Exploring the Reading Preferences and Habits of Foreign Students: A Cross-cultural Perspective

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Abstract

This paper aims at comparing the reading behaviour of the foreign students with that of the local students, especial in terms of their cultural differences. The goal is to know the ways students of multicultural benefit from the reading resources and tendencies that shape students' preferences. The study employs both interviews and questionnaires as its data collection tools to obtain research data from foreign students in different universities. Research shows that there are most marked differences when it comes to reading for information and reading frequency with cultural background affecting the genre, frequency and mode of reading. Children brought up in collectivism are comfortable in group reading and communally inclined; those in individualism read on their own. It also outlines the influence of language and language acquisition, education systems and literacy during these preferences. Moreover, the study reveals the findings on the areas of difficulty of the foreign students in other reading conditions, including language and material condition differences. African culture is significant to understand in the global worldview and hence this study seeks to explore these cultural differences with a view of improving educational approaches that will ensure that every culture is represented, in order to encourage students from diverse cultural backgrounds to figure in multi-cultural encounters in schools. When one is in a position to understand how the foreign students read, then the educators will be in a position to assist the students in improving on their academic accomplishments and also experiencing a smooth, hassle-free experience when adapting to the new culture of the country.

Keywords

Academic Reading, Cross-Cultural Perspective, Cultural Differences Foreign Students, Leisure Reading, Reading Preferences.

INTRODUCTION

In fact, the ability to read is considered fundamental to one's and academic success and is a culturally, socially and educationally constructed process as a subject important enough to be studied. These cultural variables; thus, have a considerable influence on the read more and read differently propensity of the international students because of cultural and academic distinctiveness pressures. Culture and reading practices have a clear connection, where readers' choice conform to cultural standards as literature represents social perspectives [1]. The research indicated that students from collectivist-oriented cultures tend to select materials that portray culture and relations in as much as those from individualist oriented cultures selected materials that portrayed individualism [2] [3]. Moreover, cultural demands of curriculum and individual development are pressing challenges for the readers being the international students [4]. The states aimed at supporting reading and that have highly developed reading cultures such as Japan and Germany regard reading as a socially significant and intellectually necessary activity. On the other hand, students in the background of low reading culture in their countries are equally likely to cultivate themselves into reading more so in the foreign academic environment [5]. When it comes to choice of types of literature, cross cultural differences include journals and textbooks, fictions, self-help books and so on [6]. The issue of time remains an important consideration of reading practices, including a major challenge for international students who spend considerable time adjusting to classroom schedules and academic loads while attempting to find time to read for leisure [7]. It has been established that leisure reading benefits language and helps in the development of cognitive and emotional development [8], though the amount of leisure reading may be impacted on by academic demands and culture goals of student's home country [9]. Updated scholarly communication has changed the typical approach to reading through use of e-books and other online sources, which are common among international students [10]. Some of these digital options provide convenience together with access however they also possibly eradicate customary reading behaviours and tendencies [11]. Electronic and print media suggest that the students' cultural experience with new technologies may influence their use of the electronic versus print media [12]. This research aims to understand how cultural background influences the choice of the books and reading frequency of international students, determine the preferred genre, and understand the proportion of academic and leisure reading by these learners. It is hoped that the study will improve knowledge on cross-cultural factors and head start for useful recommendations to educators besides policymakers for the international students in their learning aside development.
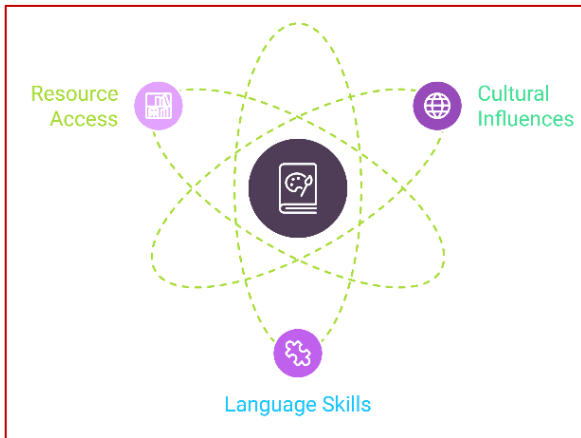
Figure 1. Influences on Student Reading Choices

(Figure.1) depicts credibility, language, and materialism have large impacts on the reading choices which students make. Cultural expectations regulate the choice of the genre; students coming from the culture introduced to rational knowledge tend to read more facts, students coming from the culture introduced to literature tend to read more narratives and philosophies. Language skills are also important: students who have a higher level of language select more difficult materials while students with low language ability select less difficult texts or materials in their own language [13]. Also, the amount and quality of resources determine the range of reading materials students can receive for learning. Those who have access to unlimited number of books are benefited with variety [14], whereas for those who have restricted access are likely to depend only on internet contents or even in common resources [15]. These aspects of cultural influences, language, and resource access influence the patterns and choices of foreign students, and thus should be conventional when issues about their foreign curriculum and recreational-reading requirements are being addressed.

Figure 2. Culture Influence on Reading Preferences

(Figure. 2) shows, apparently cultural orientations precondition international students' tendencies and preferences while reading authors of different genres and media types [16]. Collectivists are those students who came from society that embraces the communal self-orientation,

group-oriented aspects; hence, they are likely to select communal literature, group, and group history ones. On the other hand, students from collectivistic culture which embrace the culture of togetherness, and self-achievement will opt for resources that promote self-enhancement; The cultural culture of the students determines the type of reading media selected [17]. There is a conflict in some cultures where printed books are esteemed for their content while in other devices are used because of ever changing technology [18]. Also, ethnical contrasts go to the ratio of the study and recreation literature ones. While first culture students use more academic material and less of recreational ones [19], second culture students use academic and leisure reading at a similar ratio [20]. Cumulatively these cultural factors influence not only what international students read, but also how they engage with the text and why they are able to do so [21].
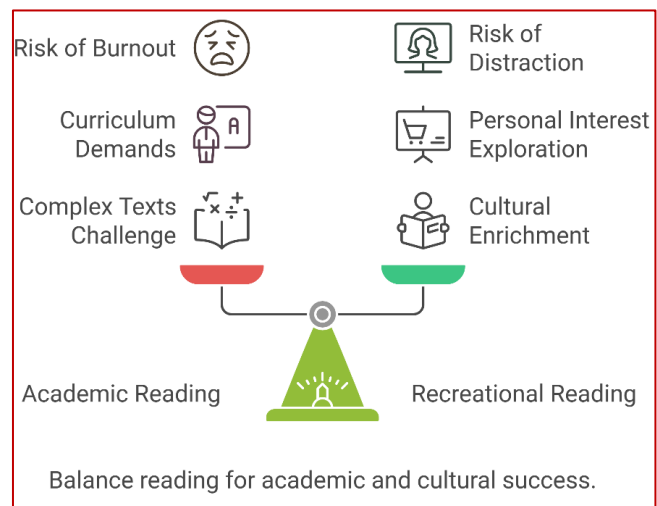

Figure 3. Balance Reading for academic and cultural success.

(Figure 3.) Foreign students are familiar with the conditions when they need to read for academic and leisure purposes in order to cope with a new academic context. Tutorially, students are motivated by curriculum calls and the desire to excel that is evidenced by curriculum analytical calls that involve texts that are complex due to students' language restriction as well as the social realities that are unfamiliar to them [22]. This creates a need to devote a lot of time and resources for understanding all these changes. Recreational reading, therefore, is a means of sparing time for enjoyment and culture acquisition, learn new interests, their own culture or culture of Me, to reduce academic and culturizational stress [23]. It is important always to consider the combination of both academic and leisure reading; if the students spend most of their reading time with academic text without engaging in leisure reading, they end up being bored and lonely, but if the students spend most of their reading time with leisure material without reading academic texts, then their performance is likely to suffer [24]. Thus, the moderation of the amount of reading is vital for foreign students' academic, personal, intellectual, and cultural health

of foreign students and their success in foreign academic environment [25] [26].

Purpose of the Study

The following paper focuses on the role of culture in students' academic and leisure reading profiles of the international students. These dynamics are investigated in the study so that the patterns of reading can be determined and the impact of this faculty on students' academic achievements and other aspects of their development assessed adequately. The specific goals of the study are:

a) The study focuses on the role of culture in students' academic and leisure reading profiles of the international students. These dynamics are investigated in the study so that the patterns of reading can be determined and the impact of this faculty on students' academic achievements and other aspects of their development assessed adequately.

b) Decide on the types of books that are culturally valued – The sort and category of books that foreign students prefer are laid down by the current study. The analysed cultural and academic preferences involving these preferences include home- country reading cultures.

c) Choice Between Academic and Leisure Reading– The paper looks at the choices that foreign students have in terms of their reading, in the light of the Academic work load they have, language difficulties, and culture expectations.

d) Benefit Educators and Policymakers – It seeks to provide culturally appropriate strategies for helping foreign learners' learning and wellbeing. Promote reading habits that will help enhance cognitive, emotional and lingual development.

Significance of the Study

This paper seeks to understand the cultures of foreign students in terms of the kind of genres they read, the mediums they employ in reading, and the frequency of which they read. It informs educators on how to cultivate culturally appropriate programs in curriculum and reading. Also, it elaborates the facilities, and the cognitive and affective processes related to leisure reading. The findings are applicable to globalization of education especially with regard to inclusiveness and equity. The findings of this research will be beneficial to educators, administrators, policymakers and researchers in enhancing educational practice.

Research Questions

- In what degree do cultural differences affect the pattern of reading among foreign students?
- What countries venerate books and what kind of books do foreign students consider worthy of their reading time?
- Foreign students, in general, how do they divide the time they spend reading, academic reading and leisure rea ding?

Objectives

- To investigate how the cultural background influences the academic and recreational use reading habits and pattern of international students.
- To discover which countries and cultures appreciate book reading and which sort of books the international students from different cultural requires international students from varied cultural backgrounds value.
- The purpose of the current study is to explore how international students integrate academic and leisurely reading and factors influencing this process.

RELATED STUDY

This quantitative study analysed disparities in reading motivation between American and Chinese college students, indicating that Chinese students outperformed their American peers in dimensions such as 'reading as part of self' and 'reading for recognition [27].

This study, conducted in Punjab, Pakistan, identified a robust positive correlation between students' reading habits, study skills, and academic achievement in English, indicating that the cultivation of effective reading habits and study skills can improve academic performance [28].

Examining research on international students' cross-cultural adaptation, this review draws attention to the mental and behavioural shifts these students experience and stresses the significance of intercultural awareness in facilitating successful adaptation [29].

This study examined the adaptation of Chinese international students to cross-cultural values and interpersonal relationships, highlighting the challenges encountered and the strategies utilized to navigate unfamiliar cultural contexts [30].

The study analysed the impact of Chinese students' acculturation strategies, sociocultural, and psychological adaptation on their academic adaptation. Results showed that separation was the most preferred strategy, while marginalization was least desirable. Students performed best in sociocultural adaptation but struggled academically. Separation and marginalization were associated with better psychological and academic adaptation [31], while integration and assimilation were associated with better sociocultural adaptation [32].

Theoretical Framework

- Convenient theoretical framework to examine foreign students' reading preferences and habits can be identified in Cultural Dimension Theory and Reading Motivation Theory. These theories focus on cultural and motivational aspect of reading.
- Cultural Dimensions Theory describes the behaviour of societies in relation to cultural factors such as individualism, collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. On it illustrates how the student from different cultural setting will opt for individual or group reading hence predicting variations in the reading

behaviour of the foreign students.

- Reading Motivation Theory states that people's reading behaviour is governed by both approach and avoidance motives. Personal interest and enjoyment are considered the part of intrinsic motivation, while motivation associated with goals connected to academic achievements refers to the extrinsic motivation. Foreign students may have varied disposition to read for academic reasons or for fun depending on their culture.

Research Gap

- Restricted Research Focus on International students - There is scanty and insufficient focus on international students from various continents and cultures.
- Lack of differentiation between Academic and leisure reading-While trait, affective, and cognitive reading behaviours are checked, the academic and leisurely reading habits are researched more than students balanced between academic and recreation reading.
- Lack of focus on Motivational and Social Factors - There is want of sufficient studies done on the motivational and social influences on the reading habits of the international students.
- Low External Validity – They usually apply to isolated developer groups or ages like young learners or even to countries like Malaysia only.
- Recreational Reading Preferences Across Cultures: Scarce Research – Many of these studies are concerned with students' reading, particularly, their academic reading skills and practices, and there is very limited information regarding students' choice of reading material in their leisure time.
- Inadequate Research on the Relationship of Technology with The Pattern of Reading - Impact of adopting technology on the reading culture of different countries.
- Lack of Research on Cultural Beliefs about Reading as a Value – Literature fails to make it clear if some cultures consider reading as academic or enjoyable activity for self-development.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The current research uses Experimental research methodologies [33]. The quantitative area focuses on establishing the general picture of reading preferences, while the qualitative portion tries to look at the underlying causes of such preferences. The use of both methods ensures both quantitative and qualitative data is obtained about the foreign students, and their reading culture [34], is obtained as in (Figure 4.).
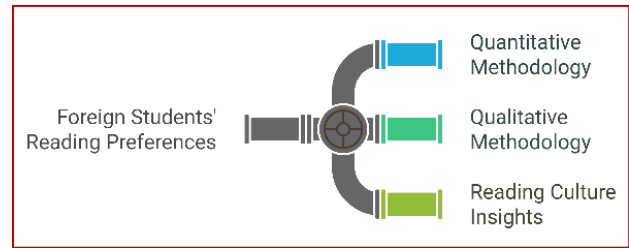

Figure 4. Explore Foreign Students' Reading Preference

Quantitative Data

The quantitative data will be collected through survey or ques tinnier developed for evaluate several aspects of reading preference. The survey will consist of **Likert-scale items [35]** aimed at measuring:

- ✓ **Reading frequency:** The frequency with which students read (daily/weekly/ rarely etc).
- ✓ **Types of materials:** The specific types of materials particularly academic works, novels, newspapers, and any other preferred Genre or category.
- ✓ **Reading formats**: Printing graphics vs. developing graphics for the Web.

The information that will be obtained from these items will be divided and described descriptively (Mean, median, mode) and will be checked for correlation and will also be compared and contrasted. For instance, the analysis will reveal whether students from different cultural background Favor certain formats of reading differently.

- ▪ **Equation for** Descriptive **Statistics** [36]
- ▪ (Mean) [37]

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i \qquad (i)$$

Where,

Xi = each response and n is total number of respondents.

Qualitative Data

The quantitative data will be collected through survey or ques tinnier developed for evaluate several aspects of reading preference. The survey will consist of Likert-scale items aimed at measuring:

- ✓ Reading frequency: The often with which the students read (daily, weekly or rarely etc).
- ✓ Types of materials: The specific types of material most especially textbooks, books, newspapers, and any other Genres or category preferred.
- ✓ Reading formats: Web printing vs. web graphic development for Web milieu purposes.

From the above-mentioned items, the information that will be obtained will be described descriptively in a tabular form using Mean, median and mode checks will be made on the correlation between the items and also a comparison and contrast between the items [38]. For instance, the analysis will show that students from different cultural background Favor certain formats of reading differently.

Participants

The focus of the study will be foreign students of different cultural background currently studying at a certain

educational institution or dispersing across a number of institutions. In addition, there will be students from different countries and cultural contexts included in the sample so the findings will represent a variety field of experience. The participants will be selected based on the following criteria:

- I was an international student.
- Having studied at the institution for at least one semester.
- Participation in the study and having reading experiences to share.one semester.
- Willingness to participate in the study and share their reading experiences.

Data Collection

- **Surveys**: The structured questionnaires [39] will include both closed ended (Likert scale) and open-ended questions. Example questions include:
  - "How often do you read for leisure?" (1 = Never, 5 = Very often)
  - "What types of reading materials do you prefer?" (Select all that apply: Academic, Fiction, Non-fiction, News)
  - "Which format do you prefer?" (1 = Print, 2 = Digital, 3 = Both)
- **Interviews**: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected participants to explore the underlying reasons for their reading habits. The interview questions will allow flexibility for the participants to share their experiences and insights [40].

Example questions include:
  - "How do cultural factors influence your reading choices?"
  - "What challenges do you face in academic reading?"

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis, the data from the surveys will be analysed using descriptive statistics to summarize the frequency and types of reading materials preferred by foreign students. Correlation analysis will examine the relationships between variables such as cultural background and reading preferences, while comparative analysis will explore differences in reading habits across different cultural groups [41], (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient) as in Eq. (ii):

$$r = \frac{\sum (X_i - \bar{X})^2 \sum (Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}{\sum (X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})} \quad \text{(ii)}$$

Where,
- X_i and Y_i are the individual values of two variables, and $\bar{X}$ and $\bar{Y}$ are their means.
- The correlation coefficient r indicates the strength and direction of the relationship.

Qualitative Analysis, Thematic analysis will identify patterns and themes in the interview data. The identified themes will be cross-referenced with the quantitative data to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural influences shape reading preferences and habits.

By combining these methodologies, the study aims to provide a well-rounded analysis of foreign students' reading habits and preferences, highlighting cultural differences and their impact on academic and leisure reading choices.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework (Figure 5) for this study is designed to explore the interconnected factors shaping the reading preferences and habits of foreign students. It integrates key constructs such as reading preferences, cultural influence, and the balance between academic and leisure reading to understand the dynamics of cross-cultural reading behaviours. Culture aspect, reading preference, and the division between the students' academic and recreational reading are the important parts of the model. It shows that culture determines students' reading habits with regards to their reading preferences. These preferences influence the genres; formats; and contexts students select; their language abilities; and their resources. Currency of language proves helpful in comprehending texts, and materials (in both print and non-). The other factor involves bodily comfort, which allows students to meet both academic and personal reading needs. Foreign students discuss difficulties and possibilities which arise when a person is trying to change cultural and educational environment. It underlines the learning and recreational reading dimensions for reconnecting academic obligation with cultural orientation and individual development. The multifaceted perspective offered in this body of work guides the development of educational strategies and support mechanisms, which educators and policymakers analysing this issue may find helpful in creating targeted solutions for foreign students.
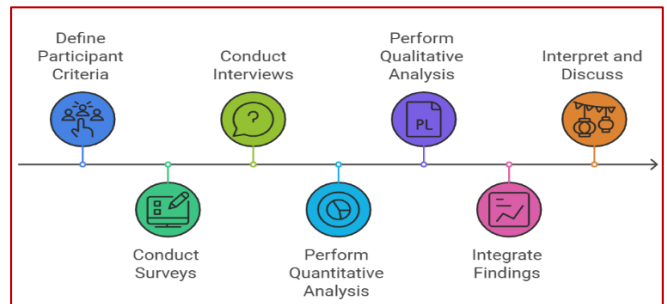

Figure 5. Process for understanding the reading preference

Algorithm Approach

Table 1. Algorithm: Analyze Reading Preferences of Foreign Students

Input: Dataset S (Student Demographics, Reading Habits), SurveyData Q (Responses)
Output: Insights I (Reading Preferences, Academic vs. Leisure Reading Balance)
1. **if** (S is valid and complete) **then**
2. **if** (Q responses are sufficient for analysis) **then**
3. Student Profiles ← Process Data(S);
4. **else**
5. Log "Insufficient Survey Responses";
6. **end if**

```
7.   else
8.   Log "Invalid or Incomplete Dataset";
9.   end if
10.  if (Student Profiles is empty) then
11.  Return.
12.  end if
13.  Preferences Matrix ← Initialize Matrix (Cultural
     Values, Reading Types, Reading Formats);
14.  for (each Student in Student Profiles) do
15.  Cultural Group ← AssignCulturalGroup
     (Student);
16.  Academic Reading ← ExtractReadingData
     (Student, "Academic");
17.  Leisure Reading ← ExtractReadingData
     (Student, "Leisure");
18.  Language Proficiency ←
     AssessLanguage(Student);
19.  Material Access ←
     EvaluateMaterialAccess(Student);
20.  while (Data conflicts or anomalies exist) do
21.  ResolveDataConflicts(StudentData);
22.  end while
23.  UpdateMatrix(PreferencesMatrix,
     CulturalGroup, AcademicReading,
     LeisureReading, LanguageProficiency,
     MaterialAccess);
24.  end for
```

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25.  Insights I ← AnalyzeMatrix(PreferencesMatrix);
26.  GenerateReport(I);
27.  UploadToDashboard(I);
28.  Notify Stakeholders(I).
```

In (Table 1.) integrating a structured, mixed method approach to analysing reading preferences and habits of foreign students, the algorithm analyses a mix of demographic and survey data. The validity of the dataset is first proven, having been completed and with enough survey responses. When validated, student profiles are processed to extract such key variables as their cultural background, academic and leisure reading preferences, language proficiency, and access to materials. An initialized multi-dimensional preferences matrix is defined to map correlations between these variables. The algorithm takes each students' data one at a time, processing it as it iteratively finds and solves conflicts (or anomalies) to stay accurate. Statistical analyses, including correlation and clustering, are used based on the preferences matrix and found that there are patterns in reading behaviors that reflect cultural values and language abilities. In a report, we summarize the insights and share with our stakeholders through dashboard and notifications. By applying this approach, we attain a complete comprehension of the cross-cultural reading habits and also aid in developing the educational practices and the culturally convenience of foreign students.

RESULT DISCUSSION

Table 2. Reading Preferences by Cultural Background

Cultural Background	Preferred Genres	Reading Medium	Percentage (Digital)	Percentage (Print)
East Asian	Academic, Self-help	Digital (eBooks, PDFs)	75%	25%
South Asian	Fiction, Religious Texts	Print (Books, Magazines)	35%	65%
European	Fiction, Philosophy	Digital and Print Mixed	60%	40%
African	Biographies, Academic	Print (Books, Journals)	45%	55%
Middle Eastern	Religious, Academic	Digital (Web Articles)	70%	30%
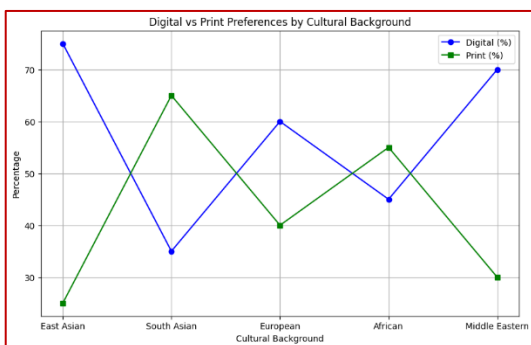
Graph 1. Digital vs Print Preferences by Cultural Background

From the (Table 2 and Graph 1.) provided, information on the ethno-cultural group preferred reading types and format including genres, the medium, digital and print, is presented. The table elaborates that East Asians primarily select academic and self-help kinds of media with a heavy proportion in the digital format (75%); the same is with South Asians who select fiction and religious books primarily in the print format (65%). As for the genre European audience is equally divided between fiction and philosophy slightly tilted towards digital (Digital: 60 %; Print: 40 %), the African audience favourite is biographies and academic genres slightly tilted towards print (Print: 55 %; Digital: 45 %). Middle Eastern preferences were shift towards the digital (70% digital) and were focused on religious and academic materials. The following graph illustrates these preferences to provide consistency with the table shown above. This depicts the per cent share preferred between the digital and print media across these cultural backgrounds. For instance, the graph highlights the extent to which the digital audience dominates the East Asian and Middle Eastern communities, and the print audience dominate the South Asians. This visualization helps explain the large differences in medium preferences, which are indicative of broader culture-genre

reading tendencies. The centrepiece located in the graph combining the figure 6 and table 2 in its present form gives not only the overview of what and how the cultural contexts influence reading preferences, but also the key cultural drivers of such preferences are introduced.

Table 3. Academic vs. Leisure Reading Habits

Reading Type	Average Weekly Hours	Percentage of Students	Purpose
Academic Reading	15 hours	80%	Coursework, Exam Preparation
Leisure Reading	5 hours	20%	Relaxation, Personal Interest
Academic & Leisure Mix	10 hours (Academic), 7 hours (Leisure)	50%	Academic Goals and Stress Relief
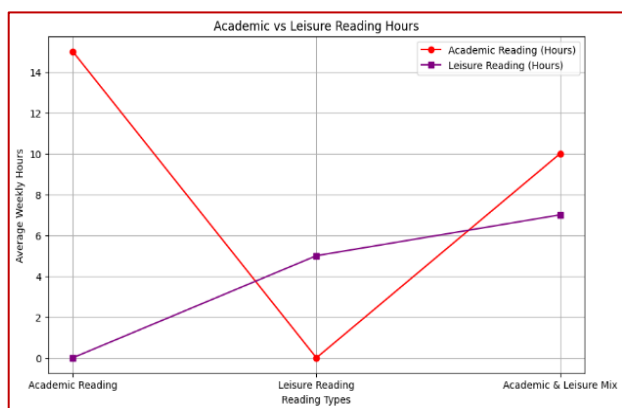
Graph 2. Academic vs Leisure Reading Hours

The provided (Table 3. and Graph 2) outline students' weekly reading habits across three categories: It's split into three categories namely the Academic Reading, the Leisure Reading, and a merged of the two. Academic Reading receives an average of 15 student hours and 80% participation, mostly for course related purposes. Leisure Reading takes 5 hours daily with 20percent of students attending it for leisure. The mixed strategy reveals 10 hours dedicated to learning and 7 for fun, which 50% of learners chose. The above trends are reflected in the following graph where the response of a very high allocation to academic purposes is seen along with a huge upside down in the mixed category where leisure time goes up meaning a plan to use both study and leisure so as to maintain the health and productivity for study.

theoretic viewpoint analysing these preferences gives a complete picture of numerous readings patterns and gives the flavour for the distribution and dynamics of reading habits. Drawing on these benefits of a precise, data driven approach, this approach offers a robust framework for addressing the special problems facing foreign students. In turn, these implications can be applied towards the improvement of educational strategies, cross cultural exchange activities, and support system design that could be delivered to underserved students. By recognizing establishing the diversity in reading habit, institutions can set up curriculum design and resources to anticipate largely foreign pupils' needs endorsing learning mastery and cultural adjustment. In the end, the incorporation of these results into mass educational plans could lead to a more inclusive, interesting, and productive learning situation for all students from all cultures.

FUTURE WORK

Many strategies must be employed in future research to enhance an understanding of the foreign students' reading behaviours. This comprises including computerized utensils such as artificial intelligence for the review of readers, carrying out empirical studies on the use of readers over some period, and substantial assessment of certain cultural communities. Research could also analyse various facets of resources including digital and print or relate to the influence of different genres on achievement and compare the roles that language proficiency plays in the choice of reading material. Furthermore, the existence of resources specifically to help foreign students – resource that may include culturally appropriate reading as well as peers – might enhance scholarly and cultural adjustment. Understanding the impact of such differential focused efforts could add to improving educational approaches and prosperity of students.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the reading preferences and habits of foreign students were explored from a cross-cultural perspective, and the main factors that significantly affect reading behaviours are discussed, including the effect of cultural values, language proficiency and material access. The results show how academic, and leisure reading are interplayed in a complex manner determined by cultural conventions and personal features. Preference for genres, preference formats of reading, and preferences for balancing academic and leisure reading variably differed among students from different cultural background, pointing to the need for a tailored support to the needs of the students. From a measure

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