

## STUDENTS' PREFERENCE FOR PRINTED READING BOOKS AND DIGITAL BOOKS: THEY PREFER READING FROM PRINTED BOOKS, WHEREAS THEY READ IN DIGITAL FORM.

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### Abstract

Current students represent the generation that has experienced numerous changes during their education due to the progression of new technologies. Reading, as one of the most reliable form of learning transformed its form. Many school and university textbooks are now available in both printed and electronic/digital formats. The problem of this research was to find out the preferences of students regarding the form of reading, as well as the reality in what form they read to acquire knowledge. The research was conducted in May 2022, with a sample of 50 students randomly selected from different academic years. The research results show that 96% of the surveyed students prefer reading from printed books, and only 4% prefer reading from electronic/digital books. The other dependent variable was dedicated to reality which the students mostly read from. In this case, the results were different, namely 54% of the surveyed students stated that they mostly read electronic/digital books. The testing of the dependent variables resulted in a value of  $p=.000$ , which proves that there is a significant difference between the students' preferences concerning the form of text (digital or printed) and the reality concerning the form of reading. The results from the research show that there is no significant difference between the students' averages, depending on the academic year, since the value  $p=.694$ . Regardless of their academic year, students prefer literature in printed form, while they mostly read digital literature.

**Keywords:** *reading, form of reading, digital literature, printed literature.*

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### Introduction

We have all been subject to technological development, as an inevitable need to organize life and work in a different form. As long as this progress is accompanied by a mixture of doubts and fears about doing well and carrying out daily activities, it does not represent a concern for children, since for them, this development is more than normal and natural. This situation has created a gap between the consent of parents and those of children, fueling increased conflict between generations. The past two years witnessed a lack of preparation for the organization of work and life where new technologies would be dominant. The pandemic forced many people to start devoting themselves more to new technologies and use them to communicate, shop, pay bills, perform work obligations, etc. Many teachers were extremely embarrassed to organize educational and educational work through new technologies. It was the pupils and students who accepted and adapted to the new way of working since they were growing up in an environment rich in technology. Holloway and Valentine (2003) have shown that each child's interaction with digital technologies is unique, asserting that how computers affect children's lives is dependent on the individual and social structures within the family where the child lives. This fact requires teachers to take into account the different digital skills possessed by

students in a class, taking into consideration that not all children have the same digital devices in the family, it is also necessary to respect the fact that in school, in addition to the general uses with these equipment and specific digital skills must be developed.

According to Marsh and Singleton (2009:11), digital writing and reading have tended to follow two venues of research: the first "researches to determine how reading needs to be redefined in the digital time", and the second refers to the search on how "technologies can increase students' skills, knowledge and understanding about reading and writing printed texts". In recent years, the term "text" has undergone radical changes in its context of use when it comes to printed texts such as books, newspapers, or magazines, and context of use when it comes to "texts" that include digital media, screens e televisions, computers, tablets or smartphones. Teaching digital skills in schools has not been a primary issue, because skills in ICT (information and communication technology) are not developed in all subjects, and as a result, some students have been noted considerable skills in the use of some software packages, but without developing the skills of using search engines in order effective. Teachers have not been able to make assumptions about specific digital skills that students get out of school, so there are common cases when a student can retrieve the necessary information from one website, and another to perform more sophisticated action, but without being able to download a document. This variety of digital skills should not be considered primary, because now classrooms have equipment such as smart blackboards, cameras, and projectors, which also present a variety of digital variety. Prensky (2009:4) suggests that for children, for adults as well, to be successful in modern society, they will not only need to learn how to use technology but must develop competence and confidence about technology in general. Rapid developments in technology have also turned literature into a concept of multimedia that includes the interaction between printed or traditional texts and the texts of media. To achieve this, teachers must build up trust in the treatment and use of texts, whether printed or media, to enable interaction between pupils/students, technology, and other literary experiences. Regarding the treatment of printed texts and digital texts, there is an imbalance between teachers with more experience and new teachers. Older claim that reading printed books can in no way be replaced by new technologies, despite the claims of young teachers, who have a unique opportunity to present a more holistic approach to reading and learning. This situation is presented as an obstacle in promoting the self-confidence of pupils/students in the use of technology in the classroom and in developing independent learning skills. To achieve educational goals to the needs of the digital age, teachers must make additional investments regarding preparations and their work planning. They need time, to gain confidence in themselves and to act in new ways. The preparations and duties of teachers are under development and quite heterogeneous, so the students during the acquisition of knowledge and skills, namely during the use of the necessary literature, receive different recommendations from the teachers. Now the development of mutual relations between digital media and traditional media can be seen, and their understanding of meaning as support to each other. An obvious phenomenon also supported by teachers.

## **Methodology**

For the needs of this project, we conducted research through a survey, with students of all academic years, where our goal was: To find out the likes/preferences of students about reading printed texts/literature and digital texts. The research was made in May 2022. The questionnaire consisted of 5 questions, which asked the students to pronounce about preferences for reading printed and digital books. Our guess on this issue was that students mostly like to read and learn from printed texts rather than digital texts. The research was carried out with a sample of 50 students randomly selected.

## Analysis and interpretation of results

The reading represents the safest and most rational form of learning. In the acquisition of new knowledge, students spend considerable time reading. Today, reading can be in printed texts such as books, manuals, magazines, encyclopedias, etc., and the same can also be read in digital form. The first question of the questionnaire required the pronunciation of students on their preference/liking about reading, which is related to learning. In this question, the respondents were pronounced as in the following graph.

*Table 1. I prefer to learn from*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Digital books	2	4,0	4,0	4,0
	Printed books	48	96,0	96,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

In the graph, it can be seen that most of the surveyed students prefer reading from printed books. Only two students or 4% of the respondents said that to learn they prefer reading from the screen, i.e., digital literature. Overall development imposes the need for interaction between teachers and students through new forms, which greatly ease communication and function of the smooth running of the teacher and student. Creating virtual classrooms helps teachers, among other things, in supplying students with various learning materials. Students also have the opportunity of notifications, communications, and supply of teaching materials through these classes (classroom). Material posted by teachers, students can download it, then save it as a document or print it. The second question of the questionnaire got the statement of the surveyed students, how they act in most cases with these materials, with which we got these answers.

*Table 2. Literature posted by professors in the Classroom*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Download and learn from the screen	7	14,0	14,0	14,0
	Download, print, and learn from paper	43	86,0	86,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

Most of the respondents stated that they download the material, and then print it. To download and save as a document were declared by 14% of the students. This confirms the statements in the first question, that they like the form of reading from printed texts to learn. Today, much of the literature with artistic content can be found on different websites. Reading this literature can be done through reading printed books and through reading from the screen. Which form of reading do respondents students like the most we got the answers as in the following graph.

*Table 3. I prefer reading fiction*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	From the screen (smartphone, tablet, computer)	6	12,0	12,0	12,0
	From a book	44	88,0	88,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

From the results of the graph, most of the surveyed students like reading literature with artistic content from printed texts, against 12% of respondents who like digital reading, i.e., screen reading. People's interests in general about various information are met through internet research. Almost no information is missing. Some of this information also helps in matters of learning and study. To acquire this data, there is the possibility of downloading and saving them, depending on interests and needs.

The next question asked the respondents to express what they do with these materials, save them in files, or print them. To this question, the respondents answered as in the next graph.

*Table 4. Various and necessary information (new words and unknowns, definitions or clarifications for different notions)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Save on file when needed and read from there	32	64,0	64,0	64,0
	Download print read from paper when needed	18	36,0	36,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

According to the results from the graph, most respondents expressed that they download and save the information and data they need in electronic form. The other 36% of respondents print materials downloaded from the Internet. The issue of reading has always been actual. People read for different reasons, in different ways. Reading both print and digital texts is widespread and practiced by everyone. Some print media have lost the interest of readers, who are changing the form of reading by focusing on reading electronic content. Based on the development of new media and the content they offer, we asked questions in the questionnaire on the amount of reading in a day, with which we reached these results.

*Table 5. In a day, on average, I read the most*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	From the screen (smartphone, tablet, computer)	27	54,0	54,0	54,0
	From a book or printed material	23	46,0	46,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

From the graph, most of the respondents answered that within the day, most read content from the screen (smartphone, tablet, or computer), and the other 46% of them answered that they read more texts printed on paper. In comparing the difference between the sample referring to student consent, from where most prefer to read, and other samples that have to do with the actions of the students about the literature posted by the teachers in the classroom, with reading different information and with the amount of daily reading, we got the results as in the following table.

*Table 6. Comparison of pairs of dependent samples*

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Read the uploaded literature	,303	,043	,014	,186	2,333	49	,024
Pair 2	Read the artistic literature	,396	,056	-,033	,193	1,429	49	,159
Pair 3	Read different and needed information	,495	,070	,459	,741	8,573	49	,000
Pair 4	Learn daily approximately	,505	,071	,356	,644	7,000	49	,000

The table shows that there is a significant statistical difference between the first pair of dependent samples,  $p=.024$ , as well as between the third and fourth pairs, where  $p=.00$ . A significant difference does not exist only between the second pair, where it is observed that there is no difference between the averages of learning

preference and fiction reading preferences, since  $p=.159$ . The research included students from all academic years, so for the needs of the study, we analyzed the average difference between representative groups, that is, between students of different academic years, by which we got to these results.

*Table 7. Analysis of differences between groups*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>1. I prefer to learn from</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	,059	3	,020	,485	,694
	<b>Within Groups</b>	1,861	46	,040		
	<b>Total</b>	1,920	49			
<b>2. Literature posted by a professor in the Classroom</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	,666	3	,222	1,909	,141
	<b>Within Groups</b>	5,354	46	,116		
	<b>Total</b>	6,020	49			
<b>3. I prefer to read artistic literature</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	,343	3	,114	1,066	,373
	<b>Within Groups</b>	4,937	46	,107		
	<b>Total</b>	5,280	49			
<b>4. Various and necessary information</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	,543	3	,181	,758	,523
	<b>Within Groups</b>	10,977	46	,239		
	<b>Total</b>	11,520	49			
<b>5. Average during a day I read</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	,748	3	,249	,983	,409
	<b>Within Groups</b>	11,672	46	,254		
	<b>Total</b>	12,420	49			

From the results of the table, it can be noted that the value of statistical significance between the year of studies as a factor, and dependent variables is high, for the first variable  $p=.694$ , for the second  $p=.141$ , for the third  $p=.373$ , for the fourth  $p=.523$  and the fifth variable  $p=.409$ . According to these results, we can conclude that there is no significant statistical difference between the groups and that students, regardless of the year of study, mostly prefer learning from printed books, whereas in reality they mostly read from digital books.

## Conclusion

The issue of reading has always represented a dilemma among researchers, even more so the issue of learning. In the past, readers hardly had access to the necessary literature, many of students were served by taking notes, with text descriptions, etc. The development of new technologies greatly helped students with the materials needed for reading and learning. Today, we find these materials both in the form of printed books and in digital form.

This allows readers, depending on their interests and preferences, to be served with one or the other form of reading. The results of the research show that current students mostly prefer reading from printed books, but they read more digital literature. Recent developments facilitate students' electronic access to necessary information, at the same time saving them from the expenses for the purchase or copying of printed literature. It is especially noted in this part that there is a big difference between the likes and reality regarding the form of reading, where the students get the necessary and most frequent information from the Internet. As far as learning preferences go, it seems that the book will continue to maintain its value as the safest and most popular tool for reading and learning, as it is the manuscript that also retained its value after the invention of the printer.

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