International Journal for Research Trends in Social Science & Humanities
ISSN: 2584-2455
Volume 4, Issue 6
Nov-Dec- 2026, PP 1-15

Academic and Leisure Reading Choices of Postgraduate Girl Students: Insights from LRG Government Arts College for Women, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract- Introduction: Despite the exponential advances in the technology, reading always plays a pivotal role in acquiring skill and knowledge invariably through any mode. **Purpose:** The purpose is to understand the reading preferences of the female Post Graduate Students so as to serve them efficiently and effectively. **Method:** This paper analyses the reading preferences of the PG students of LRG Government Arts College for Women, Tirupur, Tamilnadu. The students enrolled in 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years in the 9 PG course of Arts, Science and Commerce (405) are surveyed with help of Online structured Questionnaire. Simple Average and frequency calculation along with Garret Ranking Method were used to analyse the results. The response rate was 65.9% (267). **Results:** The highly preferred place of reading was Home. Most desired time was morning and duration was 30 minutes. Preferred online Reading was the Social Media content. More than half of the students preferred to use the content as a base to choose the reading material. 57.7% of the students prefer to read both Fiction and Non-Fiction. The most preferred fiction variety is 'Short stories'. The preferred Non-fictions are General Knowledge, Current Affairs and Competitive Exam Materials.

Keywords- Reading Preferences, Digital Reading, Offline reading, Reading Genres, Garret Ranking.

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I. Introduction

Reading can be defined as deciphering the thoughts communicated by the writer in the form of symbols and alphabets. Reading habit, as any other habit, needs to be inculcated right from the childhood for a strong foundation upon which the other literacies like writing, speaking, and listening can be built. Several research studies, assessments and surveys are being carried out by Multi National NGOs to understand the pattern of reading among the different nationalities and thereby design customised strategies to motivate intrinsically and upgrade the society with well-informed reader-citizens.

Reading and Reading Habits

Reading is the pathway to success in Education, a core element in the process of learning. Reading is a means of communication and language acquisition in a literate society. It's the source of Knowledge, Wisdom and entertainment. Reading quenches the thirst for knowledge. It does not turn to a habit unless carried out regularly. When reading is done persistently, Constantly, Critically then it is said as Reading Habit **(Erdem, 2015; Thums et al., 2020).**

According to **Palani (2012),** Reading is an Instrument which is used to exchange information while Reading Habit is an academic activity that enables students to benefit from the Reading materials. **Walia and Sinha (2014)** state that Reading habits require complex skills that includes perceiving the message, skimming, scanning the information and understanding the context. **Hassan et al (2021)** confirm that Reading habits influence many factors like the reading materials, activities, time duration, place of reading and reading motivation.

II. Survey of Literature on Reading Habits of HEI students

Kishore, Singh and Sinha (2023) have analyzed the reading habits of PG Students and found that rather than Linear traditional print reading, digital reading is widely done in the form of selective and highly parsed cyber chunks as per the recent trends. **Halder (2023)** has penned in his study that the motivation for reading Newspapers were

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Vocabulary enhancement and staying updated on the current affairs, recruitment data and National Socio-Economic policies. Most PG Students (87.5%) tend to read print newspapers for better remembrance and ease of grasping the content.

Ramaiah and Daimari (2022) compared the reading habits of PG students and Research Scholars of Pondicherry University. The results show that: 37.77% of PG students read sometimes and 41.11% read every day; 40% for PG read Newspapers daily; 77.77% of PG students enjoy reading; Factors motivating for reading is Self-Interest 44(48.88%); PG students read much at weekends (41.22%) compared to other days (34.44%) and exam days (82.22%) ; students read to gain knowledge; Preferred time to read was Night (41.12%). **Samsuddin and Aspura (2022)** studied the reading attitude and habits among 400 students of four research university libraries of Malaysia Research University of Malaysia. The results showed that: the students preferred to read Novels (36.5%) and Textbooks (17%) in print format but Academic Journals (27.25%) and Newspaper (18.75%) in online format. Preferred reading Time duration was 1-2 hours (39.50%) followed by one hour (35.75%). The preferred leisure time activity was Internet surfing (39.3%) and the reading/listening music was preferred by 11.8% students.

Kohli and Dhiman (2021) analysed the Newspaper Reading Habits of the UG and PG students of Kurukshetra University and found that the Time spent for reading Newspapers per day was mostly more than two hours(31.42%). Purpose of Reading was to improve their sense about Current Affairs and General Knowledge (28.57%).

Singh,S (2020) in his thesis on the reading habits has noticed a transitional phase due to the digitization, where students split their attention between conventional textbooks and online portals. The focus is widespread among the huge number of portals but does not involve deep digital reading on any topic.

Ahire (2019) confirms in his study that almost all the Post graduate students read only one hour per day except one student and prefer reading Textbooks, recommended books, motivation and Story books. All the PG students read two-three books per month except for a single student who read ten books per month.**Kaur and Ghuman (2019)** assessed the Reading Habits of PG students of Khalsa College, Amristar and found

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highly preferred language to read was English(74.2%)Purpose of Reading was highly for personal development (39.8%), Most Preferred Reading material was Books(68.8%).Preferred Genre was mostly GK books(43%).Frequency of reading was highly Newspapers(72.04%).Time spent on Reading was mostly 31-60 minutes(58%). Mode of Reading was highly both print and Screen(75%).Main Obstacle for reading was interacting social media opined by 66.66% students.**Prasanna Kumar (2019)** analysed the impact of ICT on the reading habits of the students of Amrita Vishwa Vidhyapeetham, Bangalore. The results show that the preferred source of information on daily basis was Textbooks(42.46%) followed by Newspaper(34.08%), occasionally preferred were Novels/storybooks(48.04%) and Journals(47.49%).Purpose of e-reading was to prepare for exams by 65.36% students followed by preparing notes by 60.34% students.**Kumara and Sampath kumara (2019)** surveyed the Impact of Reading Habits on the Academic Achievements of 2643 PG students, Scholars and Faculties of Eleven state Universities of Karnataka state. Analysis of the survey displays that Preferred place of reading was home for a majority of 1701 (69.1%) students, Frequency of reading was mostly everyday by 14121(57.7%) students. Purpose of reading was mostly due to interest in the topic being read by 1310(53.2%).

Singh (2018) assessed the reading habits of PG students of General colleges of Nalwa, Hisar of Haryana.Analysis convey that only 45.95% students visit library daily, Purpose of visiting was to read subject books by maximum students(72.35%).Preferred time for reading by most students was morning hours(78.04%) followed by late night by170(69.1%) students. Highly preferred material for reading is textbooks by 190(77.23%) and Newspaper by 170(69.10%). Preferred place is Home by 216(87.8%) followed by library 212(86.17%).**Ambika and Uthirasamy (2018)** analysed the Newspaper reading habits of PG students of Periyar University, Salem. The data analysis depicted that the mostly preferred language to read was Tamil (94.97%),Preferred format for reading was print (89.95%).Preferred section was Entertainment (78.21%) and Education(75.97%)Purpose of reading was to get Information(74.86%).

Swaminathan (2017) examined the reading habits among the students of Arts colleges in Madurai. Results show that majority of the students (66.09%)read daily. The time spent for reading daily was mostly one hour by 52.87% followed by 30

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minutes by 37.93%. Preferred language was Tamil(58.62%).Purpose of reading was to improve General Knowledge by 37.93%.**Qutab, Iqbal and Ullah (2017)** examined the screen reading habits of the PG students of the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences of Punjab University, Lahore, Pakistan. The results stated that 233(47%) students were having 1-5 years online reading experience and preferred Language was English 446(89%), Preferred device was PC by 211(42%) students. Preferred reading material was websites 231(46.2%) followed by Textbook 212(42.4%).

Rani and Murugan (2016) surveyed the Reading Habits of PG students of Anna University, Regional Centre in Tirunelveli for the purpose of presenting in a conference and the data revealed that The highly preferred reading material was Newspapers(31.03%),Purpose of searching web for reading was to complete project works(25.29%)The preferred format of reading was PDF (35.63%).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are :

- To know the preferred bases used by the female PG students of LRG Government Arts College for women, Tirupur to choose their reading material
- To understand the preferred time of reading of the students
- To get to know the preferred genre of fictions and non-fictions among the students
- To uncover the preferred place of reading among the students and
- To understand the preferred style of reading among the students

Study Unit

LRG Government Arts College for Women, Tirupur is a Government Women's College that offers 18 undergraduate programs and nine post graduate programs with an in-take of 3915 students. The college is affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

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III. Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is survey method. A structured Online Questionnaire was shared among all the PG Students through Tutors and Faculties with prior acceptance from the Head of the Institution. The total strength of the PG students is 405. Simple Frequency calculation and Percentage analysis has been adopted. Garrett Ranking Technique, a Socio-Mathematical Analysis is used to find the highly preferred place of reading.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1: No of Responses from each Department

S.No	Course	Total Strength	No of Responses Received
1.	MA Tamil	34	15
2	MA English	52	42
3	MA History	35	34
4	MA Economics	54	17
5	M Sc Maths	61	31
6	MSc Chemistry	22	19
7	MSc Zoology	34	30
8	MSc Comp Sc	55	41
9	M Com	58	38
Total		405	267

The Online Questionnaire was shared with all PG Students of nine departments. Responses were almost by all from History department (91.7%) Economics (31.4%) and Maths department students have least responded. Response Rate was 65.9%. The final year PG students (57.3%) have responded 14.6% more than the first PG students (42.7%).

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Preferred base for choosing Reading Material

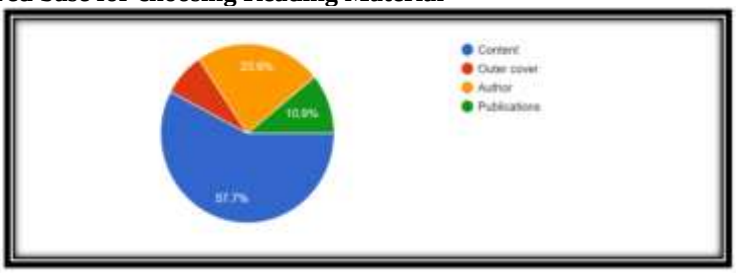


Figure-1: Preferred Base for the Choice of Reading Material

More than half of the students (57.7%) preferred to use the content to choose the reading material followed by 23.3% of the students who preferred Author. 10.9% of the students preferred to choose reading based on the Publication details while the rest (8.1%) preferred the reading material based on outer cover.

Preferred Choices of Online Reading

It is found that almost 200 students (75.18%) prefer to read or interact in social media followed by 185 students (69.54%) who like to read books online.160(60%) students prefer to read online Newspapers. 45.5% of the students prefer to read online text databases while 53.1% of them prefer to read Online Magazines.

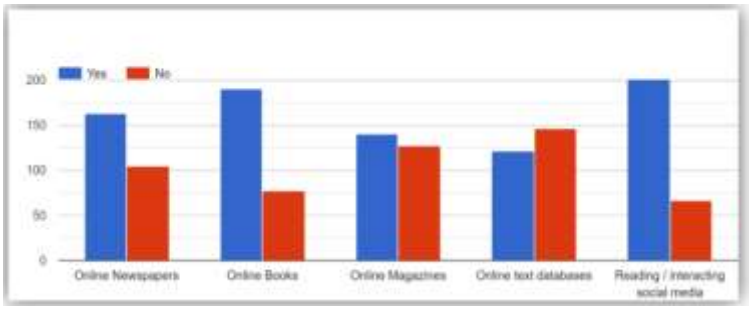


Figure-2: Preferred Choices of Online Reading

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Preferred place of Reading

The Student respondents were asked to rank the preferred place of reading. The six variables as options for the preferred place of reading were ranked by the respondents. The Garrett Ranking Technique is used to analyse the highly preferred place of reading by converting the responses to ranks using the following formula. Percentage Position = 100 [Rij - 0.5] /Nj. In which Rij – Rank given to the Reading place and Nj – No of Reading Places ranked by the students.

Table 2: No of Responses received for each Ranking

Rankings	Place of Reading						
	Home	College	Friend's Home	Public Library	College Library	Travelling	Total
Rank 1	179	28	10	9	20	21	267
Rank 2	33	126	21	28	32	27	267
Rank 3	22	52	97	24	51	21	267
Rank 4	4	24	32	140	36	31	267
Rank 5	11	23	28	49	108	48	267
Rank 6	18	14	79	17	20	119	267
Total	267	267	267	267	267	267	

Table 3: Percent Position and Garrett Scores

Rank	100(Rij-0.5)/Nj	Percentage	Score
1	100(1-0.5)/6	8.33	77
2	100(2-0.5)/6	25	63
3	100(3-0.5)/6	41.66	54
4	100(4-0.5)/6	58.33	46
5	100(5-0.5)/6	75	36
6	100(6-0.5)/6	91.66	23

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Table 4: Garrett scores of every variable for each Ranking

Place of Reading	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Total
Home	13783	2079	1188	184	396	414	18044
college	2156	7938	2808	1104	828	322	15156
Friend's Home	770	1323	5238	1472	1008	1817	11628
Public Library	693	1764	1296	6440	1764	391	12348
College Library	1540	2016	2754	1656	3888	460	12314
While Travelling	1617	1701	1134	1426	1728	2737	10343
Total	20559	16821	14418	12282	9612	6141	79833

Table 5: Ranking of Variables based on Mean Average Score

S.No	Place of Reading	Total	Mean Average score	Ranking Score
1	Home	18044	67.58	I
2	college	15156	56.76	II
3	Public Library	12348	46.25	III
4	College Library	12314	46.12	IV
5	Friend's Home	11628	43.55	V
6	While Travelling	10343	38.74	VI

The most preferred place of reading among the female PG students is the Home occupying the First Rank followed by College campus, securing the second rank. Third and fourth preferred places to read are Public Library and College Library. The least preferred place to read is 'while travelling'. The respondents, being the female students, prefer to read in their home and college.

Preferred Genre

22.1% of the students prefer to read stories / fictions while 20.2% of the students wish to read Non-Fiction. It is good to note 57.7% of the students prefer to read both Fiction and Non-Fiction. This shows the reading attitude of the PG students to utilize and enjoy all kinds of reading content.

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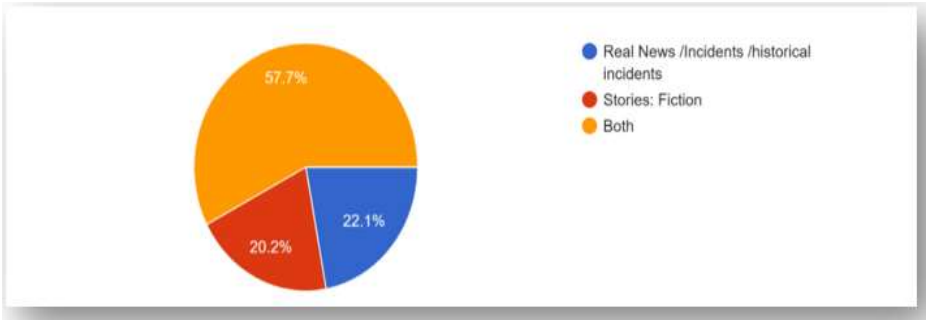


Figure-3: Preference of Genres

Preferred Genre in Fiction

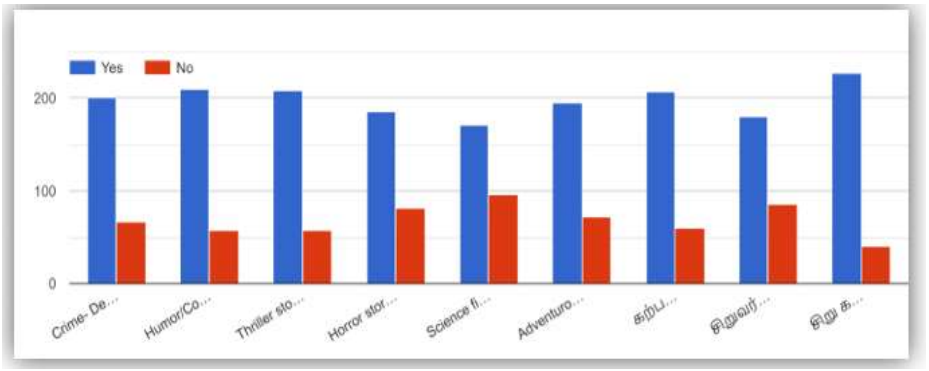


Figure 4: Preferences of Genre in Fiction

The most preferred fiction variety among the female PG students is 'Short stories' (224, 83.8%) followed by Humour/Comedy, Historical Fiction and Thriller stories equally preferred by 210(78.65%) students each. Crime& Detective genre is preferred by 200(74.9%) students. The variety least preferred by the students (163, 61%) is the science fiction.

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Preferences of Genre in Non-Fiction

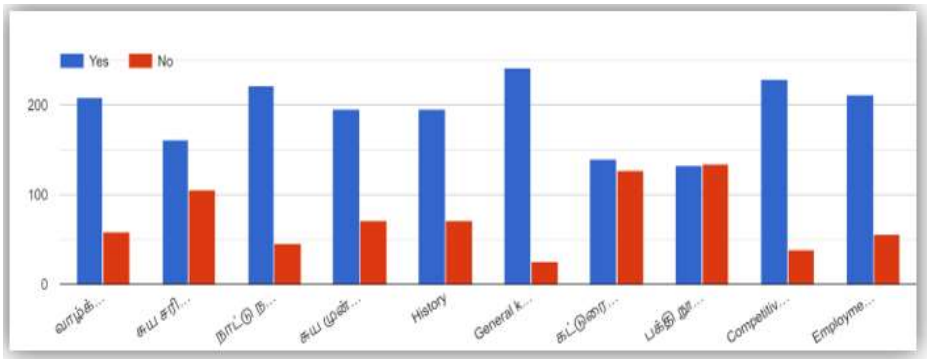


Figure-5: Preferences of Non-Fiction Genre

The preferred Non-fiction is General Knowledge 240(89.8%) followed by Competitive Exam Materials (226, 84.6%) and Current Affairs (221, 82.7%). Biography and Employment News are preferred by 210(78.6%) students. The least preferred Non-Fiction Genres are Spiritual books and Essays.

Preferred Time of Reading

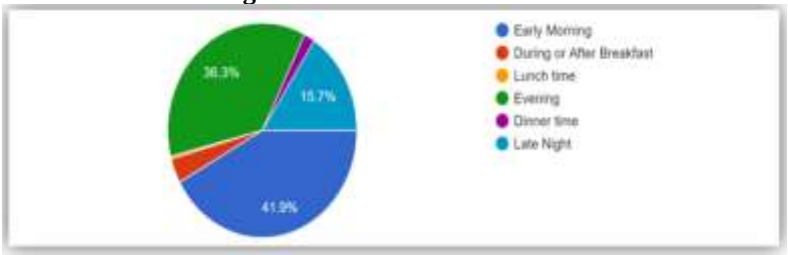


Figure 6: Preferred time for Reading in a day

The preferred time for reading is ‘Early morning’ for 41.9% students while 36.3% of students prefer to read during ‘evening’. As the students are from rural area and sub-

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urban, they need to travel long time, hence 36.3% prefer to read 'evening' and 'late night' is preferred by 15.7% to study-read in serene atmosphere without distractions.

Preferred Style of Reading

Two third of the students prefer silent reading (66.3%). While Loud reading is preferred by 10.1% of the students, Lips reading was preferred by slightly less than one fourth of them (23.6%).

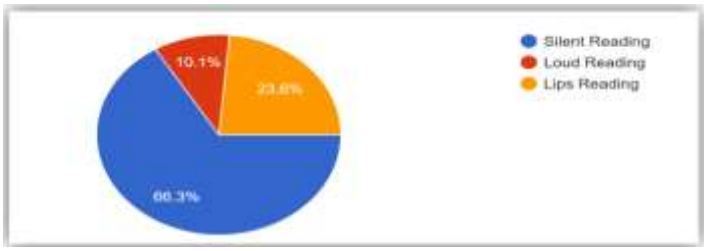


Figure-7: Preferred Style of Reading

IV. Discussion

- Preferred Online Reading was predominantly (75.18%) the Contents of social media followed by E-Books (69.54%) . Contrast to this findings, **Qutab, Iqbal and Ullah (2017)** found that the most preferred reading material is websites (46.2%) while **Samsuddin and Aspura (2022)** found that the preferred online material was Journals (27.25%) and Newspapers (18.75%) for the students.
- Home is ranked as the preferred place to read by a majority of the students (76%) followed by Public Library (56.3%). This is similar to the findings of **Singh (2018),** which conveys that reading at home is preferred (87.8%) mostly and **Kumar and Sampath kumara(2019)** who uncovered that almost 69.1% of the students preferred Home for reading.
- Highly opted genre in fiction is short stories (83.8%) followed by Humour. Thriller and Historical fiction (78.65%). This finding is contrary to results of a study

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conducted by **Samsuddin and Aspura (2022)** who revealed preferred fiction was Novels for 36.35% of the students.

- Preferred choice in Non-fiction was General Knowledge (89.8%). This is in line with the study of **Kaur and Ghuman (2019)** who found that the preferred genre was mostly GK books(43%) followed by syllabus related book(38.7%); **Kumar and Sampath Kumar (2019)** who found that the preferred non-fiction is Newspapers and Magazines 69.5%); **Prasanna Kumar (2019)** who highlighted that Textbooks are preferred daily(42.46%) along with Newspapers(34.08%)
- Preferred time to read was early morning by 41.9% followed by Evening for 36.3% of the students. This is similar to the findings of **Singh (2018)** who found that the preferred time to read was morning hours (78.04%). But, the present finding is contrary to the findings of **Ramaiah and Daimari (2022)** which showed that the mostly preferred time was night (41.12***%);*** **Kaur and Ghuman (2019)** who found that there was no specific preferred time to read for the students and they read when they had free/leisure time.
- Silent Reading is the most preferred style of Reading for 66.3% of the students while Loud Reading is preferred by 10.1% of the students. This is so true when **Krashen (2011)** insisted that Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) helps to focus and save energy encouraging extended reading compared to other reading styles while Reading Aloud helps build pronunciation and fluency.

V. Conclusion

The reading culture of the students is said to be profoundly traditional as they tend to have reading as their favourite time-pass activity and reading all genres equally to enrich their knowledge. Pleasure reading always said to be appreciable as it supports life-long Learning. The online reading is found to be a new avenue to be explored and if proper guidance and training is given to the students along with orientation, students may gain much confidence and master the art of Digital reading for Academics and pleasure as well.

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