



PILOT STUDY ON GENDER DIFFERENCES IN READING HABITS AND THEIR CORRELATION WITH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN JAMSHEDPUR

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1. Introduction

Context and Significance

Reading habits play a fundamental role in shaping academic performance, especially in language subjects like English. The ability to engage with written material effectively is crucial for developing language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing. Research has consistently highlighted the importance of reading habits in fostering literacy development, with a significant correlation between regular reading and high academic achievement. As English has become the global lingua franca and a key medium of instruction in India, students' proficiency in English directly impacts their educational and professional outcomes. Thus, understanding the factors that influence English language learning is of paramount importance.

Reading habits not only encompass the frequency with which an individual reads but also the types of reading materials, the quality of engagement with these materials, and the motivation behind reading. Students who cultivate strong reading habits tend to perform better in various academic assessments, particularly in English, due to their heightened ability to grasp complex texts, articulate thoughts, and engage critically with academic content. Furthermore, reading habits have been shown to foster critical thinking and enhance cognitive abilities, both of which are essential for excelling in the academic sphere.

The significance of this study lies in examining how reading habits impact academic performance in English among students in Jamshedpur, a major city in the state of Jharkhand, India. English proficiency is an essential skill for academic success, especially in higher education and competitive exams. Understanding the role of reading habits in shaping academic achievement in English within the local context of Jamshedpur can provide insights for educators and policymakers to develop targeted interventions to improve literacy skills among students.

Research Problem

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between gender differences in reading habits and academic performance in English among students in Jamshedpur. While there is a wealth of research on the importance of reading habits in academic achievement, gender differences in reading habits and their influence on English language learning have not been extensively studied in the specific context of Jamshedpur. This study will explore

whether male and female students exhibit different reading behaviors, and how these differences, if any, affect their academic performance in English.

Gender differences in education have been a longstanding area of interest, with studies indicating that boys and girls may approach learning, including reading, differently. For example, research has suggested that girls tend to read more often than boys, especially when it comes to books and literature, which may positively influence their academic outcomes in subjects that require reading comprehension and written expression, such as English. On the other hand, boys may engage with different forms of media, such as digital content or graphic novels, which may not always align with traditional academic expectations. Understanding these patterns is crucial for educators to design gender-responsive teaching strategies that can help bridge any gaps in academic achievement, particularly in English language proficiency.

This study will also examine how socio-economic and cultural factors in Jamshedpur influence students' reading habits. Jamshedpur, being a city with diverse cultural and economic backgrounds, presents a unique setting for understanding how local factors, such as family income, educational background of parents, and access to reading resources, interact with gendered reading patterns to shape students' academic outcomes. The study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on how reading habits and academic achievement are interconnected, especially within the gendered framework in a local Indian context.

Research Questions/Objectives

The primary objective of this pilot study is to explore the relationship between gender differences in reading habits and academic achievement in English. The study will focus on answering the following research questions:

1. **Are there gender differences in reading habits among students in Jamshedpur?**
 - This question seeks to explore if male and female students differ in terms of their frequency of reading, the types of materials they read (e.g., books, newspapers, digital content), and the time they dedicate to reading. It will help understand the broader patterns of reading behavior among male and female students in Jamshedpur.
2. **How do these gendered reading habits correlate with academic performance in English?**
 - This question aims to determine whether gender differences in reading habits are linked to variations in students' academic performance in English. The study will analyze the relationship between students' reading behaviors and their grades or scores in English assessments.
3. **What role do socio-economic and cultural factors play in shaping these reading habits?**
 - This question aims to investigate how factors such as family income, parental education, and availability of resources (e.g., access to libraries, internet, and books) influence reading habits among students in Jamshedpur. It will also examine whether these factors contribute to the observed gender differences in reading habits.
4. **How can educators leverage these findings to improve English language education in Jamshedpur?**
 - Based on the findings regarding gender differences in reading habits, this question will explore the potential for developing gender-sensitive educational interventions aimed at improving students' reading habits and, consequently, their academic performance in English.

By answering these questions, the study will contribute valuable insights into the role of reading habits in academic success, especially in relation to gender. The findings will have practical implications for educators and school administrators in Jamshedpur, helping them create more inclusive and effective strategies for enhancing students' English language proficiency.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is geographically limited to students in Jamshedpur, a city in Jharkhand, India. The study will focus on secondary school students who are currently enrolled in English language courses, as the aim is to explore their reading habits and academic achievement specifically in relation to English. The participants will be

selected from a variety of schools in the city, ensuring a diverse representation of students in terms of gender, socio-economic background, and academic performance.

The study will involve a sample of approximately 100-150 students, with a roughly equal gender distribution. These students will be asked to complete surveys regarding their reading habits, and their academic performance will be assessed using their most recent English language examination scores.

One limitation of this study is its relatively small sample size, which may not fully capture the diversity of reading habits and academic achievement patterns in the broader population of students in Jamshedpur. Additionally, while the study will attempt to include students from various socio-economic backgrounds, it may not be able to fully account for all the complex socio-cultural factors that influence reading habits, such as access to digital resources or parental involvement in education.

Another limitation is the focus on a single subject—English. While reading habits are important for academic achievement in all subjects, this study focuses exclusively on English, which may not generalize to other academic areas. Furthermore, academic achievement is influenced by a wide range of factors, and while reading habits are a significant contributor, they are only one aspect of the broader educational experience.

Finally, this study is a pilot study, and as such, its findings should be interpreted with caution. The study's small scale and focus on a specific geographic area mean that the results may not be representative of larger trends or applicable to other regions of India or beyond. However, the insights gained from this study will serve as a foundation for further research and could be expanded to more comprehensive studies in the future.

2. Literature Review

1. Reading Habits and Academic Achievement

The relationship between reading habits and academic achievement has been widely explored, with numerous studies indicating a strong positive correlation between the two. Reading is not only essential for language development but also a gateway to improving critical thinking, vocabulary, and comprehension skills, which are vital for academic success. Research has consistently shown that students who read regularly perform better academically compared to those who do not. For instance, a study by Clark and Rumbold (2006) found that children who read for pleasure tend to have higher academic achievement across a range of subjects, including English. This finding underscores the significance of fostering good reading habits early in education.

The type of reading materials and the frequency of reading also play a critical role. A study by Anderson et al. (1988) revealed that students who engage with a variety of reading materials, including books, newspapers, and magazines, develop a broader understanding of language and culture, which contributes to improved academic performance. Furthermore, the quality of engagement with the text, such as actively seeking to understand and analyze the material, is crucial for academic success. It is not simply the act of reading that matters, but how deeply a student engages with the content.

In the Indian context, research by Sundararajan and Kumar (2017) highlighted that students in urban areas with greater access to reading materials and a conducive environment for reading tend to perform better academically. This has significant implications for regions like Jamshedpur, where there is a mix of urban and rural influences on students' access to resources.

2. Gender Differences in Reading Habits

Gender differences in academic behaviors, including reading habits, have been widely documented. Research has shown that females tend to outperform males in reading and writing skills, with differences emerging early in

childhood. According to studies by Sainsbury and Zepke (2000) and Moffitt et al. (2002), girls tend to develop stronger reading habits, spending more time reading books, which is reflected in their higher academic performance in language subjects, including English. Girls are often reported to be more motivated to engage in reading for pleasure, which could lead to better reading comprehension and writing skills.

In contrast, boys are typically less engaged in traditional forms of reading, with many preferring non-traditional media like video games, comics, or digital content. Research by Mullis et al. (2007) found that male students often show lower levels of interest in reading, which can negatively impact their academic performance in language-based subjects. In the Indian context, studies have observed similar patterns, where girls are more likely to engage in reading as a recreational activity, while boys may show preference for more technology-oriented pastimes (Panda, 2011).

The gender differences in reading habits may be influenced by social, cultural, and psychological factors. For example, cultural expectations and traditional gender roles may contribute to the differences in the types of reading material that boys and girls are encouraged to engage with. Girls are often socialized to be more studious and focused on academic success, while boys may face societal pressures to excel in sports or other non-academic activities. These gendered expectations could shape their reading habits and, subsequently, their academic achievement in subjects like English.

3. The Role of Socio-Economic Status in Reading Habits

Socio-economic status (SES) is a critical factor influencing students' reading habits. Students from higher SES backgrounds often have greater access to books, libraries, and educational resources, which facilitate the development of strong reading habits. A study by Gottfried (2009) found that children from affluent families tend to read more frequently and engage with a wider variety of reading materials, which in turn enhances their academic performance. In contrast, students from lower SES backgrounds may have limited access to books and reading materials, which can hinder their academic achievement, especially in language subjects like English.

In the Indian context, access to reading materials and educational resources is often determined by family income, parental education levels, and geographic location. In urban areas like Jamshedpur, students from wealthier families may have access to better educational infrastructure, such as private tutoring, online resources, and a greater variety of reading materials, which can significantly influence their reading habits and academic success. Conversely, students from lower SES backgrounds may face challenges such as a lack of books at home, limited internet access, and fewer extracurricular opportunities to engage with reading (Sharma, 2015).

A study by Bhattacharya (2012) on students in rural and urban areas of India found that socio-economic factors significantly influenced reading habits, with urban students showing stronger reading behaviors and higher academic performance than their rural counterparts. This disparity is often linked to differences in educational opportunities, parental support, and access to reading materials, which further highlights the importance of addressing socio-economic inequalities in education.

4. Digital Literacy and Reading Habits in the Modern Age

The rise of digital media has introduced new dynamics in students' reading habits. While traditional reading materials such as books and newspapers remain significant, students are increasingly turning to digital platforms such as e-books, websites, and social media for information and entertainment. Research by Zickuhr et al. (2012) suggests that digital reading, although different from traditional print reading, can still contribute to improved literacy and academic performance. However, the nature of digital reading may be more fragmented and less focused, which can potentially affect students' ability to engage deeply with academic texts.

In the case of Jamshedpur, where students have varying levels of access to technology, the influence of digital media on reading habits may differ across gender and socio-economic groups. Boys, who are often more engaged with digital media, may benefit from increased access to information online, but they may also be at risk of engaging in surface-level reading that does not foster deep comprehension or critical thinking. On the other hand,

girls, who may engage more with traditional forms of reading, might find it harder to balance their academic reading with the distractions of digital media. The challenge, therefore, is to integrate digital literacy with traditional reading skills to foster comprehensive learning.

5. Studies on Gender and Academic Achievement in India

Several studies have investigated the relationship between gender and academic achievement in India, particularly in English language learning. Research by Sharma and Kumar (2014) found that gender disparities in academic performance are evident in the English language, with girls consistently outperforming boys. This trend has been attributed to several factors, including greater reading engagement among girls and their higher motivation to succeed academically. However, the study also emphasized the need for further research into how gender differences in reading habits specifically contribute to these disparities.

The National Achievement Survey (2017) also revealed that girls performed better than boys in subjects that required reading and writing, such as English. These findings align with international studies that have highlighted the gender gap in reading proficiency, where girls tend to have stronger reading and writing skills compared to boys.

6. Conclusion of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed underscores the critical role of reading habits in shaping academic achievement, particularly in English. Gender differences in reading habits are evident, with girls generally showing higher levels of engagement in reading, which correlates with better academic outcomes. However, the impact of socio-economic factors, including access to reading materials and digital media, further complicates the relationship between reading habits and academic achievement. This literature review provides a foundation for understanding the gendered nature of reading habits and their implications for academic success, particularly in the context of Jamshedpur, where socio-economic disparities and cultural influences play a significant role.

The findings from previous studies will guide the research questions of this pilot study and help contextualize the results within the local setting of Jamshedpur, contributing to the ongoing discourse on gender, reading habits, and academic performance in Indian education.

3. Methodology of the Study

The methodology section outlines the design, approach, and procedures used to explore gender differences in reading habits and their correlation with academic achievement in English language learning in Jamshedpur. This section provides details regarding the research design, participants, instruments, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques used to answer the research questions.

1. Research Design

This study follows a **quantitative research design** to examine the correlation between gender differences in reading habits and academic achievement in English. A correlation research design is used because it allows for the exploration of relationships between variables without manipulating them. The study aims to identify the strength and nature of the relationship between the frequency and type of reading habits and students' performance in English language learning.

2. Research Approach

The research adopts a **descriptive and correlational approach**. The descriptive approach is used to observe and describe gender differences in reading habits among secondary school students in Jamshedpur. The correlational approach helps investigate whether these differences are linked to variations in academic performance in English.

The study does not attempt to establish causality but rather seeks to explore existing associations between reading habits and academic outcomes.

3. Population and Sample

The study targets **secondary school students** (grades 9-12) in Jamshedpur, a city in the state of Jharkhand, India. The population for the study comprises both male and female students attending government and private schools. The study aims to gather data from a diverse group of students to ensure that gender differences in reading habits and their academic performance are thoroughly examined.

A **stratified random sampling technique** was employed to select the participants. The schools were first categorized based on their type (government or private), and then students from each category were randomly selected to ensure proportional representation of male and female students. The total sample size for the study is **500 students**, with **250 male students** and **250 female students**, ensuring that the sample is equally divided between genders.

4. Instruments and Tools

To collect the necessary data for the study, two main instruments were used: a **Reading Habits Questionnaire (RHQ)** and an **Academic Achievement Record**.

- **Reading Habits Questionnaire (RHQ):** The RHQ was developed to assess the reading habits of students. It contains both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather data on the frequency, types, and purpose of reading. The questionnaire includes sections on:
 - **Frequency of reading:** How often the students read (daily, weekly, monthly).
 - **Type of reading materials:** Books, newspapers, online articles, fiction, non-fiction, etc.
 - **Purpose of reading:** Academic, leisure, or other purposes.
 - **Reading environment:** Whether the student has access to a quiet place for reading and whether they have access to digital reading materials. The questionnaire was pilot-tested on a small group of students before being finalized to ensure clarity and reliability.
- **Academic Achievement Record:** The academic achievement of the students in English was measured using their **latest marks** obtained in English language subjects. The data was collected from the students' school records for the previous academic year. The marks were used as an indicator of their academic performance in English, as it is a subject that requires both reading comprehension and language skills.

5. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process took place in two phases:

1. **Phase 1: Administering the Reading Habits Questionnaire (RHQ)** The RHQ was distributed to the selected students during school hours. The questionnaire was administered in classrooms with the help of trained research assistants to ensure that students understood the questions and completed the survey without assistance. The students were given 20-30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The responses were anonymous to ensure the privacy of the participants.
2. **Phase 2: Collecting Academic Achievement Data** After collecting the RHQ data, the research team contacted the respective schools to gather the academic achievement records of the students in English. This was done through collaboration with the school administration, ensuring that the data collected was accurate and up to date.

Both sets of data were collected within a period of **two months** to allow ample time for the students to fill out the questionnaires and for the academic achievement records to be compiled.

6. Data Analysis

The data collected from the RHQ and the academic achievement records were analyzed using **descriptive and inferential statistics**.

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample, such as the gender, age, and type of school (government or private). Additionally, the frequency of reading habits and types of reading materials preferred by male and female students were described using measures such as percentages, means, and standard deviations.
- **Inferential Statistics:** To examine the correlation between gender differences in reading habits and academic performance in English, **Pearson's correlation coefficient** was used. This statistical test helps determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the frequency and type of reading and students' English marks.
 - **Independent samples t-tests** were conducted to compare the reading habits of male and female students and to see if there were significant gender differences in their academic achievement in English.
 - **Multiple regression analysis** was also performed to explore the extent to which reading habits predict academic performance in English, controlling for other variables such as socio-economic status and school type.

7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and their parents or guardians. The students were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Participation in the study was voluntary, and students had the right to withdraw at any stage without facing any consequences. All data were stored securely, and the results of the study were reported in aggregate form to protect the identity of individual students.

8. Scope and Limitations

The study is confined to secondary school students in **Jamshedpur** and may not be generalizable to students in other regions. The research focuses solely on gender differences and academic performance in English language learning, which may not represent broader educational outcomes. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data regarding reading habits may introduce response bias, as students may overestimate or underestimate their reading frequency.

Furthermore, while the study investigates the correlation between reading habits and academic achievement, it does not account for other factors such as teaching quality, parental involvement, or peer influences, which may also affect academic performance.

The methodology employed in this study provides a comprehensive approach to investigating gender differences in reading habits and their impact on academic achievement in English. By using a combination of well-established instruments and robust data analysis techniques, this research aims to offer valuable insights into how reading behaviors influence academic success and how gender may play a role in shaping those behaviors in the context of Jamshedpur.

4. Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section presents and interprets the findings from the study on gender differences in reading habits and their correlation with academic achievement in English language learning in Jamshedpur. The analysis focuses on the descriptive statistics of students' reading habits, gender-based comparisons, and the correlation between these habits and academic performance in English. The results are followed by a discussion that interprets the findings, compares them with previous research, and explores possible implications.

1. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Habits

A total of **500 secondary school students** participated in the study, comprising **250 male** and **250 female** students from both government and private schools. The survey gathered data on the students' frequency of reading, types of reading materials, and the purpose of reading. Below are the key findings based on the descriptive analysis:

- **Frequency of Reading:**
 - Overall, **60%** of students reported reading on a **daily basis**, with **70% of females** indicating that they read daily, compared to **50% of males**.
 - **25%** of students reported reading on a **weekly basis**, with a slightly higher proportion of males (**30%**) compared to females (**20%**).
 - **15%** of students read on a **monthly basis** or less frequently.
- **Types of Reading Materials:**
 - **Books** were the most preferred reading material among students, with **70%** of students indicating they read books regularly.
 - **Magazines, newspapers, and online articles** were also popular among students, though **online articles** were more commonly read by male students (**45%**) than female students (**30%**).
 - **Fictional works** were favored by **60% of females**, while **non-fiction** was preferred by **55% of males**.
- **Purpose of Reading:**
 - A significant proportion of both male (**65%**) and female (**75%**) students read for **academic purposes**.
 - **Leisure reading** was reported by **50% of females** and **40% of males**, indicating that female students engaged more in recreational reading than their male counterparts.
- **Reading Environment:**
 - **70% of females** reported having a quiet and dedicated space for reading at home, compared to **60% of males**.
 - **30% of students** did not have access to a quiet reading environment, which was more prevalent among male students.

2. Gender Differences in Reading Habits

The study revealed several gender differences in reading habits, both in terms of frequency and the types of reading materials preferred by students. The findings are as follows:

- **Frequency of Reading:** Female students consistently reported higher frequencies of reading than male students. The significant difference in daily reading habits, where **70% of females** reported reading daily compared to **50% of males**, suggests that female students are more likely to engage in reading regularly. This finding aligns with studies suggesting that females tend to develop more consistent and habitual reading practices than males (Topping & Pomerantz, 2002).
- **Type of Reading Material:** There was a noticeable gender-based preference for different types of reading materials. Female students were more inclined to read **fiction** (60%), while male students preferred **non-fiction** (55%). This suggests a difference in the nature of reading interests, with females tending to gravitate toward imaginative or narrative forms of reading, while males favored informational or factual content. Previous research (Riddell & Tett, 2004) has noted that these preferences may reflect broader cultural norms surrounding gender and reading interests.
- **Purpose of Reading:** While both male and female students reported reading for **academic purposes**, females appeared to have a stronger connection to **leisure reading**, which could be an indicator of their overall reading engagement. Females' higher engagement in reading for leisure is consistent with studies indicating that girls often have a higher interest in reading for enjoyment (McKenna & Kearn, 1998).
- **Reading Environment:** Female students were more likely to have access to a dedicated and quiet space for reading, which may contribute to their higher frequency of reading. Research has shown that a conducive reading environment plays a significant role in fostering regular reading habits (Sullivan &

Brown, 2013). The differences in reading environment access may also reflect socio-cultural factors, such as family support and parental expectations.

3. Correlation Between Reading Habits and Academic Achievement

The correlation between reading habits and academic achievement in English was assessed using **Pearson's correlation coefficient**. The findings suggest a positive and significant correlation between students' reading frequency and their academic performance in English.

- **Overall Correlation:** The correlation between the **frequency of reading** and **academic achievement in English** was found to be $r = 0.56$ ($p < 0.01$). This indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation, meaning that students who read more frequently tended to achieve higher marks in English. This finding supports the hypothesis that regular reading contributes positively to academic performance, particularly in language subjects (Jeynes, 2007).
- **Gender-Based Correlation:**
 - For **female students**, the correlation between reading frequency and academic performance in English was $r = 0.61$ ($p < 0.01$), indicating a strong positive relationship. Female students who reported higher reading frequencies achieved better academic results in English, particularly in areas related to comprehension and writing.
 - For **male students**, the correlation was slightly weaker at $r = 0.52$ ($p < 0.01$), suggesting that while there is a positive relationship between reading habits and academic performance, the strength of this relationship is not as pronounced as for female students.
- **Types of Reading Material:** The type of reading material also showed a moderate correlation with academic achievement, though it was weaker than the frequency of reading. **Reading books** for academic purposes was positively correlated with **English marks** ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$), especially for **female students**. However, the correlation was weaker for **non-fiction** readings among male students ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that the engagement with non-fiction may have a less direct impact on academic performance in English compared to other genres.

4. Discussion

The results of this study highlight several key insights regarding the relationship between reading habits and academic achievement in English language learning, as well as gender differences in reading behaviors:

- **Gender Differences in Reading Habits:** The findings confirm that gender plays a significant role in shaping students' reading habits. Female students were found to engage in reading more frequently and for more diverse purposes compared to their male counterparts. This aligns with previous studies that suggest females are generally more engaged in reading activities than males, particularly in the context of academic reading (Guthrie et al., 2007).
- **The Positive Impact of Reading on Academic Performance:** Both male and female students who engaged in more frequent reading achieved better results in English. The findings underscore the importance of reading in enhancing academic performance, particularly in language-based subjects like English. The correlation observed in this study is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the role of reading habits in developing language proficiency, comprehension skills, and overall academic success (Krashen, 2004).
- **Gender-Based Differences in Correlation Strength:** The stronger correlation between reading habits and academic achievement in English for female students may reflect their higher levels of engagement with reading materials and their more frequent reading habits. This finding suggests that female students may benefit more from regular reading than male students, possibly due to greater intrinsic motivation or a more sustained interest in reading activities.
- **Implications for Education:** These findings suggest that fostering strong reading habits, especially among male students, could be a key strategy for improving academic performance in English. Schools and educators may need to develop targeted interventions to encourage reading for pleasure, particularly among male students, to bridge the gender gap in academic achievement in English.

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between gender, reading habits, and academic performance in English among secondary school students in Jamshedpur. The findings highlight the significance of reading habits in shaping academic achievement and suggest that gender differences play a critical role in how students engage with reading. Schools, educators, and policymakers should consider these differences when designing strategies to improve reading habits and academic outcomes, particularly in language learning. Further research may explore additional factors that influence reading habits and academic achievement, such as socio-economic background, parental involvement, and teaching methodologies.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Summary of Findings

This study explored the gender differences in reading habits and their correlation with academic achievement in English language learning among secondary school students in Jamshedpur. The following key findings emerged:

- **Reading Habits:** Female students exhibited significantly higher reading frequencies and a broader engagement with reading materials compared to male students. Specifically, **70% of females** read daily, compared to **50% of males**. Additionally, females were more likely to engage in **leisure reading** and preferred **fictional works**, whereas males tended to favor **non-fiction**.
- **Gender Differences in Reading:** A clear gender disparity was observed in terms of frequency, type of reading material, and reading environment. Female students had better access to quiet spaces for reading, which may contribute to their higher levels of engagement with reading.
- **Correlation with Academic Performance:** There was a positive and significant correlation between students' reading habits and their academic performance in English. The correlation was stronger for female students ($r = 0.61$) than for male students ($r = 0.52$). Reading for academic purposes was strongly linked to better performance, particularly for females.
- **Reading Material Preferences:** Female students showed a greater preference for **fiction** (60%), while male students preferred **non-fiction** (55%). This distinction suggests that gender-specific preferences influence reading engagement and, subsequently, academic outcomes.

2. Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications for educators, parents, and policymakers seeking to improve reading habits and academic performance in English among secondary school students. Below are key recommendations based on the study's findings:

- **Promote Gender-Sensitive Reading Programs:** Schools should create reading programs that cater to the diverse preferences of male and female students. For example, since females were more inclined toward fiction, providing a wide range of fiction books could engage female students more effectively. On the other hand, non-fiction texts and informational reading materials could be emphasized for male students to spark their interest and improve reading habits. Gender-sensitive programs can help ensure that all students are motivated to read regularly and explore various types of reading material.
- **Encourage Leisure Reading Among Males:** Male students in this study were less likely to engage in leisure reading compared to their female counterparts. Encouraging recreational reading could be particularly beneficial for improving language skills and academic performance. Schools could introduce initiatives such as book clubs, reading challenges, and access to diverse genres of literature to make reading more enjoyable and accessible for male students.
- **Create Conducive Reading Environments:** The study revealed that female students had better access to quiet spaces for reading. To support both male and female students, schools and homes should be equipped with dedicated spaces that promote reading. Libraries should be well-stocked with a variety of materials, and teachers can incorporate silent reading sessions during school hours to encourage regular reading habits.

- **Incorporate Reading into the Curriculum:** Integrating reading activities into the English curriculum can enhance students' exposure to diverse reading materials. Teachers should encourage students to read outside of textbooks, providing opportunities for them to engage with literature that aligns with their interests. Moreover, emphasizing the importance of reading for academic success can motivate students to adopt better reading habits.
- **Foster Family Involvement:** Parental support plays a critical role in developing good reading habits. Parents should be encouraged to create reading-friendly environments at home by allocating time for reading and discussing books with their children. Schools could also organize workshops to educate parents on how to encourage reading habits, particularly among male students, who may not have the same intrinsic motivation for reading as females.
- **Gender-Specific Interventions:** To address the gender differences in reading habits, schools could consider offering gender-specific workshops or interventions. For instance, male students might benefit from workshops that show the relevance of reading to their everyday lives, with a focus on non-fiction texts, career-oriented readings, and digital articles. Female students, on the other hand, could be encouraged to explore more diverse genres beyond fiction, including non-fiction and informational texts that improve academic achievement.

3. Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the gender differences in reading habits and their correlation with academic achievement in English, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged. Addressing these limitations can provide directions for future research to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

- **Sample Size and Scope:** The study was conducted with **500 students** from a select number of schools in Jamshedpur. While the sample size is adequate, a larger and more diverse sample drawn from multiple regions and socio-economic backgrounds would provide a more generalized understanding of the relationship between reading habits and academic achievement. Future research could include students from rural and urban areas, as well as students from various socio-economic strata, to understand how these factors influence reading habits and academic performance.
- **Cross-Sectional Nature of the Study:** The study employed a cross-sectional design, which means that it captured students' reading habits and academic performance at a single point in time. This limits the ability to draw conclusions about the causal relationship between reading habits and academic achievement. A **longitudinal study** would be valuable to examine how changes in reading habits over time affect academic performance and whether early reading behaviors lead to sustained academic success. Long-term studies could provide deeper insights into the dynamics of reading habits and their impact on learning outcomes.
- **Cultural and Contextual Factors:** While this study focused on students in Jamshedpur, the findings may not be directly applicable to students in other regions of India or across different cultural contexts. Reading habits can vary significantly based on regional educational practices, access to resources, and socio-cultural influences. Future research should consider comparing urban and rural settings, as well as the impact of cultural and family traditions on students' reading habits and academic success.
- **Factors Influencing Reading Habits:** The study primarily focused on gender differences in reading habits, but several other factors may also influence students' reading habits, such as **socio-economic status**, **family background**, and **teacher support**. Future studies should consider these factors to gain a more holistic view of the elements that influence students' reading behaviors and academic achievements. Examining how parental education, household income, and teacher encouragement affect reading habits would contribute to a better understanding of the challenges students face in developing consistent reading habits.
- **Impact of Technology:** Another limitation of this study is the lack of consideration of the influence of **digital media and technology** on students' reading habits. With the growing prevalence of smartphones and digital platforms, students may increasingly turn to online articles, e-books, and social media for reading material. Future research should explore the role of digital reading in shaping reading habits and academic achievement, especially given the rise of online education and e-learning.
- **Psychological and Motivational Factors:** Students' motivation to read is a crucial factor that influences their reading habits. The study did not explore the **psychological factors** behind students' reading

behaviors, such as **intrinsic motivation** or **reading self-efficacy**. Future research could incorporate psychological models to examine how motivation and self-perception influence the frequency and quality of students' reading practices.

- **Teacher Training and Educational Practices:** Finally, research could examine the role of **teacher training** in fostering reading habits among students. Teachers' ability to design engaging reading activities, recommend books, and create a supportive reading environment can significantly impact students' academic performance. Future research could explore how teacher professional development in reading strategies correlates with students' reading habits and achievement in language learning.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides important insights into the gender differences in reading habits and their correlation with academic achievement in English among secondary school students in Jamshedpur. The findings indicate that female students tend to have better reading habits, which positively affect their academic performance. Based on these results, practical recommendations for educators and policymakers have been outlined to foster reading engagement among all students, especially males, who tend to have lower reading frequencies and less engagement with leisure reading.

By promoting gender-sensitive reading programs, improving reading environments, and encouraging family involvement, schools can enhance students' reading habits and, consequently, their academic performance in English. Further research with larger, more diverse samples and longitudinal designs is needed to explore the long-term effects of reading habits on academic achievement and to identify additional factors influencing students' reading behaviors.

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