

## A Study of Reading Habit and Computer Technology Effect on Student in Pakistan

Hafiz Ishtiaq Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Kamran Malik<sup>2</sup>, M. Azeem<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine that the computer technology has an impact on university students' reading habit. 296 valid questionnaires were filled up by college and university students in Pakistan. The result shows that the college and university students' paper based reading habit changes to internet reading habit. 47.9% of students read online information every day and 28.7% of them read emails every day. In contrast, only 35.1% read newspapers, and 23.8% read magazines daily. The top 8 things students do online are chat with friends (80.7%), listening to music (76.7%), checking email (70.6%), watching movies (68.6%), using social media website (65.9%), playing game (61.5%), using Web messenger (57.4%), and shopping online (27.0%). Students more involve in chat with friend, listening to music, checking email, watching movies, and social media website than any other information. The topics of interest, the ranking sequence that students indicated are entertainment, education, computer and internet, news and media, business and economy and health. The results also indicated that gender, age, education, employment status, online hours, and college students' reading habits are related. Suggestions and implications as well as future research directions were included in this study.

### 1. Introduction

The invention of the computer technology in 1950's and the prevalence of this technology in 1980's and 1990's seem to lead to the revolution in people's literacy in the 21st century. People, nowadays, tend to rely more on computer-based resources (such as writing emails, sending free e-cards, watching online video, reading online news, transmitting instant messages and photos by Yahoo or MSN messengers, exchanging information in online chat room or discussion area) than paper based resources (such as writing letters, sending cards and postcards, reading newspapers, magazines, novels).

Owing to this technology reading habits are changing across the world, even e-versions of newspapers and online news resources have reduced the popularity of paper versions of newspapers. People have access to online newspapers early in the morning, thus, they prefer not to buy newspapers. Associated Press-IPOs poll reveals that 1 in 4 adults read no books in 2006. Yes, that's 25% of the adults are reading zero books. Now the computer technology is integrated into almost every aspect of learning in higher education: mostly homework is delivered and graded on the World Wide Web and assignments are completely designed through electronic mail. Internet has become an important part of college students not only for their studies and routine but as a tool of getting to know other people and the rest of the world. (Chou & Hsiao, 2000)

As Leu (2000) says that Literacy is rapidly and continuously changing as new technologies of information and communication repeatedly appear, and new environment for exploring these technologies are continuously crafted by users. Computer technology has significant effect on reading habit of the student in the perspective of history. (Lyons, 1999). Other researchers believe that computer technology and internet are changing the way of reading. (Lamb, 2005). New media and online literacy affect the people of all ages.

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer in Business Administration Department, University of Sargodha, Gujranwala Campus

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer in Business Administration Department, University of Sargodha, Gujranwala Campus

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer in Business Administration Department, University of Sargodha, Gujranwala Campus

(Hagood, 2003). Internet becomes an important part of college students' lives, not only for their studies and routine work also, but as a tool of knowing other people and the rest of the world (Chou & Hsiao, 2000)

Reading is an art which provides humans with foundation that is helpful to understanding their life as well as the elements with which to build their worldview. Reading provides way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and to self-discovery (Panigrahi and Panda, 1996; Eyre, 2005).

Reading is considered as a cornerstone for success, not just in schools, but also throughout adult life of an individual. Reading is regarded as a process, a mode of thinking, a kind of real experience and involves many complex skills, the ability to perceive printed words, to skim for information and then perhaps read intensively. Kirsch & Guthrie, (1984) says that reading contributes significantly to job success, career development, and ability to respond to change in their life.

It is viewed the art of reading is a priceless instrument for everyone. He expresses that reading is one of the most important activities in life through which we enter into life and experiences of others and extend our knowledge (Okeke, 2000). It is studied that reading adds quality to life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. He believed that reading empowers to free citizens and brings people together (Holte, 1998).

Libraries play a vital role in reading books. Library is a place where study reference is available easily beyond class text book. Library is a vital part of education system and information.

One of the major factors of library is to inspire to love for reading, to promote reading culture among its users, to create awareness of written letter, to create creative, leisure, and pleasurable reading. However, in the statement of the World Children Report by (unicef, 1999), it is stated that nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or write their names. The school library has been described as an educational instrument and an important part of every school and university. Library skills, as described by Herring (1988), are those skills which give students a degree of independence in locating and using information they need. Libraries include magazines, newspaper, pamphlets, discs and cassettes, tape recording, films and videos, photographs, computer data, and maps. (Mishra & Yadav, 2013). Reading among young people is decline because of their interest in social networking, gaming, music, and so on. This article aims to assess the change in reading habit of the students.

The study intends to investigate the effect of technology on students' reading habits in Pakistan. Moreover, it wants to highlight the prominent factors that affect the reading habit. The rest of the paper has been divided into four sections like; literature review, methodology, findings and conclusion respectively.

## **2. Literature Review**

In the past, undergraduates rely on paper materials such as newspaper for information because they help to create and improve reading habits, knowledge, and awareness. They can be a part of good study habits for students in any area of specialization (Kumar, Singh & Siddiqui, 2011).

The purposes of this survey, are defined as how often, how much, and what students read and their reading habits. For the past few decades, many researchers have made efforts to examine learners and reading habits. (e.g. Allen, 1986; Anderson, Higgins, & Wurster, 1985; Cheng, Shen, Chou, & Hung, 1997; Dimitrijevic, & Gunton, 1975; Gallik, 1999; Hashway, Duke, & Farmer, 1993; Lamme, 1976; Mokhtari, & Sheorey, 1994; Scales, & Biggs, 1987; Scales, & Rhee, 2001; Sikiotis, 1981; Watson, 1978; Womack, & Chandler, 1992) researchers have discovered that reading habits are associated with students'

age (e.g. Fusco, 1986; Platt, 1986; Sikiotis, 1981) gender (e.g. Stanchfield & Fraim, 1979; Scales & Biggs, 1987; Scales & Rhee, 2001; Synder, 1981), education (e.g. Allen, 1986; Bank, 1986; Gallik, 1999; Gallup, 1986; Hall, 1989; Hashway, 1993; Johnson, Peer, & Baldwin, 1984; Mellon, 1990; Palmer, 1983; Patterson, 1986; Platt, 1986; Reutzell & Mitchell, 1986; Scales & Rhee, 2001; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 1994; Sikiotis, 1981; Snyder, 1981; Summers & Lukasevich, 1983; Watson, 1978), employment (e.g. Hashway, Duke, & Farmer, 1993; Mikulecky, 1979; Ogunrombi & Adio, 1995).

Reading interest is different with different age levels. Mellon (1990) surveyed the extra reading of rural youngster, and found that their reasons for extra reading were for entertainment and acquiring information. Magazines and newspapers were found to be the most preferred reading materials for youngsters. Platt (1986) reviewed several selected studies on reading preferences. Mostly students' reading behaviors are slightly different from each other. Hall (1989) examines 285 student of southern urban university. Over 70% of all students like reading magazines and newspapers the most and novels the least, and half of the students read the sports, entertainment, and front-page of the newspaper on daily bases. In addition, graduate students spend more time in reading academic materials than their undergraduate student (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 1994).

In respect of gender, boys and girls read differently. Boys' reading interests are more in automobiles, occupations, music, and travel, but decreased for outer space (Stanchfield & Fraim, 1979). Girls read significantly more books than boys (Synder, 1981). Girls select more affected topic than boys, while boys choose topics related to physical activity more than girls (McKenna, 1986).

Gallik (1999) said that there is significant and positive relationship between students' cumulative grade-point and time spent on reading for pleasure during holiday.

(Liu & Huang, 2008) Survey results reveal that female readers have a stronger preference for paper than male readers, whereas male readers exhibit a greater degree of satisfaction with online reading than females. Additionally, males and females differ significantly in the dimension of selective reading and sustained attention.

However, just using technology does not necessarily impact positively on student performance. The effectiveness of tool and strategy use is differentials the reading behavior of a student is different (Azevedo2005; Dabbagh 2005).

Television watching among young children has raised issues and concerns to many researchers and professionals. As television series can be affectionate to watch, it could glue children on the couch; continuously watching one program after another. Many studies have found that children who live in 'heavy' TV-viewing households are more likely to have poor academic performance (e.g. Razel, 2001), violence (e.g. Ni Chang, 2000) and health problems (Christakis, 2006). However, to put such blame on each viewer does not seem appropriate as the effects on television viewed by young children might differ as they pass-through a certain stage of age.

Cull (2011) showed that while internet is a text saturated world, reading online screens tends to be significantly different from reading paper material. In his study, he reviewed literature from a variety of disciplines on the technological, social, behavioral, and neuron- scientific impacts that internet is having on the practice of reading. A particular focus was given to the reading behavior of emerging university students, especially within Canada and the United States. A brief overview was provided of the recent transformation of academic libraries into providers of online digital text in addition to printed books and other materials. On the other hand, it seems it has had some negative effects on their reading habits. Instead of people reading books, they now listen to people talk on You Tube, Face book etc. So, they do not feel the need of reading any longer.

Television is an important tool for most people, young or old, as today most of the information is delivered to the public via this technology. It can now be accessed easily via cables or satellite, which could provide consumers with every type of information they need for work, leisure, interest, and so forth. With the emergence of this media and the production of various programs, television has caught the attention of most people. Comparable to other media, television is the most accessible media to most people, including young children, where television is their most favorite form of media (Burton). The use of television by young children particularly has raised debates and concerns to many organizations and researchers (Pempek & Anderson, 2005)(Griffiths & Machin, 2003) due to the boundless access to various types of information which could affect their development, behavior, health and learning. (jasoff & sahani, 2013)

The use of television among young children has raised many issues, as discussed above which has put great concern to parents, professionals and researcher's looking at the content of television programming that we could access from cables and satellite, the amount of advertisement, violence, and other unhealthy behavior and scenes are being broadcasted for the viewing of the audience. Regardless of the issues raised above, whether TV is harmful or not, depends on several factors; what is being watched, who is watching, while doing what and for how long (Sparrow, 2007). Hence, it is then the role of parents particularly to teach their young children about media literacy. This is because, when children are thought to be media literate, they could become a savvier TV viewer, who are able to distinguish (Mishra & yadav, 2013) problems addressed above. (jasoff & sahim, 2013)

Gunther (1955) has revealed that televised programs hardly affect the attitude of children (william, 1986). Teenagers are reported develop specific identity-related preferences and seek opportunities to watch television in a private context (Arnett, 1995). It has established that television has considerably reduced the time to be spent for other activities (PARKER, 1961). Besides, results have shown that television correspondingly reduces the interests in reading newspaper and magazine. (william, 1986)

### **3. Methodology**

The participants for this study are 296 learners randomly selected on campus in university in Pakistan. These universities offer 2-year college program, 4-year college program, 1.5year and graduate program for training professionals in management and science. It has approximately 15000 students. Most students come from different cities in Gujranwala. There are 63.9% male and 36.1% female students in this study. 37.9% of them are sophomore, 56.5% of them are junior, and 5.6% of them are senior. 79.1% of the students are between 20 to 30 years old and 19.3% of them are less than 20 to 30 and 1.4 is more than 40. In addition, 25.7% of the students work part-time and 74.3% of them do not work. 67.2% of the students reported that they spend 1 to 3 hours online daily; 15.2% of them spend 3 hours, 9.5% of them spend 4 to 6 hours and 8.1% of them spend more than 6 hours a day on computer.

#### **Instrument and Procedure**

A 38-item questionnaire is designed for this study (see Appendix A). The questionnaire can be divided into five categories: five items in demographic section, six items in how-often-they-read section, 17 items in what-they-read-online section, 8 items on what-they-do-online section, and one item on their topics of interest online. The instrument was designed, tested, and revised with the following procedures. First, the researcher generated items based on the intended purposes and the possible research questions. Then, the researcher had peer review of the questionnaire from two colleagues. The researcher and the teachers discussed the flaws of the questionnaire, and revised the first draft of the questionnaire. Third, the researcher brought the questionnaire to a writing class of 25 for a pilot study. Fourth, after reviewing the results of the pilot study, the researcher revised the questionnaire and developed it to current questionnaire. Finally, the researcher distributed questionnaires on campus (e.g. in the cafeteria, in the library, in the classrooms, or in parking area) with a student's help. That student stayed onsite, invited students to complete the questionnaires, waited for their responses, and collected back those questionnaires. Totally, 296 valid questionnaires were collected. After gathering the questionnaire, data we reanalyzed through totaling the frequency and percentages of responses for each of the 42 items with SPSS20.0 for Windows 7.

### **4. Paper VS computer based reading**

The first question asked from the student is if college student do more computer based study as compared to paper based study in general week as result shown in **Table 1** that 47.9% of them read online information And 28.7% of the students read emails frequently every week, while only 35.1% of students read newspaper, 23.8% of them read magazines, 54.4% of them read textbooks, and 18.9% of them read novels often in a general week. 26.4% of students rarely read novels and 33.4% of them never read novels. Through

this question, it has been found that the most of the people spend on online information and reading newspaper in a general week.

**Table 1 Student's Weekly Reading Habit**

<b>Reading</b>	<b>Never N%</b>	<b>Rarely N%</b>	<b>Sometime N%</b>	<b>Often N%</b>	<b>Very often N%</b>
Newspaper	39(13.0)	56(18.9)	97(32.8)	59(19.9)	45(15.2)
Magazine	77(26.0)	66(22.3)	82(27.7)	49(16.4)	22(7.4)
Textbook	33(11.1)	43(14.5)	59(19.9)	73(24.7)	88(29.7)
Novel	99(33.4)	78(26.4)	63(21.3)	30(10.1)	26(8.8)
E mail	80(27.0)	63(21.3)	68(23.0)	42(14.2)	43(14.5)
Online information	30(10.1)	52(17.6)	72(24.3)	72(24.3)	70(23.6)

### **5. Contents of Online Reading**

The second question was “What do college and university students usually do and read when they surf on the Internet?” As shown in **Table 2**, students tend to check emails (70.6%), listen to music (76.7%), chat with friends (80.7%), use Web messenger (57.4%), read information (88.7%), watch movie (68.6%), use Social media website (76.6%), shop (27%), and play games (61.5%) when they are online. It has been found that most of the time students remain busy with entertainment.

**Table 2: Thing students do online**

<b>Things they do online</b>	<b>N%</b>	<b>N%</b>
Chat with friend	239(80.7)	57(19.3)
Listen Music	227(76.7)	69(23.3)
Check E mail	209(70.6)	87(29.4)
Watch Movie	203(68.6)	93(31.4)
Social media website	195(65.9)	101(34.1)
Play Game	182(61.5)	114(38.5)
Web Messenger	170(57.4)	126(42.6)
Shop Online	80(27.0)	216(73.0)

**Table 3** shows that college and university students are involved in fashion (31.8%), health (36.8%), food (27.7%), movie review (25.6%), E-mail (30.1%) and job information (37.9%) than any other online information. Students seldom read magazines (77.0%), e-books (53.1%), stories (56.4%), journal articles (68.9%), horoscopes (65.5%), weather (54.8%), comic strips (69.6%), jokes (44.9%), and sports (46.3%). Therefore, college students read emails and fashion more often than any other online information. It has been found that students spend more time in reading magazine, e-book, stories, comic strip and jokes.

<b>Online reading</b>	<b>Never N%</b>	<b>Rarely N%</b>	<b>Sometime N%</b>	<b>Often N%</b>	<b>Very often N%</b>
News	98(33.1)	74(25.0)	61(20.6)	47(15.9)	16(5.4)
magazine	133(44.9)	95(32.1)	35(11.8)	21(7.1)	12(4.1)
E book	83(28.0)	58(19.6)	100(33.8)	36(12.2)	19(6.4)
Stories	102(34.5)	55(18.6)	69(23.3)	43(14.5)	27(9.1)
E mail	72(24.3)	67(22.6)	68(23.0)	41(13.9)	48(16.2)
Journal articale	122(41.2)	82(27.7)	56(18.9)	23(7.8)	13(4.4)
Sales information	120(40.5)	80(27.0)	54(18.2)	24(8.1)	18(6.1)
Movie review	74(25.0)	74(25.0)	72(24.3)	46(15.5)	30(10.1)
Horoscope	117(39.5)	77(26.0)	48(16.2)	36(12.2)	17(6.1)
Weather Report	86(29.1)	76(25.7)	70(23.6)	42(14.2)	22(7.4)
Comic strip	148(50.0)	58(19.6)	51(17.2)	29(9.8)	10(3.4)
Jokes	66(22.3)	67(22.6)	86(28.7)	45(15.2)	33(11.1)
Sports	79(26.7)	58(19.6)	78(26.4)	48(16.2)	33(11.1)
Job information	59(19.9)	59(19.9)	66(22.3)	63(21.3)	49(16.6)
Food	71(24.0)	81(27.4)	62(20.9)	44(14.9)	38(12.8)
Fashion information	74(25.0)	66(22.3)	47(15.9)	48(16.2)	61(20.6)
Health information	76(25.7)	67(22.6)	59(19.9)	49(16.6)	45(15.2)

Moreover, students' areas of interest by ranking are displayed in **Table 4**. They are mostly involved in entertainment, education, computer & internet, news & media, business& economy, health, government, recreation and science in sequence. Entertainment computer and internet and media have more percentages than other topics. Business & economy, government, social science and science have lower frequency and percentages than any other topic.

**Table 4: Students' areas of interest by ranking**

<b>Topic of Interest</b>	<b>N%</b>
Entertainment	99(33.4)
Education	62(20.9)
Computer and Internet	42(14.2)
News and Media	30(10.1)
Business and Economy	16(5.4)
Health	10(3.4)
Recreation and Sport	8(2.7)
Society and Culture	8(2.7)
Art and humanities	5(1.7)
Government	5(1.7)
Science	7(2.4)
Social science	2(.7)
Regional	1(.3)
Reference	1(.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>296(100%)</b>

**Table 5: The relationship between reading habit and demographical variable**

Variable	Online reading	P value	coefficient
Gender	News	.000**	-.267
Gender	Jokes	.001**	-.188
Age	Online news	.114	-.092
Age	Sales information	.987	.000
Age	Job	.958	-.003
Education	Online newspaper	.332	-.057
Education	Online magazine	.577	.033
Employment	Novel	.723	-.021
Hours online	Movie review	.164	.081

Note: \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01

The third research question is “To what extent do students’ reading habits and their demographical variables, such as gender, age, employment status, and personal online hours relate?”

Table 5 showed that the relationship between college and university students’ gender, age, educational performance, employment status, online reading hours, and their reading habits. Gender is related to online news and jokes reading with significant p value.

## 6. Conclusion

The frequent changes in the information age have shown in literacy as becoming more technology oriented. As stated by Kern(2006)said that computers not only offer instruction, feedback, testing in grammar, writing, vocabulary, pronunciation, and other dimensions of language and culture learning, but also provide ready access to written, audio, and visual materials as well as references. These new technologies not only effect students’ learning and reading habit in the university library as well as classroom but also affect their reading behaviors at home. The results of this study revealed that students read online information more often than paper cased information.

The results also showed that gender is related to reading news and jokes online. Age is related to reading news, sales information, and entertainment online. Education level is tied to reading newspaper and magazine online. Employment status and reading stories or novels are related. Students’ online hours are related to read online movie review. Those results seem to conform to the earlier researchers in that (1) different gender tend to read differently (McKenna, 1986;Stanchfield & Fraim, 1979; Patterson, 1986), (2) the topics of interest vary with age level (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 1994), (3) academic performance does matter in the reading habit (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 1994), and (4) employment status has little predictive value on reading habits (Mikulecky, 1979).

How do educators, teachers, and administrators cope with this change to improve students’ reading habits, if reading information online is the trend? To what extent can educators, publishers, instructors, and researchers help in developing reading materials online entertainment, besides news, media, and commercials? Grabe and Sigler (2002), after evaluating students’ use of an online study environment, mention that educational publishers would eventually integrate instructional content and study activities online. Since easy access to reading materials plays critical role in improving students’ reading habits, the researcher suggested that book companies and educational publishers could provide more learning

opportunities on Internet and commercial software products to help students form a solid or robust online reading habits. Specifically, language arts, literature, and stories should be leveled and built in online to help students read and to cope with different reading levels. Students will benefit more if educational publishers, instructors, and researchers cooperate each other on developing reading materials and publishing on internet for students to use. And this is an important goal for researchers who are interested in the impact of computer technology on students' reading behaviors, since we all have to follow the flow of technology when mouse and keyboard as well as iPod dominate the world. The survey will be limited if the non-response rate is high. Therefore, further research can be conducted and focused on more subjects and subjects in different schools and countries. It can also be emphasized on what types of information should be built in online for students to read to enforce not only their reading habits, but also language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

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