

Relationship Between Students' Reading Habits and Their Academic Achievement at University of The Punjab

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Abstract

A descriptive survey was conducted to investigate the correlation between reading habits and students' academic achievement at the university level. The study was delimited to the students of the Faculty of Education, University of the Punjab. A sample of the study was 100 students of Master level. At the first stage, 5 programs (secondary, elementary, early childhood, research and assessment and Islamic) out of the 9 programs of the Institute of Education and Research and comparatively 1 program of the Department of Special Education were taken randomly. At the second stage, 50 students from IER and 50 students from the Department of Special Education, who had a CGPA 3.00 or above, were requested to fill the instrument & collected data were analyzed by statistical methods. The study found that there is no significant correlation between students' reading habits and their academic achievement ($r=.150$, $p=.137$). It was also found that no significant correlation exists between the biological factor ($r=.125$, $p=.215$) and the environmental factor ($r=.145$, $p=.149$) as the reading habits of students and their academic achievement and the perception regarding reading habits of both departments (Institute of Education and Research and Department of Special Education) students was almost the same. Reading habit is an art that facilitates understanding the foundations of life.

Keywords: Reading habit, academic achievement, biological and environmental factors, Faculty of Education.

Introduction

Reading is an understanding process of a writer's communication (Smith & Robinson, 1980). Reading is a process of planning, remembering, and comprehending the thoughts of written words (Toit, 2001). Lone (2011) identified that in ancient times, people understood reading as illustrative knowledge which was given in the form of codes. But later on, the understanding process of a whole written content has become much more complicated (Fisher, 2004). Reading is a basic tool of education; it is not only enjoyment but a necessity (Makotsi, 2005). It is the art of understanding of written and printed words. Reading is a conscious learning which extends information and the value of life (Devarajan et al., 1996). Reading is an exciting journey by which a person can understand and analyse themselves (Panigrahi & Panda, 1996; Eyre, 2005). A person can attain realistic competency due to a reading habit. Written material (book, journal, magazine, novel, newspaper etc) is a cause to transmit the knowledge from one generation to the next (Bhan & Gupta, 2010). In

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2009, Shabi and Udofia claimed that active learning is better than passive learning, like playing games and watching television. Eamon (2005) observed that the younger generation was impressed by their elders' reading habits. Teachers and guardians play an important role in helping the younger habitual readers. It is not enough to force the young people to read, so, teachers and guardians should be readers themselves. Reading is always a means to an end and not an end in itself. Reading is considered very difficult to gain the basic information and awareness, but after regular reading, a person becomes able to solve the different challenges of modern times (Narayanswamy, 1972). Reading is considered an exhilarating journey to self-actualization (Green, 2001). Reading is a source of attaining the latest information, enhances knowledge, builds maturity, and provides alertness about current affairs (Kim & Anderson, 2011).

Habit is a permanent act of a person which done by consciously or unconsciously and then becomes a part and parcel of a person's life (Acheaw, 2014). According to Anderson (2011), habit is a pattern of behavior which usually expected of one, how he could perform. A characteristic bodily, mental, or physical condition is called a habit (Dawson & Bamman, 1958). Reading is a fundamental approach that conveys knowledge and the habit of reading is an intellectual movement that raises the abilities of reading strategy. Reading habits identify the behavior of a person that shows their taste in reading, likes, and dislikes (Sangkaeo, 1999). In the past, so many studies have been conducted on students' reading habits (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 1994). A good reading habit becomes a cause of grooming personality, mental capability, and verbal communication skills (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). The people who lost the opportunity of good reading books in their primary stages of life, find it tough to get in touch with reading habits in their coming years (Deavers, 2000). When a person has been taught to read and boost their love for books, they can discover the wealth of human experiences and knowledge through reading. Reading habits are a purposeful and well-planned model of study by which students gain an understanding of academic subjects and achieve success in exams. Reading habits decide the academic achievements of students; both are interconnected and reliant on each other. Mostly, students come from different areas with different levels of academic achievement. So, they have different patterns of reading habits. Whereas some students have good and others have poor reading habits (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012). According to Howcroft (1991), academic achievement is the actual marks of the students, in the form of a numerical score as obtained in an examination or test. The students' academic achievements play an essential role in making great leaders and manpower for the country's economic and social development (Ali et al., 2009). Student academic performances can be assessed by a number of ways like CGPA, GPA, and their test result. Reading habit is one of the most important factors that impact upon academic performance (Mlambo, 2011). The majority of researchers, such as Bhan & Gupta (2010), Ogbodo, 2002 Singh (2011), have done work on reading, especially how it affects the academic performance of students. A number of studies focus on the three elements that mediate: parents (family causal factors), teachers (academic causal factors), and students (personal causal factors) (Diaz, 2003). Academic performance is affected by Individual differences, which depend on

intelligence and personality (Tomas, 2011). Acheaw (2014) observed that an innovative and realistic education depends on the habit of individual inquiry. The procedure of individual inquiry demands self-study, self-thinking and analysis. Ogbodo (2010) observed that reading modifies behavior and shows the readers' intellectual way of thinking, cognitive development, manipulative expertise, and development of morals and interests. The environmental factors directly affect a student's reading habit and attitude to work at home, parents, educational background, and socioeconomic class (Anderson, 2011). According to Mushtaq (2012), the social, psychological, economic and environmental factors are challenging aspects that strongly influence the students' academic performance, but these factors are different from person to person and country to country.

Statement of the Problem

Reading is a basic tool of education, but it is considered difficult and avoided because so many facilities have been provided to people like the internet, watching movies, listening to audio-CDs, watching video-CDs, video games, usage of mobile, etc. (Issa et al., 2012). Therefore, nowadays, people are not showing much interest in reading books, magazines, novels, newspapers and journals, etc. (Palani, 2012). In addition, the scientific and technological inventions and innovations have also greatly declined in the good practice of reading among the majority of students. So, it badly affects students' performance. Acheaw (2014) claims that many parents and teachers protest about students' lack of interest in reading, which has become the biggest issue of today, but it does not mean that they have an inability to read. From the declaration above, the study was conducted to examine the relationship between the reading habits of students and their effects on their academic achievement.

Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives.

1. To identify factors affecting the reading habits of students.
2. To find out the relationship between reading habits and students' academic achievement.
3. To determine the reading habits of the Institute of Education and Research and the Department of Special Education students.

Research Design and Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design to examine students' reading habits and their relationship with academic achievement. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument, employing a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* (5) to *Strongly Disagree* (1). This approach enabled the quantification of respondents' perceptions and behaviors. The target population comprised students enrolled in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Punjab, which includes the Institute of Education and Research (IER) and the Department of Special Education. The IER offers nine-degree programs, while the Department of Special Education offers one program.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. In the first stage, five programs—Secondary Education, Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Research and Assessment, and Islamic Education—were randomly selected from IER, along with the Department of Special Education. In the second stage, a total of 100 students were selected using purposive sampling based on academic performance ($\text{CGPA} \geq 3.00$), including 50 students from IER and 50 students from the Department of Special Education.

Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 36 items. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Reading Habits (8 items), Academic Achievement (16 items) AND Biological and Environmental Factors (12 items). All items were measured using the five-point Likert scale to capture the intensity of respondents' attitudes and behaviors.

After data collection, responses were coded, organized, and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied. Descriptive statistics included mean scores, frequencies, and percentages to summarize respondents' characteristics and responses. Inferential statistics included: Independent samples t-test to examine differences in mean scores between groups (e.g., students with good vs. poor reading habits, and students from IER vs. the Department of Special Education) and Pearson correlation analysis to determine the relationship between students' reading habits and their academic achievement.

Analysis of Results and Findings

Table # 1

Population of the Study

	Frequency	Percent
IER	50	50.0
Special Education	50	50.0
Total	100	100.0

Table describes that 50% students were selected as the sample from the IER department and 50% from Special Education.

Table # 2

Independent Sample t-Test on Reading Habits and Department

	Department	N	Mean	df	t-ratio	p
Reading Habits	Special Education	50	3.68	98	-.912	.364
	IER	50	3.75			

The table above expresses that the t-value (-.912, $\text{df} = 98$, $p = .364$) is not significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq .05$). So, H_{04} null hypothesis is accepted. The mean achievement score of the Special Education Department ($M = 3.68$) is the same with IER Department ($M = 3.75$). Therefore, it is concluded that perceptions regarding the reading habits of both departments' students were almost the same.

Table # 3*Independent Samples t-Test on Biological Factor and Department*

	Department	N	Mean	df	t-ratio	P
Biological Factor	Special Education	50	3.7352	98	-.824	.412
	IER	50	3.8029			

The table above expresses that the t-value (-.806, df=98, p=.422) is not significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq .05$). The mean achievement score of the Special Education Department (M=3.73) is the same with IER Department (M=3.80). Therefore, it is concluded that the perception regarding the biological factor as reading habits of both departments' students was almost the same.

Table # 4*Independent Sample t-Test on Environmental Factor and Department*

	Department	N	Mean	t-ratio	df	P
Environmental Factor	Special Education	50	3.6200	-.806	98	.422
	IER	50	3.6973			

The table above reveals that the t-value (-.824, df=98, p=.412) is not significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq .05$). The mean achievement score of the Special Education Department (M=3.62) is the same with IER Department (M=3.69). Therefore, it is concluded that the perception regarding environmental factor as reading habits of both departments' students, was almost the same.

Table # 5*Department-Wise Difference Using Independent Samples t-Test*

Variable	Department	N	Mean	T	df	P
Academic Achievement	Special Education	50	3.2434	.520	98	.604
	IER	50	3.2018			

The table above depicts that the t-value (.520, df=98, p=.604) is not significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq .05$). So, H_{04} null hypothesis is accepted. The mean achievement score of students of the special education department (M=3.24) is the same with students of the IER department (M=3.20). Therefore, it is concluded that the academic performance of students of both the special education department and the IER was identical.

Table # 6*Academic achievement and poor and good reading habits t-test*

Variable	Reading Habits Category	N	Mean	T	df	P
Academic Achievement	Poor Reading Habits	46	3.11	-.712	98	.478
	Good Reading Habits	54	3.22			

Table above describes that t-value (-.712, df=98, p=.478) is not significant at level of significance ($\alpha \leq .05$). The mean achievement score of those students who have poor reading habits (M=3.11) is almost same with those students who have good

reading habits ($M=3.22$). Therefore, it is concluded that poor and good reading habits of students don't affect their academic achievement.

Table # 7

Correlations between reading habits and academic achievement

		Reading Habits	Academic Achievement
Reading Habits	Pearson Correlation	1	.150
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.137
	N	100	100

Table above reveals that there is no significant correlation exist between student reading habits and their academic achievement ($r=.15$, $p=.137$). So, a H_{05} null hypothesis is accepted.

Table # 8

Correlations between biological factor as reading habits and academic achievement

		Biological Factor	Academic Achievement
Biological Factor	Pearson Correlation	1	.125
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.215
	N	100	100

Table above depicts that there is no significant correlation exist between biological factor as reading habit of students and their academic achievement ($r=.125$, $p=.215$). So, a H_{03} null hypothesis is accepted.

Table # 9

Correlations between environmental factor as reading habits and academic achievement

		Academic Achievement	Environmental Factor
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.145
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.149
	N	100	100

The table above expresses that no significant correlation exists between environmental factor as reading habits of students and their academic achievement ($r=.145$, $p=.149$). So, H_{02} null hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded that the perception regarding biological and environmental factors as reading habits of both departments' students was same and academic performance of students of both the Special Education Department and Institute of Education and Research was identical. It is also concluded that poor and good reading habits of students do not affect their academic achievement and there is no significant relationship between reading habit and academic achievement.

Mostly students come from those families which have no reading culture. Usually, teachers require only textbook cramming and want the exact answers of the questions

in the exams therefore students fail to increase their knowledge and just stick to the point. It is a rational reason that students don't take interest in extra reading because teachers not accept extra words that's why students just follow textbook, handouts, notes and do cramming. For that reason, there is not significant relationship between reading habit and academic achievement.

Teachers should motivate the students about regular reading habits instead of textbooks, notes, and handouts cramming. They should promote library use among students and ask questions after students come from the library, and make sure that the library enhances their knowledge. Teachers should require self-expression in examinations instead of cramming.

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