Digital Disruption and Reading Culture among Rural Pre-University Students

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Abstract

This research examines the digital reading habits of pre-university college students in rural Belagavi taluk, Karnataka. Despite printed materials being the preferred format, there is a shift towards digital resources like e-textbooks, e-books, and e-newspapers. Most students dedicate one to two hours daily to reading, with morning reading being the most popular. Academic motivation is the primary motivation. However, challenges include resource costs, eye strain from prolonged screen exposure, and limited access to technology. The study suggests a balanced approach integrating printed and digital resources to enhance students' reading experiences.

Keywords
Reading, Reading Habits; Digital Reading; Digital Resources; E-Resources; Pre-University Students

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Introduction

Reading has long been recognized as a fundamental skill and an integral aspect of education and personal development. It fosters the acquisition of knowledge, ignites imagination, and cultivates critical thinking (Yusof, 2021). From ancient manuscripts to contemporary printed works, the tradition of reading has evolved over centuries, shaping both cultures and intellectual pursuits. It not only serves as a vehicle for information gathering but also functions as a means for reflection, communication, and connection with the broader world. For students in particular, reading establishes a foundation for academic achievement and intellectual growth(Bastug, 2014). Traditionally, this activity has been linked with printed media such as books, newspapers, and journals, providing a focused, tactile experience that allows readers to immerse themselves in content without the distractions often associated with digital media. However, the rapid advancement of technology and the pervasive presence of the internet have significantly altered how individuals engage with reading materials(Pido & Sujitno, 2022). The digital age has introduced a variety of new formats and platforms, fundamentally transforming the reading landscape. As digital natives, they have grown up in an environment dominated by smartphones, tablets, and computers, rendering digital content a primary source of information and entertainment(Dar et al., 2019). The reading habits are influenced not only by academic demands but also by social media, online articles, e-books, and multimedia content(Patil & Chingath, 2020). This transformation has expanded their access to information and reshaped their reading behaviours and preferences.

Digital reading presents numerous advantages, providing instant access to extensive content across diverse disciplines, cultures, and languages. With access to e-books, educational applications, and online libraries, students can engage with reading materials at any time and place(Ogunbodede & Sawyerr-George, 2023). Features such as adjustable fonts, audio narration, interactive elements, and built-in dictionaries enhance accessibility, particularly for varied learning needs. The digital format allows for personalised experiences through recommendations, bookmarking, highlighting, and annotation tools that promote active engagement and deeper comprehension (Nor et al., 2013). For students preparing for higher education, digital reading offers customised resources that align with their academic objectives. Moreover, digital reading redefines

traditional reading by incorporating multimodal content such as blogs, infographics, videos, and interactive media(Patil & Kuri, 2024). While these enhancements enrich the educational experience, they also necessitate the development of new literacy skills to evaluate and synthesize information critically (Molnár, 2019). In rural colleges, the prevalence of digital reading among pre-university students is incrementally increasing. However, many face significant obstacles due to limited access to technology and reliable internet services(Chachar et al., 2023). Students in these areas frequently lack the necessary tools and infrastructure to fully participate in digital learning, thereby placing them at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts. This research endeavors to examine the digital reading habits of pre-university students in rural colleges, as well as the challenges they encounter, to illuminate educational disparities. By addressing these issues, the study seeks to contribute to initiatives to bridge the digital divide and promote equitable access to educational resources for all students.

Review of Literature

The reading landscape has undergone a profound transformation, shifting from traditional practices anchored in printed books and physical libraries to digital platforms. Research indicates that digital technology has both enhanced and complicated reading habits(Kuri & Patil, 2023). On one hand, it affords accessibility and convenience, allowing students to access a vast array of texts through smartphones, tablets, and laptops(Dias & Victor, 2022). Conversely, the distractions intrinsic to digital media and the decline in attention spans have emerged as significant obstacles to deep, focused reading, which is essential for comprehensive understanding(Liu, 2022). PU students, typically adolescents on the brink of higher education, are particularly susceptible to these changes and their reading preferences have increasingly gravitated toward short-form content, such as social media posts, blogs, and online summaries, often at the expense of traditional academic materials(Pushpalata, 2017). This shift in reading format can adversely affect both comprehension and retention. Although digital reading introduces new avenues for engagement, including e-books, audiobooks, and online discussion forums that promote interactive and multimodal reading experiences, it can also result in diminished comprehension levels, particularly with lengthy texts(Vidani, 2024). This decline in comprehension holds significant implications for academic performance, as pre-university education increasingly demands critical and analytical reading skills(Patil & Kuri, 2024).

Access to technology and internet connectivity plays a crucial role in shaping how students engage with digital texts, manifesting in notable disparities between urban and rural students(Kumar & Kumara, 2018). Urban students typically enjoy access to advanced digital tools and stable internet connections, while their rural counterparts face challenges such as limited access to devices and unreliable internet services(Das et al., 2021). Despite these obstacles, interest in digital reading is rising among rural students with digital platforms providing interactive simulations, videos, and e-books that facilitate comprehension of complex concepts(Samsuddin et al., 2020). Furthermore, socio-cultural factors significantly influence students' interactions with technology and familial background and community attitudes can greatly impact the adoption and utilisation of digital resources(Nwagwu & Maxwell, 2025). While digital reading presents numerous advantages for educational enhancement, addressing the digital divide remains imperative(Lizunova et al., 2022). Ensuring that students in rural areas possess access to the necessary infrastructure, devices, and digital literacy training is essential for enabling all students to fully leverage the benefits of digital reading(Billmayer et al., 2020). The reading habits of PU students in rural colleges are evolving, shaped by the opportunities and constraints of the digital age. Research and adaptable educational strategies are essential to assist students in preserving vital reading skills while embracing the advancements facilitated by the digital world.

Objectives

1. To assess the digital reading preferences among the students of PU colleges in rural areas.
2. To determine the frequency and average time of digital reading among students.
3. To understand the reasons to prefer digital resources among students.
4. To explore the purposes of digital reading among students.
5. To identify the difficulties faced in using digital resources for reading and suggest measures to overcome them.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant association between gender and the preference for digital resources among students.
2. There is no significant difference in the difficulties faced in using digital resources between students of various disciplines.

Approach and Methods

The study employed a descriptive survey method with a quantitative approach, as this methodology effectively facilitates the assessment of reading habits among PU students. The population for this study comprised 1209 students from ten PU colleges located in the rural areas of Belagavi Taluk, specifically Karnataka Comp College (KCC) and Government College (GC) at Hirebagewadi, Government College (GC) at Kallehol, Angadi College (AC) at Benakahalli, Bahirji Shirolkar College (BSC) at Handignur, DMES College (DMESC) at Mutage, Gopalji Integrated College (GIC) at Shindholli, Ra Parvathe College (RPC) at Agasagi, Shakarrao G Patil College (SGPC) at Kinaye, and Sri Shivaji College (SSC) at Kadoli. The stratified random sampling technique was utilized to draw samples from the identified population, considering 3 strata i.e., Arts, Commerce and Science disciplines. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed directly to students in their classrooms during the academic year 2024-25. The collected data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS, with analyses including frequencies, percentages, means (M), and standard deviations (SD). The hypotheses formulated for this study were tested employing Pearson Chi-square and one-way ANOVA tests at a significance level of 0.05.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Out of the 200 distributed questionnaires, all the filled copies were returned with a response rate of 100% and were discovered valid and usable. The analysis was done for 200 sample respondents, which consisted of 95(47.5%) males and 105(52.5%) females, indicating a slightly higher number of female respondents.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	95	47.50
	Female	105	52.50
College	KCC,Hirebagewadi	10	5.00
	GC,Hirebagewadi	30	15.00
	GC, Kallehol	20	10.00
	AC,Benakahalli	20	10.00
	BSC, Handignur	20	10.00
	DMESC, Mutaga	20	10.00
	GIC, Shidolli	20	10.00
	RPC, Agasagi	20	10.00
	SGPC, Kinaye	20	10.00
	SSC, Kadoli	20	10.00
Discipline	Arts	70	35.00
	Commerce	90	45.00
	Science	40	20.00
Year	First Year	101	50.50
	Second Year	99	49.50

Table 1 presents the demographic details of the respondents. The sample is distributed across various colleges, with KCC at Hirebagewadi having 10(5%) respondents, and the other colleges having 20(10%) respondents each, except for GC at Hirebagewadi, which has 30(15%) respondents. In terms of discipline, 70(35%) students are from Arts, 90(45%) from Commerce, and 40(20%) from science. The year of study shows an almost equal split, with 101(50.5%) first-year students and 99(49.5%) second-year students, ensuring a balanced representation from both academic years.

Table 2. Frequency and Average Time of Reading

Frequency	Frequency	%	Time	Frequency	%
Everyday	102	51.00	Below 1 hour	35	17.50
Twice a Week	56	28.00	1-2 Hours	89	44.50
Once a Week	26	13.00	3-4 Hours	46	23.00
Once in 15 Days	11	5.50	5-6 Hours	22	11.00
Once a Month	5	2.50	Above 6 Hours	8	4.00

Table 2 illustrates the frequency and average time spent reading. Most individuals read daily, with 102(51%) respondents, while 56(28%) respondents read twice a week. Fewer read once a week (13%) or

less frequently. Regarding the time spent reading, 89(44.5%) respondents read for 1-2 hours, while 46(23%) respondents spend 3-4 hours reading. A smaller number of respondents read for 5-6 hours (11%) or more than 6 hours (4%). Only 35(17.5%) respondents read for less than an hour, indicating that the majority spend a significant amount of time reading. The regular engagement in daily reading among students is primarily influenced by academic requirements and the necessity of preparing for examinations.

Table 3. Preference for Places to Read

Places	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Night	Not at all
Bedroom	86(43.00)	19(9.50)	25(12.50)	61(30.50)	9(4.50)
Classroom	87(43.50)	44(22.00)	29(14.50)	19(9.50)	21(10.50)
Garden	38(19.00)	36(18.00)	59(29.50)	16(8.00)	51(25.50)
Hall	37(18.50)	73(36.50)	50(25.00)	16(8.00)	24(12.00)
Toilet	36(18.00)	26(13.00)	27(13.50)	23(11.50)	88(44.00)
College Library	33(16.50)	75(37.50)	31(15.50)	27(13.50)	34(17.00)
Temple	31(15.50)	19(9.50)	33(16.50)	36(18.00)	81(40.50)
Public library	18(9.00)	58(29.00)	56(28.00)	26(13.00)	42(21.00)
Friend's house	15(7.50)	29(14.50)	72(36.00)	42(21.00)	42(21.00)

*Values in the parentheses are their percentage

Table 3 shows the preference for places to read. The bedroom is the most preferred place, with 86 (43%) respondents preferring it in the morning, and 61(30.50%) respondents preferring it at night. The classroom is a popular choice, with 87(43.5%) respondents in the morning and 44(22.00%) respondents in the afternoon. The garden is preferred in the evening by 59(29.5%) respondents, but least at night, with 51(25.5%) respondents. The hall is favored in the afternoon by 73(36.5%) respondents and least at night with 16(8%) respondents. The toilet is the least preferred, with 88(44%) respondents not at all reading there. The public library is preferred in the afternoon by 58(29%) respondents, and the friend's house sees peak preference in the evening with 72(36%) respondents. Bedrooms and classrooms are the most preferred places as they offer minimal distractions, comfort, and quietude factors that facilitate the establishment of study routines, provide privacy in personal spaces, and supply the academic focus and resources typically found in classroom settings.

Table 4. Preference for Languages of Information to Read

Languages	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Kannada	130(65.00)	13(6.50)	30(15.00)	13(6.50)	14(7.00)
English	96(48.00)	40(20.00)	39(19.50)	17(8.50)	8(4.00)
Hindi	47(23.50)	49(24.50)	56(28.00)	26(13.00)	22(11.00)
Marathi	36(18.00)	16(8.00)	38(19.00)	43(21.50)	67(33.50)
Urdu	18(9.00)	12(6.00)	27(13.50)	29(14.50)	114(57.00)
Tamil	4(2.00)	16(8.00)	10(5.00)	36(18.00)	134(67.00)
Telugu	2(1.00)	15(7.50)	21(10.50)	17(8.50)	145(72.50)

*Values in the parentheses are their percentages

Table 4 shows preferences for reading languages. Kannada is the most preferred language, with 130(65%) respondents always preferring it, while 96(48%) respondents always prefer English. Hindi is frequently read, with 49(24.5%) respondents often choosing, while Marathi and Urdu see lower

preference, with 36(18%) and 18(9%) respondents always preferring, respectively. Tamil and Telugu are the least preferred, with Tamil receiving the lowest preference with 4(2%) respondents, and Telugu only 2(1%) respondents. Rural students exhibit a preference for reading materials in Kannada, as their native or regional language, enhances comprehension, while proficiency in English is crucial for academic achievement, career opportunities, and preparations for competitive examinations.

Table 5. Preference for Formats of Information Resources to Read

Formats	Frequency	Percent
Printed Resources Only	48	24.00
Printed Resources Mostly	54	27.00
Both equally	77	38.50
E-Resources Mostly	18	9.00
E-Resources Only	3	1.50

Table 5 presents preferences for reading formats. The majority i.e., 77(38.5%) respondents, prefer both printed and electronic resources equally. A significant portion i.e., 54(27%) respondents prefer mostly printed resources, while 48(24%) respondents choose printed resources only. E-resources are less favored, with only 18(9%) respondents preferring them mostly, and just 3(1.5%) respondents exclusively reading e-resources. This data suggests that while printed resources remain popular, there is a notable shift towards using both formats equally, with a smaller group opting for digital resources. There is a tendency among rural students to utilize both print and digital formats, reflecting their need for flexibility, accessibility, and variety.

Table 6. Preference for Digital Resources to Read

Resources	Male		Female		Chi-Square	Sig.
	N	%	N	%		
E-Textbooks	51	53.68	52	49.52	0.346	0.557
E-General books	49	51.58	48	45.71	0.687	0.407
E-Newspapers	45	47.37	52	49.52	0.093	0.761
E-Maps/Atlases/Globe	36	37.89	36	34.29	0.282	0.595
E-Dictionaries	35	36.84	32	30.48	0.907	0.341
E-Biographies	34	35.79	36	34.29	0.050	0.824
E-Magazines	33	34.74	27	25.71	1.933	0.164
E-Storybooks	31	32.63	30	28.57	0.388	0.533
E-Novels	30	31.58	39	37.14	0.683	0.408
E-Journals	24	25.26	30	28.57	0.277	0.599

Table 6 compares the preference for digital resources between males and females. E-textbooks are preferred by 51(53.68%) male respondents and 52 (49.52%) female respondents, showing similar interest. E-general books also reflect similar preferences, with 49(51.58%) male respondents and 48(45.71%) female respondents. For E-newspapers, 45(47.37%) male respondents and 52(49.52%) female respondents show comparable interest. E-magazines are more popular among male respondents, with 33(34.74%) compared to 27(25.71%) female respondents. E-novels show a higher preference among female respondents, with 39 (37.14%) compared to 30(31.58%) male respondents. In academic contexts, students tend to favor e-textbooks and e-general books as they provide significant educational value, characterized by structured content that is directly relevant to their coursework, thereby serving as reliable and focused learning instruments. The Chi-square test resulted in significant values of 0.164 to 0.824, indicating no significant association. Hence, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Table 7. Reasons to Prefer Digital Resources for Reading

Reasons	Very true	True	Somewhat true	Slightly true	Untrue
Easy to search	52(26.00)	60(30.00)	46(23.00)	16(8.00)	26(13.00)
Updated information	46(23.00)	55(27.50)	44(22.00)	26(13.00)	29(14.50)
Distance information sharing	45(22.50)	47(23.50)	49(24.50)	38(19.00)	21(10.50)
Large information	44(22.00)	55(27.50)	44(22.00)	35(17.50)	22(11.00)
Mobility	42(21.00)	59(29.50)	39(19.50)	38(19.00)	22(11.00)
Easy to access	41(20.50)	59(29.50)	43(21.50)	34(17.00)	23(11.50)
Less expensive	40(20.00)	74(37.00)	51(25.50)	19(9.50)	16(8.00)
Saves physical space	36(18.00)	56(28.00)	53(26.50)	41(20.50)	14(7.00)
Adoption since the beginning	31(15.50)	44(22.00)	72(36.00)	32(16.00)	21(10.50)
Authentic information	30(15.00)	54(27.00)	55(27.50)	42(21.00)	19(9.50)
Multi-access	24(12.00)	47(23.50)	56(28.00)	44(22.00)	29(14.50)
Lack of print version	20(10.00)	48(24.00)	49(24.50)	49(24.50)	34(17.00)

*Values in the parentheses are their percentages

Table 7 outlines the reasons for preferring digital resources for reading. The most cited reason is that digital resources are easy to search, with 52(26%) respondents considering it very true. Availability of updated information is also a key factor, with 46(23%) respondents rating it as very true. Many, i.e., 45(22.5%) value the ability to share information with distant friends. Mobility is a major advantage for 42(21%) respondents. The availability of updated information is important to 41(20.5%). Additionally, less expense (37%) and space-saving (28%) are highly valued, with the authenticity of information and multi-access being less significant factors.

Table 8. Purposes of Reading

Purposes	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
For course exams	93(46.50)	53(26.50)	29(14.50)	9(4.50)	16(8.00)
For homework/assignments	73(36.50)	27(13.50)	41(20.50)	29(14.50)	30(15.00)
To develop personality	66(33.00)	33(16.50)	55(27.50)	26(13.00)	20(10.00)
Reading as a hobby	59(29.50)	67(33.50)	43(21.50)	19(9.50)	12(6.00)
To improve soft skills	57(28.50)	40(20.00)	44(22.00)	41(20.50)	18(9.00)
To update the knowledge	57(28.50)	39(19.50)	55(27.50)	28(14.00)	21(10.50)
For competitive exams	48(24.00)	46(23.00)	72(36.00)	20(10.00)	14(7.00)
Parents/teachers ask to read	48(24.00)	33(16.50)	48(24.00)	34(17.00)	37(18.50)
For fun/pleasure	39(19.50)	50(25.00)	53(26.50)	29(14.50)	29(14.50)
For entertainment	30(15.00)	48(24.00)	56(28.00)	39(19.50)	27(13.50)

*Values in the parentheses are their percentages

Table 8 shows the various purposes of reading among respondents. Almost half i.e. 93(46.50%) respondents always read to prepare for course exams, followed by always reading to write homework or assignments and to develop personality with 73(36.50%) and 66(33.00%) respondents respectively. As a hobby, 67(33.5%) respondents often read. Many also always read for developing soft skills and updating knowledge, with 57(28.5%) respondents selecting both purposes. Reading for fun or entertainment is less frequent, with only 39(19.5%) respondents. Overall, the primary motivations center around academic purposes. PU students often read to prepare for examinations and complete assignments, contributing to improved academic performance and enhanced comprehension of course materials.

Table 9. Preference for AI Tools to Access Information for Reading

AI Tools	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
ChatGPT	80(40.00)	36(18.00)	35(17.50)	29(14.50)	20(10.00)
Quillbot	14(7.00)	35(17.50)	45(22.50)	31(15.50)	75(37.50)
Grammarly	21(10.50)	31(15.50)	36(18.00)	50(25.00)	62(31.00)
Gemini	27(13.50)	32(16.00)	38(19.00)	39(19.50)	64(32.00)
Bing	11(5.50)	23(11.50)	37(18.50)	45(22.50)	84(42.00)
Canva	9(4.50)	20(10.00)	39(19.50)	46(23.00)	86(43.00)
MetaAI	15(7.50)	23(11.50)	36(18.00)	43(21.50)	83(41.50)

*Values in the parentheses are their percentages

Table 9 presents preferences for AI tools to access information for reading. ChatGPT is the most popular, with 80(40%) respondents always using it and 36(18%) often using. Quillbot is less favored, with only 14(7%) respondents always selecting, while 75(37.5%) never chose it. Grammarly is always used by 21(10.5%) respondents, and 31(15.5%) often use it, but 62(31%) never use it. Gemini is always favored by 27(13.5%) respondents. Bing, Canva, and MetaAI are less frequently used, with 42%, 43%, and 41.5% of respondents respectively never selecting. Overall, ChatGPT shows the highest engagement. The inclination of PU students toward utilizing ChatGPT is attributable to its capability to deliver prompt and precise responses. This technology offers personalized and interactive support, which is recognized as both convenient and effective for enhancing the learning experience.

Table 10. Difficulties faced in using Digital Resources for Reading

Difficulties	Arts		Commerce		Science		F	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Expensive	3.71	1.144	3.43	1.366	3.75	1.235	1.344	0.263
Screen glare	3.39	1.081	3.07	1.322	3.08	1.474	1.399	0.249
Unsupported file formats	3.29	1.156	3.02	1.236	3.18	1.279	0.937	0.393
Limited access	3.27	1.250	2.76	1.230	2.68	1.309	4.294	0.015
Difficult to search	3.26	1.212	2.91	1.205	2.95	1.280	1.712	0.183
Lack of electronic devices	3.14	1.195	3.17	1.084	3.20	1.114	0.033	0.968
Missing contents	3.10	1.181	2.78	1.372	2.65	1.272	1.928	0.148
Lack of IT skills	3.06	1.226	2.94	1.239	2.43	1.338	3.445	0.034
Lack of frequent power supply	3.00	1.251	2.82	1.147	2.75	1.104	0.710	0.493
Distraction from work	2.97	1.204	2.91	1.260	2.80	1.244	0.244	0.783
Slow computers & network	2.94	1.178	2.91	1.138	2.65	1.210	0.903	0.407
Unauthentic information	2.91	1.282	3.00	1.151	2.93	1.403	0.107	0.899
Time-consuming	2.91	1.236	2.77	1.264	3.00	1.261	0.563	0.570
Lack of library staff support	2.90	1.264	2.86	1.204	2.70	1.224	0.350	0.705
Unaware of search strategies	2.60	1.172	2.60	1.243	2.58	1.217	0.007	0.993

Table 10 identifies the difficulties faced by the respondents. Cost of resources is the most significant challenge across all disciplines, with science students rating it highest with a mean of 3.75, followed by Arts (3.71) and Commerce (3.43). Screen glare and eye strain are notable hindering factors, particularly for Arts students with a mean of 3.39. Limited access

to resources is a bigger issue for Arts students (3.27), while Science students face challenges like missing content (2.65) and lack of IT skills (2.43). Totally, Arts students report higher difficulty levels compared to Commerce and Science students. One-way ANOVA test indicates no significant difference in difficulties faced between students of different disciplines except the cases of limited access and lack of IT skills with significant values 0.015 and 0.034 respectively. Hence, hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Discussion

Digital reading is increasingly gaining traction among PU students in rural colleges, offering them access to a diverse array of learning resources which extend beyond traditional textbooks. With the proliferation of smartphone usage and improved internet connectivity, students are progressively turning to digital platforms for academic assistance, examination preparation, and general knowledge acquisition. This study presents significant insights into the reading habits and preferences exhibited by these students. A predominant portion of students engage in daily reading with many dedicating 1-2 hours per day to it. The bedroom emerges as the most preferred location for morning reading, whereas public libraries and restrooms are identified as the least favored environments. Kannada is the primary language for reading, followed by English, while regional languages such as Tamil and Telugu attract comparatively less attention. Although a preference for printed materials persists, many respondents express an interest in a balanced integration of both printed and digital resources. Among the digital options, e-textbooks, e-books, and e-newspapers are the most frequently utilized, while e-magazines and e-novels experience less engagement. The principal motivations for favoring digital resources include ease of search, access to current information, and the capacity to share content effortlessly. AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, are frequently employed to enhance the reading experience. A primary challenge identified by respondents is the cost associated with resources. Other concerns include screen glare, eye strain, limited availability of resources, and challenges related to information technology skills. To promote improved reading habits among students, it is advisable for them to establish a balance between printed and digital resources, leveraging the affordability and searchability inherent in digital tools. Educators and librarians should actively encourage the utilization of digital resources such as e-textbooks and e-newspapers, while also guiding students in their effective access and use. Educational institutions can facilitate this by providing straightforward access to both printed and digital formats and addressing challenges such as screen glare and resource scarcity. Policymakers should strive to reduce the costs of digital resources and enhance internet infrastructure in rural colleges, thereby ensuring equitable access for all. Furthermore, the integration of AI tools like ChatGPT into educational platforms can assist students in locating pertinent information and improving their reading skills, thereby fostering continuous learning and academic success.

Conclusion

The study underscores the profound impact of technology on the educational experiences of young learners. The growing availability of smartphones, internet access, and online learning platforms has opened new avenues for students to interact with reading materials beyond conventional print formats. It accentuates the necessity of fostering a supportive learning environment that not only promotes digital access but also aids students in cultivating effective digital reading habits. Moving forward, the implications of this research are substantial. Educational institutions and policymakers stand to benefit from these insights by developing targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing digital learning within rural contexts. This may encompass the integration of digital reading strategies into the curriculum, the training of educators to enhance digital engagement, and the investment in infrastructure that ensures consistent access to digital resources. Further research could investigate the long-term effects of digital reading on academic performance, reading comprehension, and student motivation. Additionally, future studies may examine how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, adaptive learning platforms, and digital libraries can further enrich the reading experience for students in rural areas, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and equitable educational system.

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