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Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

Compiled by

Scarlet Griebeler

This project is submitted in part fulfillment of the Degree of Bachelor (Hons) in International Business.

Independent College Dublin, May 2025.

Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

Thesis Approved:

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Independent College Dublin, May 2025.

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To all of you, my heartfelt thanks.

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the impact of digital readers and its effects on consumers and bookshops, emphasizing its consequences on generations to come. It investigates the changes in reading habits and culture, the impact of digital intermediaries on the emerging industry, and the sustainability of physical bookstores in the digital age. By comparing how readers preferences and practices are in Brazil versus Ireland, the paper seeks to identify cultural differences in digital reading formats uptake.

A mixed-method approach was done with quantitative online questionnaire (with 58 participants) and a qualitative interview with a bookstore owner. The results point out that in spite of having convenience and reach to reading, physical printed books still represent a value to Brazilian readers in terms of culture and its emotional significance. Bookshops have lower turnover but seem to be responding by becoming hybrids – offering cultural events and engaging with their communities.

The research also underscores a generation gap when it comes to reading digital materials. It also highlights the influence of digital platforms and social media on reading decisions. The research concludes by advising bookstores to diversify their offerings, utilize cultural programming and form more connections with local school in order to survive in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital reading habits, Physical bookstores, Reading preferences, Digital platforms, Publishing, Generational differences.

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CHAPTER I

Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

Introduction

Reading has always been an essential part of human cognitive, emotional and social development. Reading practices have changed a great deal over the centuries, in response to technological, social and educational developments. Over the past several decades, the advent of digital technology has radically reshaped readers interaction with texts. Digital reading resources like e-books, audiobook, and reading apps have also become popular to provide the convenience, flexibility, and portability readers require. But these new developments also present some difficulties: over time-spans of attentions, with understanding and comprehensions of the sustainability of traditional habits of reading. More generally its impact throughout the industry, down to physical bookselling and the broader publishing ecosystem, has been affected by the rise of digital platforms in almost every aspect of how we engage with reading. On the other hand, the digital revolution has opened up new opportunities for people to get their hands on literature, but digital reading has also led to sinking sales in traditional bookstores, which in turn have had to re-invent themselves if they want to remain viable in an increasingly digital market. This shift poses some important questions about what will happen to physical books and bookstores as cultural spaces.

This study explores how readers habits, induced by digital reading, focus on consumers and bookstores, affect the future generations. The research investigates how readers in two different cultural contexts – Brazil and Ireland – are adjusting to the impulses of digital reading and how bookshops in these areas are reacting to consumer behavior changes. Through generational choices, technology platform approaches, and the bookstores strategies themselves, this study hopes to give some context into the changing of habits, between readers, the technology and bookstore owners.

The research has a central question: “How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Year?”. In this way, the research aims to add to the dialogue on cultural habits, industry transformation, and educational considerations within modern times.

1.1 Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to learn how out digital reading habits are affecting readers preferences, and how this can change the way we purchase, the way of interacting, and the habits we adopt, and also to study what are the strategies that physical bookstores are implementing in order to give face to digital transformation. Based on Brazil and Ireland, this paper wants to explore cultural similarities and differences of the adoption of digital reading ant their impact on the book retail system.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research seeks to:

- Examine how reading habits have changed with digital technologies;

- Explore the impact of digital platforms on reading preferences and behaviors;
- Examine reading format preferences across generations;
- Analyze the influence of digital reading behavior on the sustainability of traditional bookshops;
- Discover strategies that bookstores are making to survive.

1.3 Research Aims

The following are the main aims of the present study:

- To compare digital reading habits of Brazilian and Irish readers;
- To assess how physical bookstores have grappled with the digital changes;
- To contribute with some suggestions to bookstores, publishers and educators in the digital reading ecosystem.

1.4 Research Limitations

As any academic research, therefore, this study has some limitations. Firstly, the survey research findings are based upon a sample of 58 respondents and may not reflect general population trends although this size is adequate for exploratory purposes. Second, the research was conducted in only two countries - Brazil and Ireland – and the results may not be generalizable to other cultural populations. Third, the study was based on self-reports which may be susceptible to participant bias and selective recall. Lastly, the study is mostly based on an urban population therefore differences in reading habits in rural settings may not have been considered appropriately.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research has its significance for many stakeholders, educationists, publishers, bookstores owners and policymakers. To know how digital readers arrive to their reading habits and consumption patterns provides insights for the design of balanced strategies that take up the challenge of technological change while protecting literary culture and deep literacy.

Educationally, this knowledge can be used to develop curricula that blends digital and traditional reading so that students can become not just technologically savvy but also proficient at reading and comprehending material. Publishers can use this information to tailor how they deliver content, balancing digital access while maintaining the high standard of reading experience. For bookstore to survive, not just in today`s market, but in tomorrow`s too, will instead have to adopt an approach much like that which will sabe the news industry and other intermediaries, and rely on a mix of events and bookings paired with digital intercourse.

Through the development of experiential environments where people connect, bookstores can distinguish themselves from transactional-oriented online bookstores and maintain their role in a swiftly changing market. But policymakers are just as much o a critical variable here. The study could support them in literacy, cultural preservation and equitable access to reading resources, as well as in print and digital format.

Efforts like keeping independent bookstores afloat, funding public libraries and making algorithms transparent on digital platforms can all go a long way towards preserving a diverse and inclusive reading culture. The findings have implications that go far beyond the book industry.

Since digital consumption patterns shape the way that we address information (the way we think, the way we internationally work with media and culture), the results of the present study complement the general debate about social and cognitive implications of digital media. An intelligent, critical readership will enable us to mitigate the worst aspects of the digital revolution and still keep reading as a part of the common human record.

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Introduces the background research, objectives, purpose, aims, limitations, significance and organizations of the report.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review: This chapter provides and extensive literature review of the main topics observed during the study of the current situation of the bookstores and its relation with the retailers.

Chapter 3 – Methodology: This chapter gives a detailed description of the research methods, research design, data collection requirements, sample size, samples election and funding ethics (ethical considerations).

Chapter 4 – Findings: This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research – both in terms of quantitative findings from the survey and qualitative findings through interviews.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion: Final chapter of the research, which is a summary of the key results, limitations and recommendations for practice and further research.

CHAPTER II

Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the academic literature relevant to digital reading practices, including readers changing reading practices, digital platforms and their implications, generational preferences, regional attitudes and how digital reading habits may be impacting physical bookstores. The literature offers a theoretical background to approach the transformation of reading practices and the book trade environment due to digital technologies.

2.1 The Transformation of Reading Habits

The relatively recent transition from reading in print to digital formats is one of the most significant changes to modern reading practices. (Baron, 2015) describes how digital reading changes the way people read deeply, discouraging deep reading and promoting shallow reading, “reading digitally is not simply reading on a screen; it involves different expectations, attitudes, and behaviors”. According to (Liu, 2005), “users tend to browse, scan, and sample information rather than read sequentially”, online reading promotes scanning and browsing in place of linear reading, which has consequences for comprehension and critical thinking. (Singer and Alexander, 2017) reported on an experiment which compared digital and print reading comprehension and

retention is a focus of their study: users adopt digital reading because it is convenient but miss out on deep reading done elsewhere.

Other literates also stress the disjointedness of digital reading. Digital media encourages a utilitarian culture of reading, in which information is consumed quickly, without thought (Spedjelnaes, 2022). This trend has led to fears regarding the decay of critical reading competence context of the increasing digitalization of society and education.

On the other hand, digital media also provides greater flexibility and ease of access, allowing readers to take in texts in various devices and contexts, “features such as adjustable fonts, text-to-speech functions, and portable devices enable individuals with visual impairments or disabilities to access literature in ways that print cannot.” (Almaki, 2021). Other characteristics such as adjustable fonts, audio, hyperlinking enhance the reading experience for users with disabilities and for those with limited access to print text.

2.2 The Influence of Digital Platforms

The digital sphere has led to a complete transformation of the reading environment at a structural level, with Kindle, Wattpad, Audible, BookTok (on TikTok), and Goodreads leading the way that has reshaped the reading ecosystem (OECD, 2021). Theses websites and social media services not just provide a way to access digital content but also create online literary circles that shape up the reading habits and choices of readers causing a change in their behavior. Social media and the promotion of reading is very dominant with the younger population. For example, BookTok, which has become a book-selling force and championed genres (Graziosi, 2021). Digital platforms offer new ways of discovering literature and contribute to non-linear, fragmented

reading patterns, “online reading communities foster interaction and participatory culture, offering readers new forms of engagement beyond solitary reading.” (Pettersen, 2017). Nevertheless, framing reading within social media ecologies is not without concerns of marketization of reading and influence of algorithmic recommendations, “algorithmic filtering may narrow cultural exposure by prioritizing market-driven content over diverse literary voices.” (Striphas, 2010). Literature emerges as a site of struggle – a tension between the democratization of literature and the re-enforcement of market-driven trends.

In addition, digital technology has allowed self-published writers to circumvent gatekeepers and increase the range of published content (Thompson, 2012). Although this toppling opens up literary voices, however, it also presents quality control and curation problem facing literature.

2.3 General Preferences and Behaviors

Preferences of readers on digital and print modes of reading vary according to various factors such as the purpose of reading, the text type and the content, device use, etc. (Mangen et al, 2013), observed that only readers more fully retain complex information bundled in print, while transactional shorter texts are better read digitally. Despite the popularity of e-books, (Baron, 2015) indicates that a lot of people treasure the touch-based aspects of print items, such as the smell, the weight, and simply the being there. Even the digitally literate forms an emotional bond with a physical book, “despite embracing digital devices for convenience, many readers still associate print with relaxation and focused reading.”.

Reading habits are also influenced by economic reasons. (Vassallo, 2016) observes that the lower cost of e-books and the ability to purchase them online has lured price-sensitive readers, which

has caused foot traffic to decline in traditional bookstores. But there is an alternative emerging out there now, too: Free digital or pirated for it is not a game that is easily played, this switch-a-room from print to digital to print.

The literature also observes a generational aspect of reading. There is also the fact that the younger readers are more likely to be reading on a mobile device as the presence of social media and other multimedia shapes their reading habits (National Literacy Trust, 2020). Older generations will keep more of a preference for print material, because they value it as a status of cultural and intellectual capital (Instituto Pró Livro, 2021).

2.4 Regional Perceptions

Perceptions towards reading formats change across places and national borders. An investigation conducted in Brazil suggests that printed books still carry meanings a symbol of education and intellectual status (Instituto Pró Livro, 2021). Physical books are status objects as well as educational tools. On the other hand, digital take-up in Ireland is more widespread, especially for youngers. (National Literacy Trust, 2020) finds that readers in Ireland use and value more e-books, audiobooks and digital reading apps, which is a practical interest oriented towards what is more convenient and affordable.

These differentiation such as access to public libraries, internet connection, as well as education policies supporting digital literacy. Regional reading habits are also influenced by parental attitudes and education styles. (Mangen et al., 2013) argue that the print organization of school curricula may contribute to maintaining attachment to print while digitally inclusive classroom practices encourage a normalization in young students access of e-books and internet-based

reading resources: “school systems that rely on printed textbooks reinforce attachment to print, while digitally integrated classrooms foster acceptance of e-reading from an early age.”.

2.5 The Impact of Digital Reading Habits on Physical Bookstores

The increase of digital reading has had profound economic and operational consequences on bricks-and-mortar bookshops. As (Rigby et al., 2014) argued physical bookstores suffer from a downturn in sales because of competition from online retailers, a pricing decline of digital content, and consumer-referenced demand, “brick-and-mortar bookstores face declining sales as consumers shift to online and digital purchases.”. To survive, bookstores have resorted to hybrid models combining elements of e-commerce, digital downloads and cultural programming to draw customers. (Baron, 2015) avers that bookstores must redefine themselves as neighborhood centers, providing physical experiences that e-retailers cannot match. However, the literature also highlights the susceptibility of independent bookstores to e-commerce entities of a global nature such as Amazon - “global giants like Amazon threaten the viability of independent bookstores by dominating distribution channels and undercutting prices.” (Thompson, 2012).

The challenges that physical bookstores are currently facing are already being reflected upon which the future of physical bookstores is whether or not the purchase from physical bookstore encourages the reading culture or so on. But some reports underscore the resilience of bookstores that seamlessly integrate retail with cultural programming. Author talks, book clubs and storytelling for children are designed to promote book sales as well as encourage community building and literacy promotion (Vassallo, 2016).

2.6 Additional Perspectives

New researches are also questioning the environmental impact of digital versus print reading. (Kozak, 2003), points out that, while e-books decrease the demand for paper, the manufacture and disposal of reading devices compound problems of electronic waste and CO2 emissions. This aspect complicates debates on the sustainability of reading habits.

Additionally, (Almaki, 2021) highlights the potential of digital reading in enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity among readers with disabilities, which implies that technology can be a driving force for educational equity. (Striphas, 2010), “reading itself is increasingly shaped by market logics and algorithmic priorities, raising questions about the future of literary diversity.”. In the end questions the commercialization of reading in the digital age and raised the alarm that algorithms may suppress rather than catalyze literary exploration.

CHAPTER III

Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

Methodology

This chapter introduces the research approach which has been adopted to study the influence of digital reading habits on the consumption behavior, and booksellers. It describes research design, methodologies and data collection methods, sampling and data analysis, and ethical contributions of the sub-studies and the rationale for each.

3.1 Research Design

The study used a mixed method design – both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. As (Creswell,) argues, mixed methods enable the researcher to utilize the best features of both paradigms, resulting in a deeper understanding. In addition to the data from online questionnaire, qualitative interview was conducted with a bookstore owner. This design was chosen to obtain statistical patterns in reading behaviors and deeper contextual knowledge about the readings of bookstore adaptations. The data synthesis sought to achieve a comprehensive grasp of the phenomenon.

3.2 Research Approach

The research took a deductive approach and began with theories and academic knowledge, leading to empirical testing of these theories and knowledge via the collection of primary data. As (Saunders et al., 2019) point out, deduction is the act of first formulating a theory based on what is known and subsequently setting up research to support or refute hypotheses that follow from this theory. This method is quite typical within the business and social science fields where the only goal is often to test relationship in various contexts or confirm old knowledge.

In this study, the deductive path was especially suitable, as the objective was to explore if trends and phenomena found throughout the world (for instance, the fall in the circulation of popular printed habits) manifest in the local cultures of Brazil and Ireland. This research attempted to connect the types of theories in two separated market placed to the evidential side of the matter by using deduction. This also enabled the research to keep a clear focus on the research questions and that both data collection and data analysis were purposeful and coincident with research objectives.

It was as opportunity for me to investigate the extent to which current established theories of digital reader behavior and bookstore sustainability held true in an alternative socio-economic and cultural context. Another merit of the deductive approach is that it enables comparative research, applying such a lens in different environments. Although deductive is considered rigorous, it must be approached carefully: there is a risk to confirm the prior literature (i.e., to select and report results that just confirm the theory). To reduce the risk of that such a theoretical assumption may limit the depth of the study analysis, it also included open-ended survey

questions and qualitative interviews as part of its data collection, to provide room for the unexpected insights and more nuance perspectives.

Overall, the deductive research process was adopted for its adherence to the research objectives, methodological precision and for its capacity to test broad theoretical constructs in the context of the two ideal types of Brazil and Ireland.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The main data gathering techniques were as follows:

- Online questionnaire: A survey on Google Forms was disseminated through social networks, academic networks, and through sending messages. The survey contained open and closed questions on demographics, reading preferences, types of digital platforms used, and perceptions about digital vs. print reading.
- Semi-structured interview: A semi-structured interview with the owner of a small independent bookshop in Cork, Ireland. In the interview, I asked what it is like to be an independent bookstore owner when customers (and their habits) are changing and what the bookstore can do to survive. A content analysis derived theme development for both instruments.

3.4 Sampling

The survey employed convenience, non-probability sampling to access participants in Brazil and Ireland. The survey had 58 respondents in total: 58.6% of the respondents were from Brazil and 41.4% were from Ireland. The age range among the sample was varied, with half (50%) of them aged 25-34. Appropriateness was employed in choosing the interviewee through purposive

sampling, in search for someone who had direct responsibility for the control over a physical bookstore under digital conditions (Etikan et al., 2016).

3.5 Research Instrument

The questionnaire has five sections:

- Demographic profile;
- Preferred reading formats;
- Frequency of reading: digital vs. print;
- Digital intermediaries (e.g., Kindle, BookTok, etc);
- The future of reading and bookshops as we know them.

Closed and open-ended questions used Likeart scales and multiple choices. The interview guide comprised questions about sales development, customer approaches, competition with internet sales and future actions.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis: Descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies) were used to explore patterns and differentials between Brazilian and Irish respondents. Findings were presented in graphs and tables.

Qualitative data: From the open-ended survey responses and the interview were coded using thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2006). Data were coded for emergent themes, including cultural attachment to print, convenience of digital reading, and strategies for bookstores to adapt to the digital shift.

3.7 Ontology and Epistemology

The research takes on a constructivist ontology based on the belief that reading and perceptions have cultural, technological and social aspects. The research was guided by an interpretivist epistemology, focusing on subjective meaning and individual experience (Saunders et al., 2019). This position made it possible to reconcile qualitative portraits of the interior with quantitative development.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The research supervisor granted ethical approval. Written consent was obtained from all participants where they were explained the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality and the use of data. Written consent was obtained for the interview, and transcription of the interview was agreed. Data was rendered completely anonymous and participants identities were protected, and no personal identifications were there on the final report.

3.9 Limitations of Methodology

The study had some methodologic limitations. There were a few limitations of this study that need to be considered when regarding its generalizability: Sample size of 58 participants might not be reflective of general national populations. Second, self-selection may cause bias in responses, as reading enthusiasts are more inclined to take part. Third, the emphasis on urban and internet-using participants may underestimate rural or digitally disadvantaged groups. Lastly, only one interview was carried out which constrains the qualitative view to one bookstore only.

CHAPTER IV

Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

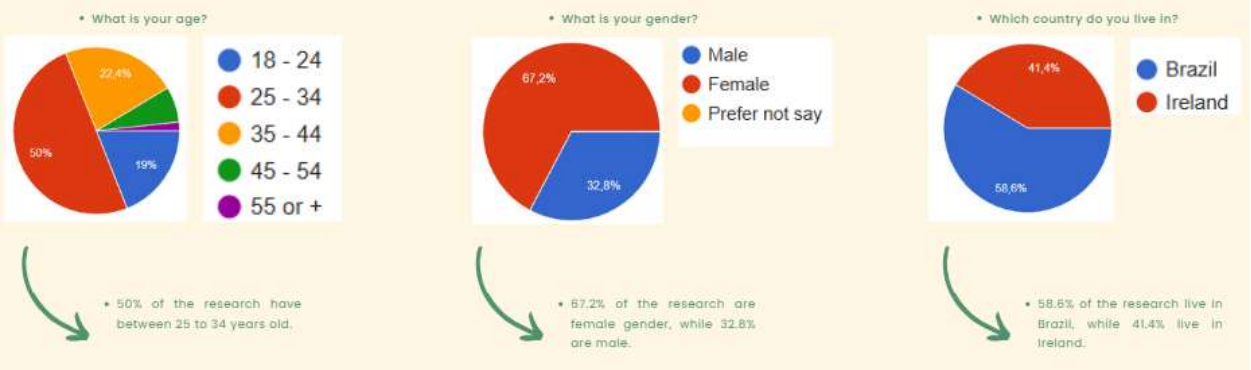
Findings

This is the chapter which represents the results of the main research, and which incorporated quantitative data and qualitative interviewee data from the independent bookstore owner. The findings have been categorized thematically, in relation to the research aims and the themes found in the literature review.

4.1 Demographic Profile

In total, 58 respondents participated in the online survey: 58.6% were Brazilian and 41.4% were Irish. Most of the participants were female (67.2%), followed by male (32.8%). The age range group was 25-34 years old (50% of interviewees), followed by 18-24 years old (20.7%), 35-44 years old (17.2%) and 45+ years old (12.1%). These demographics suggest mainly young adults as the readership, whom the literature suggests have greater engagement with digital technology (National Literacy Trust, 2020).

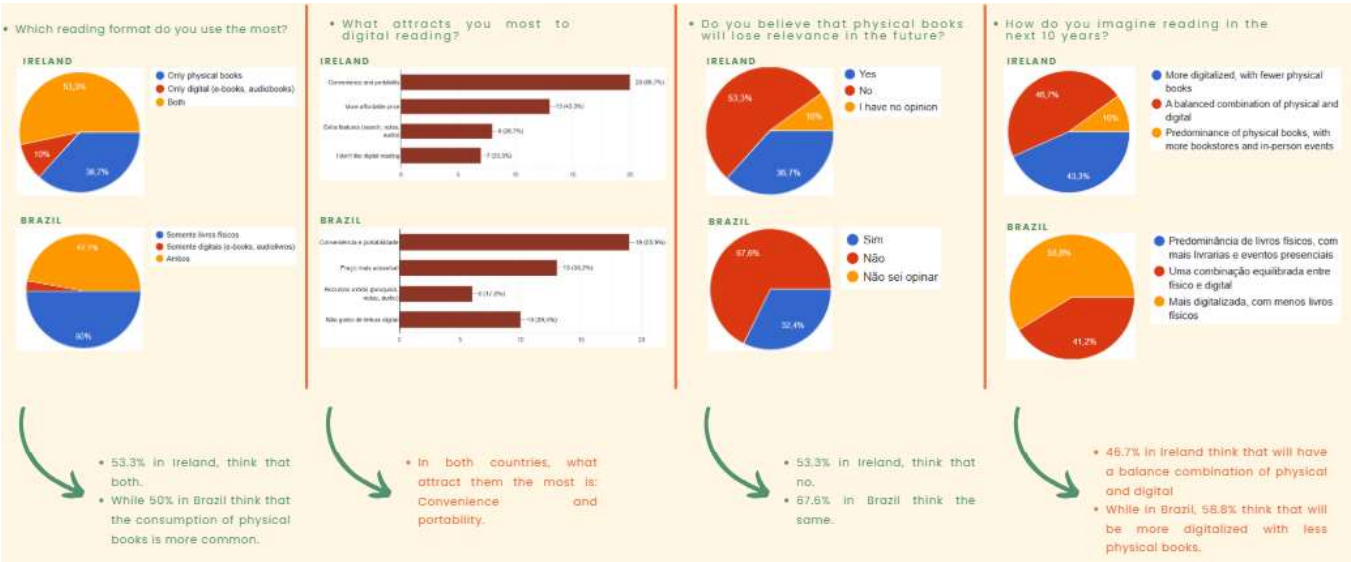
Figure 4.1.1. General Questions



4.2 Preferred Reading Formats

Respondents from Brazil overwhelmingly preferred paper books (67.6%) compared with the second largest category. It was primarily indicated that ease and portability motivated selecting digital reading, identifying with the results established by (Baron2015). But among those who preferred print, the tactile sense and smell and the emotional connection to physical books were similar to most of the points raised by (Mangen et al., 2013). Only a small portion of respondents (5.2%) spent the same amount of reading time on print and electronic, perhaps indicating an emerging hybrid nature of reading.

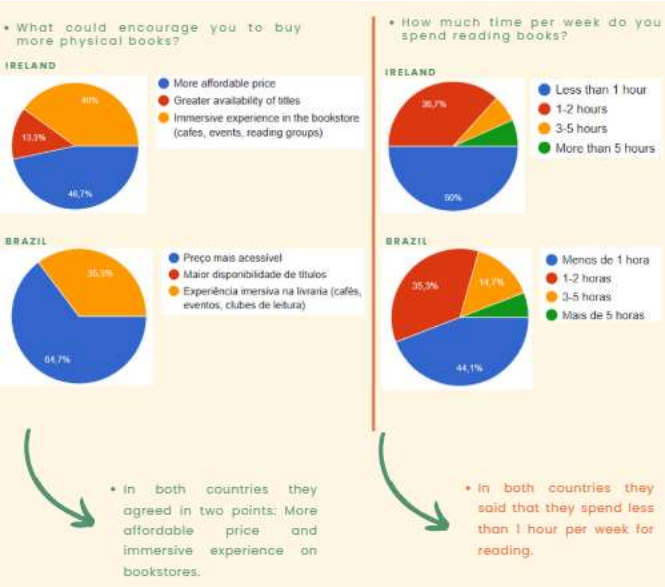
Figure 4.1.2. Theme 1 – The Transformation of Reading Habits



4.3 Frequency of Digital Reading

Participants were assessed on how frequently they read using digital devices. 70% of Irish people are reading digitally on a weekly basis, while in Brazil it is just 48.5%. This discrepancy may be due to greater digital infrastructure and societal acceptance of digital media in Ireland (National Literacy Trust, 2020). Also in Brazil, 25.9% of respondents listened to rarely consumed digital reading platforms, showing that there is still a close culture relation to the print book (Instituto Pró Livro, 2021).

Figure 4.1.3. Theme 2 – The Influence of Digital Platforms



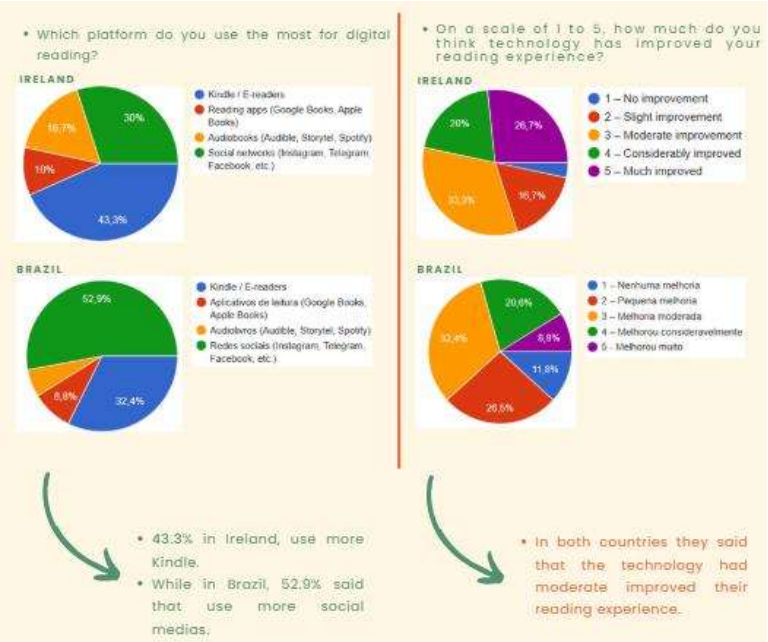
4.4 Influence of Digital Platforms

The survey had discovered how digital platforms influenced the reading habits. Amon all respondents:

- 67.2% among those used some form of social media to learn about new books, and BookTok (TikTok) and Instagram were the most frequently mentioned channels;
- 44.8% used Amazon Kindle or other apps to buy or read books;
- 22.4% followed online book clubs or literary influencers.

Irish respondents used BookTok more, and Brazilian respondents followed Instagram and YouTube influencers. This is in line with (Pettersen, 2017) who claimed that there are digital literary ecosystems that differ regionally.

Figure 4.1.4. Theme 2 – The Influence of Digital Platforms



4.5 Perceptions of the Future of Reading

On the future of reading:

- 53.3% of Irish participants thought that pre-digital forms of print publication will continue to coexist with their digital equivalents;
- The printed book, 67.6% of Brazilians believe, will persist;
- A small minority (19%) predicted a world in which all reading would be digital.

Respondents in both nations were worried that younger people are being brought up on screens, which raised attention-span and reading-depth concerns similar to concerns raised by (Singer et al., 2017).

Figure 4.1.5. Theme 3 – General Preferences and Behaviors

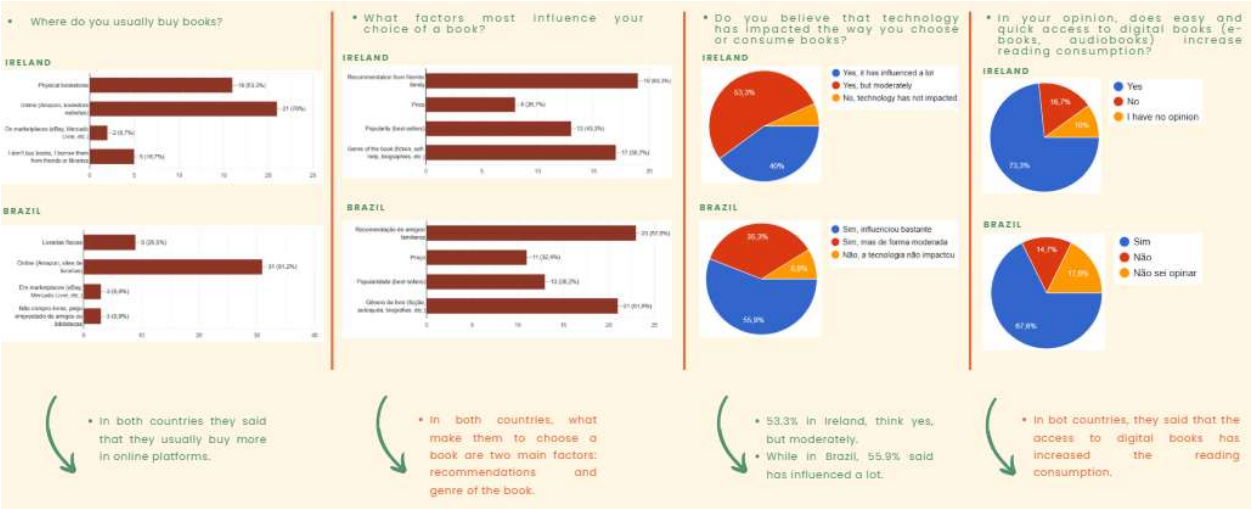
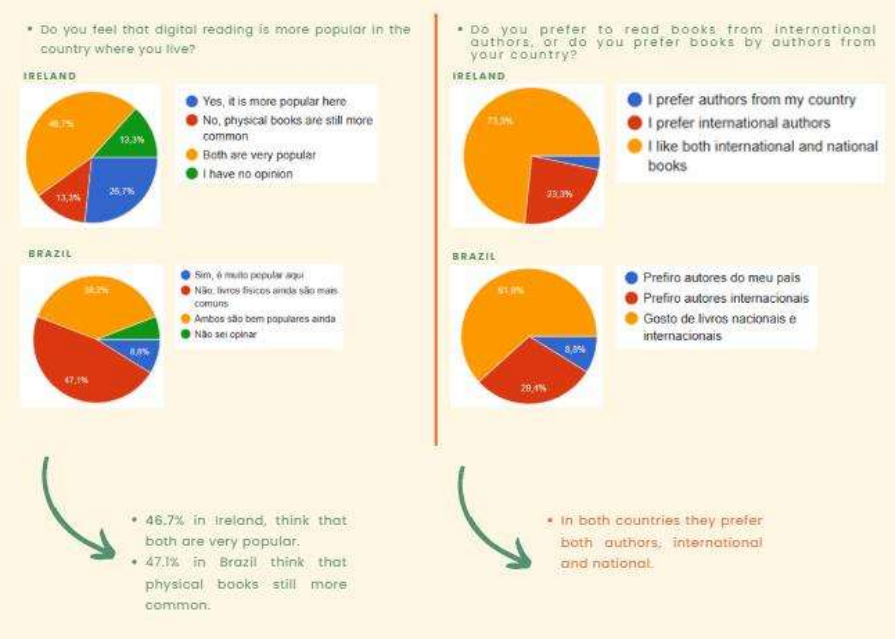


Figure 4.1.6. Theme 4 – Regional Perceptions



4.6 Impact of Digital Reading on Bookstores

Participants were questioned as to whether or not they thought digital reading was harmful to physical bookstores:

- 79.3% agreed or strongly agreed that bookstores are negatively impacted by digital reading trends;
- 86.2% thought the bookstores needed to offer diverse services in order to compete.

Bookstore qualitative responses pointed out that bookstores need to provide cultural activities, practice workshops, personalized recommendations, and school partnerships to appeal to customers, in line with (Baron, 2015) suggestion of transforming bookstores into cultural centers.

Figure 4.1.7. Theme 5 – The Impact of Digital Reading Habits on Physical Bookstores (Questions)

P.S.: They did not want to reveal their identity.

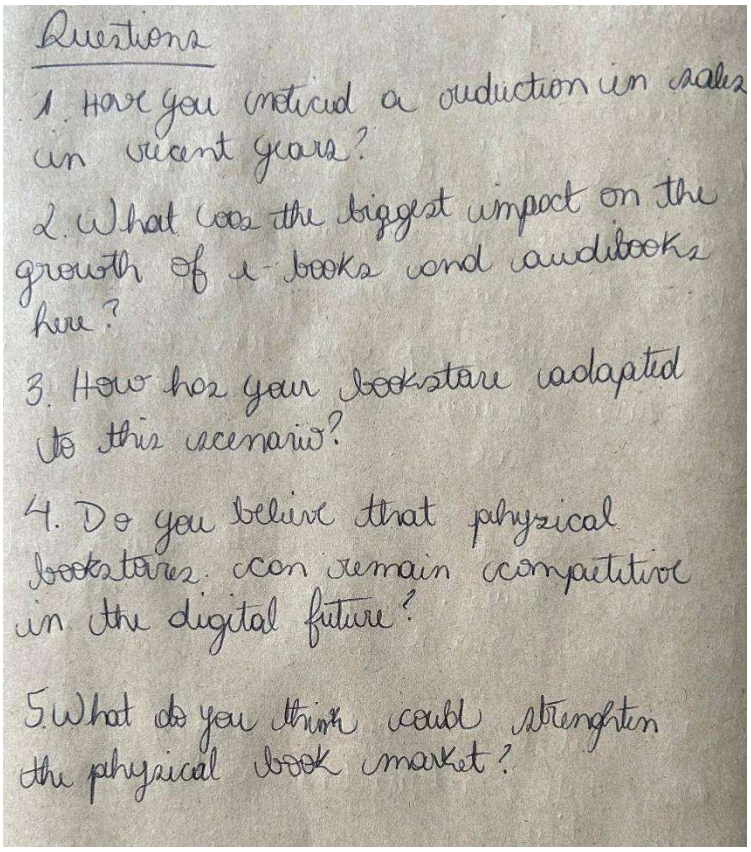
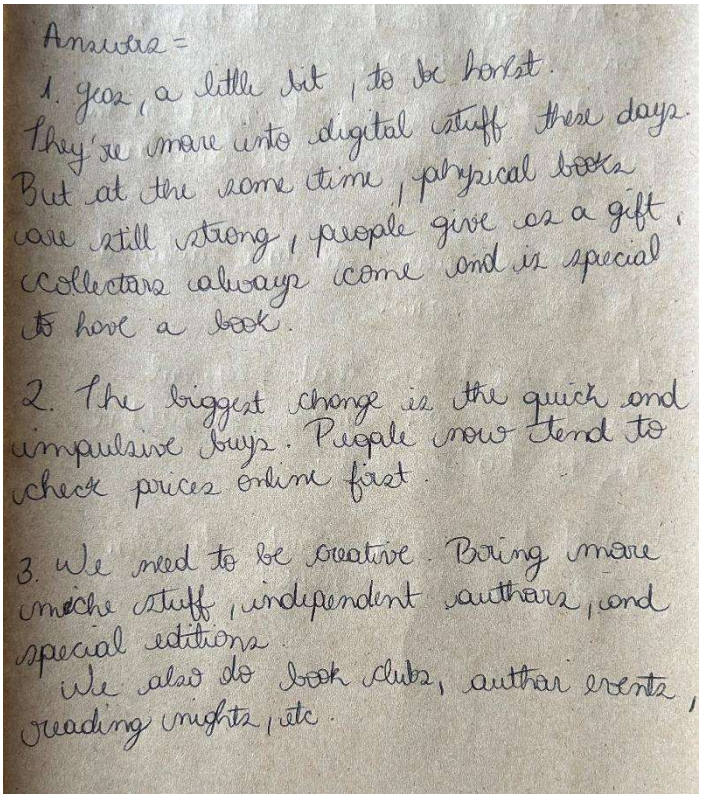


Figure 4.1.8. Theme 5 – The Impact of Digital Reading Habits on Physical Bookstores (Answer 1)



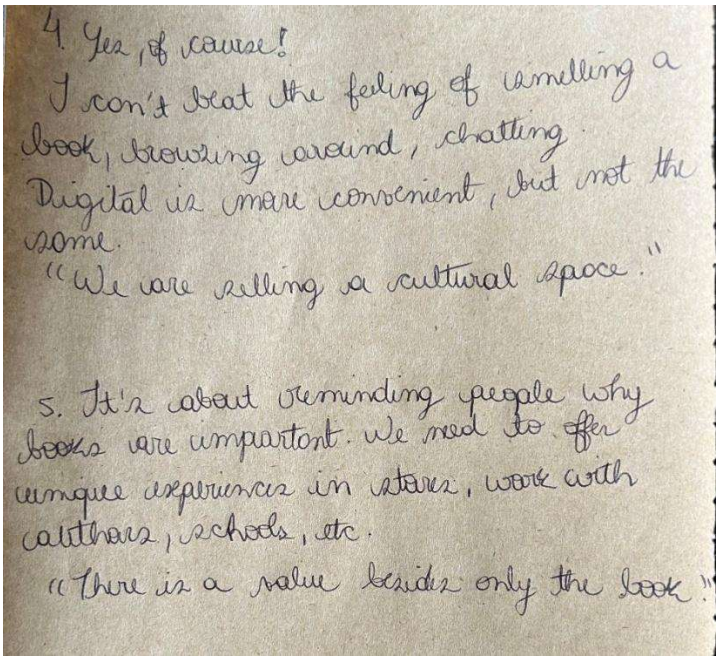
Answers =

1. Yes, a little bit, to be honest. They're more into digital stuff these days. But at the same time, physical books are still strong, people give as a gift, collectors always come and is special to have a book.

2. The biggest change is the quick and impulsive buys. People now tend to check prices online first.

3. We need to be creative. Bring more merche stuff, independent authors, and special editions.
We also do book clubs, author events, reading nights, etc.

Figure 4.1.9. Theme 5 – The Impact of Digital Reading Habits on Physical Bookstores (Answer 2)



4. Yes, of course!
I can't beat the feeling of smelling a book, browsing around, chatting.
Digital is more convenient, but not the same.
"We are selling a cultural space."

5. It's about reminding people why books are important. We need to offer unique experiences in stores, work with authors, schools, etc.
"There is a value besides only the book."

4.7 Insights from the Bookstore Owner Interview

Semi-structured interview with a bookstore owner in Cork, Ireland, provided a deeper insight in the obstacles experienced, and solutions pursued, by physical bookstores. The owner had observed a steady decrease in sales of physical books over the past five years, due to the convenience and lower prices offered by online retailer such as Amazon. Thus the bookstore brought out:

- Author discussions and book signings weekly;
- Children`s weekend reading clubs;
- A fidelity program that provides discounts for returning clients;
- Partnerships with local schools for literacy initiatives.

The store`s owner said the survival of a bookstore depends on offering community experiences that copycat online retailers cannot duplicate. “We are not just selling books anymore, we are selling a cultural space”, said the owner.

They also observed that it is even more difficult to reach the younger customers and that many believe that reading is academic and not a free time activity, in coherence with (Spedjelndaes, 2022), worrying about utilitarian oriented reading. “But eventually physical bookstores will survive if they can adapt and provide something that is a value besides only the book”, the owner concluded on a more optimistic note.

CHAPTER V

Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents a comparison and interpretation of the results in the light of the literature and concludes with a summary of the findings and implications for practitioners and researchers. It considers the research questions and assesses what the study means for readers, bookshops and the wider publishing field.

5.1 Discussion

The results of this study are consistent with studies which suggest that digital reading behaviors are increasing, especially among younger readers, and that physical books still maintain cultural and emotional value. The Brazilian participants look more inclined for printed books (67.6%) which alignspractical with the study of (Instituto Pró Livro, 2021), who considered the print as a symbol of scholar accomplishment and cultural status of being Brazilian. Likewise, the greater uptake of digital in Ireland, in contrast with (The National Literacy Trust, 2020), reflects that Irish readers value convenience and affordability with access to digital infrastructure. There were differences at a regional level, and the survey results showed that at least once a week (70%) of Irish read in digital format, while this number was smaller in Brazil (48.5%). The impact of digital

platforms, including BookTok, Instagram, and Kindle, on reading habits was notable in both countries, as 66.7% of readers turned to social media to find books.

This finding is consistent with (Graziosi, 2021), who pointed out that BookTok had raised the sales and popularity of certain genres among young generations. Yet, participants were not too optimists about the future of reading cautioning that digital reading could have consequences for attention span and comprehension-echoing the concerns of (Singer et al., 2017) and (Liu, 2005).

Even in the digital dominates beyond, 67.6% of Brazilian respondents and 53.3% of Irish respondents, indicate that paper books will still be used in the future which echoes (Baron, 2015), similar observation that paper provides a sensory and motional experience not present in digital. The bookstore owner interview underscored the difficulties facing physical bookstores in the online era: price competition from retailers, declining foot traffic, and changing customer preferences. The adaptations of the store owner, attending to author talks, establishing loyal programs, and partnering with local schools, are consistent with (Baron, 2015), he advices that bookstores evolve into cultural centers in order to stay relevant.

In general, the evidence shows that as digital reading habits grow, physical books and bookstores maintain cultural, emotional, and community importance, especially when bookstores can provide an experiential, one of a kind opportunity.

5.2 Conclusions

The effect of digital reading on the consumer and the bookstore is the main theme of this research, in the context of Brazil and Ireland.

The research found that:

- Digital reading is more widespread in Ireland than in Brazil, with increased weekly usage of digital platforms for reading among the Irish participants;
- Brazilian readers are more attached to paper books, products that matches cultural values regarding learning and intellectual posture;
- Digital platforms such as BookTok and Instagram have increasingly shaped reading choices in both countries;
- Physical bookstores are struggling to compete with online vendors and digital reading but can reinvent themselves by selling community services and cultural programming;
- Brazilians and Irish participants alike both think printed books will survive to read another day as digital editions will not dominate the market, a better balance will be achieved between the two options.

These findings indicate that despite technology`s influence on how we read, cultural, emotional, and social reasons for the existence of physical books and bookstores persist.

5.3 Recommendations

The above findings lead to the following recommendations:

- For bookstores: Work toward hybrid business models that combine retail with cultural events, workshops, a book club and partnerships with schools to offer the kind of experiential value no online retailer can match;

- For publishers and authors: To reach a younger audience, consider using digital platforms such as BookTok, Instagram and Goodreads. Reach you audiences where they are now and support local bookstores through partnerships and co-promotions;
- For educators and policy leaders: Promote balanced reading practices that include print and digital content in schools in ways that support the reading of self-selected texts, provide readers with skills for reading the mix of print and digital texts they encounter through their lives, and give readers understanding on how to write and create with the mix of media they encounter;
- For further research: A longitudinal study of the way reading habits change over time, larger samples that include rural readers, readers from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and the cognitive effects of different reading formats in different settings.

5.4 Personal Reflection

For me, this research was an incredible but also soul-wrenching and uncomfortable experience – both academically and on a personal level. Because I am an enthusiast of reading in any form, I also became more mindful of the nature of the interaction between printed and digital reading.

Learning how cultural factors allowing the topics of a book to take precedence over the format even in modern Brazil and Ireland, made me consider what kind of reader I am and what the culture of physical books in my own country means to me. What really were the old bookstores that whole story of the physical bookstores, which are still thriving and using such creative tactics to make it in the age of the digital book. Speaking with the owner of the bookstore made me

realize how much work goes into keeping these spaces and how valuable they are as community gathering places that extend beyond a place you can buy a book.

Additionally, I have learned valuable research skills, such as data collection, analysis and academic writing. I also learned how to balance quantitative and qualitative analysis, critically interpret survey data, compare and find relevance in academic literature.

The difficulty of obtaining responses, particularly in two countries, taught me patience, flexibility and problem-solving. On the whole, this project made me realize even more about reading s part of one`s own identity and culture. It also had the added affect of fueling my own interest in how digital technology has and continues to transform human interaction with texts, and to make me want to support projects that represent ongoing reading culture, and the loss of it.

5.5 Considerations on the Future of Reading

Alongside the cultural, emotional and commercial implications discussed throughout, the question of the reading of the future must also be approached through technological and psychological perspectives. Rapid advances in AI, immersive reading apps, and adaptive learning platforms, sensitized especially by millennial digital habits, indicate that digital reading is changing, perhaps in ways that exceed typical static screen use cases. Some of the features in e-books that are growing in popularity include real-time interactivity, gamified reading with voice-enabled browsing.

These developments could change the way upcoming generations read text – from literacy where sounds and pictures play a significant role in conveying or enhancing the message of the text. In a world where readers interact with content tailored to their preference and habits, notions of

authorship, narrative structure and critical thinking could be further disrupted. In addition, recent studies in cognitive psychology relate that while digital reading provides greater speed and access, certain forms of digital reading do not stimulate the brain in the same manner as print. Writers such as (Wolf,), claim that the deep reading brain – which develops through slow, concentrated reading is in danger of being underutilized in the digital world. This under exploitations could affect not only the way we ingest stories, but also how we educate ourselves, empathize with wit others and make decisions.

The implications are immense for educational systems, which exist today to prepare students for a world which demands of us not only fast, digital-paced navigation, but also time you spend on slow, critical reflection.

Public policy also provides a major role for the future of reading. Governments can contribute to a national literacy by subsidizing small libraries, public reading initiatives and independent bookstores. Relief for print media, subsidies to guarantee digital access in disadvantaged neighborhoods, or laws to enforce algorithm transparency when it comer to book recommendation platforms, are just a few instruments that would allow us to preserve the diversity and quality of reading experiences.

In the end, the simultaneous existence of digital and physical reading are but a microcosm of larger dynamic tensions in our society between the fast and the slow, the easy and the tich, the automated and the empowered. An intentional effort that has to be made by teachers, publishers, designers and policymakers in order to guarantee that the future generation, does not only inherit the ability to read or access, but also desire and do it meaningfully.

5.6 Final Conclusion

This work has examined the interplay of digital reading practices, consumers behavior and the viability of the physical high street for book buying in the Brazilian and Irish markets. From combining quantitative and qualitative perspectives, the research has shown that digital reading is much more than just a technological move, but that it represents a cultural, social and economic large change for the readers, but also for the educators, the publishers and the retailers.

While digital distribution in convenient, agile or democratic, it also poses issues in terms of reading depth and understanding and the displacement of customary cultural venues. The role of the printed book, as a symbol of intellectual and emotional value and especially in Brazil – highlights the need to maintain variety in how we read in the digital era.

Physical bookstores, while structurally threatened, have the potential to reinvent themselves as community centers that cultivate cultural engagement and literacy through experience. The future of independent bookstores may hang not only on books sales but also on their capacity t help forge real social experiences that the digital cannot replicate.

On a broader level, the study fits into discussions about our modern society`s relationship to reading, and which value we assign to technological progress, respect for tradition, availability, quality, individual fulfilment and living together. Future studies and developments across fields will be crucial to offer varied, inclusive, and thriving reading cultures to future generations.

CHAPTER VI

Digital Reading Habits. How are Digital Reading Habits Impacting the Consumers and Bookstores for the Next Generations and Years?

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