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Do They Read for Pleasure? Surveying Secondary School Teachers of District Lahore, Pakistan

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Abstract: Every society is focused on developing readers who not only can read but also want to read. This rule is more employed on teachers when it is evidenced that good readers lead to good teachers. The students are modelling their teachers hence, it is necessary for a school teacher to be good readers to produce good readers and lifelong learners. The current study explored secondary teachers' reading attitudes, priority towards reading, and engagement activities. Method: The data were collected by surveying 400 secondary school teachers who were teaching in public sector schools of District Lahore, Pakistan. A total of 40 (20 males, 20 females) randomly selected public secondary schools were approached to collect data from 400 teachers through a questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22 version. Results showed that secondary school teachers perceived themselves as devoted readers and they are reading in their leisure time by considering reading pleasure and relaxing activity. The study was the first of its kind to report reading habits among secondary school teachers teaching in District Lahore, Pakistan.

Key Words: Reading Habit, Reading Preference, Secondary School Teacher, Gender, Pakistan

Introduction

The ability to read is not enough for school teachers they are also required to read voluntarily. Teachers should focus on instructional strategies to enhance their reading volume and frequency to become lifelong learners (Chettri & Rout, 2013). According to Karim (2004), the desire to read should be instilled naturally which will help to stimulate the habit and it can be developed by using different strategies. Wagner (2002) defined reading habits as “in measurable terms

reading habit is often considered in terms of the number of materials being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading” and leisure reading has been defined as “reading of any kind, excluding school texts and other materials assigned at school” (Greaney, 1980, p. 345). Hughes-Hassell and Lutz (2006) said that school teachers have the upper hand in promoting reading habits among children.

The reading habits of school teachers and their knowledge of children's literature were

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found connected with their employed instructional strategies as teachers who were frequent readers employed greater strategies, shared personal insights and used intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivational strategies (McKool and Gespass, 2009). Burgess et al. (2011) also approved the relationship between teachers' reading habits, and their knowledge of children's literature and employed classroom strategies and demonstrated that teachers having knowledge of children's literature were expected to employ best practices in classrooms. Jabbar and Warraich (2021) verified the notion that school teachers' reading habits and their knowledge of children's literature were significant factors affecting their students' reading habits.

Preservice and In-service Teachers' Reading Attitudes and Habits

A lot of literature designated to explore reading habits, attitudes and activities among preservice or prospective teachers (Applegate and Applegate, 2004; Kennedy, 2014; Nathanson et al., 2008; Oğuz et al., 2009) that had characterized them as reluctant and infrequent readers. It was demonstrated that future teachers were dispassionate readers, giving less value to reading (Granado, 2014) and infrequent visitors to libraries (Cremin et al., 2008; Granado 2014). Valencia (2017) found potential school teachers were infrequent readers in spite of high levels of reading motivation.

However, there were also a lot of studies that addressed future teachers' reading habits and categorized them as enthusiastic and frequent readers in their leisure time (Ögeyik and Akyay, 2009; Pehlivan et al., 2010; Priajana, 2013). Baba and Affendi (2020) revealed a positive reading attitude of Malaysian student teachers who were reading for academic as well as leisure purposes.

Very few studies reported reading practices and library use among in-service teachers working in different environments i.e., elementary (Brooks, 2007; Cremin et al., 2008), secondary (Adebayo, 2009) both elementary and secondary (Broemmel et al.,

2019; Oyelude, 2013) and elementary, secondary and university (Waring and Husna, 2019). Brooks (2007) explored elementary teachers who were categorized as 'competent readers' and found that although teachers considered them as competent readers, their individual expertise and perception had little or no effect on their teaching and writing.

Adebayo (2009) found secondary school teachers as frequent readers but very few of them read for pleasure rather than to pass exams, make notes and remain updated with current developments in their field. Broemmel et al. (2019) found that school teachers in the United States were reading for professional purposes mostly in the evenings and weekends. Kerkhoff et al. (2020) reported teachers were reading for pleasure as well as for learning purposes.

McKool and Gespass (2009) and Hassen (2016) reported almost a similar situation of teachers' reading habits in different contexts although school teachers were aware of reading importance in their personal as well as professional life it is poorly constructed among them. They read only related to their classroom, course and examinations. Akçay (2017) also approved the findings among Turkish teachers who were infrequent readers even a substantial percentage (35%) did not consider themselves as a reader.

Factors Affecting Reading Habits and Preferences

There were a lot of factors affecting teachers' reading habits positively as Levitt and Owl (2013) highlighted that those school teachers who had early literacy experiences and encountered positive home reading environments were recorded avid readers and also committed to instilling reading habits among their students. Kennedy (2014) mentioned the 'availability of materials of their own choice' as an opportunity for school teachers. Avci and Özgenel (2019) suggested the use of literature circles to enhance reading habits and professional development of school teachers. Kerkhoff et al. (2020) acclaimed that interaction with people and positive texts

shaped reading identities among preservice teachers. Jabbar and Warraich (In Press) found that gender was a significant predictor of reading habits among adolescents.

There were some demographic factors affecting teachers reading habits including gender, socio-economic status (Pehlivan et al., 2010), educational level and family background (Oyelude, 2013) while Broemmel et al. (2019) negated gender and experience level impact on teachers' reading habits.

There was also variation reported in reading preference among school teachers as newspapers were the most preferred reading material followed by magazines (Benevides and Peterson, 2010; Hassen, 2016; Oğuz et al., 2009) and novels and poetry (Akçay, 2017). Ögeyik and Akyay (2009) found that student teachers were in favour of reading books in Turkish as well as in foreign languages for academic and field-related topics. Priajana (2013) inferred teacher students preferred books by foreign authors, academic articles and research reports.

In terms of reading format, the school teachers preferred electronic format and online reading (Abidin, 2011) due to ease of access and use (Priajana, 2013) and extensive availability of digital materials (Baba and Affendi, 2020). They like to read books and book reviews online which made their reading more effective and interesting (Ögeyik and Akyay, 2009). The preference towards online reading through mobiles, laptops and e-readers was increased in the recent Covid-19 situation among Nigerians (Adeyemi, 2021) and among teachers (Vyas and Tandel, 2020).

Challenges and Issues

There were a lot of challenges that school teachers had to face while developing their reading habits as the great majority were unable to understand the extensive reading (Waring and Husna, 2019). The lack of time for pleasure reading is pointed out as a big obstacle among preservice and in-service teachers (Akyol and Ulusoy, 2010; Babayigit, 2019;

Kennedy, 2014; Oğuz et al., 2009; Priajana, 2013).

The libraries are unable to provide Required reading materials to student teachers (Yılmaz, 2006; Priajana, 2013) and they had to purchase these materials that could haunt their wish for voluntary reading (Akçay, 2017; Ögeyik and Akyay, 2009). Kırmızı et al. (2014) added that school teachers require the availability of reading materials and a conducive reading environment for their leisure reading. A recent study by Adeyemi (2021) noticed that Nigerians were facing a lot of challenges while reading in Cov-19 situation like lack of motivation, high prices of recourse and in some cases unavailability of resources and excessive use of social media.

Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Reading Habits

The situation of reading habits during Covid-19 was also explored by some of the studies as a recent study conducted to infer the reading habits of Nigerians during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that reading habits increased during the pandemic through the use of mobiles (Adeyemi, 2021). Kaya et al. (2020) explored the book reading habits of teachers during covid-19 pandemic and reported gender differences in terms of reading attitudes that females have more positive attitudes towards reading books than males. A similar study was conducted by Vyas and Tandel (2020) in the context of state-open universities in India and reported an increase in reading frequency. The majority of faculty members were reading reference books through in-depth reading as well as quick browsing.

In the whole scenario, there were variations in school teachers' characterization as frequent or infrequent readers. There were also disagreements on their reading preferences and reading format priorities. Broemmel et al. (2019) pointed out scanty literature addressing school teachers' reading habits. Also, the researchers were unable to find any study that has addressed the leisure reading habits of secondary school teachers in

the context of Pakistan. So, there is a dire need to explore the situation to fill the literature gap.

Objectives of the study

The study was intended to know:

- 1) Reading Attitude and preference towards reading among secondary school teachers
- 2) Secondary school teachers' engagement activities including pleasure reading
- 3) Impact of Gender on reading attitude, preference and engagement activities

Methodology

Design of the Study

The study was intended to identify reading perceptions and preferences among secondary school teachers and the survey method was considered suitable as it allowed the coding of data into numerical representation and description of the results.

Participants

The secondary school teachers who were teaching 9th and 10th graders in public schools of Lahore District were the population of the study. The public schools' domain was selected to explore due to inconsistency in private secondary schools' domain as there was a variety of private school systems run by different agencies, individuals, organizations, groups and sects.

Ministry of Education listed a total of 331 secondary schools in Lahore District containing 179 boys' and 152 girls' schools. Loudon et al. [2002](#) recommended the following formula for the infinite population. Using the formula, considering a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error it found a sample size of 384.

$$n = Z^2(p \cdot q) / (e)^2$$

$$n = 1.962(.5 \times .5) / (.05)^2 = 384.16$$

Where;

n = Sample Size

Z = Value from normal distribution table for desired confidence level (i.e. corresponding to the chosen alpha level – for 0.05 is 1.96)

p = Obtained population proportion (i.e. 50%) and q = 1-p

e = Error of sampling or desired precision = ± 0.05

Although the calculated sample size was 384, it was decided to collect data from 400 secondary school teachers to enhance the generalizability and minimize the sampling error.

The 20 girls and 20 boys' schools were selected randomly through the available list of secondary schools and all 400 secondary school teachers teaching in these schools were requested to fill out the questionnaire that returned 386 with a response rate of 96.5 per cent.

Instrument

The instrument was developed with the help of relevant literature. The first section was comprised of six statements that described the perception of teachers considering themselves as readers or not. The second section devoted to time spent activities comprised ten statements while the third section required school teachers' demographics including their gender, age and experience level.

The tool was pilot tested from 80 secondary school teachers other than the population who were teaching in secondary schools of belonging areas of Lahore. Participants' suggestions and feedback were incorporated. The internal consistency of the instrument has been verified through the application of the Cronbach Alpha measure. It was reported .780 that ensured a high level of internal consistency of the instrument.

Data Collection and Analysis

The prior permission of participation from the heads of the schools was already acquired and secondary schools were visited personally to collect the data in school timings. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21 version by employing descriptive as well inferential statistics. The data were presented in the form of tables.

Findings of the Study

Table 1 showed that the majority of the respondents were male (n = 204, 53%) while females showed little less participation than

males (n=182, 47%). The majority of them (n= 160, 41.5%) were young as falls in the age range of 21-30 and very few of them (n = 44, 11.4%) reported above 50 years.

Table 1

Demographics of Secondary School Teachers (n = 386).

Gender	Male			Female			
	204 (53%)			182 (47%)			
Age Range	Below 20 72 (18.7%)	21-30 160 (41.5%)	31-40 88 (22.8%)	41-50 22 (5.7%)	Above 50 44 (11.4%)		
Educationa l Level	Master 326 (84.5%)	M. Phil. 52 (13.5%)	PhD 8 (2.1%)				
Experience (in years)	Below 1 70 (18.1%)	1-2 178 (46.1%)	3-4 54 (14.1%)	5-6 32 (8.3%)	7-8 10 (2.6%)	9-10 16 (4.1%)	Above 10 26 (6.7%)

A Master's Degree is the minimum requirement for secondary school teachers so the majority of them (n = 326, 84.5%) have a master's degree in their profiles followed by a few of them (n = 52, 13.5%) acquired equal to M. Phil. degree and very few (n = 8, 2.1%) claimed the highest degree of PhD in their respective subjects. Initial level (<1 or >1) and moderate level of experience (1-2 years) were reported among secondary school teachers as the majority of them were young and fresh recruits.

Reading and their prioritizing behaviour of reading over TV and watching movies. The majority of respondents (n = 268, 69.4%) considered themselves as readers by negating the statement 'I've never really thought of myself as "a reader"' and a substantial number (n = 154, 39.9%) also designated them as devoted readers. But it was quite shocking that a number of teachers (n = 118, 30.6%) do not consider them as readers. Also, a great number (n = 124, 32.1%) slightly and a few (n = 30, 7.8%) not at all perceived them as devoted readers.

Reading Attitude and Priority Given to Reading

Table 2 showed the reading attitude towards

Table 2

Secondary school teachers' perceptions towards reading (n = 386).

Statements	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all	Mean	SD*
I've never really thought of myself as "a reader"	36 (9.3%)	82 (21.2%)	Nil	Nil	268 (69.4%)	2.33	.914
I think I am a devoted reader	Nil	154 (39.9%)	78 (20.2%)	124 (32.1%)	30 (7.8%)	3.08	1.01
I get lots of satisfaction from	36 (9.3%)	204 (52.8%)	44 (11.4%)	80 (20.7%)	22 (5.7%)	2.61	1.08

Statements	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all	Mean	SD*
my personal reading							
Frankly, I don't find reading to be very relaxing	20 (5.2%)	26 (6.7%)	78 (20.2%)	136 (35.2%)	126 (32.6%)	3.83	1.11
I'd rather watch a story on TV or movies than read	50 (13%)	80 (20.7%)	72 (18.7%)	146 (37.8%)	38 (9.8%)	3.11	1.22
I'd like to spend a day reading when I have the time	12 (3.1%)	142 (36.8%)	68 (17.6%)	138 (35.8%)	26 (6.7%)	3.06	1.05

Scale: EXTREMELY=1, VERY=2, SOMEWHAT=3, SLIGHTLY=4, NOT AT ALL =5

When school teachers were asked 'Do they get relaxation and satisfaction from their personal reading?' The majority of them (n = 243, 63%) showed very and extreme satisfaction with their personal reading and a great majority (n = 262, 67.9%) took reading as a very relaxing activity by negating the statement 'Frankly, I don't find reading to be very relaxing'. However, it was unneglectable that more than one-quarter of secondary school teachers (n = 102, 26.6%) are unsatisfied with their personal reading and very few (n = 46, 12%) do not find reading as a relaxing activity.

When it came to the priority of reading over watching TV or movies, although, the majority (n = 184, 47.7%) negated the notion 'I'd rather watch a story on TV or movies than read' but a substantial number (n = 130, 33.7%) acknowledged that they have given priority to the TV and movies over reading. It was disturbing to find out that a great majority (n = 164, 42.5%) disliked spending a day reading when they have time while a great

number (n = 154, 39.9%) showed eagerness towards reading by spending a day on reading when they have time.

Time Spent by Secondary School Teachers on Different Activities

Time spent on different academic and non-academic activities by secondary school teachers has been analyzed and found that the majority of them (n = 170, 44%) spend more than one hour on planning for teaching. Similarly, less than half of the respondents (n = 178, 46.1%) spent more than one-hour grading papers. Further, a great number of secondary school teachers (n = 160, 41.5%) were engaged in reading professionals' materials for more than one hour. Surprisingly, they have also found more than one hour (n = 176, 45.6%) and half an hour (n = 90, 23.3%) for pleasure reading however very few of them (n = 40, 10.4%) admitted that they did not read at all for pleasure.

Table 3

Time Spent by Secondary School Teacher on Different Activities (n = 386).

Statements	1-15 Min.	16-30 Min.	31-60 Min.	More than 1 Hour	Not at all	Mean	SD*
Planning for teaching	18 (4.7%)	122 (31.6%)	50 (13%)	170 (44%)	26 (6.7%)	3.17	1.09
Grading papers	6 (1.6%)	124 (32.1%)	62 (16.1%)	178 (46.1%)	16(4.1%)	3.19	.988

Statements	1-15 Min.	16-30 Min.	31-60 Min.	More than 1 Hour	Not at all	Mean	SD*
Reading professional materials	66 (17.1%)	160 (41.5%)	38 (9.8%)	122 (31.6%)	Nil	2.56	1.10
Reading for pleasure	6 (1.6%)	74 (19.2%)	90 (23.3%)	176 (45.6%)	40 (10.4%)	3.44	.967
Watching TV	34 (8.8%)	70 (18.1%)	86 (22.3%)	108 (28%)	88 (22.8%)	3.38	1.26
Exercising	18 (4.7%)	134 (34.7%)	18 (4.7%)	100 (25.9%)	116 (30.1%)	3.42	1.35
Cooking	62 (16.1%)	38 (9.8%)	40 (10.4%)	158 (40.9%)	88 (22.8%)	3.06	1.29
Household tasks	38 (9.8%)	174 (45.1%)	44 (11.4%)	104 (26.9%)	26 (6.7%)	2.76	1.15
Working on the computer	12 (3.1%)	122 (31.6%)	20 (5.2%)	208 (53.9%)	24 (6.2%)	3.28	1.07
Family activities	60 (15.5%)	106 (27.5%)	10 (2.6%)	132 (34.2%)	78 (20.2%)	3.16	1.42

Scale: Strongly Disagree (SD)=1, Disagree (D)=2, Neutral (N)=3, Agree (A)=4, Strongly Agree (SA)=5.

More than a quarter (n = 108, 28%) acclaimed spending more than one hour watching TV while a number of school teachers (n = 88, 22.8%) denied doing it. A significant number (n = 116, 30.1%) accepted that they did not do any type of exercise while a great number (n = 134, 34.7%) reported doing exercise for 16-30 minutes whereas one quarter (n = 100, 25.9%) claimed to spend more than one hour on exercising. A substantial number of school teachers (n = 158, 40.9%) were spending one hour on cooking and less than one quarter 88 (22.8%) denied doing the activity may be due to the Pakistani culture where men are less involved in cooking. The secondary school teachers were found less involved in household tasks as the majority of them (n = 174, 45.1%) claimed to spend 16-30 minutes.

Surprisingly, more than half of the participants (n = 208, 53.9%) reported spending more than one hour on the computer and only (n = 24, 6.2%) denied it. A number of study subjects (n = 132, 34.2%) showed engagement in family activities for more than one hour followed by more than one quarter (n = 106, 27.5%) who spent 16-30 minutes in family activities. While it was astonishing to find out that a number of participants (n = 78, 20.2%) negated at all to be involved in their family activities.

Impact of Gender on Reading Attitude and Preferred Activities

The independent sample t-test was employed to know the impact of gender on secondary school teachers' reading attitude and their preference towards reading.

Table 4

Independent Sample T-test Comparing Study Variables in Terms of Gender (N = 386)

Variables	Male N=204		Female N=182		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading attitude & preference	3.01	0.50	2.98	0.43	.536	.592
Time spent on activities	3.12	0.59	3.15	0.60	-.552	.581

The results revealed no significant differences ($p = .592$) reported among male and female opinions. Likewise, there was no significant impact of gender ($p = .581$) found among secondary school teachers on their time spent on different activities.

Conclusions and Discussion

The study was intended to report reading habits among secondary school teachers of District Lahore, Pakistan. The study was focused on reading attitude, reading behaviour, and preference given to reading among other academic as well as non-academic activities. According to minimum qualification requirements by the government, the majority of school teachers have master's degrees in their profile while some of them have MPhil and PhD degrees.

The school teachers considered themselves as readers and a great majority also acclaimed them as devoted readers. The findings are strengthened by the studies (Priajana, 2013, Kerkhoff *et al.*, 2020) that found secondary school teachers as frequent and enthusiastic readers. But it was unneglectable that a significant number of secondary school teachers did not consider them as readers and a few of them acknowledged that they were not devoted readers. The situation was crafted by McKool and Gespass (2009) and Hassen (2016) who reported that although school teachers were aware of the importance of reading habits, it was poorly instilled among them. Akçay (2017) revealed a similar situation among Turkish teachers who (35%) did not categorize themselves as readers.

Although the majority of the participants took reading as a satisfactory and relaxing activity but more than one quarter showed dissatisfaction towards their reading and a few also negated that it was a relaxing activity. The findings were quite shocking. However, relevant studies (Adebayo, 2009; Broemmel *et al.*, 2019) declared that secondary school teachers were reading for professional, academic, exams and course-related purposes.

The reasons could create a dissatisfactory situation due to the assigned reading rather than reading of their own choice.

Reading was prioritized by secondary school teachers over watching TV. Secondary school teachers were found busy with their academic activities like working on computers, planning for teaching, grading papers, and reading professional materials to remain updated. In spite of their busyness, they were also giving a significant time (>1 Hour) to the pleasure of reading. However, they were seen as less involved in non-academic activities like household tasks, family activities, exercising, cooking and TV watching. Lack of time is reported a major hindrance towards the development of leisure reading among preservice and in-service teachers (Akyol & Ulusoy, 2010; Jabbar, 2015; Kennedy, 2014; Oğuz, Yıldız & Hayırsever, 2009; Priajana, 2013). A recent study approved the findings that lack of time and irrelevancy of extensive reading were major reasons for the lack of reading habits among school teachers (Broemmel *et al.*, 2019).

It was quite encouraging to find that most of the secondary school teachers were enhancing their professional and educational profiles. Similarly, most of them were feeling intrinsic pleasure to read material of their personal interests. They considered reading as a pleasure and relaxing activity but it had been found that they were feeling the pressure of time to cover their coursework restricted them to engage in leisure and voluntary reading. They were found busy planning for their class, grading papers and reading professional materials. However, it was very encouraging that most of the secondary teachers were reading of their own interest in spite of all these pressures. So, they had to sacrifice their family activities to fulfil their professional needs and did personal reading. The findings give insight into the administrative and educational perspective of policymakers to consider school teachers' voluntary reading as an important content of the curriculum. The focus of instilling extensive reading should be given to pre-service teachers when they were studying.

After that, the pressure to complete the coursework should be lessened to give a chance of 'by choice reading' to both the students and school teachers.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study indicated in the review of literature section that is a lot of literature that deals with preservice and future teachers' reading habits but there was scanty literature in terms of in-service school teachers. Some studies (Adebayo, [2009](#); Broemmel *et al.*, [2019](#); Oyelude, [2013](#); Waring and Husna, [2019](#)) reported secondary school teachers' reading habits and their preferences. The study fills the literature gap in the context of Pakistan especially as there was no study seems to be conducted so far. In terms of practical implications, the study will be helpful for secondary school teachers, administrators, principals and education policymakers to

consider the importance of voluntary reading among teachers and it is required to take initiatives to promote the habit of reading by designing the curriculum in a way to integrate time and choice for reading among student teachers as well as in-service teachers.

Limitations and Future Direction

The study was limited to the public sector Secondary school teachers in a specific region could restrict the generalizability of the results. Due to the limited time and resources, it was not possible for the researchers to cover both stances; public and private in different regions of Pakistan. Future studies might cover it by exploring the role of principals, school heads and administrators in developing school teachers reading habits. The relationship of teachers' reading habits with their professional development and classroom methodologies should also be investigated.

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