

Influence of Familial Environment on Reading in Adolescent Women Students

Vidya Subramanian * Dr. Sarika Sawant**

*** Librarian**

Dr BMN College of Home Science,
Matunga, Mumbai,
Maharashtra
India.

**** Asst. Prof.**

SHPT School of Library Science,
SNDT Women's University,
Mumbai, Maharashtra
India.

QR Code



Abstract: - *The present study presents the results of a survey conducted on undergraduate Home Science students in a Women's college situated in suburban Mumbai. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of familial environment on students' reading habits. The survey was conducted keeping in mind the demographic profile of the students like the socio- economic background, their mother tongue, medium of education in school, etc.*

Keywords: Reading habits, Influence of Family, Undergraduate students

Introduction

Reading is a generic habit and can be successfully and sufficiently extended and nurtured both through educational institutions and the library. In the context of this study, reading is regarded as that the students chose to do on their own. Reading habits reflect the personal choice of material to be read as well as the time and place to read it. Interest in reading provides motivation for more reading.

Reading habits suggest the sociological aspect of the reading process, the group of readers and patterns and types of behaviour. Books and libraries are both part of the whole fabric of communication. The activity of reading is regarded as a habit when it is repeatedly carried out. Reading habits are measured in terms of amount of materials read, frequency of reading as well as average time spent on reading. (Abeyrathna, PHAS.; Zanab, 2004). In the research done by Bichy (2003) of University of

Maryland Baltimore on “Reading and study skills”, he has mentioned that college students’ inadequate reading and study skills have existed since the 19th Century.

Kraschen (1996) believed that the reading habits could be nurtured at an early age. There would be differences between individuals of different age gender and there are also influences like internal factors such as home, motivation, and attitude as well as external factors like peers, teachers, and library facilities available to them.

Literature Review

Reading is a very important factor in enriching one’s knowledge and widening one’s perspective. Parents and thus the home environment are known to be the socializing agents to the children reading effort.

According to Baker et al (1997), children whose early encounters with literacy are enjoyable are more likely to develop a predisposition to read frequently and broadly in subsequent years. Young children’s initiation with print and oral traditions at home, socio economic factors and educational backgrounds at home decide the reading habits

A study by Najeemah Mohd. Yusof (2010) identifies the relationship and influence of familial factors viz income, parents’ educational level, occupation, parents’ encouragement to read and home reading environment. The results establish that the family factors strongly and positively influence the children’s reading habits and interests

Parents and the home environment figure heavily in whether or not the interest in reading is developed. The availability of reading materials in the home is certainly a necessity in developing a child's interest in books and reading. Various factors affect the reading habits in children such as education level, family income, mother tongue, language of instruction, social status, etc.

According to Sangkaeo (1999), many research studies have discovered that children who do best in literacy skills at school are those who come from homes where there are books and where parents spend time reading to them and where the children see their parents and siblings engage in reading activities

According to a study done by Noll, Under Graduate students watch 2.0 hours of TV, 1.5 hours of videos, listen to 1.2 hours of radio and 1 hour of music each day. Total time spent watching, listening to entertainment for undergraduate students is 5.4 hours/day (Noll, 2001). Hintze&Lehnus found similar results wherein they found that those who watch TV or listen to radio spend two or three hours in doing so while who read magazines/news papers spent on a average less than one hour in doing so. The total print usage for under graduates is 119.1 minutes (Noll 2001) i.e. about 2 hours in all print media including recreational college course preparation.

Objective

1. To study the socioeconomic, familial factors influencing reading among students
2. To study the influence of family, peer and teacher on reading

Methodology

First year under graduate students of a women's Home Science College in suburban Mumbai were surveyed. Stratified samples of students were presented with a questionnaire specifically developed for the study. 90 responses were received completely filled, which were taken for the results to be tabulated. The data was summarized and percentage calculated.

Limitations

Only first year undergraduate women students surveyed

Results

Table 1.1

Age	No. of respondents
17	19
18	51
19	10
20 and >20	10

The table shows that maximum no. of respondents is in the age group of 17 & 18 years who have joined college after completing high school education.

Table 1.2 - Family Background

Type of family	No. of respondents	Percentage
Joint	19	21
Nuclear	71	79

Nearly twice the respondents are from nuclear family background as against joint family. The nuclear family includes parents, siblings and grandparents while the joint family is an extended family with aunts, uncles, cousins,

Table 1.3 – Mother tongue

Mother Tongue	Number	Percentage
Marathi	40	44.44
Gujarati	19	21.11
Hindi	13	14.44
Urdu	8	8.88
South Indian	7	7.77
Others	3	3.33

Being a cosmopolitan city the students come from diverse backgrounds. Majority of the respondents had Marathi as their mother tongue and the next was Gujarati. There were also respondents with other mother tongues.

Table 1.4 - Income group

Family Income in Rupees (Monthly)	No. of respondents	Percentage
10,000-15,000	5	5.55
16,000-25,000	25	27.77
25,000 – 45,000	39	43.33
Above Rs.45,000	26	28.88

Respondents are from middle and higher middle income families. But the locations where they stay were widely dispersed. It ranged from around the city (2-10 kms.) to the suburbs (25-50Kms) away from the college.

Table 1.5 Medium of Instruction in school and high school

Medium of Instruction	No. Of Students	%
English	79	87.77
Hindi	1	1.11
Marathi	5	5.55
Urdu	2	2.22
Others	3	3.33

Majority of the respondents were aware of many ready materials available to them. Newspaper, textbooks, magazines, storybooks, comics and novels featured among the widely aware reading materials.

Table 2.1 - Exposure from family

Reading materials purchased at home	No. of respondents	%
Newspapers	88	97.77
Textbooks	63	70
Magazines	49	54.44
Comics	19	21.11
Novels	40	44.44
Poetry & Drama books	16	17.77

Majority of the respondents had newspapers being purchased in the house. Around half of the respondents have access to novels and magazines at home.

Table 2.1 (A) – Languages of the materials purchased at home

Language of reading material purchased	No of homes	%
English	69	76.66
Hindi	20	22.22
Marathi	28	31.11
Gujarati	9	10
Urdu	3	3.33
Others	2	2.22

From the above table it shows that though the mother tongues of the respondents are different majority of them are exposed to English language reading material in a major way along with their own mother tongue as most of the houses had materials bought in English All these materials are purchased at their homes.

Table 2.2 – Materials read by family members

Reading materials	You	Father	Mother	Sibling	Grand Parents
News papers	70 (77.77%)	66 (73.33%)	39 (43.33%)	37 (41.11%)	29 (32.22%)
Magazines	43 (47.77%)	14 (15.55%)	14 (15.55%)	24 (26.66%)	6 (6.66%)
Text books	68 (75.55%)	3 (3.33%)	7 (7.77%)	52 (57.77%)	1 (1.11%)
Comics	29 (32.22%)	4 (4.44%)	4 (4.44%)	40 (44.44%)	-
Storybooks/Novels	41 (45.55%)	8 (8.88%)	8 (8.88%)	21 (23.33%)	5 (5.55%)
Poetry	7 (7.77%)	5 (5.55%)	5 (5.55%)	8 (8.88%)	25 (27.77%)
Drama	12 (13.33%)	4 (4.44%)	4 (4.44%)	7 (7.77%)	-
Religious Books	29 (32.22%)	30 (33.33%)	46 (51.11%)	16 (17.77%)	3 (3.33%)

Here the family members included the immediate and extended family members. The question thus provided the exposure of family members to reading materials, familiarity and thus their influence on the respondents reading environment.

Reading :96.66% of respondents like to read while only 3% did not like reading at all

Table 3 - Language of reading

Language	No. respondents	Percentage (%)
English	75	83.33
Hindi	12	13.33
Marathi	18	20
Gujarati	5	5.55
Others	7	7.77

The language of instruction in the college was English. Majority of the respondents read in English but a few did read in their mother tongue also especially in Marathi and Hindi which happen to be the languages taught in school and high school.

Table 4 - People who influenced

The respondents were asked as to whom they remembered reading to them or reading with them in an ordered format (Descending 1st, 2nd, 3rd.) The response was as follows:

Relation	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Mother	34	6	5
Father	6	18	5
Grand Parents	5	3	3
Sibling	15	10	2
Teachers	8	1	6
Friends	13	16	13

The results reveal that the parents especially the mother formed the key person who kindled their reading within the family. Wherever grandparents are present, they were also key to initiation into reading, The teacher has also played an important role in reading and sharing among the respondents.

Table 5 – Sharing the reading

The person with whom or to whom the respondents discussed what they read was also asked and the respondents chose the order of preference with whom they discussed. The results are as follows:

Relation	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Relation
Mother	44	7	5	Mother
Father	7	19	9	Father
Grand Parents	8	7	2	Grand Parents
Sibling	9	6	7	Sibling
Friends	4	13	6	Friends
Teachers	8	7	12	Teachers
Librarian	1	1	7	Librarian
Others	1	4	3	Others

The response is indeed like the previous factor, wherein mother, friend and sibling form the network of sharing. Reading with and sharing with friends and siblings is seen. A healthy reading atmosphere in the family kindles reading amongst the respondents.

Conclusion

The important influence of parents and the home environment on the developing child provides educators with a resource to ensure children’s successful growth in reading.

The present study was undertaken as it was observed that the students’ reading was restricted to only academic purposes and academic materials (Prescribed). It was found that general awareness of different reading materials was also found to be lacking. A survey through a questionnaire was done to explore the familial entities like socio economic background, familial influences, awareness of materials that can be read, etc.

Parents are known to be socializing agents to their children especially when reading effort is concerned. This is well evident in the study conducted. It has been observed that the respondents were aware about most of the reading material available. There was a positive influence of family and peer members in their reading, irrespective of their demographic profile. Their preferred reading place was home and many of them read during travel. The study also reveals that the student’s initiation into reading was from the family and they shared their reading with

family and friends. Parents should be advised to create healthy reading environment at home.

To keep the reading going as a lifelong habit the respondents have to be initiated into the library culture thoroughly In order to enhance the students reading, the librarian should promote reading and facilitate the browsing needs so that the students are able to connect with the reading and learning materials available to them. Teachers and parents should commit themselves to allot time to children / students to read other light materials in addition to reading for academic purposes.

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