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Abstract

Reading habits have been singled out as having a significant impact on learners' intellectual output. Good reading habits allow learners to develop their critical thinking skills and eventually improve their academic performance also reading non-academic novels helps learners improve their linguistic skills. Learners with weak reading habits have made noticeable improvements after taking part in lengthy reading assignments. Learners nurture skills such as thinking, valuing, flexibility and creativity are helped by extensive reading habits. The study found that learners who read both academic and non-academic literature regularly improve their conceptual understanding, critical thinking abilities and language fluency which leads to improved academic achievements. The study noted that reading habit at home is hampered by the lack of a comfortable environment. Several factors such as home environment, family income, access to books, and parental involvement can influence students' reading habits. Students from homes with a reading culture, those with access to a wide range of reading materials, and those whose parents encourage and model reading are more likely to develop good reading habits. The study concluded that reading is a fundamental skill that should be encouraged continually throughout childhood to help people become lifelong learners. The lack of reading resources, poverty and conventional ideas all have a detrimental impact on how readers develop their habits. The study recommends that teachers should create strategies for encouraging learners to read more. This involves making sure that reading materials are available in the libraries and resource areas. In order for books to become an integral part of learners' life, let them be easily accessible both in schools and in homes. Schools should create a schedule for library hours to enable learners to visit the library for reading. Parents should encourage their children to read in a calm environment at home.

Keywords: *Reading Habits, Educational Achievement, Learners, Singapore*

1.0 Introduction

Reading is defined as the deliberate decoding and understanding of print and online texts for purposeful activity that includes pleasure, participation and action (Reiber-Kuijpers, Kral & Meijer, 2021). The research is interested in how regularly texts like novels and articles teenagers read. As a result, even while we acknowledge that certain activities (such as reading Instagram postings or game instructions) need reading skills, they are not included under this definition of reading. The meaningful decoding and understanding of text in both print and digital modes are considered to be the definition of reading. Reading in print refers to reading on paper, while reading in digital forms refers to reading on electronic devices that access online content. The development of reading skills is receiving more focus globally as the foundation for critical literacy, self-directed learning and civic participation (Servant-Miklos & Noordegraaf-Eelens, 2021). With the National Reading Movement's inception in 2016, there is a greater focus on reading throughout Singapore.

The education system in Singapore is highly competitive, and students are expected to perform well academically (Lee & Gopinathan, 2020). Secondary school learners in Bishan are exposed to a rigorous curriculum that emphasizes core subjects such as mathematics, science, and English. Bishan has a diverse student population, with students from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity is reflected in the student body of the secondary schools in the town, which provides an opportunity for students to learn and interact with peers from different cultural backgrounds. In addition to academic pursuits, secondary schools in Bishan also offer a range of extracurricular activities such as sports, music, and art (Kim, 2020). These activities provide students with a well-rounded education and help to develop their social and emotional skills. Parental involvement is an essential component of the education system in Singapore. Parents in Bishan are encouraged to play an active role in their children's education, by attending parent-teacher meetings, volunteering at school events, and supporting their children's academic and extracurricular activities. Technology is increasingly being integrated into the education system in Singapore, and secondary schools in Bishan are no exception (Debs & Cheung, 2021). Students are provided with access to digital learning resources, and technology is used to support and enhance teaching and learning.

When reading is done on a regular basis, it is viewed as a habit. Reading habits are often measured in terms of the quantity of books read, the frequency of reading and the amount of time spent reading on average (Balan, Katenga & Simon, 2019). This habit may be developed. Reading is the most noticeable entryway to the knowledge room since it is a long-lasting habit that begins at a young age. It may be considered that the exercise helps people improve their critical thinking skills and helps them become more creative. Therefore, reading regularly is a useful habit for helping people develop their personalities and mental faculties. Reading is a gateway to social, economic and civic life in addition to supporting personal and mental growth (Mushtaq, Soroya & Mahmood, 2021). All reading styles in terms of emotional reaction increase peoples' emotional satisfaction.

Loh and Sun (2019) referred reading habit as a pattern of behavior that demonstrates a person's preference for certain genres and reading styles. Children's reading habits have long piqued the curiosity of many stakeholders, including parents, librarians, publishers and educators. It would be easier to promote reading among children if adults had a better awareness of children's reading interests and habits (Samsuddin, Shaffril, Bolong & Mohamed, 2019). It is generally agreed upon

that fostering a lifelong reading habit from a young age is the most effective way to do so. However, it is a common observation that children's leisure or free-choice reading is ignored in favor of reading for academic purposes. It is not unexpected that learners often equate books and reading with learning, academics, school projects and passing exams given the growing pressure on learners to do well academically. While Singaporean learners will not hesitate to read textbooks, encouraging them to read for pleasure and to develop a lifelong love of reading would be difficult (Rasiah, Kaur, Baharom, Turner, Habibullah & Singaram, 2022).

Reading habits have been singled out as having a significant impact on learners' intellectual output. It is a crucial component of higher academic achievement, a technique of information acquisition and it affects how well learners throughout the world fare (Tus, Lubo, Rayo & Cruz, 2020). Learners' emotional and intellectual intelligence rises when they are engaged in reading, particularly non-academic books. Good reading habits allow learners to develop their critical thinking skills and eventually improve their academic performance. Additionally, even reading non-academic novels helps learners improve their linguistic skills. Students' comprehension is significantly impacted by poor reading habits, which has an impact on their performance and development (Kuijpers, Douglas & Kuiken, 2019). Even intelligent learners who read less perform poorly academically. However, some students with weak reading habits have made noticeable improvements after taking part in lengthy reading assignments. Activating, summarizing, monitoring and clarifying, picturing and organizing, searching and selecting, questioning and inferring are the seven reading techniques of highly proficient readers.

Costa and Kallick (2019) claimed that student's nurture skills such as thinking, valuing, flexibility and creativity are helped by extensive reading habits. It has been discovered that reading habits have an impact on learners' information retention, worldviews, and English speaking and writing skills. Sadly, reading habits are generally declining, probably as a result of improvements in new media technologies, notably social media. According to Wang and Ho (2019), an individual's incapacity to succeed academically is accompanied with a subliminal sense of happiness due to a lack of exposure to relevant reading materials, educational opportunities and resources. The lack of reading resources, poverty and conventional ideas all have a detrimental impact on how readers develop their habits. Ramirez, Fries, Gunderson, Schaeffer, Maloney, Beilock and Levine (2019) found that acute lack of reading resources was a substantial barrier to engagement in prolonged reading. Poor academic achievement is a result of weak reading habits.

Reading helps young people develop the skills necessary for a functional society by enhancing their capacity for lifelong learning, stimulating their visual and physical experiences and improving their social cognition and social competence. Hoover and Tunmer (2020) claims that reading is a complicated cognitive process that requires the recognition of printed symbols as meaningful units and their understanding as a thought unit to correctly understand a printed message. Reading well may help learners succeed academically and professionally as well as build their critical thinking, writing and communication skills and intuitive knowledge, all of which are important for the growth of human capital (Heineke & Vera, 2022).

2.0 Literature Review

Torppa, Niemi, Vasalampi, Lerkkanen, Tolvanen and Poikkeus (2020) reported that children's language skills are considerably improved by leisure reading. The aim of this research is to better understand student's reading habits, motives and attitudes. 440 upper primary pupils took part in

the research and data were gathered using a pre-tested questionnaire. The results indicate that the majority of the participating learners were driven to read for academic purposes, such as to enhance language proficiency and get higher test scores. After hobbies and using a computer or the Internet to play games, reading was the third most popular leisure activity. It was also discovered that females read more often than males in general. This study provides some recommendations for encouraging learners' reading habits.

Baba and Affendi (2020) noted that reading preferences and academic success were correlated. Learners who read both academic and non-academic literature regularly improve their conceptual understanding, critical thinking abilities and linguistic fluency, which leads to improved academic achievements. This quantitative research at Asia-Pacific International University in MaukLek, Thailand looked at learners' reading habits and how they affected their academic performance. SPSS was utilized to examine the data after 250 respondents to a survey were chosen using a convenience sample technique. The association between reading habits and academic performance was investigated using multiple regression and correlation matrix analysis. The research supported the hypothesis that, among the five factors, the goal of reading significantly affects academic achievement. The findings also indicated that the majority of respondents valued the significance of reading. The responders didn't read much, however. The study suggests that schools authorities should create strategies for encouraging learners to read more. This involves giving learners access to materials that will inspire them to start reading. Administrators could also devise plans for instructors to use in order to encourage reading habits, which would enhance learners' academic achievement.

Latha (2020) conducted study to investigate the effects of reading habits on the academic performance of learners and instructors at the colleges in the state of Alabama. A well-constructed and organized questionnaire was used to conduct the survey. The study included 2463 postgraduate students, researchers, and faculty members in total. Equal numbers of men (50.2%) and females (49.8%) made up the study population, and the majority of them (63%) come from rural regions. The survey discovered that science-related subjects accounted for 48.8% of the respondents. Nearly all of the respondents, according to the report are avid readers. The majority of them read at home (69.1%), followed by university libraries (48.6%). It's fascinating to learn that 57.7% of respondents regularly read books. According to the poll, the majority of respondents favored reading books (58.9%) over newspapers/magazines (69.5%). The survey discovered that a significant portion of respondents (53.2%) read from a variety of information sources because they were curious in the subject of the study. According to the survey, the participants' reading habits have had an effect on their academic performance. Also, it was shown that reading regularly had served as a conduit for learning about the actual world. It also increased mental acuity and strengthened practical reading skills.

Vuong, Hoang, Nguyen, Ho and Vuong (2021) conducted research to determine if reading habits have any impact on Turkish high school learners' academic performance in their biology class. The mixed technique was employed in the study and the relational screening model was selected over the quantitative research models and the phenomenological method over the qualitative research models. The research group comprises of 266 students who previously completed biology classes in the Turkish province of Kars and are now enrolled in their last year of high school at different high schools. The researchers' questionnaire form was used to gather the data. The participants were given a total of 15 questions in the questionnaire: 5 questions to ascertain the

factors of the kind of school, education fields, gender and school report marks; 6 closed-ended questions to gauge their reading habits; 3 open-ended questions; and 1 metaphor question. For the purpose of conducting a descriptive analysis of the responses to the questionnaire items, frequency and percentage values were computed. Chi-square analysis was performed to look at the connection between learner reading habits and demographic factors and the content analysis method was utilized to look at metaphors.

Tus (2020) performed research to determine the effect of students' reading habits on their academic performance. 44 students from Tishk International University's language preparatory school were chosen at random from a group of 110 students to participate in the survey. 44 learners' yearly academic achievement has been observed in accordance with the Preparatory School's 24-week annual language instruction plan. The findings of data analysis using the SPSS program were displayed under the title of the impact of reading habits, both quantity and quality on students' academic performance. In this empirical investigation, reading was not required of the participants. During the academic year, they read novels as an extracurricular activity.

Francisco and Madrazo (2019) conducted research to investigate student reading habits and how they relate to academic performance, utilizing Senior High School in Asia's Region as a case study. The information was gathered using a questionnaire. The gathered data were examined using SPSS. According to the study's findings, 45.19% of the respondents understood how crucial reading was to their education. The study also showed that the majority of students' reading habits have a negative effect on their academic performance. The results showed that their habit of reading at home is hampered by the lack of a comfortable environment. According to the findings, it has been advised that the school create a schedule for library hours to enable learners to visit the library for at least an hour and a half each day. Parents should encourage their children to read in a calm environment at home.

Muhamad, Latiff, Azmi and Hassan (2020) argued that complex cognitive, physical, intellectual, cultural and linguistic processes are all involved in the complex act of reading. According to research, students who read a lot tend to excel academically at a high level. In Malaysia, the focus of education is now on cultivating an educated and intellectual society rather than only producing literate citizens. Promoting effective reading practices is one way to achieve this objective. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore reading behaviors and determine how they relate to reading performance among final-year English as a Second Language (ESL) students in particular Malaysian secondary schools. Data from a sample of 351 ESL students were collected as part of the study's cross-sectional survey using questionnaires and written exams as the data collection tools. Simple linear regression, Pearson correlation, and descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. The results showed a strong correlation between the reading proficiency of ESL students and their reading habits. The reading proficiency of ESL students is also greatly influenced by their reading habits. These results emphasize the importance of reading habits in influencing the reading proficiency of ESL learners. The focus of this study, however, is only on the reading proficiency of learners in a small number of secondary institutions. The results of this study could thus be replicated in future studies including computer-assisted or blended learning.

Maulod and Lu (2020) noted that reading occupies a crucial role in the life of anybody. The doors to knowledge's riches are opened through reading. It serves as a significant way to introduce the child to the world around him. It is the exact foundation upon which the child's edifice is to be

constructed. All learners need reading as a vital tool for lifetime learning because it is one of the most significant aspects of our language. Education should prepare young students to adapt to the rapid pace of social and technical change that will characterize the 21st century. In these conditions, linguistic proficiency is crucial for education. In this perspective, reading in particular is a tool for lifelong learning, for gaining new knowledge and abilities, and for learning through media, particularly newspapers, books, radio, television and computers.

Li and Chu (2021) performed study to evaluate the relationship between reading habits and academic success and the impact of reading habits on academic success. The goals of this study were to determine whether there was a significant relationship between reading behavior and academic achievement and whether reading behavior had a significant impact on academic achievement among undergraduate students enrolled in the English education study program at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. 101 individuals in the sixth semester were chosen as the sample out of the 482 active students who made up the research's population. This study collected academic achievement from the students and their reading habits using a reading habit questionnaire created by Janthong (2010). Reading behavior and academic achievement were highly connected, according to an analysis employing the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ($r=0.565$, $p=000$). Additionally, the examination of linear regression revealed that reading habit was responsible for 31.9% of academic success. As a result, the findings showed that reading habits and academic achievement were related and that reading habits affected academic achievement.

3.0 Findings

It is sometimes assumed that when an activity is consistently engaged in willingly for leisure, a habit and interests have been formed. This habit and interests are thought to be cultivable from a young age. Individuals of different ages and genders would naturally have varied interests and these differences would be impacted both by internal their homes, their motivation and their attitudes and external their friends, schools, teachers and the library resources they had access to. It was noted that learners who grow up without access to reading materials had poor reading skills compared to those who had who had reading materials all around them. Therefore, it is essential to have a wide selection of books in school and at home. Reading fosters critical thinking, vocabulary growth and the acquisition of new knowledge in learners. Learners who read regularly can escape into other areas and discover new ideas.

Learners' educational achievement is considerably improved by leisure reading. It was discovered that females read more often than males. Learners who read both academic and non-academic literature regularly improve their conceptual understanding, critical thinking abilities and language fluency which leads to improved academic achievements. The study noted that reading habit at home is hampered by the lack of a comfortable environment. The success of learner academic career will be greatly influenced by his reading skills. Every effort should be made to help children develop their reading skills from an early age because reading may be seen of as a fundamental ability that every student should be able to master. It was discovered that parents and friends have a much greater impact on learners than schools and teachers. Learner's thoughts and life choices are affected by the people with whom they spend the most time. Developing reading habits has many advantages, especially when it comes to issues that affect the child's mental development. Without the habit of reading, a child may experience certain issues in life, especially if they are in a profession that needs reading on any level. Children's language skills are seen to increase

unintentionally and instinctively when they read for pleasure. It was discovered that reading regularly helps children become better readers. Reading whether for pleasure or for learning, widens the experiences and understanding of young people, the topic of reading is important.

Research studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between reading habits and educational achievement of secondary school learners. Students who read regularly tend to perform better in their academic subjects compared to those who do not. Reading helps students to expand their vocabulary, improve their comprehension skills, and develop critical thinking abilities, all of which are essential for academic success. The more frequently and for longer durations students read, the better their academic performance tends to be. This suggests that reading should be a regular and sustained activity for students, rather than just something they do occasionally. Several factors such as home environment, family income, access to books, and parental involvement can influence students' reading habits. Students from homes with a reading culture, those with access to a wide range of reading materials, and those whose parents encourage and model reading are more likely to develop good reading habits. Teachers and parents can play a crucial role in cultivating good reading habits in students. This can be done by providing access to reading materials, setting aside dedicated reading time, and modeling reading behaviors themselves. Technology has both positive and negative effects on students' reading habits. While digital reading can make reading more accessible and engaging, it can also lead to distractions and reduced attention spans. It is therefore important to balance the use of technology with traditional reading practices.

4.0 Conclusion

Reading is a fundamental skill that should be encouraged continually throughout childhood to help people become lifelong learners. Encouragement of leisure reading is a tried and true method for enhancing general reading skills. The results of this survey, however, reveal that the majority of the learners read in order to improve their academic standing. This may be attributable to the demanding Singaporean educational system, which places a strong premium on meritocracy and academic achievement. Parents and teachers frequently put pressure on students to perform better in class. Learners in the early grades may be subjected to pressure in order for them to develop the culture of reading. Many learners also wished they had more time for enjoyable reading. Therefore, it is important that Singapore Ministry of Education take into account minimizing primary school learners' workload so that they may find enough time for enjoyable reading.

Students read for relaxation and to improve their academic performance. Reading was reported to influence learners' information retention, worldviews, and English language proficiency. But one of the biggest issues is that some learners don't want to read. It is imperative that teachers stress the value of reading. In conclusion, there was a significant relationship between reading for pleasure and academic success. According to the study, the majority of the participants in the study have good attitudes about reading but lower reading habits. The lack of reading resources, poverty and conventional ideas all have a detrimental impact on how readers develop their habits.

In conclusion, the research findings strongly support the notion that reading habits are positively correlated with educational achievement in secondary school learners. Students who read frequently and for longer durations tend to perform better in their academic subjects compared to those who do not. The cultivation of good reading habits is influenced by various factors, including home environment, access to reading materials, and parental involvement. Teachers and parents

can play an important role in promoting good reading habits in students by providing access to reading materials, setting aside dedicated reading time, and modeling reading behaviors. Technology can also have both positive and negative effects on reading habits, and it is essential to balance the use of technology with traditional reading practices. Therefore, fostering a reading culture in homes and schools can help to enhance the educational achievement of secondary school learners.

5.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that teachers should create strategies for encouraging learners to read more. This involves making sure that reading materials are available in the libraries and resource areas. Additionally, instructors at all levels of education should come up with methods for motivating learners to have interest in reading. Presence of reading materials is among the most effective techniques to encourage learners to read. In order for books to become an integral part of learners' life, let them be easily accessible both in schools and in homes. Schools should create a schedule for library hours to enable learners to visit the library for reading. Parents should encourage their children to read in a calm environment at home. Teachers and parents should provide support and guidance to students in developing good reading habits. This can include setting aside dedicated reading time, helping students to choose appropriate reading materials, and providing feedback and encouragement. Technology can be a useful tool for promoting reading, it is important to use it wisely. This can include using e-books and digital reading materials alongside traditional print materials, monitoring and limiting screen time, and encouraging students to use technology for reading-related activities such as online book clubs. Schools and parents can collaborate with community partners such as libraries and local bookstores to provide students with access to a wide range of reading materials and resources.

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