Book Searching Pattern among the Students of Kannur University

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ABSTRACT

Purpose : *This study aims to investigate the book selection patterns among the students of Kannur University, Kerala. This research aims to identify the key determinants shaping students' book selection behaviour.*

Methodology : *Data for the current study was collected through a survey questionnaire covering questions regarding the reading time, type of book, book characteristics and physical condition of the library. The investigator adopted the convenience sampling method by visiting the campus of Kannur University and distributing the hard copies of the questionnaire personally to the respondents.*

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Findings : *The study revealed that the daily visitors of Kannur University are very less and most of them visit the library to borrow and return books. It was discovered that students tend to read fictional books more than other categories like non-fiction and academic books. As far as the book selection pattern is concerned it was revealed that the size of the print, the author's reputation, physical characteristics or subjects, size of the books were always a matter. Furthermore, the respondents consider the book's title and author's name as a major factor while selecting the books.*

Value : *The findings of this study are expected to have significant implications for educational practices, library resource allocation, and curriculum enhancement at Kannur University in specific and other higher educational institutions in general.*

Keywords :

Book Selection, Book Selection Behaviour, Book Searching Process, Kannur University

1. INTRODUCTION

University libraries serve as the intellectual hub of academic institutions, providing students, faculty, and researchers with access to a vast array of scholarly resources, support services, and collaborative spaces (ODonnell & Anderson, 2022) .Understanding the book selection patterns among students is pivotal for academic institutions and libraries(Evans, 1970). Selecting a book in a library is a process that involves several key steps to ensure that the chosen materials meet one's specific needs and preferences (Tejeda-Lorente et al., 2014). Firstly, it is essential to identify the purpose behind seeking a book, whether it's for academic research, leisure reading, or any other specific



goal(Stelmaszewska & Blandford, 2004). This initial step helps narrow the search criteria and focus on relevant materials. Ensuring equitable access to resources is another essential aim, achieved through diverse collections and services tailored to accommodate the needs of all members of the college community (Stelmaszewska & Blandford, 2004).

In the context of Kannur University, delving into the preferences and habits of its student body regarding book selection offers valuable insights into the reading culture and information needs within the university community. By exploring the factors influencing students' choices in selecting books, such as academic requirements, personal interests, and cultural influences, librarians and university administrators can tailor their collection development strategies to serve better the diverse needs of students across various disciplines and academic levels. Additionally, investigating how students access and utilize library resources sheds light on the effectiveness of existing services and informs potential areas for improvement.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the book selection patterns among students of Kannur University, contributing to the enhancement of library services and the promotion of a vibrant reading culture within the university campus. Understanding which types of books students favour allows for more strategic acquisition decisions, ensuring the library's resources remain relevant and engaging.

Additionally, insights gleaned from this study can inform resource allocation within the library budget, directing funds towards areas of highest demand. Beyond the library setting, investigating book selection patterns contributes to academic research by providing data on reading behaviour and information-seeking strategies.

2. Objectives of the Study :

- To assess the book selection pattern among the students of Kannur University.
- To elucidate the major characteristics of books and how they impact their selection
- To find how the facilities in the library impact the book selection.

3. Past Studies :

Chapman et al. (2007) carried out a study to understand the preferences and perceptions of 40 first graders students from 4 major schools and found that boys and girls students preferred storybooks than information books. In a similar kind of study, students expressed their likeness towards books with illustrations(Brookshire et al., 2002). Cumaoglu et al. (2020) surveyed 222 students across 36 different universities in Turkey to know their preference for e-books and printed books. The study found that 62% of the students liked to read e-books over printed books due to its accessibility advantage. The social environment of the students affected their reading behaviour. Consistent with these findings, a study from China reported that faculties at Wuhan University preferred electronic resources over printed resources for their teaching and research(Gao et al., 2011).Among the e-resources, faculties preferred journal articles and conference proceedings. Against to this, Matthews and Johnson (2023) reported that first-generation students from Marathon University preferred printed books over electronic books.

The comprehensive review of existing theories and studies related to book selection patterns among students in libraries reveals a significant gap in the literature. While several individual studies are exploring specific aspects of book selection, such as book preferences, leisure time usage of libraries, factors influencing book selection, and online library usage, there is a lack of research that holistically examines all dimensions of this phenomenon.



4. Methodology

Data for the current study was collected through a survey questionnaire covering questions regarding the reading time, type of book, book characteristics and physical condition of the library. The investigator adopted the convenience sampling method by visiting the campus of Kannur University and distributing the hard copies of the questionnaire personally to the respondents.

Ethical consideration has been sought from the respondents in advance of in participating the survey. A total of 232 questionnaires were distributed during the first week of May 2024 and 200 filled-in questionnaires were received with a response rate of 86.20% and further considered for analysis. Data analysis was done using Jamovi version 2.3.28 version by applying descriptive statistics.

5. Analysis and Interpretation :

General Information of Respondents

Data in Table 1 shows the general information of the respondents who participated in the survey. Gender-wise distribution of samples shows that females (77%) are more as compared to their male counterparts (23%). Nearly half of the respondents (43.5%) were aged between 20 and 22 followed by the 17 to 19 age group with 36.5%. As far as the level of study is concerned, more than half of the participants (51.5%) were PG students followed by UG with 48.5%.

It was also seen from the table that most of the respondents who participated in the survey belonged to the science discipline (41%) followed by social science (24.5%), humanities (20%), and arts(14.5%).

Table 1 : General Information of Respondents

Gender	Male	46	23.00%
	Female	154	77.00%
Age group	17-19	73	36.50%
	20-22	87	43.50%
	23-25	37	18.50%
	25+	3	01.50%
Level of study	U.G.	97	48.50%
	P.G.	103	51.50%
Discipline	Science	82	41.00%
	Social Science	49	24.50%
	Humanities	40	20.00%
	Arts	29	14.50%

Frequency of Library Visit :

As per Figure 1, it can be assumed that only 23 (11.5%) students visit the library daily. 39(19.5%) students visit the library 2-3 days a week. The highest number of students 63 (31.5%) visit the library once a week. Only 16 (8%) students visit the library once a fortnight. 40(20%) students visit the library once a month and 19 (9.5%) students rarely visit the library.

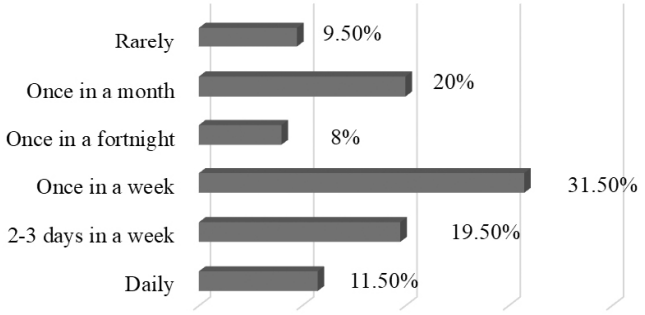


Figure:1 Frequency of library visit



6. Reasons for Visiting the Library :

Respondents were asked about major reasons for visiting the library. The result as per the Table showed that 36.5% of the respondents sometimes visited the library to read newspapers. 32% of the respondents visited the library to borrow and return books that they had taken from the libraries.

Most respondents rarely or never visited the library for referring periodicals. The visit to accessing e-resources among the respondents was also found very less (7.5%). Only a few participants (11.5%) visited the library to prepare for competitive examinations. The majority of the respondents(62%) visited the library to take Xerox.

Table 2 : Reasons for the library visit

Reasons	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
To read newspapers	33 (16.50%)	18 (9.00%)	73 (36.50%)	42 (21.00%)	34 (17.00%)
To borrow or return books	64 (32.00%)	60 (30.00%)	55 (27.50%)	15 (7.50%)	6 (3.00%)
To refer periodicals	6 (3.0%)	27 (13.5%)	58 (29%)	53 (26.5%)	56 (28%)
To access e-resources	15 (7.5%)	23 (11.5%)	58 (29%)	67 (33.5%)	37 (18.5%)
To prepare for competitive examinations	23 (11.5%)	30 (15%)	56 (28%)	50 (25%)	41 (20.5%)

7. Preferences of Books by the Respondents :

Respondents were asked about the type of books they like to read and the result is demonstrated in Figure 2. As per the figure, more than half of the respondents (54.5%) were interested to read fiction followed by academic books (23.5%) and textbooks (7%). There is less preference



among the respondents towards non-fiction books (2.5%). Respondents also shared their preference for other genres of books.

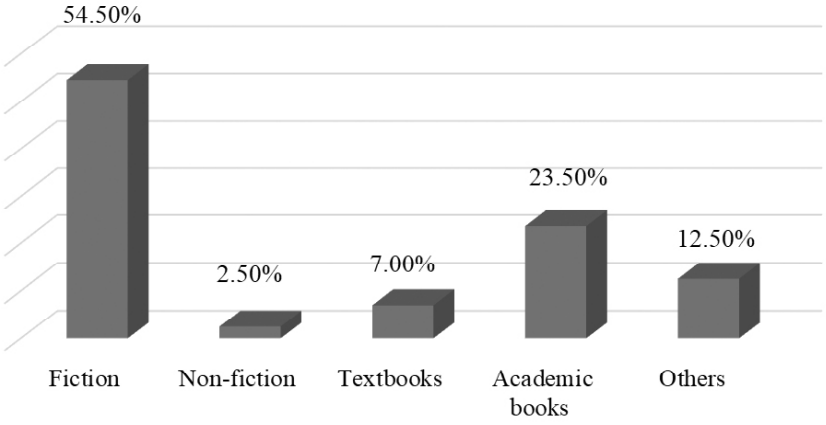


Figure 2 : Preferences of genres of book by the respondents

8. Book Selection Pattern :

The criteria for selecting a particular book would be different from user to user. A separate question was included to know the book selection pattern among the respondents. The result as per Table 3 revealed that 32.5% of the respondents never considered the size of the print while selecting a book while 8.5% of the participants always considered the same. The reputation of the author is always a matter for 18% of the respondents while 9% of them never consider it. It was observed from the table that a good number (34.5%) of participants considered the physical characteristics of the book while selecting the book. The year of publication of the book is also not a big parameter when choosing the books for many participants. However, the physical size of the book matters for 11.5% of the students always and 17.55 of them opined that they often consider the size of the book while choosing the book.

Table 3 : Book Selection Pattern

Book selection pattern	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Size of the print	17 (8.50%)	41 (20.50%)	53 (26.50%)	24 (12.00%)	65 (32.50%)
The reputation of the author	36 (18.00%)	33 (16.50%)	86 (43.00%)	27 (13.50%)	18 (9.00%)
Physical characteristics, or subject	45 (22.50%)	43 (21.50%)	69 (34.50%)	27 (13.50%)	16 (8.00%)
The year of publication	9 (4.50%)	19 (9.50%)	45 (22.50%)	63 (31.50%)	64 (32.00%)
The physical size of the book (portability)	23 (11.50%)	35 (17.50%)	64 (32.00%)	39 (19.50%)	39 (19.50%)

9. Factors Considered while Selecting Books

To learn more about which factors the students concentrate on while selecting a book, a separate question was included. Respondents were asked about the criteria that they are considering while selecting a book. Majorly 5 criteria were asked and the result was analysed using a 5-point Likert scale.

The result showed that 27.5% of the respondents always consider the front cover and design of the book while selecting a book. The information provided on the back cover impacts the book selection and 33% of the respondents expressed that it always affects their decision while choosing a book.

Very interestingly, most of the participants(43%) opined that the title and the author of the book always impact its selection. 29% of the participants always turned over the pages of the book before selecting it. 39 or 19.5% of the participants consider the index provided in the book as a major criteria while selecting a book from their respective libraries.

Table 4 : Factors Considered while Selecting Books

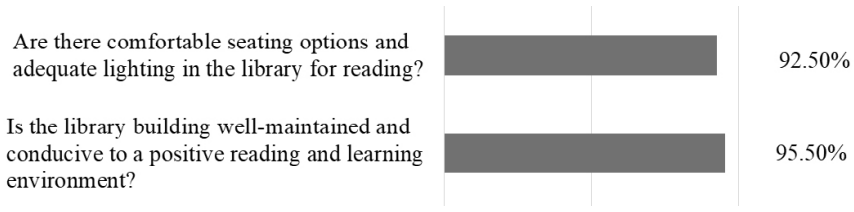
Factors considered for book selection	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Front cover design as a factor	55 (27.50%)	42 (21.00%)	53 (26.50%)	16 (8.00%)	34 (17.00%)
The information provided in the back cover	66 (33.00%)	44 (22.00%)	57 (28.50%)	23 (11.50%)	10 (5.00%)
The title and author's name	86 (43.00%)	53 (26.50%)	39 (19.50%)	10 (5.00%)	12 (6.00%)
Turning over through page	58 (29.00%)	38 (19.00%)	59 (29.50%)	28 (14.00%)	17 (8.50%)
The index as a factor	44 (22.00%)	39 (19.50%)	55 (27.50%)	32 (16.00%)	30 (15.00%)

10. Library Facilities and Book Selection

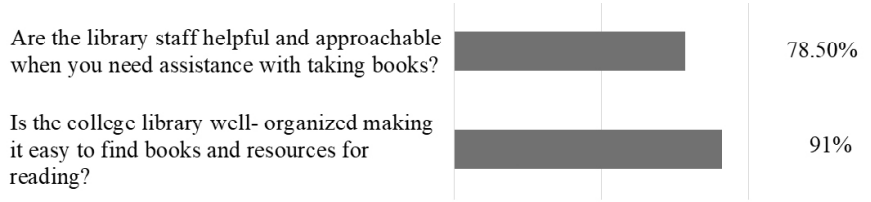
The present study also investigated whether the facilities of a library would affect the book selection by the students. As per Figure 3, 92.50% of the participants agreed that their library had enough seating and lighting facilities. Most of the respondents (95.50%) were satisfied with the library building and they agreed that they had a positive reading environment in their libraries.

It was also observed that 21.5% of the respondents were not happy about library staff while a majority (91%) agreed that their libraries were well organized making it easy to find books.

Fig. 3 : Library Facilities and Book Selection







11. Findings, Discussion and Recommendations :

The present study delved into the intricate dynamics of how students at Kannur University choose books for their academic and personal pursuits. The study findings reveal several interesting insights into the reading habits and library usage patterns of students. The study revealed that the daily visitors of Kannur University are very less and most of them visit the library to borrow and return books. The use of the library for accessing digital resources and referring periodicals was found very less among the respondents. The possible reason could be the less awareness of students on e-resources and periodicals as identified from a similar kind of study in Pakistan(Qaiser Iqbal, 2021). When the authors assessed which type of books the students liked to read, it was discovered that students tend to read fictional books more than other categories like non-fiction and academic books. This finding is consistent with previous studies that students tend to read more fictional books than other categories(Erikson et al., 2020; Hopper, 2005; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001). As far as the book selection pattern is concerned it was revealed that the size of the print, the reputation of the author, physical characteristics or subjects, size of the books were always a matter. The year of publication of the book was not that important. Furthermore, the respondents consider the title and author's name of the book as a major factor while selecting the books. The information provided on the back cover of the book also plays a major parameter. This finding goes in line with the findings of Habeeb Omotunde

(2015).When the investigators asked whether the library facilities affect the book selection, it was found that facilities available in the library were a major factor in selecting a book which aligns with a previous study's findings(Ray Reutzel & Gali, 1998). However, the students at Kannur University were satisfied with the facilities available in the libraries.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made :

1. Promote Reading Culture : Encourage students to engage in diverse reading materials beyond academic requirements to foster a culture of reading and lifelong learning.
2. Library Services Enhancement : Improve library services and resources based on the identified book selection patterns to better cater to students' needs and preferences.
3. Faculty Engagement : Encourage faculty members to recommend relevant and engaging literature to students to support their academic and personal development.

12. Conclusion :

The study concludes by emphasizing how important it is for libraries to actively involve students and encourage the use of their resources. Libraries can improve students' reading experiences by addressing the difficulties they are facing. This will help students form stronger reading habits. To encourage a reading culture among students, libraries should also think about hosting frequent book talks, author interactions, and reading workshops. The findings underscore the importance of tailored interventions to enhance library services, and curriculum design, and



promote a culture of reading among students.

This study serves as a foundational step towards understanding and addressing the complexities of book selection patterns in academic settings. While existing research has explored various aspects of book selection, there remains a need for comprehensive studies encompassing all dimensions of this phenomenon.

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