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A Study on the Reading Habits of Prospective Teachers in Goa

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Abstract

The present study attempted to find out the reading habits of prospective teachers. A survey was conducted on a sample of 192 students pursuing B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses in Goa. Data was collected using a reading habit inventory and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study focused on the reading habits of teacher aspirants, considering their discipline (Science and Non-Science) and gender. The result showed that the majority of the prospective teachers have a moderate level of reading habit. The findings also revealed that there is no significant difference in the reading habits of prospective teachers with reference to gender. But the difference in reading habit scores of science and non-science teachers is statistically significant. The study helped in understanding the level of reading habits of prospective teachers in Goa and implies that efforts must be made to enhance their reading habits, as these teachers will promote reading among future learners.

Keywords: Digital Reading, Educators, Prospective Teachers, Reading Habits, Reading Skills, Teaching Professionals

1. Introduction

Reading habits refer to an individual's behavioural pattern related to reading. It describes how often individuals read, how much time is spent on reading, and what type of material is read. It is an accepted fact that reading plays an important role in enhancing intellectual abilities and supporting academic performance (Kishore, Singh & Sinha, 2023). Reading is a skill, and it is crucial when considering individuals' development related to learning new knowledge. It is a fundamental skill requirement to function in today's society. Numerous studies have shown the link between competency in reading and overall attainment. Reading develops the mind, helps to discover new things, develops imagination, and improves spelling (Hegade, 2023). Reading enhances the

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power of imagination and creativity. Reading increases vocabulary, builds language and personality, enables one to acquire knowledge of all subjects, and cultivates writing skills. Reading is also associated with improving academic performance, activating creativity, developing critical thinking, and reducing stress.

Reading can be said to be a habit when individuals see it as necessary, enjoy it, can criticize what they read, and keep reading for life, or we can say good readers are lifelong readers. Acquiring a reading habit has advantages, such as the individual will be motivated to learn and capable of handling the crucial situations of life wisely. Reading habits cannot be generated overnight in adulthood, but they should be developed at an early age. And here educators play an important role. Cultivating a positive attitude towards reading in school years can help foster reading habits in the future. For this reason, teachers are considered role models in developing reading habits among children, as children spend more time with books in school than at home (Abang Yusof, 2021).

1.1. Teachers' Training Courses and their Relevant Institutions in Goa: An Overview

Teacher education programmes are offered at different levels in institutions in Goa. In Goa, five colleges are offering the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme, of which one college also offers the Master of Education (M.Ed.) programme and a Diploma in Pre-Primary Teacher Training Programme. Out of these five institutions, three function as post-graduate teacher training institutions, and the remaining two offer integrated B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed. teacher training programmes designed for students completing higher secondary education. Administratively, Goa is divided into three districts, namely North Goa, South Goa, and Kushavati, with three education colleges in North Goa and the other two in South Goa. All five teacher training institutions are affiliated with Goa University and operate under the regulations of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Teacher education institutions in Goa collectively prepare prospective teachers by developing pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and professional competencies. Students trained in these colleges are recruited by secondary and higher secondary schools in Goa, thereby contributing to the quality of education in the state of Goa.

1.2. Reading Habits of Prospective Teachers

Prospective teachers are student teachers undergoing training or preparing to become teachers. Prospective teachers will be absorbed in schools after completing training, and they will be responsible for building the future of the nation. Reading habits among prospective teachers are crucial, as they influence their literacy attitudes and teaching effectiveness. Teachers who are good readers themselves can cultivate good reading habits among students, thereby fostering a culture of reading within the classroom and creating a literate society. Understanding these habits can also help in addressing the challenges of literacy and reading in the classroom (El Haddad & Charles, 2024).

A real initiative is required from teachers to bring together students and books so that students develop a love for reading. And to create a suitable atmosphere in school for supporting reading, teachers themselves should have an interest in reading. However, if teachers' reading habits are weak, it will affect their ability to encourage students to read. In this view, it is necessary to understand the reading habits of prospective teachers. The present study is undertaken to examine the reading habits of prospective teachers, with the main purpose of assessing their preparedness to promote a reading culture among future learners.

2. Review of the Literature

Research literature on the reading habits of teacher aspirants highlights the significant benefits that reading enhances their professional

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development and effectiveness as educators. Reading not only improves cognitive skills such as critical thinking and comprehension but also fosters effective communication abilities. Uzum & Alincak (2021) studied book reading habits among prospective teachers and concluded that reading books improves imagination, gains effective communication skills, and improves the ability to express effectively.

Furthermore, Goodwin et al. (2019) conducted a study that revealed that students performed better on longer texts when read in paper format compared to digital, which emphasizes the cognitive advantages of traditional reading methods. Similarly, Salmerón et al. (2021) explored reading comprehension under time pressure and found that students with high comprehension skills could maintain similar levels of understanding when reading on tablets as they did with print, but those with lower skills struggled more with digital texts under time constraints. Moreover, Honma et al. (2022) investigated the cognitive effects of reading on smartphones, revealing that it promotes overactivity in the prefrontal cortex and results in lower reading comprehension compared to paper reading. However, Haddad & Charles (2024), in a pilot study conducted in the UAE, found no significant difference in comprehension outcomes between digital and traditional mediums when implementing a Reading for Pleasure program, suggesting that while digital formats are widely used, their effectiveness may not surpass that of print.

Astuti & Sudirman (2024) explored the reading habits of pre-service English teachers utilizing a mixed-method approach. The study highlighted the importance of fostering robust reading habits among prospective teachers to enhance their professional development. In another study, Das (2020) examined the reading habits of UG students related to documents of career guidance and found that reading these information sources increases general knowledge, intelligence, and also makes students ready to appear for competitive examinations. Similarly, Vaishali & Shashi (2015) investigated and compared the reading habits of science and non-science stream trainee teachers and found that both streams have similar reading habits, with non-science stream teachers preferring literature and science stream teachers preferring science-related material. Moreover, Liswaniso & Mubanga (2019) investigated the reading habits of students in the teacher training program at the University of Namibia. The study found that students have poor reading habits, and they read only for study purposes, which negatively affects the quality of learning. Furthermore, Wahab (2023) explored the influence of teachers' personal reading habits on the teaching methodologies they employ in the classroom and found that teachers with good reading habits employ a broader range of instructional techniques and critical thinking exercises compared to those with poor reading habits.

Previous studies show that good reading habits help to improve imagination, enhance comprehension and communication skills in students, and enhance professional development in teachers. Research has also compared reading on print and digital formats and their effects. Some studies have examined the influence of the reading habits of teachers on teaching methodology. However, studies on prospective teachers' reading habits by considering format preference, gender, and discipline together are missing. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the reading habits of prospective teachers in Goa, focusing on their preference for print and digital materials and comparing reading habits across gender and discipline.

3. Research Objectives

The main objectives covered in this study are as follows:

- To find the preference of prospective teachers between printed material and the digital version of the material for reading.

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- To assess the level of reading habits of prospective teachers.
- To compare the reading habits of prospective teachers based on gender.
- To compare the reading habits of prospective teachers based on their discipline of study.

4. Research Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant difference in reading habit scores between female and male prospective teachers.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference in reading habit scores between prospective teachers of science and non-science disciplines.

5. Research Methodology

The study explored the reading habits of prospective teachers adopting a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire incorporating the Reading Habits Inventory adopted from Senthikumaran and Revathi (2022). The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms. The population of the study comprised 300 second-year post-graduate teacher training programme students. There are five teacher training colleges in Goa, of which three colleges offer post-graduate teacher training programmes and only one college offers a master's programme (M.Ed). The questionnaire was administered to all second-year students of these three colleges offering post-graduate teacher training programmes and M.Ed programmes during the academic year 2024-2025. A total of 192 valid responses were received from students who voluntarily responded. The majority of teacher trainees in teacher education institutions in Goa are female, and the same is reflected in the sample. Data collected was analysed using Jamovi software, and a pie chart and box plot were used for the graphical representation of the data.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The habit of reading is an essential trait to create a well-educated society. Reading helps to develop good thinking techniques and produce new information. The study of reading habits among prospective teachers is crucial for understanding how future educators engage with literature and other reading materials.

6.1 Demographic Information of the Prospective Teachers

Demographic information of the prospective teachers are presented in Table 1 under the present study.

Table1: Demographic information of the prospective Teachers

Particulars	Details
Population	300 Second-year students of the postgraduate teacher training programme, prospective teachers
Sample Size	192 prospective teachers
Male Students	19
Female Students	173
Study Period	Academic Year 2024-2025

6.2. Preference of Prospective Teachers between Printed and Digital Material

It is clear from the study that among the total sample of prospective teachers, 49% were those who preferred the printed version of reading materials. 44.8% of the total sample were those who preferred both the digital version and the printed version for reading. Those who prefer digital reading over the

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printed version were only 6.2%. The printed version was preferred more by the prospective teacher, even though the sample population consisted of digital natives.

Table 2:Preference of Prospective Teachers

Reading Material Preference	Number of Prospective Teachers
Printed Material	94
Digital Material	12
Both Print and Digital	86
Total	192

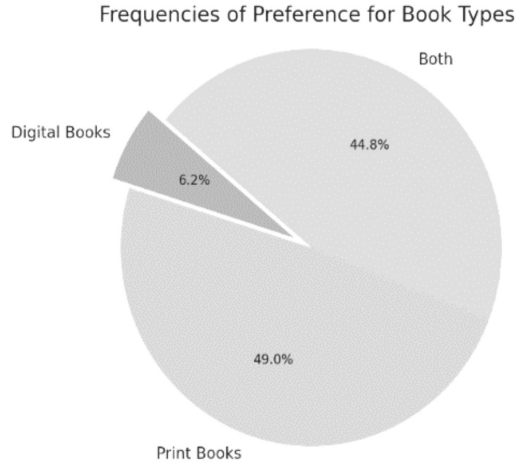

Figure 1: Pie Chart showing the preferences of prospective teachers for reading.

6.3. Reading Habits of Prospective Teachers

The Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the variable reading habit of prospective teachers. The data collected from a sample of 192 prospective teachers were analyzed using the Jamovi software. The average reading habit score was 22.7. The result indicated that the median is 23.0, which is very close to the mean, suggesting a relatively symmetrical distribution. The scores range from 7 to 37, showing quite a wide spread, with a standard deviation of 6.13.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the variable - Reading Habit

Variable of study	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Reading Habit	192	7	37	22.7	23.0	6.13

The group as a whole seems to have a moderate reading habit on average. Since the mean and median are very close, it suggests that the distribution of reading habit scores is approximately symmetrical, meaning there is no strong skew towards higher or lower scores. The scores are fairly evenly distributed, with a typical spread and no extreme skew. There is reasonable variability among participants; some read very little, while others have very strong reading habits. A standard deviation of 6.13 shows a moderate spread of scores around the mean. This means that the majority of scores are moderately spread around

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the average, and very few participants have scores far lower than 16.57 or higher than 28.83. This indicates that while most participants have average reading habits, there is a fair amount of variation in how frequently or intensely people read.

6.4. Classification of the total sample of prospective teachers based on their level of reading habits

Based on the mean scores, the total sample is classified into three categories. The classification is as follows: Low reading habits: If the reading habit score is below the mean minus one standard deviation (mean - SD), Moderate reading habits: If the reading habit score is within one standard deviation above or below the mean (mean ± SD) and high reading habits: If the reading habit score is above the mean plus one standard deviation (mean + SD). The classification of samples on the basis of scores on reading habits is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Levels of reading habits (classification based on Mean and SD)

Level of Reading Habits	Range	No. of Prospective teachers	Percentage
Low	Less than 16.57	32	16.7
Moderate	16.57 to 28.83	126	65.6
High	Greater than 28.83	35	17.7
Total		192	100

Table 2 shows that the majority of prospective teachers (65.6%) exhibit moderate reading habits, while a smaller portion (16.7%) displays low reading habits, and roughly 17.7% show high levels of reading habits. This could be because of factors such as academic demands, time availability, or personal preference.

6.5. Hypothesis Testing against Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in reading habit scores between female and male prospective teachers.

Table 5 presents a comparative analysis of reading habits between male and female prospective teachers based on the collected sample. The average reading habit score for female teachers was slightly higher (Mean = 22.9) compared to male teachers (Mean = 20.5).

Table 5: Reading habits across gender of prospective teacher

Variable	Discipline	N (Sample Size)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-Value	Signi ficance
Reading habit	Male	19	20.5	7.61			Not	Signi ficant ($p > 0.05$)
	Female	173	22.9	5.93				
	Student's test				-1.61	190	0.108	
	Mann-Whitney U				1353		0.206	
Total	192							
Effect size	Cohen's d		-0.390					

The variability in reading habit scores was comparable between the two groups, with male teachers showing an SD of 7.61 and 5.93 for female teachers. This suggests similar consistency in reading habits within each group. While the mean difference between the two groups is not substantial, the slightly

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higher maximum score for female teachers suggests the presence of individuals with a significantly more intensive reading habit within this group. To determine if these differences are statistically significant, the t-test and Mann-Whitney U test were performed, which showed a statistic U of 1353. It can be interpreted that there is no statistically significant difference in reading habit score between male and female prospective teachers. The effect size was also calculated, showing that Cohen's d is -0.390. This reinforced the earlier interpretation that even though the females score higher on reading habits, the reading habit score between male and female prospective teachers is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it failed to reject the null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference between the reading habits of male and female prospective teachers. Figure 2 shows a box plot, which is used to graphically represent the reading habit score against gender.

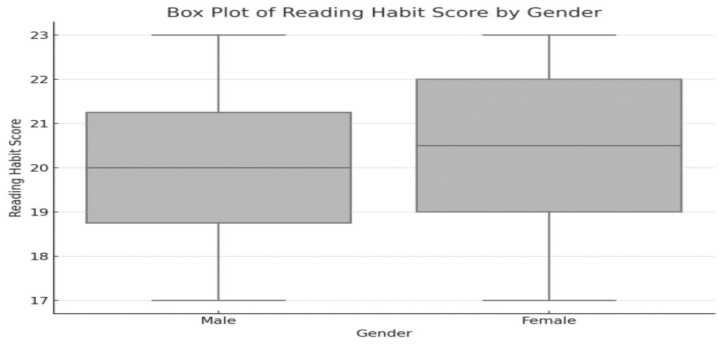

Figure 2: Box plot showing the reading habit score against the male and female sample groups of prospective teachers.

6.6. Hypothesis Testing against Null Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant difference in reading habit scores between prospective teachers of science and non-science disciplines.

Table 6 presents a comparative analysis of reading habits between science and non-science disciplines of prospective teachers based on the collected sample. The average reading habit score for the non-science group was slightly higher (Mean = 20.8) compared to the science group (Mean = 23.7). The variability in reading habit scores was comparable between the two groups, with science teachers showing an SD of 6.59 and 5.64 non-science teachers showing an SD of 5.64.

Table 6: Reading habits across the discipline of prospective teachers

Variable	Discipline	N (Sample Size)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-Value	Signi ficance
Reading habit	Science	67	20.8	6.59				Signi ficant ($p > 0.05$)
	Non-Science	125	23.7	5.64	-3.21	190	0.002	
	Student's test							
	Mann-Whitney U		3029		0.002			
Total	192							
Effect size	Cohen's d -0.486							

This suggests similar consistency in reading habits within each group. While the mean difference between the two groups is not substantial, the slightly higher maximum score for the non-science teachers suggests the presence of individuals with a significantly more intensive reading habit within this group. To determine if these differences are statistically significant, a t-test and a Mann-Whitney U test were performed, which showed a statistic U of 3029. It can be interpreted that there is a statistically significant difference in reading habit score between science and non-science teachers. The effect size was also calculated, and Cohen's d was obtained as -0.486. This reinforced the earlier interpretation that the reading habit scores between science and non-science prospective teachers are statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, indicating there is no significant difference between the reading habits of science and non-science teachers, was rejected. The difference in the reading habit can be because non-science students are often engaged with literature, which involves more reading. Science students, on the other hand, focus on problem-solving and research papers, which involve different types of reading or less reading overall. Figure No. 3 shows a box plot, which is used to graphically represent the reading habit score against the discipline of study.

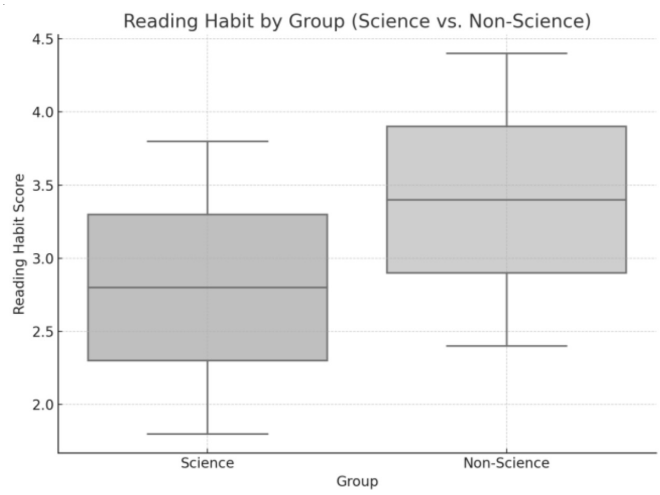

Figure 3: The box plot showing the reading habits of prospective teachers against the discipline of their study

7. Discussion

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the reading habits of prospective teachers across variables such as gender and discipline of study. The results contribute to an understanding of current reading trends among future educators and also highlight areas that require attention in educational practices and policy. The results show a higher preference for printed material among digital natives. This stresses the fact that digital material or resources can never replace the print material in teacher education institutions. Digital text is often appreciated for convenience, but when it comes to focused reading, printed materials are favoured. The moderate level of reading habits observed among prospective teachers highlights the need for

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targeted efforts to further nurture reading engagement. Institutions can consider incorporating regular reading assignments into the curriculum, having book clubs or reading groups, and rewarding participation in reading activities. The study further found no significant difference between the reading habits of male and female prospective teachers. However, a significant difference was observed in the reading habits of Science and non-science trainees. To strengthen reading habits among prospective science teachers, reading activities can be incorporated into science courses, encouraging engagement with non-science literature.

8. Conclusion

The present study intended to understand the reading habits of prospective teachers and revealed that the reading habit score is normally distributed. The reading habit score was further analyzed across the genders and found no significant difference in the reading habits of male and female prospective teachers. When the reading habit was analyzed across the disciplines of study, non-science teachers showed a higher reading habit compared to science teachers. It is alarming that future teachers are not reading seriously and show a moderate level of reading habit. Findings of the study are significant for teacher education programmes as reading habits of prospective teachers will influence their ability to cultivate reading habits among students. Hence, there must be an effort to enhance the reading habits of prospective teachers in the state of Goa. This study contributes to the understanding of the reading behaviour of prospective teachers and highlights the need for developing a reading culture in future educators. Future research may be done to explore the relationship between reading habits and academic performance or the impact of reading habits on teaching effectiveness.

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