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I READ OR DON'T: THAT'S THE QUESTION

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Abstract

Reading is considered to be an essential intellectual habit of students at higher education institutions. For the sake of contributing to students' intellectual growth, it is essential to discover whether this habit is verily present in today's students at higher educational establishments. Reading habits or preferences can vary and can be influenced by factors emerging from different aspects of life. This study was designed to examine the reading habits or preferences of university students in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, a survey was designed and administered to 390 university students studying in three different universities. The survey consisted of five categories, including personality self, background, interpersonal relationships, motivation and academic influence. The research revealed that university students do not choose to read, but instead they prefer to engage in different pastime activities such as watching TV/Movies, surfing the net or spending time with friends.

Keywords: Factors, Formation, Indication, Reading Habits, Survey, University Students.

1. Introduction

Reading is considered as a key to obtaining knowledge and attaining esteemed social recognition. It opens doors to loads of experiences that provide the individual with the opportunity to widen his horizons, recognize and cultivate his passions while getting a deeper understanding of himself, people around him and the world in general. It is a habit usually acquired in the early years of childhood and shaped in the later stages like youth and adolescence. Reading can also be deemed as a practice that sharpens and develops the individuals' capacities of imagination and critical thinking. For this reason, it is an important means of ensuring the development of human beings' personalities as well as their mental aptitudes. John Holden, in his book called *Creative Reading*, states that "reading is a vitally important gateway to economic, social, and civic life (Holden, 2004, 18). It puts children's imagination in motion, stimulates learning and refines views, broaden horizons, and assists readers to explore the world. Reading grants people the chance to learn "about other people, about history and social studies, the langue arts, science, mathematics, and the other content subjects that must be mastered in school" (Lyon, 1997).

Reading ability proves to be significant in several stages of people's lives: from personal to public, from academic to professional, and from social to public. This ability empowers the individual to achieve personal ambitions, well-defined objectives such as successful completion of primary or secondary education or securing a job as well as unclear and distant goals which improve person's own life and development. Therefore, reading literacy is a crucial part of the human asset, which is directly associated

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with the social and economic prospects of individuals as well as countries. Reading habit is a fundamental and indispensable aspect of achieving literacy in the members of the society. A.K. Sharma and S.P. Sing, in their article, state that “the reading habit has one of the most powerful lasting influence in the promotion of one’s personal development in particular and social in general” (Sharma and Sing, 2005,119).

Young people’s acquisition of good reading habits does not only have a positive effect on their academic future but also in their everyday lives. No matter for what sort of reasons people like to read, either for pleasure, getting information or discovering new things, development of social skills, or building a good self-image, it is of paramount importance to reinforce this zeal for reading with constant and steady reading habits. There is a direct correlation between reading habits and academic success. Anne E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich, in their article entitled “Early Reading Acquisition and Its Relation to Reading Experience and Ability 10 Years Later,” explain the relationship between reading and reading habits in following words: “If the student got off to a fast start in reading....., then they are more likely to engage in more reading activity. Thus, a fast initial start at reading acquisition might well help to develop the lifetime habit of reading” (Cunningham and Stanovich,1998,942). On the other hand, Nancy Kaplan, in her article called “To Read, Responsibly,” states the following on the subject:

Reading books in one’s leisure time strongly correlate with reading proficiency so that when rates of voluntary book reading decline and we also see a decline in reading proficiency, it is reasonable to suppose that people are becoming less proficient readers because they are spending less time reading books for pleasure (Kaplan, 2008, 194).

It is evident that students will need reading habits throughout their education. Students with poor reading habits usually consider reading material to be relatively more difficult (Allington, 1984), and, thus, cultivate an unfavorable attitude towards reading (Oka and Paris, 1986). It is quite surprising what a significant effect struggling with reading has on the education of students. It may just be one skill, but it has the power to affect everything. A recent study, conducted by Donald J. Hernandez, for *American Educational Research Association*, revealed some alarming facts about how poor reading skills influence the rate of graduation. The most striking finding of the study is that poor reading skills lead many students to leave school before even receiving a diploma. It also reveals that “the rates are highest for the low, below-basic readers: 23 per cent of these children drop out or fail to finish high school on time, compared to 9 per cent of children with basic reading skills and 4 per cent of proficient readers” (Hernandez, 2011).

On the other hand, the *International Reading Association* makes the following projection on how significant reading habit will be in future:

Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future (Moore at al., 1999, 3).

People are having an increasingly rapid pace of life today, and society requires proficient and educated workforce who had obtained some extent of knowledge and sharpened individual skills throughout their education. Young people will have to equip themselves with the necessary skills and competence to reserve a secure place for themselves in this very demanding life. This study aims to identify the factors that positively or negatively influence the reading habits and preferences of university students and discover what they usually do with their leisure time.

2. Background of the Study

Reading habits and preferences of young teenagers and adolescents have been discussed by numerous researchers in the world. They have been considered by many educational experts as an essential factor in teaching and learning. Studies have been conducted on the reading habits and patterns of teenagers and young people (Wicks,1995; Machet, 2004) and on those of college students and adults (Gallik, 1999; Kirsch & Guthrie,1984). Wicks (1995) discovered that young children acquire specific patterns of reading, these patterns are adopted by other members of the society, and eventually, they are handed down from one generation to another. On the other hand, Machet (2004) found out that the reading habits of South African children did not show a radical difference from those of children in England. It further revealed that children



showed a positive attitude towards reading texts of non-fiction. Gallik (1999) discovered magazines to be the most popular reading material that 75% of college students frequently read.

Moreover, some studies have revealed a strong and positive association between young people who read for pleasure doing academically well and their friends who do not read for enjoyment. This can be said of reading that is carried out in and out of school (Krashen, 1993; Anderson et al., 1988). It was discovered that reading habit could also be linked with the attainment of skills like reading comprehension, grammar (Cox and Guthrie, 2001) as well as the extent of vocabulary (Angelos and McGriff, 2002). Finally, Kubis' (1994) study revealed that students who were exposed to reading in the early years of childhood and who have a collection of books had harbored more favorable attitude towards reading than those who did not.

3. Statement of the Problem

In the past 20 years or so, the world has witnessed dramatic changes in the fields of technology and information. No doubt, the invention of new technological devices has made our lives a lot easier, and people have gained ease of access to information anywhere in the world. However, people have begun to lead busy lives, and young people and adults spend a considerable amount of their time watching TV, playing computer games and surfing on the internet. The reading habits receive the most significant blow in the process at least. People either do not spare time for reading books or prefer to read from the computer screen. Rose (2011) stated that readers of traditional hard-copy books expressed their reservations that "electronic text ultimately diminishes both the personal growth of individuals and the stability of our society" (516). Despite such objections and scepticism, some researchers assert that students, who have become accustomed to reading from computer screen, experience difficulties in reading hard copies of books (Burke & Roswell, 2008) and predict the increasing domination of electronic texts on the reading habits.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study intends to investigate the reading habits / preferences of university students studying at three universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also aims to identify the factors that positively or negatively influence the reading habits and to determine what sort of reading materials these university students prefer to read and what kind of activities they engage in their leisure time.

5. Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the expressed reading habits / preferences of university students?
2. What type of reading materials do students choose to read?
3. What kind of factors influences the reading preferences of students positively or negatively?

6. Methodology

6.1 Sampling

A total of 390 university students participated in this study. These students are currently enrolled at three universities located in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of 390 participants, 200 of them were female, and 190 of them were male. The participants of the study consisted of 63 freshmen students, 66 sophomore, 78 junior, 123 senior and 60 Masters or Doctoral students.

6.2 Instrument

The information on reading habits/preferences of university students was obtained through a survey. This 34-item survey was developed after regular discussion and consultation with experts and changes were being made upon their suggestions. The pilot study for the final version of the survey was conducted to the students to test the adequacy of the research instrument and to assess the feasibility before conducting a full-scale survey. The survey was administered to the participants after making improvements. It was done both on paper and online. The collected data were analyzed through SPSS software program. The Cronbach alpha reliability score of the survey was calculated as .835.

7. Findings and Comments

There are various factors that affect reading and reading habits/preferences of young children and adults. Their interests, states and situations can be seen as the primary reasons that motivate them to obtain information as well as knowledge. This motivation for gathering information and knowledge urge them to read books, magazines, newspapers, fiction, non-fiction, research articles, etc. This is an indication of their reading habits or preferences. Individuals' reading preferences may differ depending upon their personality,



background, interpersonal relationships, motivation and academic influence. Therefore, the findings of this study will be analyzed under these five variables mentioned above.

7.1 Personality Self

All distinguished personalities throughout world history have been passionate readers. People have acquired the habit of reading since the earliest times in history, and thus, words of wisdom have been transmitted from one generation to another. Sustained and regular reading improves the intelligence, reforms the emotions, nurtures the talent, enhances the quality of one's life and thus, ensures the active participation of a person in social, cultural, educational and political lives.

Table 1. Study Year, Reader Type and Number of Book Owned by Students

Category	Year of Study		Category	Reader Type		Category	No of Books	
	F	%		F	%		F	%
First	63	16.2	A very poor reader	113	29.0	1-10	24	6.2
Second	66	16.9	Poor reader	110	28.2	10-25	155	39.7
Third	78	20.0	Average reader	36	9.2	25-50	93	23.8
Fourth	123	31.5	Good reader	63	16.2	50-75	45	11.5
M.A/PhD	60	15.4	A very good reader	68	17.4	75or more	73	18.7
Total	390	100	Total	390	100	Total	390	100

As shown in the table above, out of 390 participants, 123 participants study in their senior year of undergraduate study. The remaining students almost equally were distributed at other years of study (freshmen, sophomore and junior) and the number of participants from these years is pretty much close to one another (63 freshmen, 66 sophomore and 78 junior year students). However, 57.2% of the participants label themselves to be either a very poor or poor readers, and only 33.6 % students regard themselves to be a very good reader or good readers. When it comes to the number of books owned by university students, 39.7 % of poor readers stated that they possessed between 10-25 books in their libraries in addition to study-related books. 23.8 % of average readers asserted that they had between 25-50 books at home on their bookshelves. A collective percentage of 30.2 % of very good or good readers stated that they possessed more than 50 books at home apart from books they use for their respective at university.

Table 2. Reading Enjoyment, Students' Attitude towards Reading and Time They Spent for Reading

Category	Enjoyment		Category	Reading Attitude		Category	Time for Reading	
	F	%		F	%		F	%
Strongly disagree	11	2.8	Strongly disagree	17	4.4	None	78	20.0
Moderately disagree	208	53.3	Moderately disagree	226	57.9	Less than one hour	117	30.0
Neutral	3	.8	Neutral	13	3.3	One to two hours	59	15.1
Agree	77	19.7	Agree	113	29.0	Three to four hours	56	14.4
Strongly agree	91	23.3	Strongly agree	21	5.4	Five or more hours	80	20.5
Total	390	100	Total	390	100	Total	390	100

The table above contains data on students' reading attitude, whether they enjoy reading or not and time they dedicate to reading. Out of 390 respondents, 219 students (56.1 %) stated that they did not enjoy



reading, and 195 of them indicated that they spent less than one hour or not time reading for pleasure, whereas 168 of them (43%) confirmed that they enjoyed reading and they spent at least three hours or more on reading for pleasure. 62.3 % of students stated that there was no change in their attitudes, and they did not like to read when they were children, and did not enjoy reading now. Only 34.4 % of students declared that there was a significant change in their reading attitudes as they grew older.

Table 3. Students' opportunity to choose books and preference of book type

Opportunity to choose			Electronic texts			Hardcopy		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Strongly disagree	1	.3	Strongly disagree	41	10.5	Strongly disagree	22	5.6
Moderately disagree	23	5.9	Moderately disagree	151	38.7	Moderately disagree	161	41.3
Neutral	4	1.0	Neutral	8	2.1	Neutral	10	2.6
Agree	177	45.4	Agree	151	38.7	Agree	59	15.1
Strongly agree	185	47.4	Strongly agree	39	10.0	Strongly agree	138	35.4
Total	390	100	Total	390	100	Total	390	100

As can be seen in table 3.1.3, 92.8 % of students stated that it was utterly crucial for them to have the opportunity to choose what type of book they would like to read. 40.8 % of respondents also asserted that they mostly read books of their favorite authors, whereas 22.8 % of them prefer to read books recommended by either by their friends or members of their families. The types of books university students prefer to read are listed as realist fiction by 91 %, short stories by 83.3 %, crime/adventure by 73.3 % and books on romance by 51.7 % respectively. Moreover, 95.1 % of respondents declared that they like to spend time surfing the Internet rather than reading. 88.8 % of them said that they would prefer to watch TV or movies, and 86.4 % of participants said that they choose to spend their time with their friends rather than reading books. These findings confirm the opinion asserted by S. Wagner that many students do not have developed a negative attitude to reading but give priority to other leisure activities such as sports, social life and school work (Wagner, 2002).

7.2 Background

There are several factors that influence students' background in reading. Parents, home environment, and teachers are essential to the acquisition of reading habits at an early age and nurturing a love of reading in them. Reading for pleasure is positively affected by the relationships between families and children, teachers and children, and children and communities (Cremin et al., 2014, 3). Parental involvement plays a crucial role in children's development of reading habit. Many parents pay immense attention and spend a considerable amount of quality time with their children and thus allowing them to build a significant resource in the early years of literacy development. As a result, children become exposed to reading through casual parental involvement which paves the way for formal training in reading and developed reading skills (Senechal and LeFevre 2002). The relationship between parents and children, which is supported by positive and favorable interactions, is believed to initiate the motivation to acquire literacy and to appreciate reading books. Weigel et al. asserted the significance of parent involvement in following words: "Parents who express positive attitudes about reading and actively engage their children in literacy enhancing activities are creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm for literacy and learning" (Weigel et al. 2006, 374).

Table 4. Parents enjoy reading, reading relaxes and helps to understand myself

Parents Read			Reading Relaxes			R. Helps to Understand Myself		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Strongly disagree	87	22.3	Strongly disagree	57	14.6	Strongly disagree	57	14.6
Moderately disagree	176	45.1	Moderately disagree	165	42.3	Moderately disagree	156	40.0
Neutral	13	3.3	Neutral	4	1.0	Neutral	10	2.6
Agree	103	26.4	Agree	78	20.0	Agree	63	16.2
Strongly agree	11	2.8	Strongly agree	86	22.1	Strongly agree	104	26.7
Total	390	100	Total	390	100	Total	390	100



Table 4 includes data on parents' enjoyment of reading as well as the effects of reading on relaxation, comforts and understanding oneself or the world. Out of 390 students, 263 of them (67.4 %) stated that their parents did not enjoy reading. This finding proves the point made by Senecal and LeFevre that children are positively or negatively influenced by parental involvement. 56.9 % of respondents did not believe in the perception that reading allows readers to relax and makes them feel comfortable, whereas 42.1 % of participants expressed that they feel relaxed and comfortable when they have a book in their hands. When asked whether reading helps them to understand themselves and the world, 54.6 % of students stated that they would not consider reading to have any contribution either in understanding themselves or the world they live. Only 42.9 % of participants acknowledged its positive contribution to provide insight into gaining knowledge about oneself and the world.

Table 5. Enjoy reading as a child and confidence in the ability to choose books

Category	Read as a Child		Category	Ability to Choose	
	F	%		F	%
Strongly disagree	53	13.6	Strongly disagree	1	.3
Moderately disagree	187	47.9	Moderately disagree	11	2.8
Neutral	5	1.3	Neutral	4	1.0
Agree	66	16.9	Agree	268	68.7
Strongly agree	79	20.3	Strongly agree	106	27.2
Total	390	100	Total	390	100

Table 5 shows data on participants' statement that they enjoyed reading as a child and their confidence in their ability to choose books that they would enjoy reading. Out of 390 students, 61.5 % of them (140 respondents) declared that they did not consider reading to be enjoyable when they were children. Only 40.2 % of students asserted that they enjoyed reading since their childhood. This result confirms the view stated by Weigel et al. that parents' positive attitudes about reading and their active support for encouraging children to participate in literacy-building activities would lead them to develop a habit of reading. Furthermore, 95.9 % of respondents stated that they feel confident in their ability to choose a book that they would enjoy reading. According to Krashen (1993), students who have the chance to pick whatever they read in a natural setting incline to be more motivated and to demonstrate better development in language as well as in reading.

7.3 Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships that children build since their early childhood play a critical role in the development of reading habits. Their interpersonal relationships with their parents, teachers and peers prove to be significant groups of reference. Positive modeling by parents, teachers and friends can improve reading habit and also encourage reading enjoyment in unwilling and involuntary readers. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), in his book called *The Ecology of Human Development. Experiment by Nature and Design* has determined peers, parents, and teachers to be the most influential reference groups. He discovered that these three groups are the major principles in child development. R.J. Berndt conducted a study on the influence of peer groups and concluded that "in American society and many other societies, the change from childhood to adolescence is marked by an increase in the frequency and intensity of peer interaction" (Berndt, 1979, 608). Peers can stimulate behavioral change in children. Parents and teachers can also play a critical role in improving the reading habits in students. They can achieve this in many ways, but, most importantly, they can inspire a positive change in students by becoming role models.



Table 6. Talking to Parents and Friends about books and sharing ideas with friends.

Talk to My Parents			Interesting Book			Ideas with My Classmates		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Strongly disagree	97	24.9	Strongly disagree	3	.8	Almost Never	9	2.3
Moderately disagree	167	42.8	Moderately disagree	3	.8	Sometimes	38	9.7
Neutral	18	4.6	Neutral	7	1.8	Once month	^a 4	1.0
Agree	101	25.9	Agree	325	83.3	Once week	^a 296	75.9
Strongly agree	7	1.8	Strongly agree	57	14.3		13	3.2

As can be seen in table 6, out of 390 participants, 264 students (67.7%) stated that they did not talk about the books they read with their parents. Only 102 respondents (27.7 %) asserted that they liked talking to their parents about the books they read. However, when asked if they wanted to tell their friends when they read an exciting book, 96.6 % of students declared that they shared it with their friends. Similarly, 86.9 % of them mentioned that they shared their ideas with their classmates about a book they are reading. These results confirm the opinion expressed by Berndt that students feel a lot comfortable or encouraged to talk about the books they read or share their ideas about the books either with their friends or classmates on a regular basis.

Table 7. Influence of friends and professors.

If My Friends Read More			My Professors Help		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Strongly disagree	9	2.3	Strongly disagree	54	13.8
Moderately disagree	9	2.3	Moderately disagree	179	45.9
Neutral	9	2.3	Neutral	73	18.7
Agree	218	55.9	Agree	82	21.0
Strongly agree	145	37.2	Strongly agree	2	.5
Total	390	100	Total	390	100

Table 7 offers data about the influence of friends and professors on the reading habits of university students. Out of 390, 363 students (93.1 %) stated that they would read more if their friends read more. This finding shows parallelism with the statement made by Berndt that peer influence has a significant impact in producing behavioral change. However, 59.7 % of respondents declared that their professors do not provide any guidance in choosing a book and give them any chance to discuss their ideas with them. This finding indicates that professors fail to become role models to their students in the development of students' reading habits even though they hold a position of commanding influence.

7.4 Motivation

Motivation is generally considered as a significant determinant in the acquisition and achievement of reading habit. It is the connection between reading habit and performance. Passionate readers tend to read more because they are intrinsically motivated, and this enthusiasm leads to improved vocabulary power and



sharpened language skills. Guthrie and Wigfield defined reading motivation as “the individual’s personal goals, values and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000, 3). According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), reading motivation is an intricate factor that encompasses reading objectives, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and social motivation for reading. Motivation can be prompted and be influenced by parental involvement, peer interaction and teacher’s stimulation. Therefore, many schools, educators and parent organizations include carefully selected rewards in their reading campaigns to support and to encourage reading motivation in their students.

Table 8. Motivation by Family and Professors and Lack of Books

My Family Encourages			My Professors Motivate			Lack of Books		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Strongly disagree	57	14.6	Strongly disagree	54	13.8	Strongly disagree	49	12.6
Moderately disagree	179	45.9	Moderately disagree	175	44.9	Moderately disagree	197	50.5
Neutral	26	6.7	Neutral	78	20.0	Neutral	10	2.6
Agree	104	26.7	Agree	81	20.8	Agree	86	22.1
Strongly agree	24	6.2	Strongly agree	2	.5	Strongly agree	48	12.3
Total	390	100	Total	390	100	Total	390	100

As can be noticed in Table 8, out of 390 participants, 236 of them (60.5 %) stated that they receive no motivation or encouragement from their parents. Only 128 students (32.9 %) expressed their contentment due to continuous support from their parents. On the other hand, 229 respondents (58.7 %) complained that they receive no encouragement or motivation from their professors at the university. Only 21.3 % of them acknowledged their professors’ role as a means of motivation. Besides, 63.1 % of participants asserted that their motivation was negatively affected by the lack of books that they would like to read either at university libraries or book stores. 34.4 % of them stated that their motivation was not affected by the lack of books. These findings indicate clearly that students will read more if their parents or professors can become positive role models to them or if they receive a fair amount of encouragement and motivation either from their respective parents or professors at university.

Table 9. Students’ Book Selection Preferences

Read After Watching a Movie			My Favorite Authors			Friends Suggest		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Strongly disagree	11	2.8	Strongly disagree	24	6.2	Strongly disagree	5	1.3
Moderately disagree	203	52.1	Moderately disagree	137	35.1	Moderately disagree	52	13.3
Neutral	13	3.3	Neutral	5	1.3	Neutral	14	3.6
Agree	84	21.5	Agree	38	9.7	Agree	240	61.5
Strongly agree	79	20.3	Strongly agree	186	47.7	Strongly agree	79	20.3
Total	390	100	Total	390	100	Total	390	100

The table above shows data on students’ priorities in the book selection process. 54.9 % of participants stated that they do not decide to read a book after watching the movie adaptation of that particular book, but 41.8 % of them asserted that they feel interested in reading the book after watching a movie based on the book. However, 57.4 % of respondents preferred to read books by their favorite authors, whereas 41.3 % of them stated that they did not prefer to read books written by their favorite authors. Furthermore, 81.8 % of students declared that they would prefer to read books suggested or recommended



by their peers or friends. This finding reveals the fact that friends or peers play a critical role in motivating students to read books.

7.5 Academic Influence

Several researchers have focused on the substantial correlation between reading and school achievement (Cox and Guthrie, 2001, Angelos and McGriff, 2002, Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998). Students who read for pleasure are likely to achieve significantly higher academic success than their classmates who do not read for pleasure. Similarly, students who read books outside school tend to become enthusiastic readers, obtain higher grades in all subjects and have broader vocabulary knowledge than those who do not read (Krashen 1993 and Cunningham and Stanovich 1998). Even if students do not read materials such as novels, stories or poems, but prefer to read information included in websites, news articles and magazines, this kind of reading will provide students with the opportunity to practice reading and this, in return, will expand their vocabulary and increase their motivation to read (Moje et al., 2008).

Table 10. Importance of Reading in English classes, Reading as Homework and Time Spent on Reading

Reading in English classes			Reading Homework			Time Spent for Reading		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Strongly disagree	1	.3	Strongly disagree	48	12.3	None	4	1.0
Moderately disagree	5	1.3	Moderately disagree	129	33.1	Less than an hour	8	2.1
Neutral	9	2.3	Neutral	10	2.6	One to two	41	10.5
Agree	67	17.2	Agree	165	42.3	Three to four	186	47.7
Strongly agree	308	79.0	Strongly agree	38	9.7	Five or more	151	38.7
Total	390	100	Total	390	100	Total	390	100

As can be seen in Table 10, a total of 375 students (96.2 %) emphasized the importance of reading in their courses at university. On the other hand, while 203 participants (52 %) consider reading to be a form of homework related to their course work, 177 of them (35.4 %) do not regard reading to be a type of homework instead they read because they have developed a habit of reading. Furthermore, when asked how many hours they spend reading for school in a typical week, 186 students (47.7 %) stated that they spend between three to four hours in a week on reading for school. 151 participants (38.7 %) declared that they do five or more hours of reading in a week.

Table 11. Frequency of Checking Books from the Library and Reading for Vocabulary Improvement

Check Books from Library			Read to Improve Vocabulary		
Category	F	%	Category	F	%
Never	73	18.7	Strongly disagree	24	6.2
Rarely	178	45.6	Moderately disagree	117	30.0
Sometimes	36	9.2	Neutral	8	2.1
Often	87	22.3	Agree	134	34.4
Always	16	4.1	Strongly agree	107	27.4
Total	390	100	Total	390	100

Table 11 contains data on how often students check out books from library and their intention to read for vocabulary improvement. Out of 390, 178 participants (45.6 %) stated that they rarely go to library and check out books, 73 of them (18.7 %) informed that they never check out books, 36 participants (9.2 %)



sometimes check out books, 87 respondents (22.3 %) declared that they visit libraries and finally, only 16 students (4.1 %) stated that they always check out book from the library. This indicates that libraries lack facilities to make students feel comfortable or do not include books that students will consider to be interesting. Haycock emphasizes this issue and states that “in schools with well-stocked, well-equipped school libraries, managed by qualified and motivated professional teacher librarians working with support staff, one can expect capable and avid readers” (Haycock, 2003, 10).

8. Conclusion

No doubt, the spread of internet and developments in communications have greatly affected the pace and the standards of living. It also had a considerable impact on reading habits, especially those of university students. Nowadays, students prefer to read screen-based or electronic texts due to their ease of access and storage facilities because they have trouble engaging with traditional paper books. Also, students began to engage in more enjoyable leisure activities than reading books, such as surfing the internet, playing games, watching TV or movies and spending time with their friends. It is more convenient for them to seek refuge in the virtual world because it offers them chances to interact and connect with people from different cultures and nationalities. Even though the amount of time they spend on reading varies, students prefer to read materials related to their course work because they either consider reading to be a form of homework or lack necessary vocabulary capacity to follow courses offered at university. The absence of exciting reading materials also influences their reading habits or preferences negatively. Therefore, libraries should be well-stocked and well-equipped with reading materials and they should be managed by qualified and experienced library staff that will provide the necessary support to students as well as encouragement for them to read.

Perhaps the most important factor that negatively affects their reading habits is the lack of motivation or the role model. Researchers and educators have highlighted the increasing importance of reading motivation while conducting their studies or works on literacy behavior. They even suggested that positive motivation may prove to be useful in tackling the growing estrangement from reading. In this respect, parents, teachers or professors and friends can play a critical role in providing motivation or encouragement. As pointed out, reading motivation is considered to be one of the most effective determinants for achieving academic success and building reading habit. Parents, teachers and friends can stimulate reading enjoyment in disinclined readers by encouraging positive reading attitudes and becoming dependable role models. It is essential for students to talk to their parents, friends or professors about the books they are reading or to receive suggestions from them regarding what to read.

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