INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON THE READING HABITS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS OF KSOU DURING LEISURE TIME: A STUDY

Poornima
Research Scholar , Dept. of Library & Information Science , University of Mysore.

Short Profile

Poornima is a Research Scholar at Department of Library & Information Science in University of Mysore.

Co-Author Details :

Adithya Kumari H.
Associate Professor , Dept. of Library & Information Science, Yuvaraja's College, Mysore.

ABSTRACT:

In the present study an attempt is made to assess the reading habits of students of distance education during their leisure time. The sample was made up of 1005 students who were sampled from various disciplines of KSOU with different programmes. Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data for the study, which elicited the information on type of books read by respondents during leisure time. Data analysis was done using chi-square tests and contingency table analysis. Results revealed that out of 1005 respondents 989 (98.41%) read general knowledge books, 877 (87.26%) read books on science, 548 (54.5%) of them read books on humor, 544 (54.53%) read fun loving books, 491 (48.86%) read books on health and medicine, 471(46.87%) read books on literature, 449 (44.68%) read biographies and 410 (40.80%) read books on detectives. On a lower level, 401(39.90%) respondents read books on philosophy and religion, 349 (34.73%) read books on adventure, 327 (32.54%) read books on classics, 313 (31.14%) read books on romance, 226 (22.49%) of them read astrology and 283 (28.16%) read books on crime. Gender had significant influence over reading books, where male respondents read more of adventure, biographies, classics, crimes, literature, philosophy & religion, romantic than female respondents. Age had significant influence over reading habits, where respondents in higher age groups read more of classics and general knowledge. Employment status had significant influence over reading habits where unemployed respondents read more of astrology, classics, crime, philosophy and religion than respondents with employment.

KEYWORDS

Reading habits, distance education students, Leisure Time, demographic variables

INTRODUCTION :

Distance learning as defined by Oladeji (2000) is an educational programme designed for those who could not, may be for family, financial or some other reasons, attend existing educational institutions to acquire learning without necessarily becoming regular students of such institutions. He stressed that distance education is considered as a branch of adult education where the clientele may comprise of those who have no exposure of any kind to formal education, or those who dropped out of the formal school system and those who wish to supplement their formal education. Distance learners have characteristics which Akintayo and Bunza (2000) listed as adults with professional responsibilities (jobs), social responsibilities (families), study part time, limited formal education or are a long time away from formal education, highly and intrinsically motivated and who are interested in practical results for career, occupation or life style. Sacchanand (2002) reported that distance students' characteristics are different from students in traditional universities. Their characteristics were listed as: adult learners, mature, employed, have family responsibilities, higher motivation and are willing to take responsibility for their own education. Others include: clear cut goals, self-directed, study on independent basis, learn in a variety of ways, take control over their learning and often experience a feeling of isolation and remoteness from other students.

The library is the nerve centre of any educational institution as it promotes the acquisition of reading, inquiry and independent thinking through the provision of resources to support teaching and learning activities (Mabawonku, 2004). It normally houses information materials in various formats such as electronic information sources like CD-ROM, the internet, etc. Library services are essential support services to distance education students. Most researchers in distance learning are in agreement that library support is a key element (Caspers, Fritts and Gover 2001). Distance learners' expectations of library services as revealed in the literature, demonstrate a great need (Niemi, Ehrhard and Neeley 1998). The library needs of distant learners are not unique; they have the same library and information needs as on campus students (Dugan 1997; Rodrigues 1996), but Rowland and Rubbert (2001) in their study on information needs of distant learners reported that the university libraries did not cater for the specific needs of these students. Apart from the manner in which they are accessed, requested and delivered, the same resources are required, the same questions are asked, and the same quality of service is expected (Rodrigues, 1996); and they expect the same level of library service as that provided to their peers on campus (Riggs, 1997).

Distance learners access library and educational resources and services in various ways (Sacchanand, 2002). Access can be direct e.g. face to face, or mediated by printed material, e.g. manuals, brochure, or mediated by technology, using a variety of media such as telephone, radio, the Internet etc. Successful direct access is characterized by flexibility, reliability, availability, user-friendly, portability, efficiency and service ability (Sacchanand, 2002). Kavulya (2004) in his study of distance education in four universities in Kenya opined that some of the students have little or no exposure to library use and this affects their access to library resources. Effective and appropriate services to distance learning communities may differ from, but must be equivalent to those services offered on a traditional campus (ACRL, 1998).

Study habits are learning tendencies that enable students to work privately. Azikiwe (1998) describes study habit as "the adopted way and manner a student plans his private readings, after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subject". According to her, "good study habits are good asset to learners because they (habits) assist students to attain mastery in areas of specialization and consequent excellent performance, while the opposite constitute constraints to learning and achievement leading to failure". These study habits may influence the library habits of the students in

their use of various resources in the library for academic achievement. Olaojo and Akewukere (2004) in their study on study habits of postgraduates in University of Ibadan reported that library habits such as how and inability to locate needed materials in the library affected their learning outcomes.

This study was designed to look at the reading habits of distance education learners of Karnataka State Open University and how age, gender and their professional status would influence their reading habits. Review of literature clearly highlighted the study habits, usage, etc. But, no thorough investigation has been done on reading habits of distance education learners during their leisure time. Hence, the present study is conceptualized and it is hypothesized that distance education learners vary in their reading habits during leisure time and demographic variables have significant influence over reading habits.

KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY: A BRIEF PROFILE

The Karnataka State Open University was established on 1st June 1996 with Karnataka Govt,. Notification No. ED 1 UOV 95 dated 12th February 1996, KSOU Act 1992, keeping in view the educational needs of our country in general and the Karnataka State, in particular. It is the Eighth Open University in the country. The University is an erstwhile Institute of Correspondence Courses of Mysore University and enjoys a unique privilege of a long and rich experience in the field of Distance Education. It is also a member of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) as well as Commonwealth Universities Association. It is recognized by Distance Education Council (DEC), Ministry of HRD, Government of India. All academic Programmes are approved by DEC, New Delhi.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To know reading habits of distance educations students of KSOU during their leisure time;
2. To know influence of age, gender and employment-wise distribution of respondents in reading different type of books during their leisure time.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample was made up of 1005 students who were sampled from various disciplines of Karnataka State Open University with different programmes. The choice of respondents from each programme was done using the stratified sampling procedure. The students pursuing various courses at the various levels were stratified into gender, age and their employment status. Of the 1005 sample selected 412 were males and 593 were females. Age group analysis indicated 452 of them were below 25 years, 296 were in the age group of 26-30 years, 122 were in between the age group of 31-35 years, 71 were in the age group of 36-40 years, and remaining 64 were in the age group of above 40 years. 509 respondents were employed and remaining 496 were unemployed.

Tool employed

Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data for the study. Gay (1992) stated that

descriptive survey studies are usually conducted by administering questionnaire. The use of the questionnaire was appropriate because it made it possible for reading habits of students pursuing distance education. The structure of the questionnaire was made up of only close-ended items. The use of the close-ended format offered the respondents fixed alternative responses. The questionnaire was constructed based on 'yes' and 'no' alternatives. The contents of the questionnaire were developed along the line of the research questions formulated for the study. A total of 14 types of books were listed for reading habits.

Data Collection Procedures

Permission was sought from the concerned authorities which provided an explanation of the intent and authenticity of the research and was delivered to the students through the study centre coordinators in order to seek access for the conduct of the study. A follow up visit was made to the students at the study centre to interact with them and to establish rapport for the conduct of the study. In all, almost 9 months were used for distribution and collection of the questionnaires and had a response rate of 83.75%. Once the data were collected, they were subjected to statistical analysis like chi-square test and contingency table analysis.

RESULTS

Tables 1 to 14 present the type of books read by the distance education students and their association with gender, age and professional status along with test statistics.

User Opinion about reading Adventurous Books

Table 1
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Adventurous Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Fema le	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	167	182	150	110	43	29	17	167	182	349
	40.53%	30.69%	33.18%	37.16%	35.25%	40.85%	26.56%	32.81%	36.69%	34.73%
Do Not Read	245	411	302	186	79	42	47	342	314	656
	59.47%	69.31%	66.72%	62.84%	64.75%	59.15%	73.44%	67.19%	63.31%	65.27%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC= .101 ; p=.000		CC=.065; p=.365					CC=.041; p=.196		X^2=93.78 ; p=.000

The table 1 shows that out of 1005 respondents there are only 349 (34.73%) indicated that they read 'adventurous books' as against majority (656; 65.27%) respondents indicated that they do not read. Chi-square test revealed significant difference between those who read and do not read responses ($X2$=93.78; p=.000), indicating that those who do not read were significantly high. Except for

gender, non significant associations were observed for employment stratus (CC=.041; p=.196) and age groups (CC=.065;   p=.365). However, gender had significant influence (CC=.101; p=.000), where male respondents were more interested to read adventurous books in leisure time.

User Opinion about reading Astrology Books

Table 2
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Astrology Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	98	128	92	67	38	15	14	99	127	226
	23.79%	21.59%	20.35%	22.64%	31.15%	21.13%	21.89%	19.45%	25.60%	22.49%
Do Not Read	314	465	360	229	84	56	50	410	369	779
	76.21%	78.41%	79.65%	77.36%	68.85%	78.87%	78.11%	80.55%	74.40%	77.51%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC= .026; p=.411		CC=.080; p=.163					CC=.074; p=.019		X^2=304.28 ; p=.000

As far as reading astrology books are verified, as it is shown in the table 2 that a large majority of the respondents (779; 77.51%) indicated that they do not read and remaining (226 (22.49%) indicated that they read. Those who do not read responses were found be significantly high as revealed by the chi-square test (X^2=304.28; p=.000). Except for employment stratus, non significant associations were observed for gender (CC= .026; p=.411) and age groups (CC=.080; p=.163). However, employment status had significant influence (CC=.074; p=.019), where those who were unemployed were aspiring more to read astrology.

User Opinion about reading Biographies

Table 3
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Biographies during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	203	246	206	134	57	26	26	224	225	449
	49.27%	41.48%	45.58%	45.27%	46.72%	36.62%	40.63%	44.01%	45.36%	44.68%
Do Not Read	209	347	246	162	65	45	38	285	271	556
	50.73%	58.52%	54.42%	54.73%	53.28%	63.38%	59.37%	55.99%	54.64%	55.32%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.077; p=.015		CC=.052; p=.612					CC=.014; p=.666		X^2=11.39; p=.000

On the whole as it is clear from the table 3 that there are 449 (44.68%) respondents indicated

that they read biographies compared to 556 (55.32%) respondents who do not read. Chi-square test revealed significant difference between those who read and do not read responses (X2=11.39; p=.000), indicating that those who do not read responses were significantly high. Except for gender, non significant associations were observed for employment stratus (CC=.014; p=.666) and age groups (CC=.052; p=.612). However, gender had significant influence (CC=.077; p=.015), where male respondents were more interested to read Biography books.

User Opinion about reading Classic Books

Table 4
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Classic Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	164	163	124	112	45	25	21	141	186	327
	39.81%	27.49%	27.43%	37.84%	36.89%	35.21%	32.81%	27.70%	37.50%	32.54%
Do Not Read	248	430	328	184	77	46	43	368	310	678
	60.19%	72.51%	72.57%	62.16%	63.11%	64.79%	67.19%	72.30%	62.50%	67.46%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.128; p=.000		CC=.101; p=.034					CC=.104; p=.001		X^2=122.58; p=.000

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents (678; 67.46%) reported that they do not read classics books and only 327 (32.54%) indicated that they read. There was a significant difference between 'yes' and 'no' responses, which was revealed by chi-square test (X2=122.58; p=.000) having 'no' responses were significantly high. As far as association with different demographic variables are verified, contingency coefficient tests revealed significant associations for gender (CC=.128; p=.000), age (CC=.101; p=.034) and employment status (CC=.104; p=.001).

User Opinion about reading Crime Books

Table 5
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Crime Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	135	148	110	97	38	23	15	112	171	283
	32.77%	24.96%	24.34%	32.77%	31.15%	32.39%	23.44%	22.00%	34.48%	28.16%
Do Not Read	277	445	342	199	84	48	49	397	325	722
	67.23%	75.04%	75.66%	67.23%	68.85%	67.61%	76.56%	78.00%	65.52%	71.84%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.085; p=.007		CC=.090; p=.083					CC=.137; p=.000		X^2=191.76; p=.000

As far as reading books on crime is verified, there are a large majority of the respondents (722; 71.84%) indicated that they do not read and remaining 283 (28.16%) indicated that they read. The 'no' responses were found be significantly high as revealed by the chi-square test (X2=191.76; p=.000). Except for age groups, significant associations were observed for gender (CC=.085; p=.007) and employment status (CC=.137; p=.000). However, age groups (CC=.090; p=.083) had no significant influence.

User Opinion about reading Detective Books

Table 6
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Detective Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	176	234	181	127	54	27	21	196	214	410
	42.72%	39.46%	40.04%	42.91%	44.26%	38.02%	32.81%	38.51%	43.15%	40.80%
Do Not Read	236	359	271	169	68	44	43	313	282	595
	57.28%	60.54%	59.96%	57.09%	55.74%	61.98%	67.19%	61.49%	56.85%	59.20%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC= .033; p=.301		CC=.056 ; p=.529					CC=.047; p=.135		X^2=34.05; p=.000

The table 6 reveals that there are less number of respondents (410; 40.80%) reported that they read detective books they prefer to read and more (595; 59.20%) indicated that they do not read. The 'no' responses were found be significantly high as revealed by the chi-square test (X2=34.05; p=.000). When associations with different demographic variables are verified, contingency coefficient tests revealed non-significant associations for gender (CC=.033; p=.301), age (CC=.056; p=.529) and employment status (CC=.047; p=.135).

User Opinion about reading Fun loving Books

Table 7
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Fun loving Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	236	308	242	161	69	40	32	264	280	544
	57.28%	51.94%	53.54%	54.39%	56.56%	56.34%	50.00%	51.87%	56.45%	54.13%
Do Not Read	176	285	210	135	53	31	32	245	216	461
	42.72%	48.06%	46.46%	45.61%	43.44%	43.66%	50.00%	48.13%	43.55%	45.87%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.053; p=.095		CC=.031; p=.919					CC=.046; p=.145		X^2=6.85; p=.009

Table 7 shows that majority of respondents (544; 54.13%) reported that they read fun loving books and few (461; 45.87%) indicated that they do not read. The 'yes' responses were found be significantly high as revealed by the chi-square test (X2=6.85; p=.009). While associations with different demographic variables are verified, contingency coefficient tests revealed non-significant associations for gender (CC=.053; p=.095), age (CC=.031; p=.919) and employment status (CC=.046; p=.145).

User Opinion about reading General Knowledge Books

Table 8
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading General Knowledge Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	405	584	449	291	116	71	62	499	490	989
	98.30%	98.48%	99.34%	98.31%	95.08%	100.00%	96.88%	98.04%	98.79%	98.41%
Do Not Read	7	9	3	5	6	0	2	10	6	16
	1.70%	1.52%	0.66%	1.69%	4.92%	0.00%	3.12%	1.96%	1.21%	1.59%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC= .007; p=.821		CC=.114 ; p=.010					CC=.030; p=.339		X^2=942.01; p=.000

As far as reading general knowledge books is verified, a large majority of the respondents (989; 98.41%) indicated that they read and very less (16; 1.59%) indicated that they do not read. The 'yes' responses were found be significantly high as revealed by the chi-square test (X2=942.01; p=.000). Except for age groups, no significant associations were observed for gender (CC=.007; p=.821) and employment status (CC=.030; p=.339). However, age groups (CC=.114; p=.010) had significant influence. All the Respondents in the age group of 36-40 years of age preferred General Knowledge books as their choice of reading.

User Opinion about reading Health and Medicine Books

Table 9
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Health and Medicine Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	207	284	217	145	60	33	36	237	254	491
	50.24%	47.89%	48.01%	48.99%	49.18%	46.48%	56.25%	46.56%	51.21%	48.86%
Do Not Read	205	309	235	151	62	38	28	272	242	514
	49.76%	52.11%	51.99%	51.01%	50.82%	53.52%	43.75%	53.44%	48.79%	51.14%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.023; p=463		CC=.041; p=.791					CC=.046; p=.141		X^2=.526; p=.468

From the table 9 it is found that 490 (48.86%) respondents preferred reading health and medicine books as against 514 (51.14%) who do not read. Chi-square test revealed non- significant difference between 'yes' and 'no' responses ($X2$=.526; p=.468). Further same trend were proven in respect to association with different demographic variables are verified, contingency coefficient tests revealed non-significant associations for gender (CC=.023; p=463), age (CC=.041; p=.791) and employment status (CC=.046; p=.141).

User Opinion about reading Humorous Books

Table 10

Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Humor Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	239	309	234	172	68	40	34	272	276	548
	58.01%	52.11%	51.77%	58.11%	55.74%	56.34%	53.13%	53.44%	55.65%	54.53%
Do Not Read	173	284	218	124	54	31	30	237	220	457
	41.99%	47.89%	48.23%	41.89%	44.26%	43.66%	46.87%	46.56%	44.35%	45.47%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.058; p=.065		CC=.056; p=.536					CC=.022; p=.482		X^2=8.24; p=.004

Table 10 shows that majority of the respondents (548; 54.53%) opined that they read humor books and very less (457; 45.47%) indicated that they do not read. The 'yes' responses were found be significantly high as revealed by the chi-square test ($X2$=8.24; p=.004). As far as associations with different demographic variables are verified, contingency coefficient tests revealed non-significant associations for gender (CC=.058; p=.065), age (CC=.056; p=.536) and employment status (CC=.022; p=.482).

User Opinion about reading Literature Books

Table 11

Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Literature Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	216	255	197	147	64	32	31	229	242	471
	52.43%	43.00%	43.58%	49.66%	52.46%	45.07%	48.44%	44.99%	48.79%	46.87%
Do Not Read	196	338	255	149	58	39	33	280	254	534
	47.57%	57.00%	56.42%	50.34%	47.54%	54.93%	51.56%	55.01%	51.21%	53.13%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.092; p=.003		CC=.063; p=.334					CC=.038; p=.227		X^2=3.94; p=.047

From the table 11 it is found that only 471 (46.87%) respondents indicated that they read 'Literature books' as kind of books they prefer to read and remaining 534 (53.13%) respondents invalid this. Chi-square test revealed significant difference between 'yes' and 'no' responses (X2=3.94; p=.047), indicating that 'no' responses were significantly high. Except for gender, non significant associations were observed for age groups (CC=.063; p=.334) and employment status (CC=.038; p=.227). However, and gender (CC= .092; p=.003) had significant influence, where males respondents were found to read more 'Literature books' compared to female respondents.

User Opinion about reading Philosophical and Religious Books

Table 12
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Philosophical and Religious Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	193	208	163	122	58	30	28	180	221	401
	46.84%	35.08%	36.06%	41.22%	47.54%	42.25%	43.75%	35.36%	44.56%	39.90%
Do Not Read	219	385	289	174	64	41	36	329	275	604
	53.16%	64.92%	63.94%	58.78%	52.46%	57.75%	56.25%	64.64%	55.44%	60.10%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.117; p=.000		CC=.080; p=.164					CC=.093; p=.003		X^2=41.00; p=.000

The table 12 shows that there are 401 (39.90%) respondents who reported that they read philosophical and religious books and more (604; 60.10%) of them indicated that they do not read. The 'no' responses were found be significantly high as revealed by the chi-square test (X2=41.00; p=.000). Except for gender and employment stratus, non significant associations were observed for age (CC=.080; p=.164). However, gender (CC=.117; p=.000) and employment status (CC=.093; p=.003) had significant influence.

User Opinion about reading Romantic Books

Table 13
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Romantic Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	144	169	136	93	49	20	15	145	168	313
	34.95%	28.50%	30.09%	31.42%	40.16%	28.17%	23.44%	28.49%	33.87%	31.14%
Do Not Read	268	424	316	203	73	51	49	364	328	692
	65.05%	71.50%	69.91%	68.58%	59.84%	71.83%	76.56%	71.51%	66.13%	68.86%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.068; p=.030		CC=.083; p=.139					CC=.058; p=.065		X^2=142.92; p=.000

Table 13 shows that majority of the respondents (692; 68.86%) reported that they do not read romantic books and only (313; 31.14%) of them indicated that they read. There was a significant difference between 'yes' and 'no' responses, which was revealed by chi-square test (X2=142.92; p=.000). As far as association with different demographic variables are verified, contingency coefficient tests revealed significant associations for gender (CC=.068; p=.030), but no significant associations for age (CC=.083; p=.139) and employment status (CC=.058; p=.065).

User Opinion about reading Science Books

Table 14
Gender, Age Group and Employment Status-wise User opinion about Reading Science Books during their Leisure Time

Responses	Gender		Age groups (in years)					Employed		Total
	Male	Female	<25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+	Yes	No	
Read	358	519	398	259	104	61	55	444	433	877
	86.89%	87.52%	88.05%	87.50%	85.25%	85.92%	85.94%	87.23%	87.30%	87.26%
Do Not Read	54	74	54	37	18	10	9	65	63	128
	13.18%	12.48%	11.95%	12.50%	14.75%	14.08%	14.06%	12.17%	12.70%	12.74%
Total	412	593	452	296	122	71	64	509	496	1005
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Test statistics	CC=.009; p=.769		CC=.030; p=.920					CC=.001; p=.974		X^2=558.21; p=.000

As far as reading science books is verified table 14 shows that large majority (877; 87.26%) respondents indicated that they read science books and remaining 128 (12.74%) of them indicated that they do not read. There was a significant difference between 'yes' and 'no' responses, which was revealed by chi-square test (X2=558.21; p=.000). When an association with different demographic variables are verified, contingency coefficient tests revealed non-significant associations for gender (CC=.009; p=.769), age (CC=.030; p=.920) and employment status (CC=.001; p=.974).

DISCUSSION

Major findings

• On the whole it was found that 989 (98.41%) of respondents read general knowledge, 877 (87.26%) of them read science, 548 (54.5%) of them read books on humor, 544 (54.53%) of them read fun loving books, 491 (48.86%) of them read books on health and medicine, 471 (46.87%) of them read books on literature, 449 (44.68%) of them read biographies and 410 (40.80%) of them read books on detectives.
• On a lower level, 401 (39.90%) of them read books on philosophy and religion, 349 (34.73%) of them were read books on adventure,327 (32.54%) of them read books on classics, 313 (31.14%) of them read books on romance, 226 (22.49%) of them read astrology, and 283 (28.16%) of them read books on crime.
• Gender had significant influence over reading books, where male respondents read more of adventure, biographies, classics, crimes, literature, philosophy & religion, romantic than female respondents.
• Age had significant influence over reading habits, where respondents in higher age groups read more of classics and general knowledge.

• Employment status had significant influence over reading habits where unemployed respondents read more of astrology, classics, crime, philosophy and religion than respondents with employment.

CONCLUSION

It is quite evident that students of distance education varied in their reading habits of various types of books. Maximum propriety was given to general knowledge, followed by humor, fun, health and medicine and least priorities were given to astrology and crime related issues. Hypotheses 1 formulated as distance education learners vary in their reading habits during leisure time is accepted. However, hypothesis 2 formulated as demographic variables have significant influence over reading habits is partially accepted as gender, age and professional status had limited influence over reading habits of distance education students.

It is encouraging to know that the student community awakened to read more of general knowledge books during their leisure time, which increases their knowledge and awareness of happening in the world. If the students start reading more general knowledge, humor, health and medicine it will create an impact in every area of their life. There are still barriers in creating a reading environment that will inculcate good reading habits among distance education students. The library is still the best place for quiet study. For effective promotion of reading habits, skills and culture, reading must be made pleasurable and voluntary (Thanuskodi, 2011).

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