

Research Paper



Analyzing the reading habits of medical students: insights from a research study

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ABSTRACT

A modern saying is, "The chapter you are learning today will save someone's life tomorrow. Pay attention." Acquiring knowledge through reading is crucial for the learning process of a medical professional. "A doctor is a student until he dies; once he considers himself not a student anymore, the doctor inside him dies" It can form part of an individual and become a habit, which, once developed, becomes very difficult to break. Reading habit is an essential life skill. Reading in clinical practice is necessary as it is related to clinical competencies. This study investigates the reading habits of medical students at GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, GITAM University, Visakhapatnam. One hundred students participated in the study through an online questionnaire. All 100 students responded that work most often is engaging with their reading and studying. This study assesses knowledge, attitude, and practice of reading habits among medical students at GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research at Visakhapatnam.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The medical field is constantly evolving, and keeping up with new developments and research is crucial for medical students to succeed in their studies and future careers. As a result, the reading habits of medical students have been a topic of interest for researchers worldwide. The literature on this topic indicates that medical students face unique challenges in reading and learning, given the vast amount of material they need to master and its complexity. In "Reading Habit," we get two words reading and habit. Reading is an action of a person, who reads, and routine is a product of this action or learning; like all other habits, reading in an individual develops with time. Smith and Robinson defined reading as "an active attempt on the reader's part to understand a writer's message."

Reading to learn is an essential tool for life-long learning. Promoting a reading culture among medical students is one of the critical tasks in curriculum reform to strengthen students' learning capabilities. Acquiring knowledge through reading is crucial for the learning process of a medical student. In clinical practice, it is essential as it relates to clinical competencies. Medical students encounter a massive volume of different subjects; with which they are unfamiliar [1]. On the other hand, remembering the various facts and new diagnostic and therapeutic methods seems complicated. Thus, learning all the facts needs enough time and regular curriculum planning. Frequently much time is devoted to developing the curriculum content and the type of assessments that will be completed; with little attention given to how the student's best learns or if they will be enhancing their lifelong learning habits. A student's learning approach, including study habits, has been shown to predict the student's success.

2. RELATED WORK

The reading habits of medical students have been a topic of interest for researchers over the years. The literature suggests that medical students face unique challenges in reading and learning due to the volume and complexity of the material they need to master. A study conducted in the US by [2] focused on Reading and Study Habits of Medical Students on Clerkships and Performance Outcomes: A Multi-institutional Study. The authors found that students who were more self-directed learners tended to have better reading habits and spent more time studying independently. The authors recommended that medical schools focus on developing students' self-directed learning skills to improve their reading habits and academic performance and highlight the importance of guiding medical students in optimizing their use of resources during clinical rotations. By doing so, students can maximize their learning and contribute to a supportive learning environment for their peers.

A study conducted in [3], [4] focused on reading Habits among the sample of Hawler Medical College Students. This study examined the research that indicated a concerning lack of interest in reading among medical students in Hawler [5]. To address this issue, academic institutions are encouraged to organize regular events such as study circles, debate clubs, seminars, and essay competitions to inspire students to acquire knowledge and engage in these events [6]. Furthermore, providing reading rooms with all necessary facilities, like infrastructure, sanitation, and ventilation, can help attract students towards libraries and promote a culture of reading among the students. Overall, the findings of this study highlight the need for proactive measures to encourage reading and knowledge acquisition among medical students [7]. Academic institutions should prioritize creating a supportive learning environment to help students develop a love for reading and lifelong learning.

Finally, a study conducted in Saudi Arabia by [8] focused on medical students' preferences towards learning resources and their study habits. The importance of developing reading habits and communication skills in medical learning cannot be overstated. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering a supportive environment that encourages students to read textbooks, especially in the early years of medical education when English proficiency may be lacking. However, the availability of online resources and social media applications can distract students from studying. Implementing outcome-based curricula and using assessment tools that promote deep learning can help students develop better study habits. Overall, further research is needed to explore study habits in medical students across Saudi Arabia and to identify effective

strategies for promoting textbook reading.

2.1. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the frequency of reading habits among medical students and their preferred reading material.
2. To evaluate the reading skills of medical students and identify any difficulties they face.
3. To assess the impact of reading on the academic performance of medical students.
4. To identify the various sources of reading material used by medical students.
5. To identify the different purposes for which medical students read.
6. To determine the sources from which the medical students inculcate their reading habits.
7. To evaluate the accessibility and usefulness of various library resources and services among medical students.
8. To identify the issues faced by medical students while reading.

3. METHODOLOGY

- **Sampling Technique:** The study will use convenience sampling to collect data from medical students at the GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Visakhapatnam. The students will be invited to participate in the study through an online questionnaire.
- **Sample Size:** The study will aim to collect random responses from 100 medical students at the GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research.
- **Data Collection Tool:** An online questionnaire will be used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire will be designed to gather information about the reading habits of medical students and the availability of resources at the GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research.
- **Ethical Considerations:** The study will ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. The participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent will be obtained before data collection. The study will also comply with the ethical guidelines of the institution.
- **Data Analysis and Interpretation Analysis:** The data collected through the online questionnaire will be analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentages. The results will be presented in the form of tables and Figures.
- **Gender-wise distribution:** Figure 1 According to the form's response Figure 1, 64% of the female and 36% of the male participants provided feedback on their reading habits at the GITAM Institute of Medical College and Research, Visakhapatnam. These findings suggest a higher rate of female participation in the study than male participation.

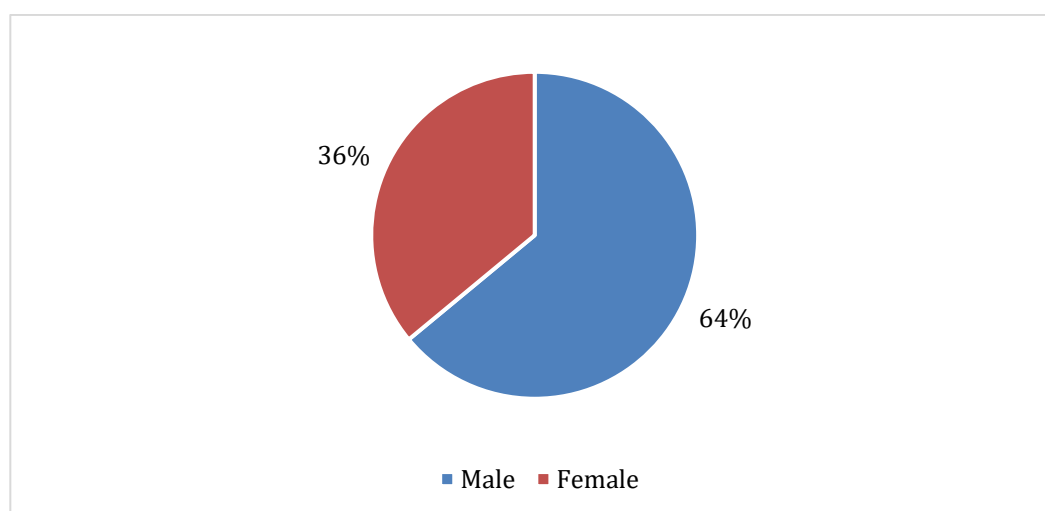


Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

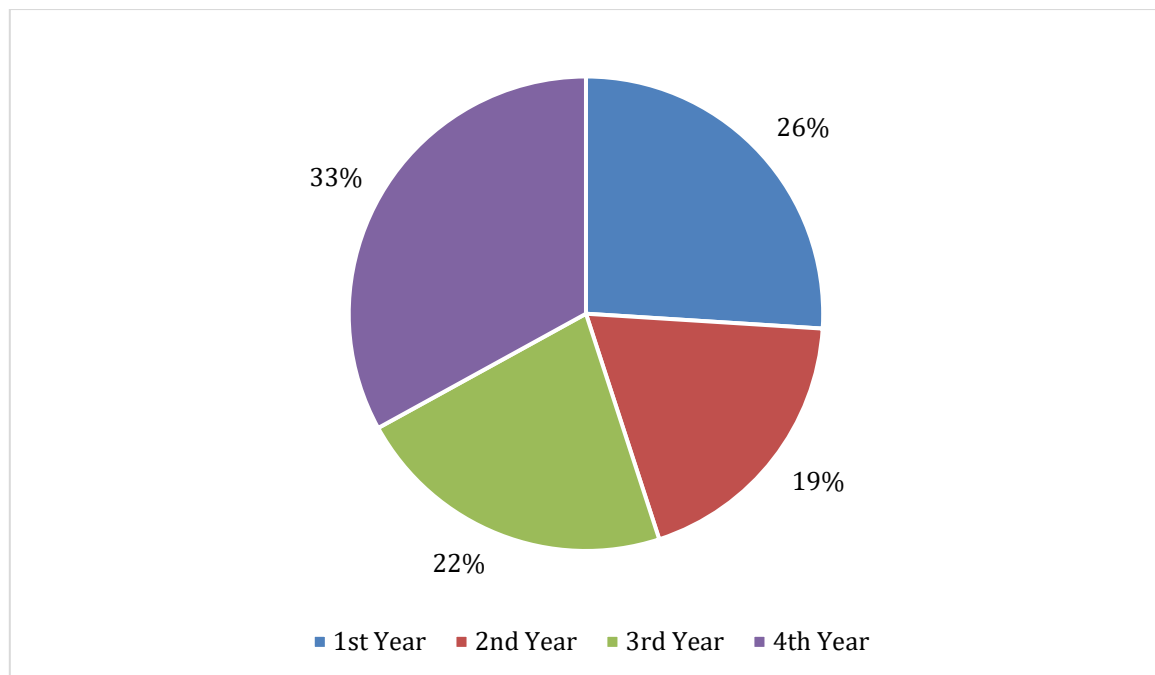


Figure 2. Year-wise Distribution of Respondents

According to the forms response Figure 2, the study found that 26% of the participants were first-year MBBS students, 19% were second-year MBBS students, 22% were third-year MBBS students, and 33% were fourth-year MBBS students [9]. These findings indicate that most respondents were in their final year of the MBBS program at the GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research.

- **The Number of Visits**

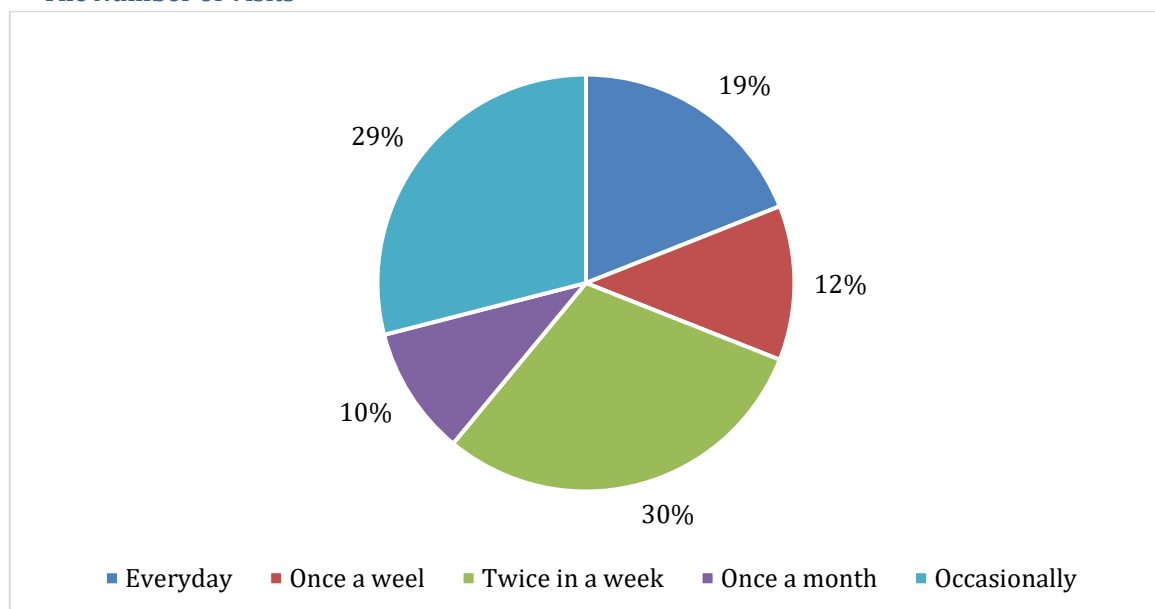


Figure 3. Frequency of Library Visits

According to the forms response Figure 3, 19% visited the library every day, 12% visited the library once a week, 30% visited the library twice a week, 10% saw the library once a month, and 29% visited the library occasionally. These findings suggest that a significant proportion of the respondents visit the library regularly, with the majority visiting the library twice a week or less frequently.

- **Time to Spend on Reading**

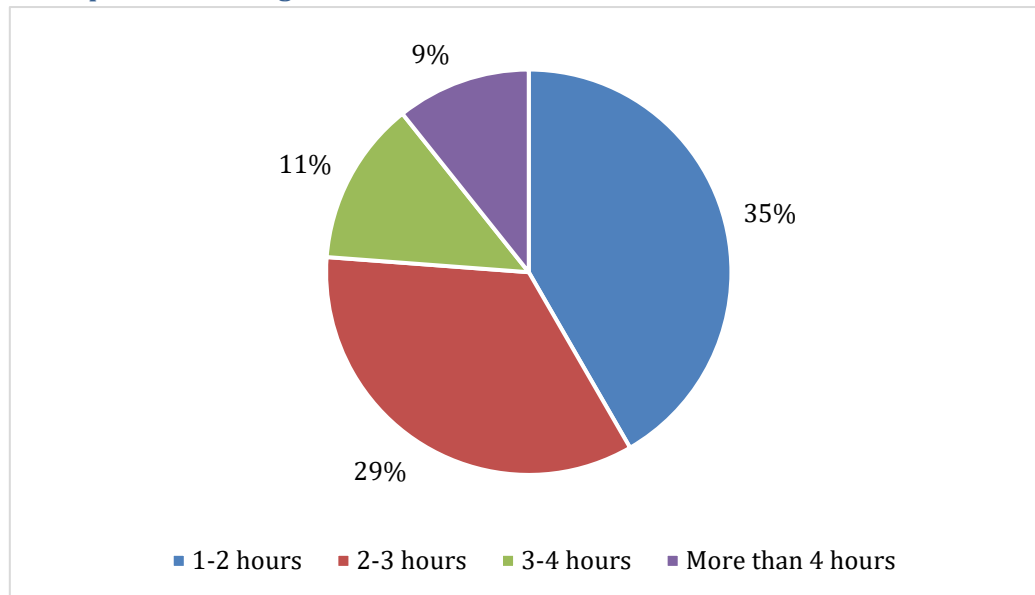


Figure 4. Average Time Spent in the Library

According to the forms response Figure 4, 16% spent less than one hour on reading, 35% spent 1 to 2 hours on reading, 29% spent 2 to 3 hours on reading, 11% spent 3 to 4 hours on reading, and 9% spent more than 4 hours on reading. These findings indicate that most respondents spent up to 2-3 hours on reading, with a relatively small proportion spending more than 4 hours on reading.

- **Preferred Time for Reading**

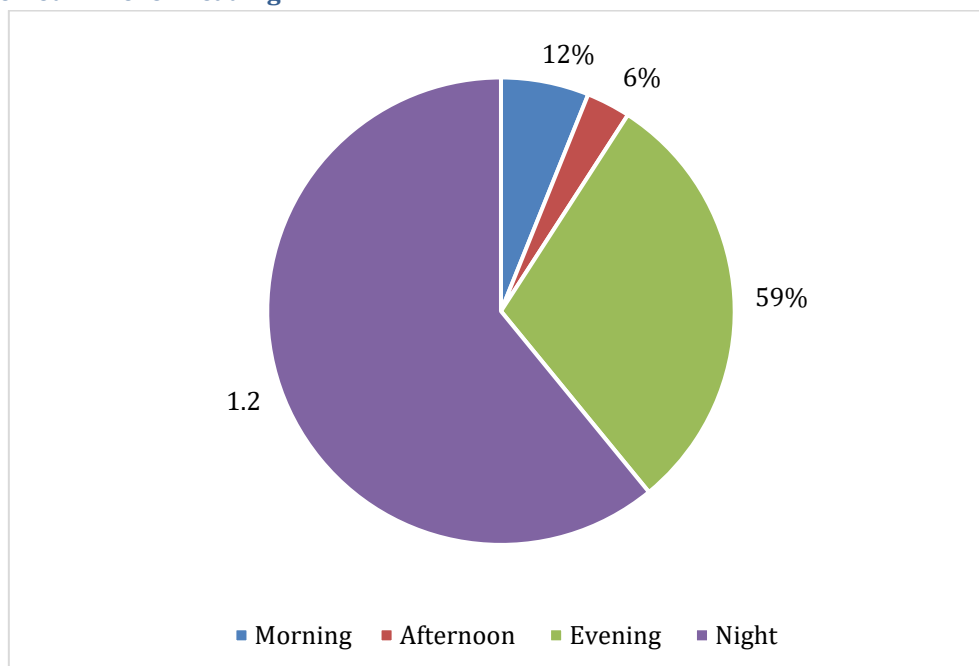


Figure 5. Preferred Time for Library Visits

According to the forms response Figure 5, the study found that 12% of the participants preferred reading in the morning, 6% preferred reading in the afternoon, 59% preferred reading in the evening, and 23% preferred reading at night. These findings indicate that the majority of the respondents preferred reading in the evening, with a significant proportion of the respondents preferring to read at night.

- **Kind of Material for Reading**

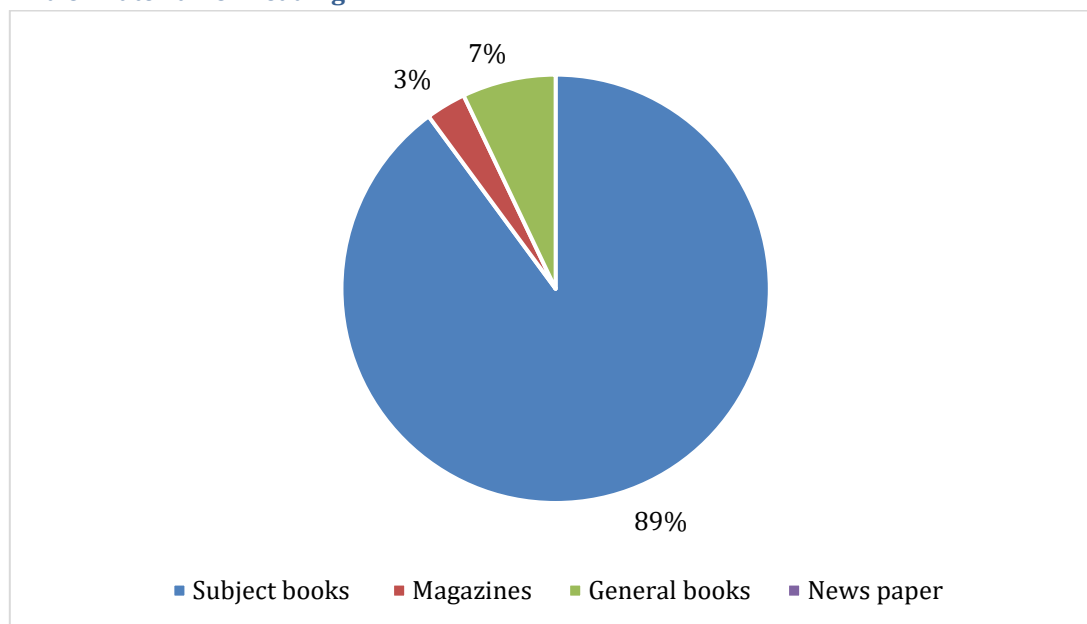


Figure 6. Preferred Reading Materials

According to the forms response Figure 6, the study found that 89% of the participants preferred reading subject books, 7% preferred reading general knowledge books, and 4% preferred reading magazines, journals, or periodicals. These findings indicate that the majority of the respondents preferred subject books as their primary reading material, with a small proportion preferring general knowledge books or magazines, journals, or periodicals.

- **Purpose of Reading**

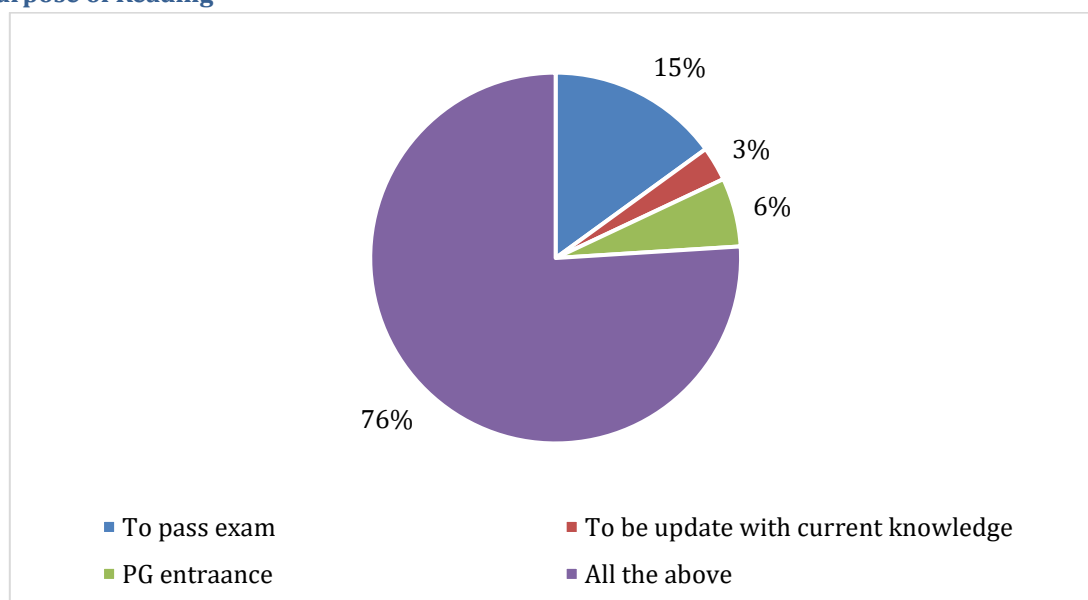
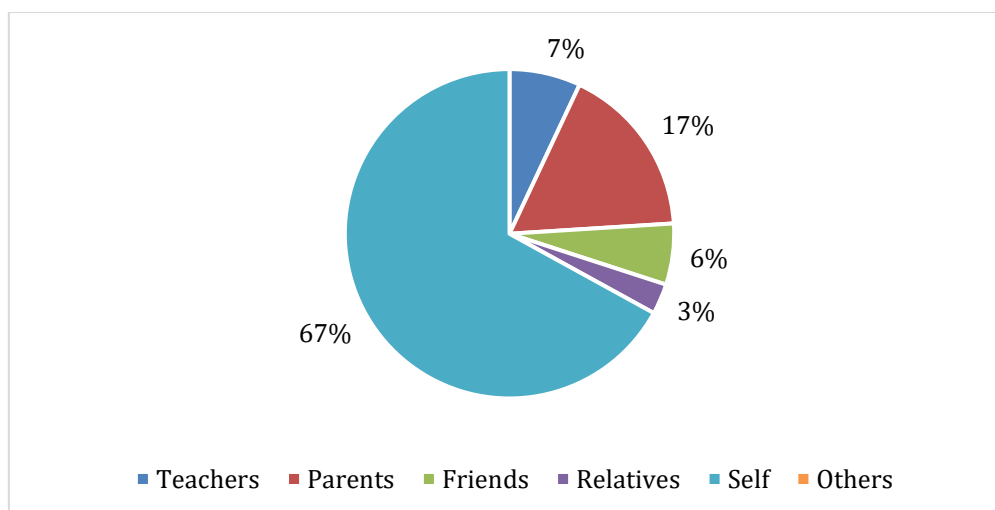


Figure 7. Purpose of Library Use

According to the forms response Figure 7, the study found that the respondents had multiple purposes for their reading habits. Specifically, 15% of the participants had a reading habit for passing academic exams, 4% had a reading habit for updating themselves with current and developing knowledge, 5% had a reading habit for PG entrance, and 76% of the respondents had a reading habit for all the above reasons. These findings suggest that the majority of the respondents had a multifaceted approach to their

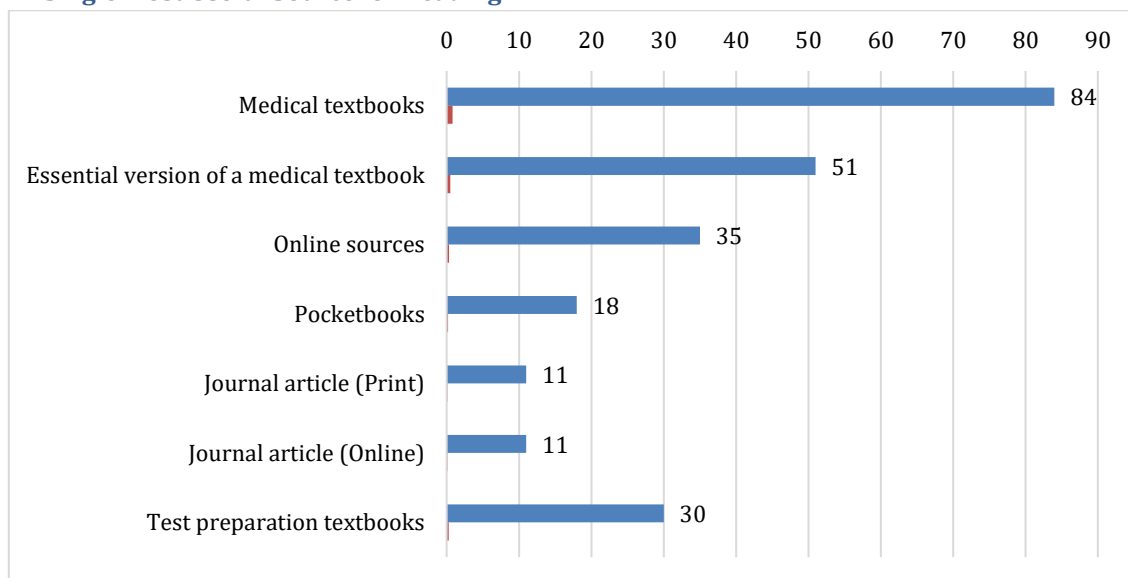
reading habits, incorporating various purposes such as academic success and knowledge acquisition.

- **Inculcating Reading Habits:** According to the form's response [Figure 8](#), it can be inferred that 7% of the respondents inculcated the reading habit from their teachers, 17% of the respondents taught the reading habit from their parents, 6% of the respondents inculcated the reading habit from their friends, 67% of the respondents regarding inculcate the reading habit from themselves, and 3% of the respondents regarding inculcate the reading habit from others. This implies that a significant number of respondents developed their reading habits on their own, while a lesser percentage was influenced by external factors such as parents, friends, or teachers.



[Figure 8](#). Source of Motivation for Library Use

- **A Single Most Useful Source for Reading**



[Figure 9](#). Most Frequently Used Information Sources

The forms response [Figure 9](#) revealed that medical textbooks were the most preferred source for reading among medical students, with 84% of the respondents selecting them as their primary reference material. This was followed by the essential version of medical textbooks (51%), online sources (35%), and test preparation textbooks (30%). Pocket books (18%), journal articles in print (11%), and journal articles online (11%) were also cited as useful sources for reading, albeit to a lesser extent [\[10\]](#).

It is worth noting that medical textbooks were identified as the most useful source of reading by a

vast majority of respondents (84%), indicating their critical role in medical education. Moreover, the results indicate that online sources are gaining popularity among medical students, which could be attributed to the ease of access and convenience they offer. However, it is essential to note that medical textbooks remain the gold standard and the most reliable source of information for medical students.

How Do You Find These Sources?

Table 1. Perceived Usefulness of Reading Resources

Description	Not Useful at All	Not Very Useful at All	Neutral	Somewhat Useful	Extremely Useful
Medical textbook	2%	2%	14%	23%	59%
Essential version of a medical textbook	Nil	5%	22%	32%	41%
The online version of the textbook	Nil	5%	37%	28%	27%
Journal article (Online)	3%	8%	54%	23%	12%
Medical websites	1%	5%	40%	37%	17%
Pocketbooks	3%	5%	38%	35%	19%
Journal article (Print)	2%	5%	48%	34%	11%
Test preparation handouts	4	8	31	27	30

How do you find these sources?

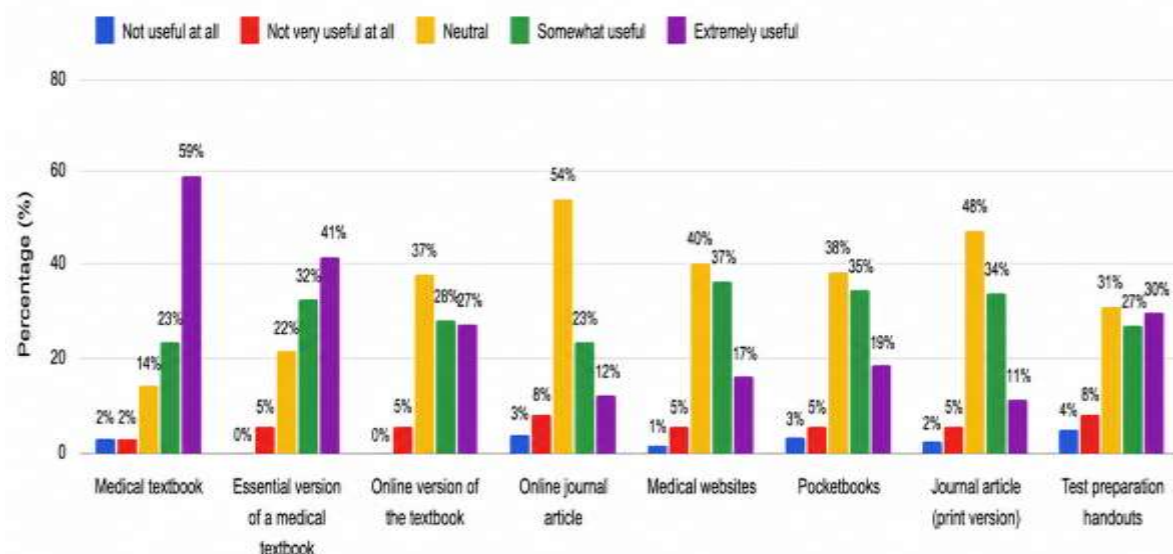


Figure 10. Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Perceived Usefulness of Library Information Sources

According to the forms response [Table 1](#), [Figure 10](#), most medical students find medical textbooks extremely beneficial, with 59% reporting so. Essential versions of medical textbooks are also highly valued, with 41% of respondents finding them extremely useful. Online versions of textbooks and medical websites are viewed as neutral, with 37% and 40% of respondents respectively, reporting so. Pocketbooks, Journal articles (print and online), and Test preparation textbooks are also seen as neutral sources, with percentages ranging from 30% to 54%. It is worth noting that medical textbooks are perceived as the single most helpful source of information by a significant majority of students [\[11\]](#).

- Please Indicate Your Level of Satisfaction Concerning the FACILITIES by Completing the Following Statements

Table 2. Students' Perceptions of Library Services and Facilities

Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Computers and electronic equipment are accessible in the library	25%	49%	1%	2%	3%
The library's collection meets my research needs	16%	38%	30%	12%	4%
Library staff keeps me informed about new services and collections	13%	30%	26%	17%	14%
Library space is adequate	20%	17%	17%	16%	30%
Opening hours are adequate	21%	38%	16%	13%	12%
Closing hours are adequate	21%	35%	17%	13%	14%
Library staff provides quality service	34%	39%	17%	3%	7%

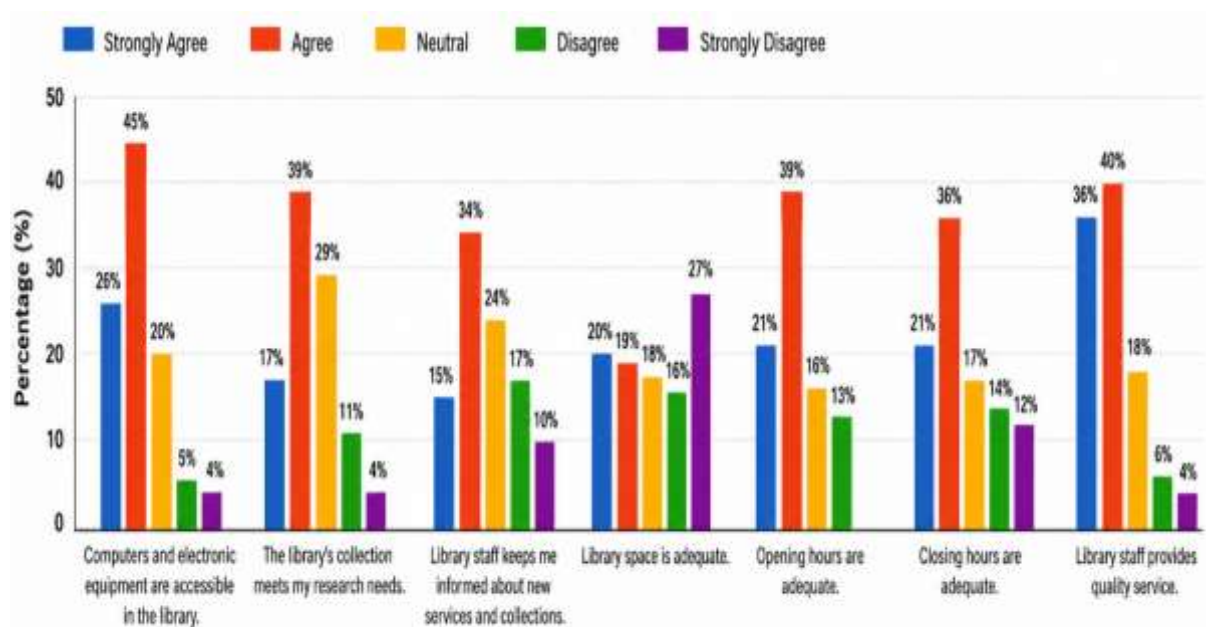


Figure 11. Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Satisfaction with Library Facilities

Table 2, Figure 11 summarizes the survey responses regarding the accessibility and quality of library resources and services. The percentage of respondents who agreed with each statement is reported. Almost half of the respondents, 49%, agreed that computers and electronic equipment were accessible in the library. However, only 38% agreed that the library's collection met their research needs. Additionally, only 30% of respondents agreed that library staff kept them informed about new services and collections.

Regarding the library space, 30% of respondents disagreed that it was adequate. For the opening hours, 38% of respondents agreed that they were adequate, while 35% agreed that the closing hours were adequate. Lastly, 39% of respondents agreed that library staff provided quality service.

- **What Problems Do You Experience During Reading?**

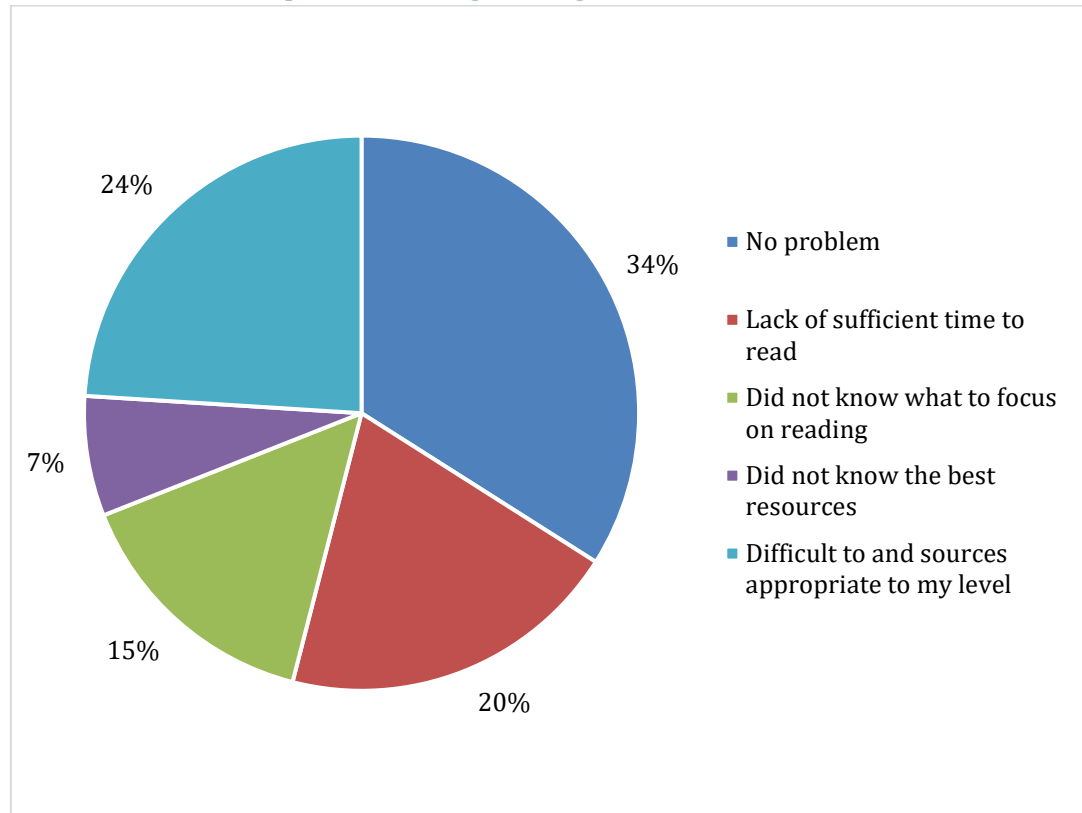


Figure 12. Challenges Faced in Library Use

Figure 12 presents the largest proportion of respondents, 34%, reported no issues with reading. However, 20% reported a lack of sufficient time to read. Other issues reported by respondents included not knowing what to focus on while reading (15%), difficulty finding sources appropriate to their level (24%), and not knowing the best resources to use (7%).

- **Please Indicate Your Level of Satisfaction Concerning the Resources by Completing the Following Statements**

Table 3. User Perceptions of Library Resources and Accessibility

Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Resources are appropriate for my course needs	19%	47%	27%	3%	4%
Resources are current and relevant	14%	45%	31%	7%	3%
Resources are easy to find	14%	54%	27%	3%	2%
Borrowing resources policies and procedures are clearly stated	19%	51%	25%	4%	1%
I usually find the resources I need	16%	49%	24%	7%	4%
I usually ask the library staff for assistance	13%	45%	31%	6%	5%
I find that there are always resources available that address assignment questions	18%	43%	33%	4%	2%
Recommendations for new or different resources are listened to by the library staff	19%	36%	33%	5%	7%

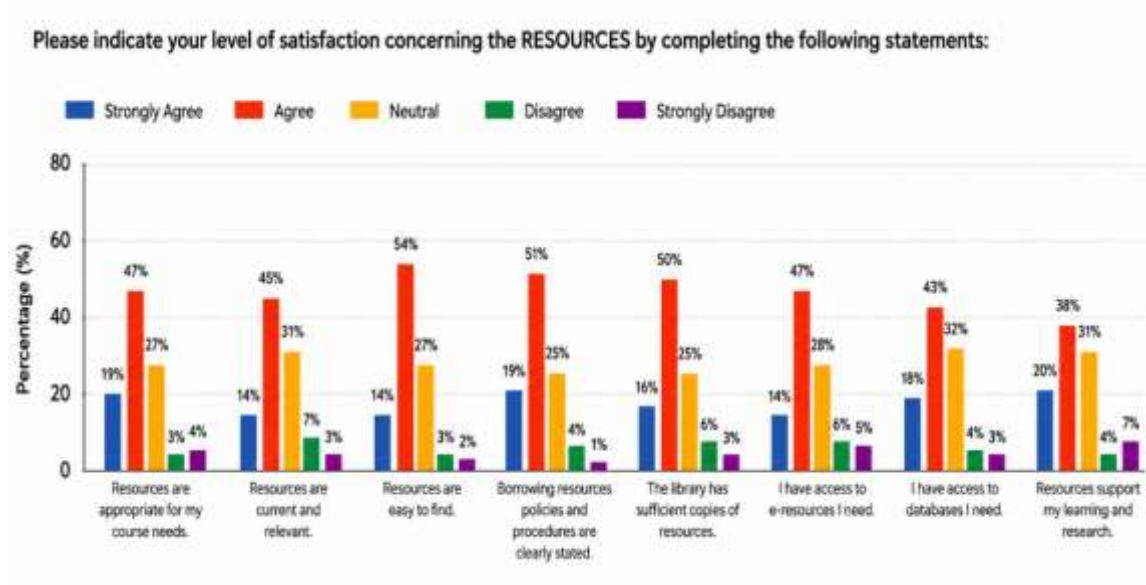


Figure 13. Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Satisfaction with Library Resources

Table 3, Figure 13 presents the results of the survey question asking students about their perceptions of the appropriateness, currency, accessibility, and availability of resources in the library. The percentage of students who agreed with each statement is reported.

100 % of the respondents, 47% agreed that the resources available in the library were appropriate for their course needs, while 45% agreed that the resources were current and relevant. A majority of students, 54%, agreed that the resources were easy to find, and 51% agreed that the borrowing policies and procedures were clearly stated. Regarding resource availability, 49% of students agreed that they usually find the resources they need in the library, while 43% agreed that there are always resources available that address their assignment questions. In terms of seeking assistance, 45% of students agreed that they usually ask the library staff for help. Finally, only 36% of students agreed that the library staff listened to recommendations for new or different resources.

4. CONCLUSION

This study's findings provide insight into the reading habits and perceptions of medical students regarding library resources and services. Medical textbooks were found to be the most useful source of reading material, with a majority of students inculcating the reading habit themselves. The study also highlighted several areas where library resources and services could be improved, such as the availability of current and relevant resources and adequate library space. Additionally, the study identified several challenges faced by medical students, such as a lack of sufficient time to read and difficulty finding appropriate sources. Addressing these issues and improving library resources and services can enhance the learning experience of medical students and help them become more successful in their academic pursuits. Overall, the study provides valuable insights that can inform future efforts to improve library resources and services for medical students.

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Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Dr. Venkata Rao Nagavolu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Mohan Bandaru	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Informed Consent

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their voluntary consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

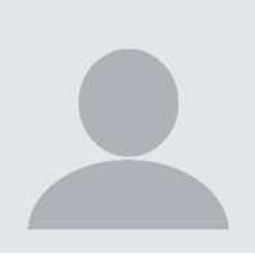
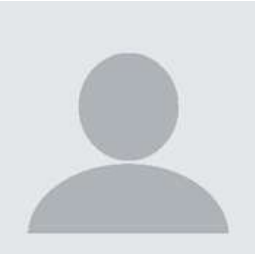
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