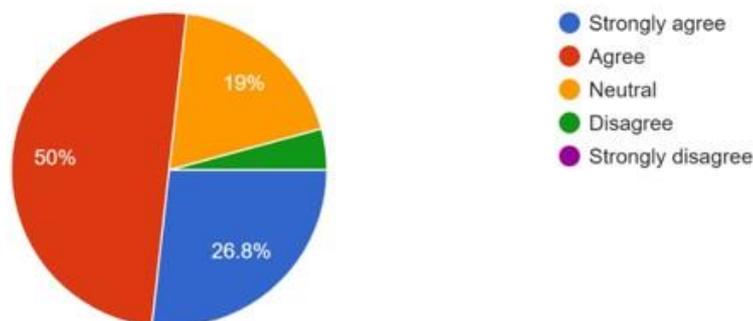
Can you experience a positive change in your communication skills after inculcating the reading habit ?
 142 responses



When asked about improvement in communication skills due to reading practice, 26.1% strongly agreed and 49.3% agreed that they experienced a positive change in their communication skills after inculcating the reading habit and 19.7% were neutral. Maximum number of students have experienced a positive change in their communication skills after inculcating the reading habit.

Did you experience betterment in your vocabulary after inculcating the reading habit?

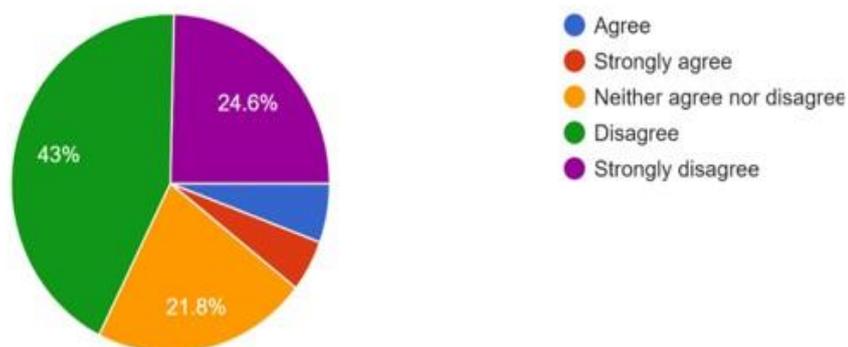
142 responses



When asked about whether the students experienced betterment in their vocabulary after inculcating the reading habit, 26.8% strongly agreed and 50% agreed and 19% were neutral. Maximum number of students have experienced betterment in their vocabulary after inculcating reading habit.

I face anxiety and difficulty while reading.

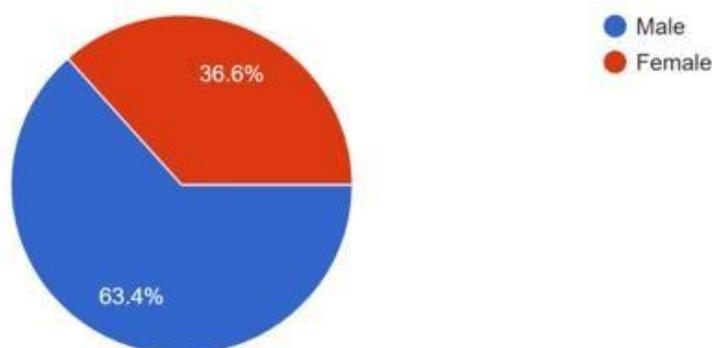
142 responses



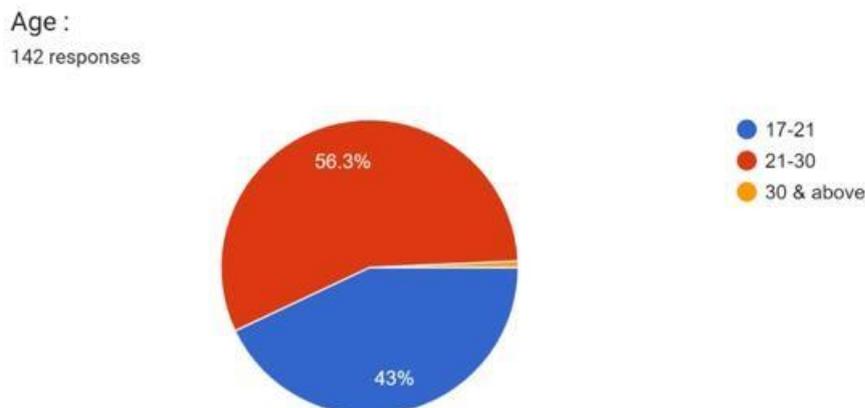
When asked if the students faced anxiety and difficulty while reading, very few experienced this issue. 21.8% were neutral. However, 24.6% strongly disagree and 43% disagree that they faced anxiety and difficulty while reading. Therefore, we can say that maximum number of students did not face anxiety and difficulty while reading, however there are very few approximately 11% face challenge and anxiety while reading.

Gender

142 responses

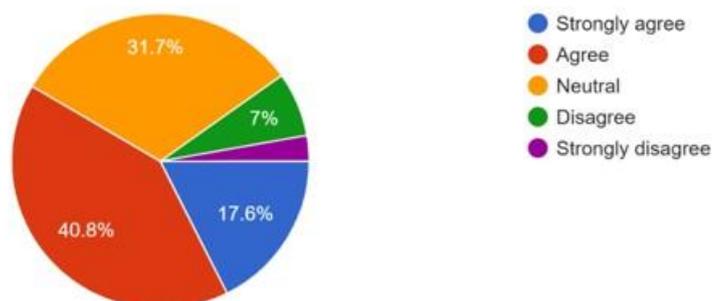


The male readers are more in numbers as compared to females. Therefore we can say that gender has its impact on reading.



56.3% of the readers are belonging to 21-30 age group and 43% of the readers are belonging to the age group 17-21, therefore we can say that age has an influence on reading habits.

Have you experienced reduction in your stress level due to regular reading practice?
142 responses



When asked if the students experienced reduction in their stress level due to regular reading practice, 17.6% strongly agreed and 40.8% agreed however 31.7% were neutral and 7% disagreed.

Key Findings:

- The results of the analysis shows that maximum number of students 31% read weekly, 25% students read daily, and very few 9.9% read fortnightly and 5% read only once a month.
- Majority of the students (63%) preferred to read for duration 10 to 30 min daily and only few 23% prefer to read for 1 hour per day and 13.4% read for 2 to 3 hours daily.
- Maximum students preferred to read motivational books, a few preferred to read fiction and self-help books and even less preferred to read novels.
- The results revealed that out of 142 students, maximum enjoy reading and very few do not enjoy reading.
- When asked whether reading regularly helped in increased knowledge, majority of them responded positively.
- Majority of the students responded positively, when asked if regular reading practice helped them in understanding others feelings.
- Most of the students agreed that they were able to understand others beliefs in a more better manner after they started with regular reading practice.

- Majority of the students agreed that regular reading did enhance their communications skills.
- Maximum students responded positively to betterment in their vocabulary after inculcating the reading habit.
- Majority of the students responded positively to increase in focused attention after practicing reading regularly.
- Maximum students agreed that their memory power increased after inculcating the reading habit.
- Maximum students responded positively to the question, whether the students experienced increase in logical reasoning capability after practicing the reading habit regularly.
- When asked if the students experienced a rise in their Auditory and visual information processing ability from the time they started reading regularly, maximum students agreed positively.
- Majority of the students responded positively, when asked if the students noticed a rise in their confidence levels and interpersonal skills after inculcating the reading habit.
- Majority of the students responded positively and very few or you can say negligible responded negatively, when asked if the students experienced reduction in the stress level due to regular reading practice.
- When the students were asked about the challenge of not being able to read very well in spite of trying very hard maximum students disagreed of facing such kind of problem. However 19% agreed that they faced the challenge of not being able to read very well in spite of trying very hard.
- When asked if the students faced difficulty in understanding if no pictures, charts, or diagrams were included, 25% agreed of this problem and 45% disagreed.
- 12% strongly agreed and 22.5% agreed, while 37% disagreed, when asked if the students felt tired and sleepy when they start reading.
- Maximum disagreed and very few agreed when asked if the students faced anxiety and difficulty while reading.
- When asked if the students need a lot of help while reading, maximum disagreed, however 14.2% agreed of needing a lot of help while reading.
- Majority of the students disagreed and 10.6% agreed of facing the anxiety issues while reading, when asked if the students faced anxiety and difficulty while reading.
- 11.3% agreed feeling upset when they have to read and majority disagreed when asked if the students feel upset when they have to read.
- When asked if the students avoid reading as it makes them feel anxious, majority of them disagreed, however only 7.8% agreed that they avoid reading as it makes them feel anxious.
- On being asked about feeling nervous if they have to read a lot of information for their job or some social activity, majority of them disagreed, however only 17% agreed feeling nervous if they have to read a lot of information for job or social activity.
- 32% disagreed and 18% agreed when asked if the students feel that encountering unfamiliar words is the hardest part of reading.
- On being asked about worrying a lot about reading, majority disagreed, only 16.2% agreed worrying a lot about reading.
- When asked if the students had trouble understanding what they read, majority of the students disagreed and very few agreed.

Conclusion

The research has come up with interesting results. As is evident from the results the reading habits has a great impact on career of students. Especially regular reading habits enhance their knowledge, capabilities to understand others feelings and beliefs, vocabulary, communication, self-confidence and many others and the enhancement in these areas enable the student's working proficiency. Through this research the most prominent challenge that has come up which the students face in developing reading into a habit is finding reading as a boredom and an area of least interest. The other challenges that have surfaced through this research are some students feel sleepy and tired when they take a book in their hand for reading. Another big issue that has come into limelight, is the fact that many students face difficulty in understanding if there are no pictures, charts or diagrams to explain the content. This research has also proved an interesting fact that gender and age does influence the reading habit. It has become evident from this research that the number of male students reading on a regular basis exceeds the number of female students. Also this research has reiterated the fact that more number of students in the age group 21-30 years of age, practice reading regularly, as compared to the age group of 17-21 years. Reading habit has also emerged as an anti-stress agent and majority of students who are regular readers have responded positively that reading does help in relieving their stress to a great extent.

Taking into consideration the enormous benefits of reading we can very well say that reading can drastically improve the personal as well as professional life of students, provided they are able to overcome the challenges and considerably develop their reading habit.

Recommendations

As this research has proved that reading has a profound impact on personal as well as professional life of the students, therefore higher educational institutions should encourage the students more for reading books, novels, journals, magazines etc. from which they can learn something more than the theoretical knowledge. Higher education institutions should make every possible effort to ensure that the students are spending some time of the day in reading different types of books and gaining knowledge from the books. More awareness should be created among the students community about the benefits of reading in personal and professional life by the educators and facilitators. The educational institutions should intervene and take initiatives like allocating separate time apart from academic lectures for reading books out of the syllabus. Educational institutions can form reading clubs. Institutions can promote reading day, reading competitions, book review meets, activities like summarizing book etc. to help students in developing reading habits. In this manner more and more students can develop their thinking capabilities and can improve the quality of their personal as well as professional life.

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