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# FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN READING
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**[1]\*Nafiseh Zarei**

Faculty of Education and Humanities, Unitar International University, Malaysia

nafiseh@unitar.my

**[2]Francine Joseph**

Astro Radio Sdn Bhd, Malaysia

Joseph.francine@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Reding helps individuals gain knowledge and it assists them in critical thinking and capturing ideas and information in order to analyze them and implement in different situations. It provides opportunity to develop imagination and creativity. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence students' motivation in leisure reading. Qualitative research design was selected, and the sample of the study consisted of 18 students (15-17years old) from a private English Language Centre in Malaysia. The researchers used open-ended questionnaire and focus group discussion for the purpose of data collection. The data were categorized, coded, and analyzed qualitatively using content analysis. The results of this study demonstrated that the students were willing to improve writing skills, grammar, and English vocabulary via reading books in their free time. Furthermore, family and friends play very important roles in terms of motivating the students to get involved in reading.

KEYWORDS: leisure reading; motivation; theory of motivation; hierarchy of needs

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension skill relates to language skills, decoding, memory, building confidence, and motivation. Researchers such as McGeown, Duncan, Griffith and Stothard (2015) mentioned that reading motivation and reading habit (particularly fiction book reading) were found to predict additional variance in adolescents' reading comprehension, summarization skills, and text reading speed after accounting for variation in word reading skill. They identified the ways to boost adolescents' reading motivation and engagement in fiction book reading. Inderjit (2014) believed that reading skills are important throughout our lifespan, particularly to new demands and changes in our jobs. He also stated that reading has been found to improve comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, and grammatical development. "A person who reads regularly has almost unlimited opportunities for career

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and personal growth in today's information technology world Schaar, Laparasau & Ng (2013)."

The term "reading" refers to the words, ideas, and mindset which provide advice or even of another person's experience wrapped in a convenient portable set of books. Huang, Capps, Blacklock, & Garza (2014) stated that reading can boost social life and increase economic growth within a country. College students preferred utilizing library resources via Internet as they believed that electronic prints are useful information and they are more interesting than traditional books.Schoenbach, Greenleaf & Murphy (2016) mentioned that personal dimension draws on student's identity and develops the reader's fluency and confidence in exploring his/her own identity and self-awareness. Readers build knowledge on word construction, grammar, and understanding the text structure. This combination builds a consistent relationship between motivation and reading habit. Schiefele, Schaffner, Moller and Wigfield, (2012) found that students who have developed reading habits tend to achieve advanced level of comprehension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Hagan(2013), including reading skill in classroom affects students' reading attitude in a positive way. This will encourage students to read often and select the topics on their own choice. Therefore, it is significant for instructors and teachers to analyze literacy programs and lessons and implement them in classrooms. Students need to practice reading in-order-to develop literacy skill, comprehension, and language fluency.

The findings of a studyconducted by McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths & Stothard (2015) showed that reading affects teenagers' motivation and behavior. The results of their study also revealed that students who valued reading were highly engaged with the texts and therefore were able to remember more stories. Similarly, good readers had higher reading motivation and were more engaged with fiction books. A study by Baki (2018) showed that students' motivation in grades 6, 7, 8 has a direct domination in reading attitude. By decreasing positive attitude towards reading, and reading comprehension, students will have negative feelings and it leads students to dislike school (Kocaarslan 2016). Guthrie, Wigfield, & You (2012) stated that while motivation refers to goals, values, and beliefs in a certain area, such as reading, engagement refers to behavioral displays of effort, time, and persistence in attaining desired outcomes. For example, as a basis of reasoning, motivation increases engagement in every task at elementary or secondary school levels. The results of a study by Klaudia & Guthrie (2015) indicated that the lower avoidance to read was significantly negative for advanced readers whereas reluctant readers were associated with achievement of school grades.

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According to Maslow' Motivation Theory (2011), one must satisfy lower basic needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs. Maslow's hierarchy levels include five stages viz., physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs and the need for self-actualization.Teenagers need to do certain tasks (emotional behavior), which satisfy their needs (fulfillment) and these needs can be turned into a negative or positive decision before they move on to the next level. The variation on this model, between "emotional behavior" and "fulfillment" provides support from parents and teachers. "Students whose teachers are non-stop readers are more likely to considerthe teacher as their role modelMiller & Kelley (2013)."

The main concept of Maslow's theory is derived from learner's beliefs and motivation. This theory indicates that students' development of growth and support increases confidence to build self-actualization. Students need to feel secured with their parents regarding moral or financial supports. For instance, in reading, parents play a significant role at home to encourage children to have a good attitude by strategically place reading materials on their study table, in the car, or on the coffee table. students would more likely to read spontaneously when they find reading materials at such places. Other ways to motivate and develop reading attitude among students is to read along with them and discuss the books with them. Developing a routine visit to the bookstore or library is another best way to develop reading habit among students. On the other hand, a teacher's role is to encourage students and provide guidance in classroom by incorporating effective lesson plans that needs to be fun, challenging, and rewarding such as implementing project-based work in groups, lesson related games, video and audio activities, and role plays. In this respect, students can build reading competency and try to obtain their goals. According to Klaudia & Guthrie (2015), struggling readers are usually low motivated because they tend to disengage from books as there is no attention provided to them.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the students can reach the highest level (self-actualization level) when they are open to new knowledge and experience to enhance most of their abilities. For instance, students are capable to expressively interact with peers and self-access the way of thinking. Physiological needs are obviously important to human beings as it seems that Maslow's theory is prominent and can be used in schools and in job industry.

METHODS

The main objective of this research was to explore the factors that influence Malaysian students' motivation in leisure reading. The research design of this study was qualitative. In this study, the research instruments involved in-depth open-ended questionnaire and focus group discussion to portray clarifying and deciphering gathered information constructively. The questions were with regard to the students' reading habits, leisure reading motivation, and the factors which motivates them to read more. The research instruments were tested via

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the pilot study for the purpose of validity and reliability of the data. The sample of this study was comprised of 18 students (15-17years old) from a private English Language Centre in Malaysia.The sampling technique which has been chosen for this study was purposive sampling that is a non-random sampling technique. The students were asked to answer the questions carefully and provide he researchers with rich information about their experiences and motivation n terms of leisure reading. The data from the focus groupdiscussion were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. The data obtained from two research instruments were categorized and codded according to the specific variables and themes and were analyzed through content analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the factors that influence students' motivation in leisure reading. According to students' feedback from the open-ended questionnaire, if the students want to join a conversation in the class, they need to read certain books to have the background knowledge of the topic in order to share some information with their peers. They mentioned that they would like to read additional books to improve knowledge in terms of specific topics. They all agreed that their writing skills will be enhanced via reading books. In addition, they believed that they can expand their English vocabulary and grammar through reading books. Based on the obtained data, it can be found that the students very highly motivated to read storybooks and novels as they are interesting. The researchers asked the students to explain about the factors that motivate them to read books.

The researchers asked the students about their interests in terms of reading. According to students' feedback from the open-ended questionnaires, the students were highly motivated to read interesting storybooks. Moreover, they pursued reading towards their own interest, mostly based on true stories. Some students voiced out that the design and appearance of books are matters in order to motivate them to pick up the books to read.In addition, they claimed that not only friends but also, family members are great influencers to encourage them to read. According to the students' feedback they feel happy and satisfied after reading a book of their interest. Baki (2018) also mentioned that, in relation to the influence of reading attitude on an academic level, learning process plays an important role. He added that reading has an instrumental role and is the key to find happiness in life. The identity of this research element is the situation of students who read and find happiness in this skill.

Reading provides positive thinking, increases empathy, and social networking. Providing the data about reading motivation relates to comprehension, teachers and educators should enhance student's motivation to read by offering a holistic lesson plan to be effectively engaged in the classroom. The practices include facilitating and self-efficacy to approach the goals, tasks, and challenges by teacher's effectiveness of how the course is

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delivered.According to (Klaudia & Guthrie 2015) motivation and belief to succeed are abilities to achieve a certain task and that increases effort and persistence in task performance (Bandura 1997).

According to the students' responses, parents and friends are also the factors that have potential impacts on their leisure reading. They stated that their family supports encourage them to read more. Therefore, parents can be academically involved in the life of their children both at school and at home. School-based involvement can be defined as parents' participation in school programs or constantly communicating with teachers on the child's progress in school. The home-based involvement is measured as communicating with children about school, peers, and activitiesmight practice the habit of helping them with school assignments or encouraging them to read by giving them choices of books. According to Bandura (1977), Social Learning Theory (SLT) is a powerful theory that describes the process of observing others and then replicating behaviors. In other words, behavioral learning and cognitive learning are inter-related as they focus on attention and outcomes of the behavior. Thus, it is crucial and effective for students to have peer or group tasks to build relationships and maintain the relationships.

Maslow's theory is used for the purpose of this study as it focuses on students' motivation. His theory indicated that students' development of growth and support increases confidence to build self-actualization. By reading, the students will achieve the two highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs which are self-esteem and self-actualization. Therefore, the students need to feel secured from parents with moral or financial supports. For instance, in reading, parents play a significant role at home to encourage them to have a good attitude by providing them interesting books according to their children's interest.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicated that the following factors affect students' motivation in terms of leisure reading in a positive way. The students were motivated to read books because reading helps them to develop their English vocabulary, writing skills, and grammar and structures. In addition, the results of this study showed that the students will be more motivated to read books if the books include real life stories as this will teach them life lessons and they can apply people's positive experiences into their real life. It is worth sating that some students believed that the design of the book is one of motivating factors as well. Furthermore, family andfriends play very important roles in terms of motivating the students to get involved in reading. Therefore, all the above factors are effective towards Malaysian students'reading habit. Finally, the findings demonstrated that the students were highly motivated to read non-fiction and happy ending books as well.

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