Reading Habits Among Gen Z : From Teachers Point of View

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Abstract

The present study aims at eliciting the comments and opinions of 116 teachers who are working in both CBSE and matriculation schools of Virudhunagar District on the reading habits of Google era school students. A well-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the school teachers handling Classes IX and XI in 11 matriculation and 6 CBSE schools. Out of 170 questionnaires distributed, 116 duly filled were returned in complete form. The study reveals that : A majority of the respondents are female, working in matriculation schools, handling non-language subjects and hailed from semi urban areas ;40.5 %of the Teachers felt that 80% of students had good reading habits; 87.9% of teachers agreed that students with good reading habits are able to score better in Languages.

Keywords

Reading habits, school students, teachers' comments, effect on academics, effect on pro-academics

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Introduction

The Gen Z (those born between early-to-mid 1990s to the early 2000s) popularly known as the Net Generation, Digital Natives, Post Millennials, i Generation, etc. has been born into a world overrun with technology, so much so, that they can never imagine life without the internet, Smartphones and Social Media and hence are being also known as the always-on generation. As a result information is at their fingertips and they are much aware of social and global issues. In an age when browsing the net, playing with funky handsets and passing non-stop SMSs seem to be the order of the day, reading a book in a peaceful corner of a library has become an archaic idea for most people. While technology is slowly taking a steady control over individual lives, the reading habit is fast vanishing into thin air. (The Hindu)

Review of Literature

Kuruvilla (2018) a practising psychiatrist laments that many children are unable to read or write and the technology revolution has made matters worse. The English language, he termed as 'Oldspeak' is being gradually pushed out by the shortened and the more business like 'Newspeak' that has a vocabulary that is actually shrinking. The revolution in Electronics and Communication Technology in the last two decades has transformed Indian Children's dream of aspiring to have standards of living much above their parents. Yet the other side effect is the lack of reading and writing skills. Children today are looking out for instant gratification in the Internet and Television.The percentage of parents who actively try to inculcate a love of books and reading is much less and even those few fail to be successful in their efforts.

A TCS Gen Z survey, one of the largest studies in the country that captured the digital habits of the Indian students in the 12-18 age group, reveals that the Young India knows how to put the Internet to constructive use. The aim of the survey was to capture the changing trends of the youth across the nation with a focus on technology. About 12,000 students across 15 cities were questioned on what gadgets they preferred, whether they wanted to be entrepreneurs. While the Smartphone was the most popular gadget they considered the Internet most useful for doing their school assignments. A fourth of those surveyed said they found social media a waste of time. 69% of students said that they had de-activated their social media accounts at least once of which 25% teens did so because it was time consuming and 11% quit because their parents forced them to..It concluded that they use facebook more than any other social media

platform, and prefer WhatsApp to any other Instant Messenger.

Ifthekhar (2018) finds that the expression 'Bookworms' doesn't hold good any more, since people peer into their smart phones endlessly. Psychologists have termed such addiction to nomophobia (No mobile phone phobia) since the youth panic at the very thought of being separated from their smart phones. This desperation is so much so that children would rather go to bed hungry than have their mobiles snatched. It is no wonder that footfalls have come down in libraries with even diehard bibliophiles turning to kindle, smart boards, tablets or e-books to stake their thirst for reading. People prefer to find a piece of information with a click of a button rather than to rummage through dusty library shelves. Libraries have escaped from becoming obsolete by embracing technology and providing online access to their databases. But the inexplicable pleasure in holding physical books , reading at one's convenience and in a posture one likes is indeed missing. 'Is Google making us stupid?, Online, r u really reading?*The dumbest generation*.*Distracted'*.are popular book and article titles critical of the Internet, including the Internet's impact on reading that has proliferated in recent years**.**

Need of the Study

The development in Information and Communication Technology have continued to influence interest in reading and have resulted in changes in Reading materials, Reading Habits, leisure activities, etc. Apart from drawbacks in their reading habits it has resulted in health disorders and psychological and social problems.
Further with more time spent on reading electronic documents a screen-based reading behaviour has emerged characterized by more time spent on browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one–time reading, non–linear reading, and reading more selectively, while less time is spent on in-depth reading and concentrated reading. (Liu, 2005). A new type of reading behaviour – literacy is a growing concern wherein increasing numbers of capable readers are regularly choosing not to read. Literacy poses a major threat to our society where people are incapable of reading and writing well enough to handle the complex literacy demands of modern society. (Kamheih, 2012)

Statement of the problem

Today, many students prefer to watch movies and other shows on the television, and are addicted to their mobiles on social media. Parents and teachers complain of the lack of interest in reading among their children. Virudhunagar District in Tamilnadu is known for its academic excellence. The excellence is proved by its top position in both X and XII board exams in a row of years. The study is a correlation study which aims to analyse the impact of reading habits and reading attitudes on the academic performance of the secondary school students of Virudhunagar district.

Objectives

- To examine the effect of reading habits on academics among students.
- To examine the effect of reading habits on pro-academics.
- To ascertain who significantly influence children's reading habits.
- To examine the causes for the changes in the reading habits of the students
- To examine the relationship between reading habit and academic achievement of students.
- To find out the likely problems that hinders the secondary school students from forming the habits of reading and to offer solutions to the likely problems hindering them from reading.

METHODOLOGY

As Teachers work with hundreds of students, collecting data from a hundred of them could be extrapolated as that from ten thousand students. Therefore it was decided that teachers to be the population of study. The sample comprised of 110 teachers of Matriculation and CBSE schools handling IX and XI Std across Virudhunagar District, Tamilnadu in India. Virudhunagar District was chosen as it has consistently topped the XII Std for many decades, though it was pushed to the Seventh place in 2018-19. So also the Chennai region has ranked second in th CBSE XII Examinations.

The survey method was adopted and data was collected using a Questionnaire. The data was analysed using SPSS Statistical Tool.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

Survey method was adopted and Questionnaires were used for data collection. There are about 70 Matric Schools and 13 CBSE Schools in Virudhunagar district. Using simple random sampling method Questionnaire was distributed to teachers handling IX and XI Standard in 11 Matric schools and 6 CBSE schools. 170 Questionnaires were distributed and 116 were returned and analysed.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

A well Structured Questionnaire was used for data Collection The data collected was analyzed quantitatively with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Ver.16.

'Zotero' – a firefox add-on open source software - will be used to manage and prepare the references.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

1. The study is limited to the schools coming under the purview of Virudhunagar Educational district, Tamilnadu State
2. The study is limited to Matric and CBSE schools, not including the government schools.
3. The study is limited to the teachers handling classes IX and XI only.
4. The study is limited to the opinions of teachers on reading habits with the academic achievement of the students, not analyzing on the overall / wholesome improvement of the students.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Personal and academic profile of the Respondents

Variable	Components	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	26	22.4	22.4
	Female	90	77.6	100.0
School Board	CBSE	49	42.2	42.2
	Metric	67	57.8	100.0
Classes Handled	IX	58	50	50
	XI	58	50	100
Subjects Handled	Languages	40	34.5	34.5
	Non Languages	65	56.0	90.5
	Both	11	9.5	100.0
Nativity	Rural	40	34.5	34.5
	Semi Urban	49	42.2	76.7
	Urban	27	23.3	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	

Table 1 shows the personal and academic profile of the teachers participated in the present study.

Gender : Out of 116 Teachers 22.4 % were male and 77.6% were female.

School Board :42.2 % were working in CBSE Schools while 57.8% were teachers in Matriculation Schools.

Classes Handled :50% were handling IX Std. and 50% were handling XII Std.

Subjects Handled :34.5 % were handling Languages, 56% handled Non languages while 11 % handled both languages and other subjects.

Nativity: 34.5 % were from rural areas, 49 % were from Semi Urban areas and 23.3 % were from Urban areas.

Table 2: Percentage of Students with Good Reading Habits

Board of the School Affiliation	Percentage of Good Reading Habits				Total
	Above 80%	51-80	31-50	Below 30	
CBSE	23	13	9	4	49
Matric	24	24	16	3	67
Total	47	37	25	7	116
Chi-Square	2.665	df=3	p=.446		

Table 2 shows the teachers view on the percentage of students with good reading habits. 40.5 %of the Teachers felt that 80% of students had good reading habits, 31.9% of teachers felt that 51-80% had good reading habits, 21.6% felt that 31-50 % had good reading habits and 6% felt that less than 30% had good reading habits. The result of chi-square shows that the Null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant association between the Board of School affiliation of the teachers and their comments on the percentage of good Reading Habits of the students.

Table 3: Effect of Reading Habits on Academics

Effect	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Score Better in Languages	102 (87.9)	12 (10.3)	2 (1.7)	116 (100)
Score Better in Subject Papers	93 (80.2)	20 (17.2%)	3 (2.6)	116 (100)

Table 3 shows the effect of reading habits among the students on their academics.

Languages:87.9% of teachers agreed that students good reading habits are able to score better in Languages, 10.3% were neutral over it while 1.7% disagreed that students with good reading habits were able to score better in languages.

Subject Papers: 80.2% of teachers agreed that students with good reading habits are able to score better in Subject papers, 17.2% were neutral over it while 2.6% disagreed that students with good reading habits were able to score better in Subject papers.

Table 4: Effect of Reading Habits on Pro- Academics

Effect	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Reading helps to write essays, stories, poems better	106 (91.4%)	10 (8.6%)	0	116 (100%)
Reading helps in Elocution and extempore speeches	106 (91.4%)	10 (8.6%)	0	116 (100%)
Reading helps in Debates and Group Discussion	104 (89.7%)	9 (7.8%)	3 (2.6%)	116 (100%)
Reading Habits improves Spelling and help perform Spell bee	107 (92.2%)	8 (6.9%)	1 (.9)	116 (100%)
Reading Habits helped in doing better in Quiz and G.K Competitions	99 (85.3%)	14 (12.1%)	3 (2.6%)	116 (100%)
Reading Habits helped to use New words.	104 (89.7%)	11 (9.5%)	1(.9)	116 (100%)

Table 4 shows the effect of reading among the students on their pro-academic activities. 91.4 % of teachers agreed that Reading habits helped students to write essays, stories, poems,etc. Better while 8.6 % were neutral over it. None of the teachers disagreed over this point. 91.4 % of teachers agreed that Reading habits helped students in Elocution and Extempore Speeches while 8.6 % were neutral over it. None of the teachers disagreed over this point. 89.7 % of teachers agreed that Reading habits helped students in Debates and Group Discussion while 7.8 % were neutral over it. And 1.7% of the teachers felt that reading did not help in doing Debates and Group Discussion better. 92.2 % of teachers agreed that Reading habits improves Spelling and help perform Spell bee Competitions better while 6.9 % were neutral over it. 0.9% of the teachers disagreed over this point. 85.3 % of teachers agreed that Reading habits helped students in doing better in Quiz and G.KCompetitions, while 12.1 % were neutral over it. 2.6% of the teachers disagreed over this point. 89.7 % of teachers agreed that Reading habits helped students to use new words better while 9.5 % were neutral over it. 0.9% of the teachers disagreed over this point.

Table 5: Students Reading Habits are motivatedby whom?

Motivation Factors	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Parents	28 (24.1%)	60 (51.7%)	28 (24.1%)	116 (100%)
Teachers	80 (69%)	24 (20.7%)	12 (10.3%)	116 (100%)
Friends	7 (6%)	36 (31%)	73 (63%)	116 (100%)
Others	115 (99.1%)	1 (.9%)	0	116 (100%)

Table 5 shows the opinion of the teachers on the people who motivate the students to read. About one fourth of the respondents agree that parents play a prominent role to motivate the students to read. 69% agree that they play a prominent role to motivate the students to read while about two third of them disagree that the friends play a prominent role to motivate the students to read.

Table 6: Impact of technology on students' reading habits

Board of the School Affiliation	Percentage of Teachers who view that there is an impact of technology on students' reading habits		Total
	YES	NO	
CBSE	43	6	49
Matric	54	13	67
Total	97 (83.6%)	19 (16.4%)	116
Chi-square	1.059	df=1	p=.303

Table 6 shows that 83.6 % of teachers felt that there is an impact of technology on the reading habits while 16.4 % felt that there was no impact of technology on Reading habits. The result of chi-square shows that the Null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant association between the Board of School affiliation of the teachers and their view on

the impact of technology on Reading Habits of the students.

Table 7: Reasons for the drop in Reading Habits

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Lack of Parents Attention	18	15.5
Electronic Gadgets	90	77.6
Lack of Teachers Attention	4	3.4
Others	4	3.4
Total	116	100.0

Table 7 shows that "15.5 % of teachers felt that" the lack of parents' attention was the reason for the drop in reading habits. A majority of 77.6 % felt that Electronic Gadgets had caused a drop in reading habits. 3.4% felt that the lack of teachers' attention was the cause and 3.4% felt there were other reasons for it.

TIPS TO TEACHERS

- Choose children in alphabetical order to read their books aloud in front of the class. Later they will enjoy reading aloud.
- They can read some paragraphs that touched them and give the summary of the book.
- Avoid testing. Informal discussions are always fun !
- Conduct Competitions –Debates, Cover Designing, Illustrations, Book Reviews, etc. They that acts as catalyst to motivate reading. Quiz encourages the habit of reading the newspapers regularly.
- Have a Reading Hour when everyone reads. If made obligatory it becomes a habit.
- Encourage them to read Magazines and Newspapers and to borrow books home of their own choice
- Challenge the Students to read 6 books/month (any size).\
- Passion for numbers will make him read more!
- Award Golden Stars. Certificates or Prizes would motivate them to read more

READING PROGRAMMES

There are a variety of instructional practices and strategies that have recently been adopted by schools to improve students' reading skills and expand student's reading habits.

- THE READING BUDDIES is a program that pairs lower elementary students with teen volunteers for reading practice over the summer.
- PARTNER READING Program two students choose a book and read together. While one reads the left side, the other reads the right side. The whole class looks forward to this hour!
- ACCELERATED READER PROGRAM: It is a computerized reading management system that uses a reward system to motivate students to read beyond their required classroom texts. The students choose from a variety of books on the program's list to read independently either during class or outside of school. On completing their books, the students take a computerized multiple choice reading comprehension quiz that awards points for passing scores. Students are awarded points based on the length and difficulty of the books and the percentage of correct answers in the quiz. Some schools set up rewards systems which range from certificates, prizes to extra classroom credit. This program provided students with an incentive to read and was created to enhance the curriculum. (Palani, 2012)
- SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR): Classroom time is allotted for everyone, including the teacher, to read self-selected material. Some Schools schedule a specific day of the week for SSR, while others devote a portion of each class period. SSR affords students with opportunities to read a variety of authentic texts for their own purposes and pleasure which enables the students to practice lifetime reading skills. (Palani, 2012)
- A Daily DEAR -Drop Everything and Read! (Kamhieh, 2012) gives the teacher a structured time to touch base with each student over a period of time, assess progress, and target instruction. It gives students time to read what they want to read, share what they've read, and receive the support they need for further reading explorations and reflections. Daily reading sessions last between twenty and thirty minutes and are followed by fifteen minutes in which students can write in their reading response logs. (Kamhieh, 2012)
- READATHON Students come to school in a dress they are comfortable in, bring pillows and bed sheets and books they like and spend endless hours in leisure reading. Reading together with hundreds of other children, discussing the stories after the session has indeed been an inspiration to read more and

more. Sponsors are involved to raise funds for a cause.

CONCLUSION

This research revealed that reading habits have an effect on the academic performance, will develop their imagination and creative mindset and ultimately make academics more interesting. The prominent role of parental guidance plays a very important part in developing reading habits and could mould students into ardent and vociferous readers. The parents and the teachers should help their children cultivate the reading skills when they are young, so that it becomes part and parcel of their life. Today, there are many community libraries where children can be encouraged to go and read novels and fiction. When this is done, it will help them express themselves well and write good language which will eventually lead to better academic performance.

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