



Reading in the Era of Social Media: Understanding Gifted Students' Habits and Attitude Towards Reading

Azman, A.S., Ali, M.A.M., Usop, R., Zakaria, Z.*

Kolej PERMATA Insan, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 71800, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, MALAYSIA

*Corresponding author email: zulkarnin@usim.edu.my

KEYWORDS

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reading preferences

ABSTRACT

Reading is essential in the process of growth in youth as it improves brain connectivity, increases vocabulary and comprehension, acts as a mental stimulation and so much more. This paper aims to understand the reading habits and attitudes of the students in Kolej PERMATA Insan (KPI) in the era of social media. The students enrolled in this secondary school have a high intelligence quotient (IQ) and are described to be gifted and talented. A questionnaire was designed in a quantitative manner and distributed to the 50 students of Foundation 3 where only 45 out of 50 responded. The questionnaire analysed the students' reading habits, preferences and attitudes towards reading. It was revealed that most of the students enjoyed reading especially novels and fiction as they find the activity fun but if given the choice they would much rather watch movies or listen to music. They would usually read to fill up their boredom and some spend time reading as long as 30 minutes to 1 hour while others spend 1 to 2 hours. Most students read to expand their knowledge and brush up their linguistic skills and understand that reading has a positive impact on their academic performances. Some students also faced difficulty in reading as sometimes they lack motivation to read or there was a lack of reading materials around them and while most of them preferred more pictures in the reading materials, others were already fine with how the reading material was. Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to improve the students' reading habits and attitude. Conducting this survey is essential as it helps the lecturers and parents of the students to truly understand the reading habits and reading attitude of the students in KPI and more actions could be taken to benefit their positive attitude towards reading.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Reading plays a huge role in an individual's personal and academic development. It is one of the main skills that would be developed in school and continues to be enhanced for many years in the

academic and work journey. In modern society, individuals are taught to read from a young age and there are so many pre-school programmes that focus on developing reading skills as parents believe it would be the foundation for discovering the world of knowledge at school level [1]. Generally, teachers and parents stress the importance of good reading skills from young as it influences the mental growth throughout one's life. Reading helps a child's brain to grow and be more active. Research shows that those who have a good reading ability perform better in abstract thinking, general cognition and pattern finding. Medical News Today reports that strong reading skills are a predictor for higher intelligence.

One of the main concerns in the academic world today is the reading habit and behaviour among the young generation of students. With the presence of so much distractions in the form of devices, applications, software and platforms, reading has taken a list of competitors which are more interesting to explore and embrace by the young generations of students and young minds [2]. The long and challenging process of coding the text and interpreting the meaning and message lies within are proven to be too complicated to many as they prefer the Instagram, TikTok and many other popular apps form of presentation. Even watching the videos on YouTube could be too long for some. Thus, the need to relook and evaluate our strategies with the reading skills and other aspects of printed media that still survive today.

1.1 Reading in the Era of social media

In this day and age, people tend to read more on devices rather than the traditional books and printed materials. People who choose to read ebooks do so due to the variety of books they can have access to through just a device [3]. Not only that, ebooks are easier to access and are more environmentally friendly. With that said, many readers still do prefer the traditional printed books. Traditional books offer an experience that is much different from ebooks[5]. Readers are able to absorb more information as they are more likely to focus and be less distracted. Just like everything else, the trends of reading are heavily influenced by social media [4]. Avid readers usually share their opinions on books and recommend books to their audience on social media. Audiences vary from the young to old and that includes students [6]. This study is made to observe the habits and attitudes of the students of Kolej PERMATA Insan.

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative survey for data collection. This research method was selected as it covered the basic information on the type of reading materials, reading time allocated and other aspects of reading behaviour involved. The participants of this survey were the Foundation 3 students of Kolej PERMATA Insan in 2020. Hence, an online questionnaire was distributed to the 50 students. However, the response rate was 90% as only 45 responses were received. The questionnaire is used as the main instrument in this study and comprises questions based on the reading habits of students, factors that influence the students' reading habits and the students' reading attitude. Some questions required the students to choose the answers provided while other questions required the students to give their own answers. The students were given a week to submit their responses.

2.1 Research Objectives

The study was carried out to understand reading habits among the gifted students of Kolej PERMATA Insan in general. The information gathered will be useful in preparing and planning the reading materials and activities that would be suitable and interesting for them to use during their class and free time. The teaching and learning programs can be adjusted and improved using the data from the study. Basically, the research objectives set for this study are:

- To understand the general reading habits among the gifted students of Kolej PERMATA Insan.
- To discover the students' reading activities for their academic and leisure time.

To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the research questions prepared for this study are:

- What are the general reading habits among the gifted students of Kolej PERMATA Insan?
- How do students in Kolej PERMATA Insan manage their reading activity for academic and leisure?

A set of questionnaires covering the related topic on reading behaviour and activities was designed, adopting a questionnaire from a previous research on secondary school students' reading habits. Other relevant questions were suited to discover other aspects on their reading habits as discussed in the findings and discussion section of this paper.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Enjoyment of Reading

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	88.8
No	5	12.2

Table 1 shows the students' enjoyment of reading. 40 (88.8%) respondents enjoyed reading while 5 (12.2%) respondents did not. The findings showed that most of the respondents actually enjoy reading activity. The availability of reading materials in their academic and non-academic realm had enabled them in choosing their reading activity based on their preferred choice.

This shows that most of the students have a positive outlook on reading. The reading requirement for academic and personal purposes had been the main reasons for most students choosing reading as one of their main daily activities at their classroom and hostel. Typical secondary school students have always been instructed to make revisions using their textbook and reference books [7]. Assignments that require reading and library research are quite common among the students of KPI.

Table 2. Reason for reading

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fun	21	46.6
Relaxing	11	24.4
General Knowledge	9	20.0
Educational (Exams)	4	8.8
Boring - No	4	8.8
Spare Time	2	4.4

Table 2 shows the reason students read. Surprisingly, 21 (46.6%) respondents read because it is fun and 11 (24.4%) respondents find reading to be relaxing. 9 (20.0%) respondents read to gain

general knowledge. Other reasons are for educational purposes and because they had spare time. 4 (8.8%) respondents did not like reading as they found it boring.

This shows that students read for entertainment and find relaxation in reading. Reading can be seen as a stress reliever while also a medium to gain knowledge from a general perspective and educational perspective. Most students don't view reading as a chore but a fun activity that can be done in their spare time and they don't associate reading with being a stressful activity and as an activity that is required only in educational terms [9].

Table 3. Something else they would rather do

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Movies/Animes	12	26.6
Music	9	20.0
Games	8	17.7
Exercise	7	15.5
Videos/Youtube	5	11.1
Reading	5	11.1
Sleep	4	8.8
Social Media/Internet	4	8.8
Writing/Assignments	3	6.6
Drawing	2	4.4

Table 3 shows the other activities the students would do instead of reading. 12 (26.6%) respondents would rather watch movies or anime, 9 (20.0%) respondents would listen to music and 8 (17.7) would play games. Other activities include exercising, sleeping, going on social media, doing some writing or drawing. Amazingly, there are still 5 (11.1%) respondents who would still choose to read among other activities. Despite their enjoyment for reading, most students would still rather do other things than read. This shows that although they do like to read, reading wouldn't be their first choice. They would rather do activities that are more stimulating such as watching movies or playing games. Others would rather be more physically stimulated so they prefer to exercise [8].

Table 4. Preference of Reading Material

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Novels/Fiction	34	75.5
Articles/Newspapers	18	40.0
Educational	15	33.3
Comics	11	24.4
Magazines/Social Media	11	24.4

Table 4 shows the students' reading material preferences. 34 (75.5%) respondents prefer reading novels and fiction. It is surprising to find that articles and newspapers are the second most read material as 18 (40.0%) respondents prefer it as their reading material especially at their age. 15 (33.3%) respondents prefer educational reading materials. Other reading materials include comics and magazines or social media posts.

Many students prefer reading novels that are fictional rather than articles or newspapers that are more factual. They would prefer reading as a leisure activity rather than an activity to keep up with the news or to search up information. This might be due to their view of reading which should be enjoyable and fun.

Table 5. Enhancement of Reading Experience

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pictures	16	35.5
Sufficient	14	31.1
Vocabulary/Complexity	5	11.1
Bigger Fonts	4	8.8
Minimised Texts	3	6.6
Environment	1	2.2
Colour	1	2.2

Table 5 shows what could enhance the students' reading experience. 16 (35.5%) respondents feel that pictures would enhance their reading experience while 14 (31.1%) respondents feel they already enjoy their reading material as it is. 5 (11.1%) respondents would enjoy a wide range of vocabulary and complexity in their reading experience. Other enhancements include bigger fonts, minimised texts, their environment and the colour could enhance their reading experience.

Reading material enhancement preference is quite divided among the students. For a lot of them, no enhancement is needed in their reading material. For those that would want an enhancement in their reading experience, they want pictures included in their reading material.

Table 6. Frequency of Reading

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30 minutes - 1 hour	19	42.2
1 - 2 hours	16	35.5
2 - 3 hours	9	20.0
4 hours and above	7	15.5

Table 6 shows how much time students spend on reading. 19 (42.2%) respondents spend about 30 minutes to an hour while 16 (35.5%) respondents spend one to two hours on reading. 9

(20.0%) respondents take as long as two to three hours to read and 7 (15.5%) respondents actually take up to four hours and above to read.

Most students spend only a short time on reading despite them finding reading to be fun. This might be the response from casual readers. On the other hand, there are also a large percentage of students that spend around 1-2 hours on reading. This is the average time for the students to spend time reading. There are also quite a number of students that spend a large amount of time on reading. These avid readers would spend 2-3 hours or 4 hours and above reading.

Table 7. When do you read?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bored	22	46.6
Spare Time	18	40.0
Exams	3	6.6
Before Sleep	1	2.2
Last Option	1	2.2

Table 7 shows when students read. 22 (46.6%) respondents usually read when they are bored, 18 (40.0%) read in their spare time and 3 (6.6%) only read during exams. Others would read before sleeping or as their last option.

A lot of students choose to read when they feel bored. This shows reading is one of their ways to escape boredom and have fun. This also means students do not find reading a boring activity but rather an activity filled with enjoyment. Many students also read in their spare time which means they view reading as an activity worth their time. They do not feel their time would be wasted when they read.

Table 8. Why is Reading Important to You

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Knowledge	22	48.8
Linguistic Skills	17	37.7
Creativity/Imagination	9	20.0
Fun/Relaxing	7	15.5
Not Important	1	2.2

Table 8 shows the students' understanding of the importance of reading. 22 (48.8%) respondents say it is to gain knowledge, 17 (37.7%) choose to read to improve their linguistic skills while 9 (20.0%) respondents say it encourages them to be creative and imaginative. Other respondents find reading to be fun and relaxing or even not important.

Many students understand the importance of reading. They understand that reading is the key to knowledge and a way for them to brush up their linguistic skills. They also understand that

reading is a way for them to develop mentally and academically which would help them grow into a knowledgeable and articulate individual.

Table 9. Effect of Reading on Academic Performances

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do Not Know At All	11	24.4
Do Not Know Specifically	10	22.2
Knowledge	10	22.2
Linguistic	5	11.1
Higher Grades	5	11.1
Concentration	2	4.4
Creativity	1	2.2

Table 9 shows the students' understanding of the effect of reading on their academic performances. Surprisingly, 11 (24.4%) respondents do not know the effect at all while 10 (22.2%) respondents understand that reading gives a positive impact but do not know what it is specifically. 10 (22.2%) respondents say reading expands their knowledge in a certain subject. Others understand that reading helps in improving their linguistic skills, achieves higher grades, helps them concentrate and encourages them to be creative.

Despite the students knowing reading enhances their knowledge and linguistic skills, they still do not fully grasp the effect of reading on their academic performances. They understand how reading is important but they do not understand its impact on their academic performance. This might be due to the fact that most of them view reading as a leisure activity instead of something that could help them in their academic performance.

Table 10. Factors of Reading Influence

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self	23	51.1
Parents	10	22.2
Friends	10	22.2
Siblings	3	6.66
Teachers	2	4.4

Table 10 shows who influences the students to read. 23 (51.1%) respondents say they read on their own will and choose to read by themselves. 10 (22.2%) respondents claim their parents play a role in their reading influence while 10 (22.2%) respondents say that their friends are the ones who influence their reading habits. Others claim their siblings and teachers played a role in the reading interests.

A lot of students have the initiative to read on their own. Most of them do not require outside influence to read and will read voluntarily. This is a good sign that students do not have to be forced to read, which is essential in development.

Table 11. Obstacles Faced When Reading

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of Motivation	17	37.7
Lack of Materials	9	20.0
Do not understand	7	15.5
Lack of conducive parents	5	11.1
Do Not Like Reading	2	4.4
Scared of Judgement	1	2.2
Lack of Time	1	2.2
Low Attention Span	1	2.2

Table 11 shows the obstacles the students face while reading. 17 (37.7%) respondents complain that they lack the motivation to read, 9 (20.0%) say that there is a lack of reading materials and 7 (15.5%) simply confess that they do not understand what they read. Others claim that they have a lack of conducive parents, they simply do not like reading, scared of judgement based on their reading material and they do not have time.

Although the students find reading to be fun, most of them lack the motivation to read. This might be due to the fact that reading is not their number one choice when choosing an activity as stated above. Some students also find the lack of materials that they prefer to be an obstacle for them to read [10]. Topics that do not interest them would not influence them to read thus they would choose to do something else they are more interested in.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In summary, most of the students enjoy reading for fun and favour novels and fiction as their reading material. Most would spend 30 minutes to an hour reading and usually read when they are bored. Adding to that, students also understand that reading expands their knowledge but surprisingly, they do not feel that reading would have a huge impact on their studies. A lot of students suffer from the lack of motivation to read and would prefer to have more pictures in their reading material [11]. Apart from that, students do not have any difficulty in self-reading as they read on their own account.

With these findings, lecturers of Kolej PERMATA Insan can take advantage of the students' positive outlook towards reading and bring out the best of them. As most students lack motivation to read, lecturers and parents can help encourage them to read and brief them about the positive impacts reading has on their studies.

Author Contribution

Azman, A.S.: Conceptualisation, methodology, investigation, visualisation, writing and editing.
Ali, M.A.M., Zakaria, Z.: Data analysis, supervision, writing, and editing. Usop, R.: Methodology, writing and editing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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