

Examining College Student's Preference towards E-Books in Academic

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Abstract

This study examines college students' preferences towards e-books in academic contexts and measures their level of satisfaction with digital learning resources. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 155 college students in Coimbatore. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, ANOVA, t-tests, and chi-square tests were applied to interpret the data. Results revealed that students prefer e-books mainly due to easy accessibility, portability, and cost-effectiveness. Despite the advantages, some students still favour printed books due to screen fatigue and comprehension challenges. Most respondents accessed e-books through free online platforms and preferred formats like PDFs. The study concludes that while e-books are widely accepted, further improvements are needed in usability and reading experience to enhance satisfaction. Insights from this research will assist educators and publishers in optimizing digital academic content for students.

Keywords: E-books, Academic Preference, Digital Learning, Student Satisfaction, Reading Habits, Accessibility.

Introduction

The evolution of digital technology has significantly altered the way information is consumed, shared, and stored across the globe. In the academic domain, traditional printed textbooks have gradually made way for electronic books (e-books), offering a flexible, accessible, and often more economical alternative. E-books have transformed educational experiences by providing instant access to a vast range of academic resources, interactive features, and enhanced portability. The increasing adoption of e-books in higher education institutions reflects a shift towards more sustainable and technology-driven learning methods. Students today are equipped with smartphones, tablets, laptops, and e-readers that enable them to carry extensive libraries without the burden of physical books. Furthermore, e-books allow users to search, highlight, annotate, and customize their reading experience, which supports better comprehension and efficient study practices.

Despite these advantages, the transition from traditional books to e-books is not universally smooth. Some students express reservations due to challenges like digital fatigue, reduced reading engagement, lack of tactile experience, and distraction from notifications on electronic devices. These factors suggest that while e-books provide undeniable benefits, they may not fully replace traditional printed materials for every learner. Understanding students' preferences towards e-books is essential for educational institutions, publishers, and policymakers aiming to develop effective learning resources. It is critical to evaluate the factors that influence students' adoption of e-books including cost, convenience, accessibility, device compatibility, and academic usefulness. This study focuses on examining college students' preferences for e-books in academics and measuring their level of satisfaction with these digital resources. Through a systematic survey and statistical analysis, the research aims to uncover patterns in usage, perceived advantages, and limitations associated with e-books. Additionally, the study investigates how demographic factors such as age, field of study, and academic level impact students' satisfaction and choice between digital and printed formats.



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In an era where personalized and technology-enhanced learning is increasingly prioritized, such an investigation is timely and relevant. By understanding students' behaviors and attitudes toward e-books, educational stakeholders can better design, promote, and integrate digital learning materials that truly meet the academic needs of students.

Statement Of The Problem

With the growing influence of Digital Technology in education, e-books have become a widely used alternative to traditional printed textbooks. They offer advantages such as convenience, affordability, and interactive features. However, despite these benefits, many students still favour printed books due to factors like readability, comprehension, and personal comfort. The transition from printed textbooks to e-books presents both opportunities and challenges for students. E-books offer portability, allowing students to carry multiple texts without the physical burden of heavy books. Additionally, they are often more cost-effective than printed versions, making education more affordable. The variations in students' preferences toward e-books raise critical questions about the effectiveness of digital learning resources. Are e-books truly enhancing students' learning experiences, or do they present challenges that hinder comprehension and academic performance?

Scope Of The Study

The scope of this study focuses on evaluating college students' preferences and satisfaction levels regarding e-books. It aims to understand the factors influencing students' choices between e-books and traditional printed books, such as convenience, accessibility, cost, and usability. Additionally, the study assesses the overall satisfaction of students using e-books by examining aspects like readability, interactive features, ease of navigation, and effectiveness in academic learning. The research targets college students from various disciplines and academic levels, conducted in colleges or universities. Key variables include student preferences, satisfaction levels, and factors affecting their e-book usage. Data will be collected through questionnaires to gain valuable insight. However, the study may have certain limitations, such as sample size constraints, students' varying access to e-books, and individual reading habits. The findings will provide valuable insights for educators, publishers, and institutions to enhance e-book content, accessibility, and overall user experience for students.

Objective Of The Study

1. To evaluate the student's Preference towards E-books in academics.
2. To measure the level of satisfaction towards E-books among college students.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design to examine college students' preferences and satisfaction towards e-books in academics. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 155 college students in and around Coimbatore. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents. Secondary data was gathered from journals, articles, and books. Statistical tools like simple percentage analysis, One-way ANOVA, Independent t-test, Friedman Rank Test, and Chi-square analysis were used to interpret the data and derive meaningful insights.

Review Of Literature

Seema Sood, Neeraj Kumar Singh , Suman Sumi and Deepika Tewari(2024), the research paper entitled, "Awareness and Usage of E-books Among Students of Panjab University, Chandigarh" . This study has been conducted to examine the use and awareness of e-books, to determine level of relevance of E-books subscribed by Panjab University, it is therefore imperative to investigate how Panjab University students use and are aware of their subscription to e-books. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed using a simple random sampling method and 202 responses were received. For this purpose, an online survey was conducted amongst post-graduate students and research scholars of Panjab University. The result showed that Majority of the respondents 73(66.4 %) are accessing e-books.

Jenheri Rejeki Tarigan , Bella Pitaloka Br Kembaren , Richa Fionasari , Nanda Pambudi, Natalia Rumanti Hartono (2024) stated that "Analysis of the Effectiveness of E- Books in Increasing Students' Digital Literacy", This study aims to measure the effectiveness of using e-books in improving students' digital literacy. It analyzes the factors that influence the effectiveness of using E-books. The method used in this research is quantitative. The data obtained is the number of responses. The statements presented in the questionnaire are a form of google formula called google from. The data will be processed through SPSS which was previously inputted into excel. The results of this study state that the use of E-books as digital reading materials will provide facilities for access, distribution, and consumption of reading materials. E-books provide interactive features to enhance the reading experience

Amjad Islam Amjad, Sarfraz Aslam, Zahra Saleem And Musarrat Habib (2024) examined in the study titled "Unlocking success: Measuring higher education students performance through E-books and Machine learning" .This study investigated the role of E-books and M- learning on the academic performance of university students in Pakistan. We selected 430 5 university students from 10 universities in Punjab province using multi-method and multi-stage sampling techniques. The study's research design was a descriptive survey with cross-sectional data collection using a

self-developed questionnaire. For the data analysis, we used Jamovi software . The results revealed that E-books, predicting 57.5 % of the total mediation. Based on the study's results, we suggested that university students should effectively use E-books and M-learning to enhance their academic performance, leading to academic success.

Amrina , Sri Nur Rahmi(2024) , analyzed in the study titled, “Utilizing the E-Book System in Supporting Students’ Literacy and Independent Learning”. This study aims to understand the concept of utilizing the E-Book system in supporting students’ literacy and independent learning by utilizing the E-Book system in education and to find out the extent of the development of the E-Book system in education. The method used in conducting this study is quantitative, with data obtained through disseminating questionnaires online using Google Forms. The word was processed using the SPSS application by statistical analysis through the ANOVA test; after completing the data test, the researcher presented the data in the form of graphs and tables containing respondents. The results of this study show that the introduction of an offline-based E-Book system will be able to support the literacy and independent learning of students in the world of education.

Bina Nusantara University Jakarta, Indonesia (2024) highlighted in the study titled, “Text- book versus E-book: Media for Learning Process in Generation Z Julisar Information Systems Department School of Information Systems” ,The aim of this study is to analyze learning process by using Text-book and E-book in Generation Z. Research methodology was conducted by descriptive study, verificative study. Through this research, students in even semester (2, 4, 6, and 8) in some higher educations were directed as sample. Results reveal that most of students was still reading text-book on off-line-based. They faced network problems when they read e-book on online-based. The results reported that while social media used as for learning process, it should be better if there is a feature added in social media.

Cecilia A. Caperida (2024) , stated in the study titled, “A Comparative Analysis of the Student Preferences for Digital and Physical Books in Library” . The study aimed to (1) determine the extent to which the type of library resource (digital vs. physical) influences student utilization, (2) analyze the correlation between the frequency of accessing online resources and overall academic performance, and (3) compare the resource utilization patterns between different academic disciplines to identify significant differences. The research method utilized in this 6 study involved a comprehensive analysis of survey data collected from students. Data was analyzed through ANOVA, a statistical method used to compare the means of three or more groups to determine whether they have statistically significant differences. It was posted on the respected group chats, and 153 students responded to the form. The finding indicates that respondents frequently access digital resources, an affirmation of the study made by Anyim in 2021.

Anandhi Deva Amirtharaj ,Divya Raghavan, Judie Arulappan (2023), studied that “Preferences for printed books versus E-books among university students in a Middle Eastern country ”, the main purpose of the study is to assess the preferences of using printed books versus E- books. A descriptive cross sectional survey design was used to collect the data. A total of 607 students were included in the study. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study concluded that 74.6% of students prefer e-books in terms of easy to carry and 80.6% of them spent more than 1 h reading from e-books, while 66.7% of the students preferred printed books due to the ease in studying and 67.9% favoured as it is easy to make notes.

Anna Leonard (2023) ,examined in the study titled “ The views, adoption and use of e-books by undergraduate students at the University of Namibia” .The research aimed at investigating the adoption of views about and use of e-books at the University of Namibia. The research design was exploratory and the study adopted a mixed approach, in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Data collection was done through administering questionnaires, a focus group discussion and observation, combined with think-aloud methods. Both purposive sampling and random sampling techniques were used in selecting respondents. The results of this study reported a high awareness about e-books by students. The study also revealed frequent general use of e-books.

Ensaf Nasser Al Mulhim And Yara Ahmed mohebeldin Zaky(2023), investigated, in the study titled ,“ Sustainability in E-Learning: E-Books and Academic Procrastination among Secondary Students” , This article investigates the extent of academic procrastination among secondary school students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who utilize sustainable digital learning materials, specifically e-books, compared to those who rely on printed books in a traditional face-to-face learning environment. A sample of 336 first-year secondary school 7 students was randomly recruited and divided into two experimental groups based on their preference for either electronic or printed textbooks. An online survey was employed to assess academic procrastination. The findings indicate no statistically significant differences in the impact of textbook formats (electronic versus printed) on academic procrastination among secondary school students.

Foluke Okocha (2020), highlighted in the research paper, “Determinants of the Adoption Academic Electronic Books by University Students in a Developing Country” the study examined the adoption of academic Electronic books by undergraduate students. Students were categorized based on college of study and this include college of business and social science. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed of which 287 were returned , the questionnaires 9 were further designed based on constructs from the UTAT model and further designed using E- books 7-point Linkert scale. The questionnaire consisted majorly on closed ended question Results showed that a majority of students were aware of electronic books but only 44.5% of students used then often.

Findings Of The Study

Satisfaction Towards Various Aspects Of E-Books – Descriptive Statistics

Aspects	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Easy access to E-books	155	1	5	3.89	1.171
Reading Experience and interface	155	1	5	3.39	1.147
Build in dictionary and thesaurus	155	1	5	3.40	1.236
Search and navigation tools	155	1	5	3.46	1.265
Adjustable Font Background	155	1	5	3.19	1.298
Impact on academic performance	155	1	5	3.48	1.250
Variety and availability of titles	155	1	5	3.27	1.340
Content accuracy and relevance	155	1	5	3.15	1.441
comfort and effect on concentration	155	1	5	3.37	1.310
Valid N (listwise)	155				

Interpretation

The table shows the descriptive statistics for the level of satisfaction towards various aspects of e-books, chosen by the respondents has the highest mean score, the mean value is obtained for the factor is Easy access to E-books (3.89), Impact on academic performance (3.48), Search and navigation tools (3.46), Build in dictionary and thesaurus (3.40), Reading Experience and interface(3.39), Visual comfort and effect on concentration (3.37), Variety and availability of titles(3.27), Adjustable Font Background (3.19), Content accuracy and relevance (3.15).

Demographic Factors Vs Satisfaction Towards E-Books In Academic – Anova

H0: “There is no significant difference between age, Academic, field of study, Frequency, Duration of E-Books in academic and satisfaction towards E-Books in Academic”.

Factors	Classification	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	f	Sig.	S/NS
Age	Under 18 years	25	3.4040	.63626	.458	.722	NS
	18-21 years	91	3.4440	.60775			
	22-24 years	34	3.3029	.53203			
	Above 25 years	5	3.5400				
Academic level	Undergraduate	89	3.4360	.66627	.166	.919	NS
	Postgraduate	40	3.4000	.57155			
	Diploma	20	3.3350	.75133			
	Research scholar	6	3.3333	.56451			
Field of Study	Science	18	3.5167	.67932	.787	.503	NS
	commerce	93	3.4237	.64478			
	Arts	25	3.4320	.60465			
	Engineering	19	3.2105	.68629			
Frequency	Daily	14	3.4214	.84232	1.939	.126	NS
	Weekly	82	3.5012	.64855			
	Monthly	46	3.2217	.55933			
	Rarely	13	3.4846	.61758			
Duration	1 hour	64	3.3750	.66619	.787	.503	NS
	2-3 hours	73	3.3699	.62820			
	More than 3 hours	18	3.6944	.60922			

Interpretation

The results of the ANOVA table shows that the F-value as 0.458 for age, 0.166 for Academic level 0.787 for field of study, 1.939 for Frequency and 0.787 for Duration. The calculated P-value for age is 0.722, 0.919 for Academic level, 0.787 for field of study, 0.126 for Frequency and 0.503 for Duration. Since the P value at 5 percentage level of significant is more than 0.05 for the above factors, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between demographic factors such as age, qualification, field of study, Frequency and Duration of the respondents and satisfaction towards E-Books in Academic. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship Between The Gender And Saticfaction Towards E- Books-Independent T-Test

H0: “There is no significant difference between gender and satisfaction towards E- Books in Academic”.

Factors	classification	N	Mean	Std.deviation	t	sig	S/NS
Gender	Male	50	3.5440	.64749	1.824	.917	NS
	Female	103	3.3417	.64146			

Interpretation

The table shows the relationship between demographic profile of the respondents and satisfaction of using E-Books . The result of the t-Test table shows that the t value 1.824 for Gender. The calculated value for gender is .917. Since the significant value at 5 percentage level of significant is more than 0.05 for the above factors, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between demographic factors such as Gender and satisfaction towards E-Books.

Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Preference Towards E-Books – Friedman’s Rank Test Table

Factor	Mean Rank	Rank	N	157
Cost-effectiveness	2.91	I	Chi-Square	42.264
Portability and Convenience	3.24	II		
Interactive Features (Hyperlinks, Videos, Search)	3.35	III	df	5
Accessibility(Availability Anytime, Anywhere)	3.51	IV		
Environmental Impact (Less Paper Usage)	3.92	V	Asymp. Sig.	<.001
Search Function	4.07	VI		

Interpretation

From the above mentioned table, cost-effectiveness (2.91, 1st rank), portability and Convenience (3.24, 2nd rank) , Interactive Features (Hyperlinks, Videos, Search)(3.35, 3rd rank), Accessibility(Availability Anytime, Anywhere) (3.51, 4th rank), Environmental Impact (Less Paper Usage) (3.92, 5th rank), and Search function(4.07, 6st rank), these rankings indicate that readers prioritize these factors in their daily lives. It's evident that search function out as the primary consideration for Readers.

Relationship Between Academic Level And Purpose Of Reading

H0: “There is no significant relationship between academic level and purpose of reading”.

Academic level	Purpose of reading			Total	P value	sig	S/NS
	For Lecture Reading	For Research	For course purpose				
Undergraduate	30	32	27	89	8.635	.195	NS
Postgraduate	7	16	17	40			
Diploma	10	4	6	20			
Research scholar	1	2	3	6			
Total	48	54	53	155			

Source: Computed Data

Interpretation

The above table shows the relationship between academic level and purpose of reading. From the above table, out of 155 respondents 30 were undergraduate and their purpose of reading is lecture. It is clear from the table that there is a significant relationship (P=8.635, Sig=.195) between academic level and purpose of reading. As the significant value is greater than 0.05 it shows that there is no a significant relationship between academic level and purpose of reading.

Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Suggestions

- Introduce targeted awareness programs that emphasize the benefits of the resource for experienced learners.
- Develop customized content tailored to engineering subjects.
- Introduce reminders, newsletters, or notification systems to prompt regular usage. • Improve user interface for desktop systems.
- Provide concise summaries, key takeaways, and interactive elements to reduce reading fatigue.
- Diversify content to support self-learning, research, and project work.
- Ensure Users Are Aware Of Multiple Format Options (PDF, MOBI, Etc.) To Cater To Varied Reading Preferences.

Conclusion

The preference for e-books among college students has been growing due to their affordability, accessibility, and convenience. This study explores key factors influencing students' choice of digital reading over traditional printed books. Findings indicate that a majority of students, particularly young undergraduates from the commerce stream, rely on E-books for academic and research purposes. Smartphones are the most commonly used devices for accessing E-books, with PDF format being the preferred choice due to its compatibility and ease of use. A significant proportion of students obtain e books through free online sources such as open-access platforms and PDF downloads, highlighting cost-conscious reading habits. The study also reveals that students typically spend three hours reading e-books, with research being the primary purpose. Additionally, social media plays a vital role in influencing students' awareness and adoption of e-books. Pricing is a crucial factor, with most students favouring E-books priced under rupees fifteen. Given these trends, it is evident that digital reading is becoming an essential part of students' academic routines. Publishers and educators should focus on enhancing the availability of affordable and user-friendly E-books to support students' evolving reading preferences in the digital era..

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