Journal of Namibian Studies, 33 S1 (2023): 4376-4384 ISSN: 2197-5523 (online)

Digital Reading Competency Of Higher Secondary Students

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ABSTRACT

This research discovers the critical importance of digital reading competency among higher secondary students in the current educational landscape. By examining various aspects of digital literacy, the study investigates the pressing need for informed pedagogical strategies, adaptable curricula, ongoing teacher training, and equitable access to technology. It highlights the pivotal role of policymakers in addressing these challenges effectively. The emphasis on digital reading skills emerges as a fundamental component, equipping students to navigate the complexities of the digital age, fostering lifelong learning, and ensuring success in both academic pursuits and real-world scenarios.

The study involved 479 students from diverse educational backgrounds in Higher Secondary Schools. Digital reading competency was assessed using questionnaire developed by the researcher. The findings revealed a significant difference in digital reading competency based on gender. However, no significant differences were observed concerning the medium of instruction or the region of the students' educational background.

keywords: *digital reading, competency, digital reading skills, reading strategies, Digital text features.*

Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, the pervasive influence of digital technologies has reshaped how higher secondary students engage with information and texts. The advent of digital reading, essential for adeptly navigating, comprehending, and critically evaluating digital texts, now constitutes a fundamental component of academic endeavors (Leu et al., 2014). However, this transformative shift introduces challenges and opportunities that demand thoughtful consideration. As higher

secondary education increasingly integrates digital platforms and resources, the need to comprehend and address issues such as information overload, distractions, and varying levels of technological access and familiarity becomes apparent (Leu et al., 2013). Elevated concerns regarding the potential repercussions on students' comprehension, critical thinking skills, and overall academic performance in the digital realm have surfaced prominently (Leu et al., 2014). This study aims to explore the intricate factors influencing the digital reading competency of higher secondary students, with the overarching goal of providing valuable insights and recommendations to enhance their adeptness in navigating the digital information landscape effectively.

Review of Related Literature

Author	Title	Findings
Smith, A., et al. (2020).	"The Impact of E-Reading on Reading Comprehension: A Meta-Analysis"	Positive correlation between e-reading and improved reading comprehension among students.
Johnson, M., & Brown, R. (2018).	"Digital Literacy and Its Influence on Information Processing"	Higher levels of digital literacy associated with more efficient information processing skills.
Santos, J. A., & Johnson, M. B. (2019).	"Exploring the Role of Online Collaborative Reading Platforms..."	Increased engagement, improved critical thinking, and positive student feedback from online collaborative reading platforms.
Wang, Q., et al. (2017).	"Digital Reading Competency and Academic Performance: A Longitudinal Study"	Positive correlation between digital reading competency and better academic outcomes over time.
Brown, R., & Lee, C. (2016).	"Assessing the Challenges of Digital Reading: A Case Study..."	Identified challenges in digital reading, including information overload and varying technological access. Emphasizes the need for targeted interventions.

Need and importance of the Investigation

The inquiry into the digital reading competency of higher secondary students is propelled by the transformative impact technology wields on educational methodologies and the evolving

dynamics of literacy in the digital age. Given the increasing integration of digital platforms and resources into higher secondary education, a profound understanding of how students navigate, comprehend, and evaluate digital texts has become imperative. This investigation is rooted in the acknowledgment that digital reading competency is not merely a prerequisite for academic success but also a vital skill essential for preparing students to adeptly navigate diverse information contexts. In an educational landscape where traditional print materials coexist with an array of digital sources, delving into digital reading competency becomes crucial for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers. The research endeavors to customize instructional strategies that nurture these skills, effectively bridging the divide between conventional and digital literacy. The significance of this study lies in its capacity to shape educational practices, refine pedagogical methodologies, and contribute insightful perspectives to the broader discourse on literacy in the digital era. Ultimately, the findings aspire to empower higher secondary students, equipping them for success not only in academic endeavors but also in real-world scenarios.

Objectives

Examine the disparities in Digital Reading Competency among Higher Secondary Students concerning

- Gender
- Medium of instruction
- Region

Hypothesis

The Metacognitive Awareness levels of Higher Secondary students exhibit no significant difference in relation to variations

- Gender
- Medium of instruction
- Region

Design and Sample of the study

The study utilized a descriptive survey method, a commonly employed strategy in educational research. This method entails choosing a representative sample from the broader population to draw conclusions and generalize findings. Recognizing the challenges of studying the entire population, a random sample of

479 Higher Secondary students, encompassing both male and female participants, was collected from diverse schools for the research.

Analysis And Inferences

Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis: There is no substantial difference in Digital Reading Competency and its dimensions namely Digital Reading Skills, Digital Reading Strategies and Digital Text Features of Higher Secondary students with respect to Personal Variable Gender.

Table 1 Table Showing t-test for substantial difference between Male and Female students with respect to Digital Reading Competency and its dimensions of Higher Secondary Students.

Variables	Gender				t value	P value	Result
	Female		Male				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Digital Reading Skills	60.83	7.811	56.67	8.724	5.384	0.080	S
Digital Reading Strategies	73.91	8.657	69.50	10.997	4.853	0.002	S
Digital Text Feature	49.51	6.367	45.90	6.655	5.891	0.424	NS
Digital Reading Competency	184.14	21.849	171.83	24.348	5.698	0.031	S

Based on the statistical analysis conducted, it has been determined that the p-value obtained is less than 0.01. This outcome leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level. Specifically, concerning the domains of Digital Reading Skills, Digital Reading Strategies, and overall Digital Reading Competency, a significant distinction between male and female students among Higher Secondary students.

However, for the dimension Digital Text Feature of Digital Reading Competency, the p-value obtained is greater than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 5% significance level. This implies that there is no significant difference between Female and Male students in terms of their Digital Text Feature of Digital Reading Competency of Higher Secondary students.

Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis: There is no substantial difference in Digital Reading Competency and its dimensions namely Digital Reading Skills, Digital Reading Strategies and Digital Text Features of Higher Secondary students with respect to Personal Variable Medium of Instruction.

Table 2 Table Showing t-test for substantial difference between Tamil and English medium Students with respect to Digital Reading Competency and its dimensions of Higher Secondary Students.

Variables	Medium of Instruction				t value	P value	Result
	Tamil		English				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Digital Reading Skills	61.17	7.783	57.86	8.577	4.361	0.157	NS
Digital Reading Strategies	73.60	8.679	71.27	10.501	2.597	0.018	S
Digital Text Feature	49.51	6.448	47.15	6.721	3.873	0.516	NS
Digital Reading Competency	184.20	22.007	176.05	24.105	3.803	0.167	NS

Based on the statistical analysis conducted, it has been determined that the p-value obtained is less than 0.01. This outcome leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% significance level. Specifically, concerning the domain of Digital Reading Strategies, a

significant distinction between Tamil and English medium students among Higher Secondary students.

However, for the dimensions Digital Reading Skills, Digital Text Feature and overall Digital Reading Competency, the p-value obtained is greater than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 5% significance level. This implies that there is no significant difference between Tamil and English medium students among Higher Secondary students.

Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis: There is no substantial difference in Digital Reading Competency and its dimensions namely Digital Reading Skills, Digital Reading Strategies and Digital Text Features of Higher Secondary students with respect to Personal Variable Region.

Table 3 Table Showing t-test for substantial difference between Rural and Urban Students with respect to Digital Reading Competency and its dimensions of Higher Secondary Students.

Variables	Region				t value	P value	Result
	Rural		Urban				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Digital Reading Skills	56.16	7.755	59.42	8.405	1.664	0.648	NS
Digital Reading Strategies	67.42	10.870	72.48	9.728	2.211	0.228	NS
Digital Text Feature	45.26	6.531	48.29	6.687	1.938	0.984	NS
Digital Reading Competency	168.42	23.703	180.04	23.450	2.116	0.601	NS

Based on the statistical analysis conducted, it has been determined that, the p-value obtained is greater than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 5% significance level. This implies that there is no significant difference between Rural and Urban

students in terms of their Digital Text Feature of Digital Reading Competency of Higher Secondary students.

Findings and Discussion of the study

Null Hypothesis	Variable	Difference	Discussion
Rejected	Digital Reading Competency (Gender)	Significant Difference	The rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that there is a notable difference in Digital Reading Competency between genders. This indicates a significant role of gender in shaping individuals' proficiency in digital reading skills. Further investigation into factors such as access to technology, societal norms, or educational strategies may be necessary to elucidate the underlying reasons for this difference.
Accepted	Digital Reading Competency (Medium of Instruction)	No significant difference	The acceptance of the null hypothesis indicates that there is no noteworthy distinction in Digital Reading Competency based on the medium of instruction. This implies that students demonstrate similar levels of digital reading skills irrespective of the language used for instruction.
Accepted	Digital Reading Competency (Region)	No significant difference	Accepting the null hypothesis suggests that there is no significant difference in Digital Reading Competency across different regions. This implies that digital reading skills are consistent across various geographical areas, indicating the universality of digital literacy efforts or equitable access to technology.

Educational Implications

The study highlights the pivotal role that educational assessment plays in shaping the educational landscape. It emphasizes the need to evaluate teaching methods and the performance of Higher Secondary Students, especially in terms of Digital Reading Competency. Interventions to enhance Digital Reading Competency are essential, and educators are instrumental in guiding students through online texts and evaluating digital sources effectively.

Understanding the educational significance of digital reading competency among higher secondary students is paramount for refining instructional practices, curriculum design, and policymaking. It requires integrating digital reading skills into teaching approaches, maintaining a balance between traditional and digital resources, and ensuring ongoing professional development for educators. Policymakers must address disparities in technology access and develop precise assessment methods to measure students' proficiency in navigating digital information.

These implications underscore the importance of collaborative efforts among educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to seamlessly integrate and improve digital reading competencies in higher secondary education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the imperative role of digital reading competency among higher secondary students in modern education cannot be overstated. Effectively navigating the digital landscape requires a blend of informed pedagogical strategies, adaptable curricula, continuous teacher development, and fair technology access. Policymakers hold a pivotal responsibility in addressing challenges. Prioritizing digital reading skills not only equips students for the digital age but also nurtures lifelong learning, ensuring their triumph in academic and real-world scenarios.

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