



Online Reading Habits of Learners in the English as Second Language Classroom: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

One thing about language is that it evolves. Hence in the verge on this millennium language has evolved in par with technology. Given this phenomena, this paper investigates the online reading habits of Form One English as Second Language (ESL) learners. It also goes on to investigate the factors that contribute as the crucial components to online reading habits; types of materials, hours spent, students' preference between printed materials to online and overall general findings. Thus, the factors outlined in the paper are using the theoretical framework of cognitive, comprehensible theory, social cultural and domain learning. The preliminary study used a questionnaire as an instrument, and the participants comprise of 30 a suburban secondary school in Temerloh, Pahang proficient students in the English Language. The findings include that authentic materials are still preferred for online reading materials. Plus, long hours in the social network seemed to be the next emerging trend among young adolescents. Finally, this paper ends with implications and conclusion that online reading should be considered and monitored to nurture reading for information among English as Second Language learners as it affects their examination results.

Keywords: Online reading, Habits, Technology, Voluntary reading, Material types, Hours spent.

1. Introduction

Since the birth of the millennium, education has evolved. Together, the technology has developed as well. Therefore, it is only wise that both education and technology grow hand in hand; thus, creating the possibility of using technology in education as there are endless possibilities in this marriage. Melor Md Yunus et al (2011) asserted that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) provide opportunities for students to work both collaboratively and independently.

To begin with, students can look for endless information to widen their knowledge in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom; listening, speaking, reading and writing. However the vocal fact is that, reading is the most fundamental as it connects all these skills together yet it is often side-lined. Mohammad Jafre (2011) elaborates that having the habit of reading is a crucial life skill. Thus, reading is crucial among learners, as it allures them to boundless information and knowledge. Thus, it should be more of a voluntary and pleasurable reading. In schools, students are introduced to reading through teachers where else it is the duty of their parents to inculcate this habit at home.

Endless efforts are poured into numerous programmes in schools with the sole objective of inculcating reading habits. Nevertheless reading is not a process that is inculcated over nightly but it takes effort and hard work. Therefore, inculcating this habit has positive effects directly or indirectly (Mohammad Jafre, 2011). Of late, the only on-going programme in school is the Sapphire Reading Programme which supposedly encourages students to read books in the library voluntarily which is parallel to what Stephen Krashen (2004) dictates that voluntary reading occurs when students self-select their text or books on their own based on their interest.

In fact, Melor et al (2009) further elaborate that students can manage their own learning at their own choice. This helps them to take responsibility of their own learning that showcases greater autonomy and more learners centred.

In Malaysia, most recently, in 2009 at the Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair at Putra World Trade Centre, the Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, detailed that, according to the literacy statistics, Malaysians are more inclined to read light materials such as newspapers, magazines and comics in comparison to citizens from developed countries. These developed countries have shown great interest in reading books (Utahberta et al., 2011). In fact, the National Literacy Survey conducted in 2005 detailed that Malaysians on average still read two books a year (Mohamad Jafre et al, 2011).

Hence, it could be possible that all the programmes introduced in school are unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education has proposed another programme for Form One students of selected schools on Oral Proficiency in English for Secondary Schools (OPS) which positions listening and speaking as its focal point which unconsciously demands reading to be done voluntarily at the students' expense; online or the library. Krashen (2003) elaborates that studies have shown that those who read more do better on a wide range of texts. Thus, this brings us to the question, perhaps, in this age of technology; online reading is the answer to encourage reading or is it a mere myth. As lately, internet is a part of the technological and digital culture of the teenagers hence it is only wise that online reading would better suit teenagers compared to reading printed materials or books.

In fact it has changed students to become digital native as they are brought up in the digital environment. The younger generations spend more time reading screen based materials due to its wide range of availability of choice, efficiency and up to date in nature and subsequently provide them with the platform to make new choices out of the abundance of availability wisely (Mohammad Jafre, 2011; Riza Atiq Abdullah and Kamisah Osman, 2011). Then there is the question of it probably being a myth? Well, are these students really reading or perhaps only spending the long hours on the internet for other possibilities.

Till this date, reading is a constant challenge for the students in a suburban secondary school in Temerloh, Pahang. The poverty in reading could be seen through the poor performance in the Sapphire Reading Programme that was introduced to nurture the importance or reading habits among students (Chin, Vun and Thayalan, 2007). Noticeably, from the year 2010 to 2013 in the suburban secondary school, there were poor performances in the Lower secondary students. What is the cause and reason for their poor performances? Is it due to their poor reading habits? These students do not have much interest in reading especially English reading materials. Do these students have their own choice of reading materials and only read when something that interests them?

This could be seen through Figure 1, where the number of students obtaining Sapphire, Gold and Bronze is disappointing especially among the Lower Secondary. As for the Upper Secondary it is understandable as they would be more focused on their major examination hence leaving the possibility of reading for pleasure.

To make matters worse, the suburban secondary school is chosen as the one of pioneer schools for the OPS programme in the District of Temerloh which is a part of the Ministry of Education policies to strengthen the English Language this year or more known for its abbreviation 'MBMMBI' (Ministry of Education Policies, 2013).

This programme focuses on the Form One students. According to the programme, students are only engaged in Listening and Speaking skills for the first six months. During this period of time, students are encouraged to do voluntary reading on their own. In addition, these Form One students are also unique as they are divided into seven cohorts according to their proficiency which was determined through the diagnostic test done on the first week of their school. Hence, this puts these thirteen years old Form One students apart from the other students.

Moreover, as the requirement of the Literature component, these Form One students are required to read a short story and a Novel. However to dismay, reading seems to be too much of a challenge. In addition, these students lack the insights during group discussions of a subject matter which they are required to research on in advance. Also, they seem to perform poorly in comprehension questions in examination as it requires reading.

This was clearly seen through the Diagnostic Test and in the English Year End Examination. These are believed to be due to their lack of reading habits as Ryker and Ponnudurai (2011) support that traditional print reading or TPR which encompasses skimming and scanning, use of visual clues actually contribute to the understanding of the text.

Figure-1. Sapphire Reading Programme results for students in a suburban secondary school, Temerloh, Pahang

Year \ Form	SAPPHIRE					GOLD					BRONZE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2010	1		2	3	2		1	3	2	1	1		4	2	2
2011	2			5	1			2	2	2		1	2	1	2
2012		1		4	1			1	3	1	1	1			1
2013	1		3					1					2		1

SAPPHIRE	More than 280 books
GOLD	200 to 270 books
BRONZE	60 to 100 books

(Taken from Norashikin bt. Abdullah, 2013)

As mentioned earlier, reading is a concern, therefore if prolonged it could create an unruly reading habit. Hence, identifying their reading habits is a must. Thus, this Form One is the most appropriate cohort for the study as they are of the same proficiency level and demanded to do voluntary reading in order to speak in class during the ‘language in use’ and ‘language in action’ segments in the OPS classroom. Plus, it should not be an issue as these Form One students also have their computer usage classes in the computer lab of the school and internet at home. Nevertheless, reading habits should be also inculcated at the early age. Being teenagers and in the age of technology, it is only wise that this students are given the options in the reading availability; the online reading as these students are also introduced to computers and have internet at home; not to mention the One Malaysia Notebooks. Therefore, the possibility of being exposed to the wide range of reading materials online such as news, magazines, articles and more is inevitable. In fact Norazah Nordin et al (2010) support that learning takes place anytime and anywhere and it can be placed outside the classroom environment. In fact it is clearly on par with the proposed 21st Century Learning put forth by Riza Atiq Abdullah and Kamisah Osman (2011) thus allowing students to learn by themselves to innovate, collaborate, experiment and explore all possibilities.

Therefore, this paper will report the results of a study that investigated the online reading habits of the Form One ESL learners in a suburban Secondary School in Temerloh, Pahang. Data were gathered through survey regarding: (a) the types of materials read; (b) hours spent reading online and (c) students’ preference between printed and online materials. An overview of the general findings will be provided.

2. Literature Review

Malaysia is a country where the community speaks more than one language. Malay Language is the mother tongue of most ethnic Malays and also the National Language of Malaysia; Also known as the First language (L1) in the schools. Then, English language which was introduced during the British colonial period came into the picture it is and till to this date is regarded as a Second Language (L2) as it is also a global language (Rajadurai, 2010).

Furthermore, great importance is placed on raising the literacy level by teaching people to read. However another problem has emerged. Literate and proficient students in the language choose not to read. For centuries researchers have classified them into numerous terms. Whether called “literate non-readers” (Well,1988), “illiterate literates”(Huck,1973), “non-readers”(Smith,1988), “reluctant readers” (Hambers,1969) or “alliterates” (Beers, 1996 a & b, Boorstin,1984 ; Decker,1986; Mikulecky,1978; Ohamian,1989) ,this group of people, who can read but do not is truly one of the “great tragedies of contemporary education” (Smith,1988. p.177; as cited in Beers ,1997) . Hence, today’s students are developing into non - reading habits and become reluctant readers.

Furthermore, globally, Malaysia is most likely not quite up to the mark in reading. This could be seen through the survey of the International Student Assessment (PISA). This assessment focuses on students’ ability in reading skills that enables them to process in life and not learning to read. Hence, in the year 2009, Malaysia was listed 55th in reading among other countries in the world such as United Kingdom, Thailand, Singapore and Shanghai to name a few. Sadly too, most of whom scored between Level one and two and none in Level five and six (Lumley and Mendelovits, 2012). In terms of technology, Malaysia has improved ever since the introduction of Multimedia Super Corridor (MISC).Furthermore, according to Melor (2007), ICT is making headway in schools and this is seen as a fundamental step for

Malaysian Education. Hence, Malaysia has grown in the technology and no longer a stranger to computers and internet or the World Wide Web (www). As a matter of fact, in October 2011, the Ministry of Education launched a comprehensive review of the education system in Malaysia in order to develop a new National Education Blueprint that brings about a paradigm shift in learning through three waves; one in particular is the seventh transformation which is to scale up quality learning across Malaysia through ICT (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013).

Therefore it is obviously clear that integration of ICT is inevitable. Thus, merely focusing on printed materials or on paper is perhaps inapplicable or applicable. Furthermore, Ryker and Ponnudurai (2011) point that ICT – literate students claim reading printed materials is mundane. However, the focus here is whether reading online is the new trend? Researchers have found that reading books is longer in trend as many have opted to reading on cell phone and the computer (Mohammad Jafre et al, 2011). If so what are the preferred materials to be read? Many researches are captured by the emergence of new digital environment (Mohammad Jafre et al, 2011). In fact, Mohammad Jafre et al (2011), further acknowledged that screen based reading is emerging with an increasing amount of time spent on reading online. Mohammad Jafre et al (2011) indicated that teenagers lack interest in reading in informative materials as mostly read e-mails, comic strips and jokes online where else newspaper is the most read printed materials. Furthermore, Melor Md Yunus et al (2009) assert that playing computer were the most popular activity among adolescents. On the contrary, Cull (2011) asserts that the amount of time spend on the internet has not been found to interfere with the time students' report spending on reading for their studies or leisure.

Hence, students perhaps do spend time surfing online and the question that rises from here is that do they actually read online reading materials. If they do, what are they? How do these children spend their time in the internet? Mohammad Jafre et al (2011) research detailed that most teenagers spent one to three hours online daily even though most of them do not have internet at home. Jiao (2012) indicates that technology has allowed us to have an explosion of information through the internet; news, facts, opinions and etc. Not only that, to date, there are millions of internet sites with magazines, books and endless more. However, Bogdanov (2011) comments that a wealth of information does not necessarily mean that we actually read them. He further adds that the online habits would provide an insight into the how children use to approaching learning. Promisingly, Cull (2011) explains that, young people tend to be heavy internet and mobile users, yet all this time spent online does not mean that teenagers have given up on sustained reading. In fact, those who are online tend to read more. Krashen (2003) in his voluntary defence clarifies that readers should have exposure to rich variety of reading materials. He also claims that it is a simpler solution; providing access to plenty of interesting comprehensible reading materials and providing some time to read. Hence, online reading material is student centred and allows them to read on their own pace (Knoester, 2010). In fact, research suggested that independent reading outside of the school is a strong indicator of school and reading success (Krashen, 2003). Melor Md Yunus et al (2011) further elaborates that students have the freedom and ability to manage their affair which entails the right to make decisions. Henceforth, what all the researches are indicating is that the learners or students are in charge of their own interest in obtaining knowledge and in their types of materials which drives these students to spend hours on online reading materials in order to acquire knowledge which in time becomes a habit formation.

Rice et al (2011) asserted that transition from traditional brick and mortar approaches to more modern and technology centred is necessary in order to promote higher level thinking. Hence the infusion of technology could be the modern approach into the existing and widely held theories. In fact Melor Md Yunus et al (2011) elaborates that ICT is found to be effective in teaching and learning. Thus, keeping this in mind, Skinner's behaviourist theory, Piaget's cognitive theory together with Krashen's comprehensible theory and Vygotsky's social cultural theory are four of the fundamental ones. Therefore, online reading habits can be based on these theories.

Primarily, habit formation is usually highlighted by the behaviourist theories. In fact, Melor (2007) asserted that behavioural theories play important roles in language through imitation and habit formation. Furthermore, Farall (2012), states that language is a behaviour like any other that is learned. She further added that behaviour is changed through reinforcements. Hence, reinforcements here are the boundless online materials. Moving on, to the cognitive approaches popularized by Piaget. It describes the adjusting and recognising of new learning into existing cognitive structures (Farall, 2011). This is also propagated by Krashen (2003) through comprehensible theory which further describes that this new learning is adapted through voluntary reading, extensive reading or pleasure reading. Finally, since the reading online is done voluntarily on their own and forming a habit formation. Thus it becomes students centred. Thus this bring us to the most popular school of thoughts; constructivist theory. Vygotsky through his

social cultural theory emphasised that development is associated by others and technologies available to the culture. Hence, in this twenty first century one adamant culture is the ICT; internet (Tudge and Winterhoff, 1993). Therefore, it could be reviewed that online reading is a cognitive, comprehensible and social cultural which through its habit formation becomes behavioural; online reading habits.

Besides these, theoretical framework, several related models to reading is applicable. One in particular is Alexander's Domain Learning (MDL) as it the most fitted to the domain of reading as it is intertwined with the theories. Alexander developed a theory of life span development with reading as a complex communication behaviour that involves three stages. Stage one is 'surface level processing'. This is followed by stage 2; mid-level or terminal stage and stage three which is deep level (Mayer and Alexander, 2011). Mayer and Alexander (2011) further explain that in MDL, reading begins with the level of acclimation where reading is done for knowledge as perceived in the cognitive theory of Piaget. After a series of reading it proceeds to stage 2 which is terminal stage of competence; which is similarly spoken by Krashen's comprehensible theory as competence is the combination of both innate and new learning. Finally, the final stage is the proficiency and expertise level which is gained to series of reading and comprehending (Mayer and Alexander, 2011). Hence, this could only be achieved through redundancy in other words, habit formation which encompasses Skinner's behaviourist theory. As a whole, best describes online reading habits.

Keeping all these in focus, it is clear that knowledge is the backbone for students to express their thoughts in class during communication activities especially in OPS oriented classroom. Daley (2010) elaborates that reading involves making sense of written text, building speaking vocabulary and eventually initiating words; in other words reading actually encourages speaking . In fact Vygotsky asserted that the development of speech is profound through the development of higher mental process that is achieved through reading (Tudge and Winterhoff, 1993). Hence, this brings us to the idea of a framework that online reading habits could be governed by both the hours spent and interest that could stand independently due to other forthcoming explanations respectively or intertwine and create the possibility of both interest and hours. As a consequence, these bring to the following research questions: (1) to determine the types of online and printed materials students read; (2) to determine students' preferences between online and printed materials; and (3) to investigate the hours spent by students reading online.

3. Methodology

The research attempts to investigate why students do not show much interest in reading. A survey was conducted among the 13 years old Form One ESL students of a suburban secondary school of Temerloh, Pahang Darul Makmur, to study; first, the students online reading habits, choice of online and printed reading materials which interest them the most, and investigate the hours spent reading. Thus, the instrument used to collect data for the research is identified and discussed. A quantitative type of research in the form of survey and case study is used as it is the best in order to recognize students learning. Bryman (2010) claims that only through quantitative research that the world can be studied through the eyes of the people who are studied and it frequently involves the study of meaning in the form of attitude scales such as Likert Scaling techniques.

In addition, the samples are chosen from a suburban school located in Temerloh Pahang. It is a purposive sampling whereby 30 students out of 210 were chosen. These 30 students are in set 1 based on their Primary School Examination or more formally known as UPSR result when they were twelve years old. Most of these students achieved 5A's or 7A's in this examination. They were form set one and have the same proficiency level. These samples are able to read and have computer and internet at home. In addition, these students have also undergone two tests; a diagnostic test and English Language Year End Final Examination. Both these test comprised of comprehension text that requires reading for information, vocabulary, grammar and syntax. The result of these tests showcased some worrisome details on the subject matter. Thus, they would be the best samples as this survey dealt with identifying reading habits. The samples comprised of a mix number of 10 male and 20 female samples. Therefore, to evade producing "illiterate literates" in the future and curb the scenario while still in its bud, a research to investigate the matter at hand is essential. In the end, hoping the findings of the research would be in the betterment of the students in the school.

The instrument used for carrying out this survey was in form of questionnaire. This questionnaire uses the 5 point Likert scale as they are divided into important parts. This scale is chosen as it is the most appropriate in getting the students thoughts across as it is more of a deductive strategy (Poggenpoel, Myburgh and Linde, 2006). As a whole, the questionnaire is successful and effective. The question

consisted of close ended questions. The statements for the questionnaires were adopted and adapted from Mohammed Jafre et al (2011) based on researches done on the related matter. Care was also taken to see that the questionnaire was simple in design, with only considerable blend of question type to sustain interest and encourage valid and reliable responses.

In order to successfully carry out the research, the students were explained on the procedures before completing the questionnaire. Once done, the questionnaires were collected and its data were retrieved and the interpretations derived are discussed with the help of graph, percentages and tables that provide valid and reliable data, and so forth. The data obtained is analysed by identifying responses to the guiding questions and the more specific information sought after, particularly for points of agreement on the matter. Furthermore, the data from the two tests done prior are also analysed using percentages. This is done to show inter-correlations between all the variables as it the key to unlock the subject matter.

4. Discussion

As mentioned earlier, these students have undergone two separate tests as well. The first a diagnostic test which focused on four main sections; grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and syntax. The second was the Year End Examination that also has for major components that was tested. They were cloze text, meaning, comprehension and graphic stimulus based questions. The outcomes of these tests are analysed and compared to the findings of the survey done later.

Initial diagnostic test administered provided some interesting insights and through Figure 2 it is further diagnosed. The number of students that achieved A's is saddening as only 17 % or only 5 out of 30 students scored. Majority of the students achieved grade B which totalled 57 % and finally the remaining 26 % accomplished grade C. Hence, one possible conclusion that could be drawn about this result is the fact that these students also did poorly in the comprehension section of the test as this could be seen through Figure 3. This is so, as 53% of the students were below the average passing and required mark. Where else, 47% were above the passing score. Thus, more than half of the students seemingly face problem in comprehension. On the contrary, 70 % of the students were above and 30% were below the passing mark for the vocabulary section. Therefore, the poor achievement in vocabulary could be the reason for the poor performance in the comprehension. In fact Ryker and Ponnudurai (2011) support that lexical proficiency affects reading comprehension.

Figure-2. Overall grades achieved the Diagnostic Test.

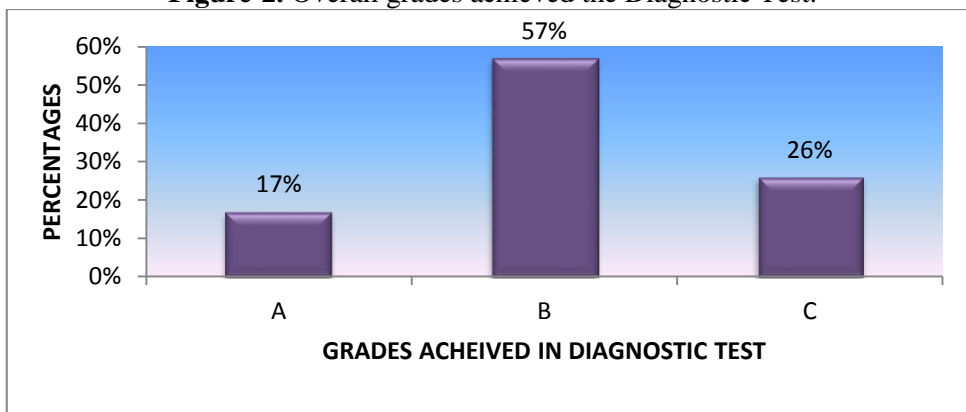
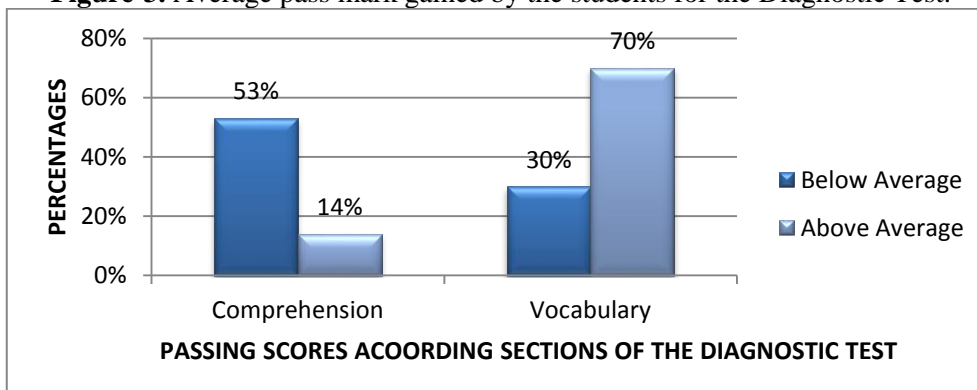


Figure-3. Average pass mark gained by the students for the Diagnostic Test.



In comparison, the English Language Year End Final Examination Analysis of the same students revealed further change. In this examination too which can be seen in Figure 4, only 23% of the students scored A. This followed with 30% of the students that achieved grade B. In addition, 20% were scored in both Grade C and D respectively. Lastly, the remaining 7% fell into grade E. Correspondingly this poor result could be the contributing factors due to selected features of the examination. This could be seen through Figure 5. This is so as 63% of these students scored below the average passing mark for the comprehension. Where else, only 37% scored above the average passing mark. However, there were some in improvement in the English Language Final Year examination in comparison to the diagnostic test. These were due to the fact that programmes were done in order to improve students' vocabulary through Sapphire and OPS programme. Thus, these support Ryker and Ponnudurai (2011) argument that lexical proficiency contribution in comprehension.

Figure-4. Grades achieved in the final examination for the English subject.

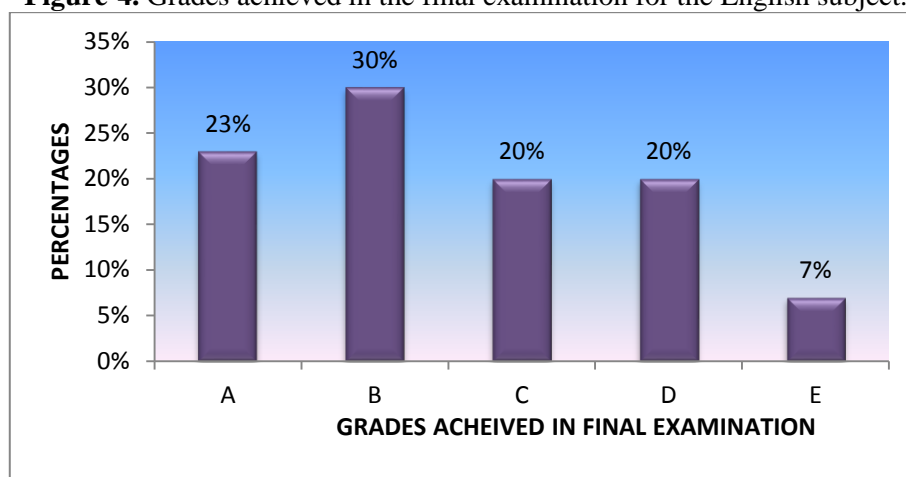
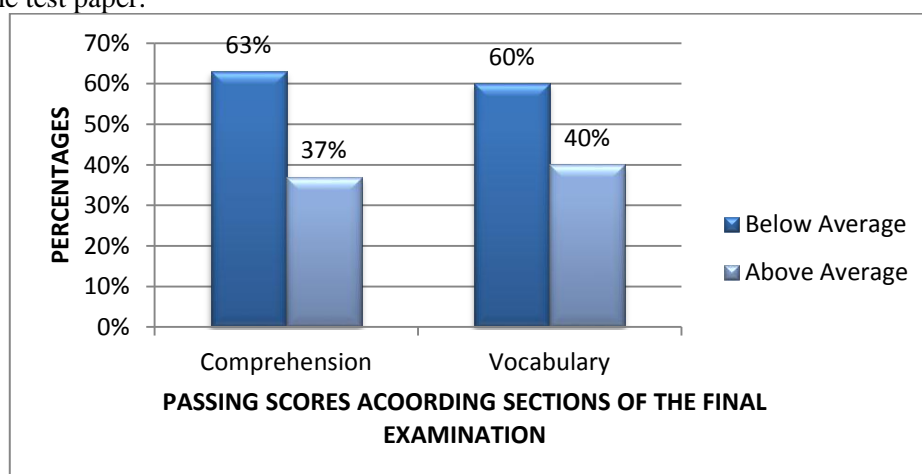


Figure-5. Average pass mark for the English subject in the final examination. It is grounded on the sections in the test paper.

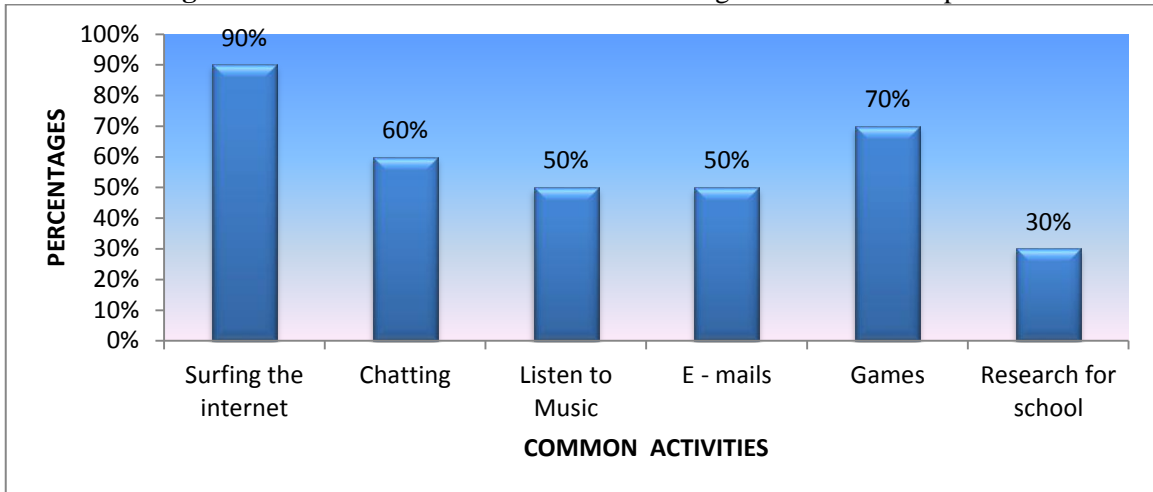


Thus, both the test and examination showcase that comprehension play a contributing factor for these students to perform poorly. Undeniably, comprehension requires reading. So where does the problem exist and what do they read? Hopefully, the findings from the survey would further explain the whole scenario.

First and foremost, the findings foretell some interesting facts about the Year One students. Most of these students use computer at home in comparison to school, friend's house or even the cyber café; a total of 100%. Students' tend to use the computer at home as they tend to have more freedom at homes than any other place. Furthermore, Figure 6 indicates that the common activities done by the students in order of preferences or importance in usage from 1 to 6. Thus, surfing the internet falls first as the most common preference as their first choice with 90%, which is followed by chatting in the second place with 60% and finally the third place is shared between listening to music and e-mails with 50% respectively. On the other hand, the least preferred choice and with majority of the students choosing it as their 5th

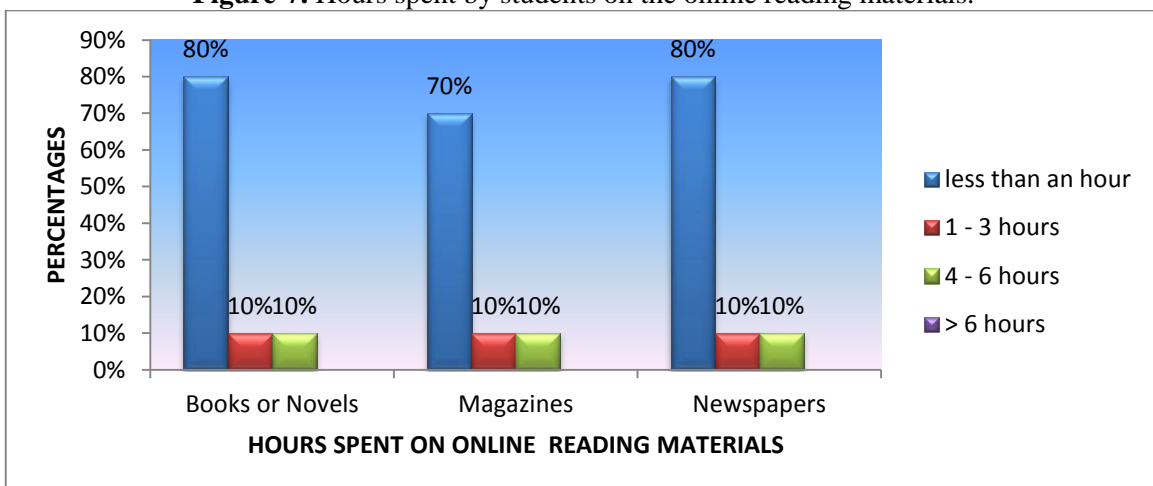
choice for using the internet is playing games with 70%. This is followed with only 30% of the students using the internet for doing research for school.. These findings is similar to Mohammad Jafre et al (2011) in term of surfing the internet to be the first choice however it contradicts with other choices of preferences. One in particular, playing games online is no longer in top there of preferences. Furthermore it also refutes Melor Md Yunus et al (2009) that playing games online is the most popular among students. These provide a possible foreshadow of other possible findings.

Figure-6. Common activities done online through the use of a computer.



Thus, this brings to the question on how these students spent their time reading online in order to give some insights on their interest and hours. Therefore, as seen in Figure 7, a total of 80 % of the students spend less than an hour on reading books and novels online daily. This is the highest among other daily activities among students. Similarly, 80 % of the students spent less than an hour daily on reading newspapers online. In fact most of the students which is a total of 80% never read local newspapers such as Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian, Kosmo and etc. However, interestingly 70 % of these students spent less than an hour on reading online magazines daily. Hence, if seen separately, these students probably spent less than an hour for reading novels, magazines and newspapers separately. Hence students are apparently becoming reluctant readers and supports the notion by Najeemah Mohd Yusof (2010) that majority of children between the ages of 10 to 14 shows no interest in reading.

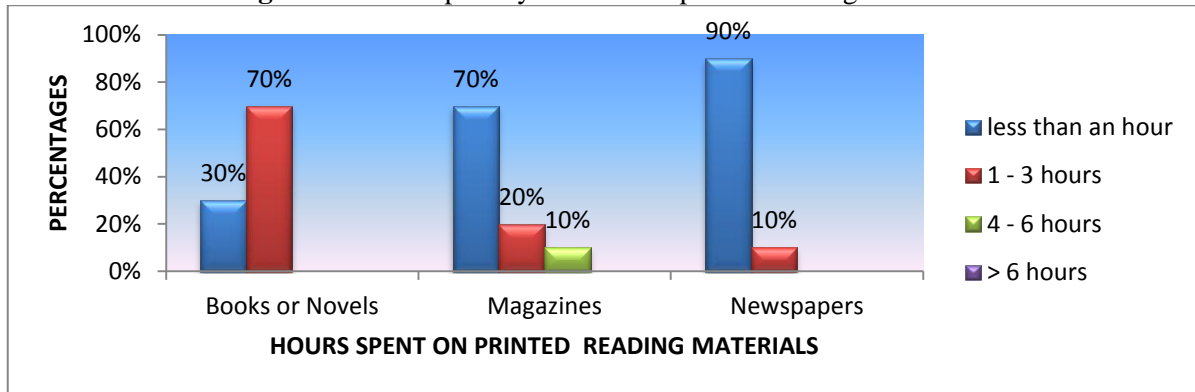
Figure-7. Hours spent by students on the online reading materials.



On the contrary, if seen together, these students could possibly spend one to three hours daily on reading online materials. In comparison, students show different results to printed materials. This could be demonstrated through Figure 8 where 70 % of the students spent one to three hours reading printed books or novels daily. It also indicates that 70 % of the students spent less than an hour reading magazines where else 90 % of them spent less than an hour on reading newspaper daily. Hence it could

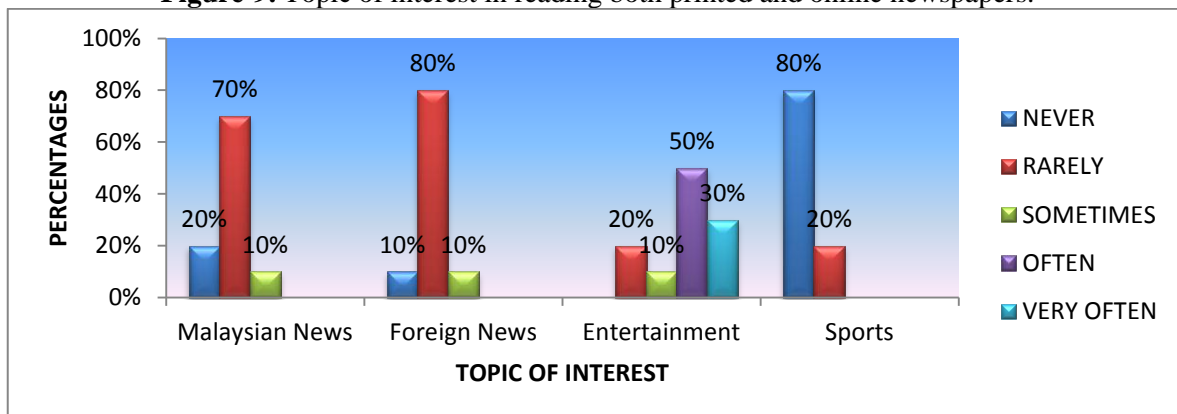
be sustained that these students spent from one to three hours reading printed materials daily. Hence, it could be seen that reading printed books or novels are more favoured by the students in comparison to online books. However, these students did not show very promising online reading habits. However, in order of preference, it could be identified that books, magazines are favoured in comparison to newspapers. This could be due to fact that printed materials are readily available in the comfort of their homes and reduce the hassle of going online to read (Melor Md Yunus et al, 2009). Furthermore, it agrees with Cull (2011) that the amount of time spend on the internet has not been found to interfere with the time students' report spending on reading for their studies or leisure.

Figure-8. Hours spent by students on printed reading materials.



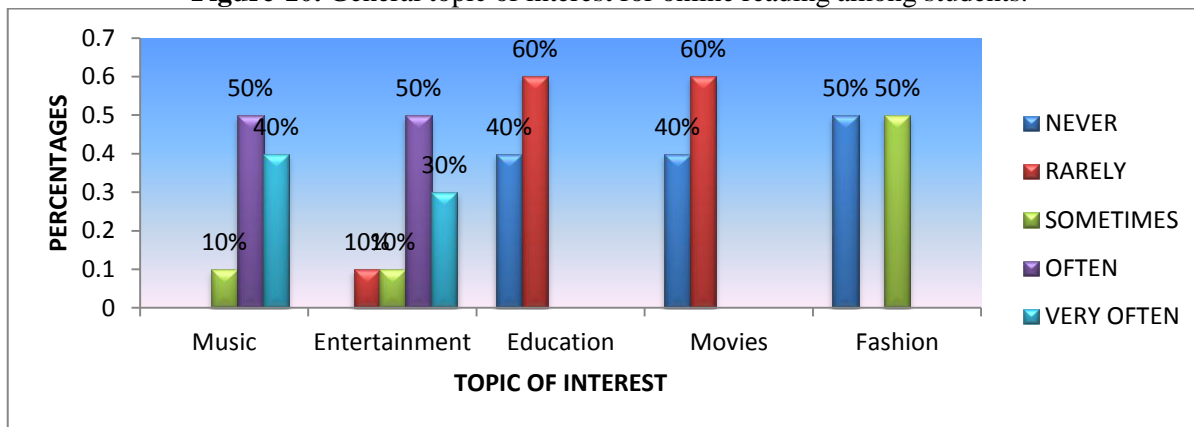
So, the question remains on what these students read in, newspapers and so forth regardless of it being printed or online. On this matter, Figure 9 displays that 70% of the students rarely read Malaysian news and 80% rarely read foreign news as well. Nonetheless, 80% of these students often and very often read entertainment news. Hence this contradicts with Mohammad Jafre et al (2011) that indicated newspaper is the most read printed materials read by the teenagers. In addition sports are the least as it is never read news by the students with 80%. This could be probably being due to the ratio of the female and male students in the sampling or the lack of interest in the area.

Figure-9. Topic of interest in reading both printed and online newspapers.



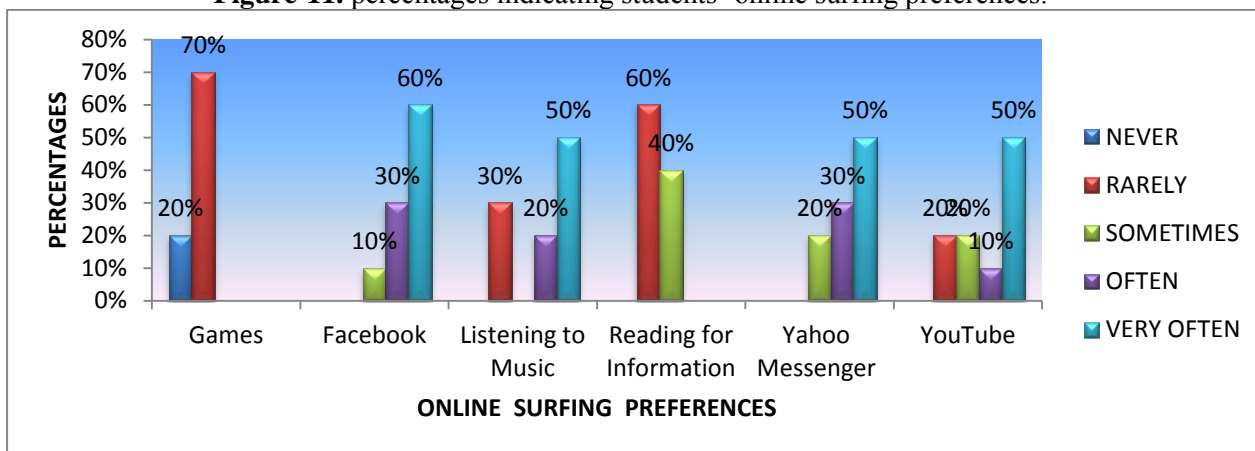
Thus, on further probing into what these students like to read about in general online, is shown in Figure 10. As guessed these students often and very often read on music as it takes centre stage with 90%. This is supported by Melor Md Yunus et al (2009) that music lovers would spend most of their time downloading their favourite and latest songs in the internet. This is closely followed by entertainment with 80% of students. Where else, both education and movies share 60% respectively as the rarely reading interest. The least favourite is the fashion as it 50% never read and another 50% read sometimes.

Figure-10. General topic of interest for online reading among students.



Keeping all this in mind, what these students surf online is still a questionable feature. Hence the following figure illustrates this question; Figure 11. The result indicates that 90% of the students use the Facebook often and very often. Also it is used for four to six hours by 60% of them and 40% uses it for less than an hour. This is closely followed by Yahoo Messenger with 80% that is often and very often used. In addition, Listening to music comes third with 70% that student often and very often do where else 30% rarely does. Surprisingly, 60% of the students’ use YouTube very often for one to three hours where else 40 % of them use it up to four to six hours weekly. Also, 70% rarely play games and sadly 60% rarely read for information. Hence, it could be stated that these students spent most of their time on internet chatting through Yahoo Messenger and Facebook for more than three hours. Furthermore it is supported by Mohammad Jafre et al (2011) that most of the times spent by students’ online are in chat room than to reading. They also seem to love to spend their time on YouTube which could be associated with entertainment and music.

Figure-11. percentages indicating students ‘online surfing preferences.



All in all based on these findings, it could be indicated that there are four main findings. Firstly, in terms of general information, entertainment, music, and chatting are the main focus of the students. Secondly, it is also clear that this students spent more time on pleasure and lack interest in reading for information. On the contrary these students do prefer reading printed books and novels to online reading. Also, online magazine is seen to be favoured by the students in relation to other online reading material. Hence, it agrees with Cull (2011) that even though young people tend to be heavy internet and mobile users, spent most of their time online; it does not mean that teenagers have given up on sustained reading.

5. Implications

Thus, these findings provided come concerning implications. To begin with, students that are so often claimed tech – savvy, are not up to the challenge as they are more inclined to share information through the social networking to reading online. As mentioned by Mohamad Jafre et al (2011), social networking without an adult supervision could create unwanted outcome. On the other hand, what is read online

should also be governed to avoid these teenagers to be exposed to online violence or foul language. Therefore, teachers and parents should play a vital role in moulding these students reading habits.

Secondly, teachers should head towards 21st century education. Therefore, in order to be more students centred learning teacher should advocate and not dictate information (Rice et al, 2011). Teachers should be also educated and trained about the use of ICT so that they could convey it to their students. Thus, school should be the focal point in providing a 'blended' education where there is the mix of both technology and traditional education. This is so, as it clear that this technology – savvy students still prefer printed reading material. In fact, students still print the information from online for in depth reading. So, keeping this in mind, school with the help of the administration should provide the infrastructure to accommodate both traditional and technology oriented teaching. Computer labs and libraries should be important information centre.

Finally, the Ministry of Education should study the introduction of any programmes in both rural and urban schools before implementing it as students differ tremendously. Failing to do so will only create negative perception towards the programme. Therefore it is important that all the involving parties; students, teachers, school and the ministry to work as one for the betterment of the future generation.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, all the questions put forth by researches have been answered. Yes, there are explosion of information in the internet and being netizens; these students have tremendous attraction towards the internet. Thus, interest on the material determines the hours spent. They also have the interest reading but on printed books, magazines and etc. Therefore relying totally on online reading is uncertain. Therefore in the course of technology, authenticity should not take a second seat. Being young learners, their interest should be taken into consideration as reading is important. Furthermore, teachers should take note that young learners are weak in comprehension and apparently could be the downfall in the examinations. This is so as comprehension requires reading for information. Ryker and Ponnudurai (2011) assert that there is no certainty that interactive online reading contributes to improvement in the reading comprehension. However it does make reading more enjoyable. Hence the schools should take this into consideration and update the library with more vast choice of should also have internet facilities for students to surf for information and give education on how to gain important information. These way students can also be educated on the pro and cons of certain websites. Last but not least, parents should be educated on the interest of their students as they spent more time on social networking. Hence these students has to be educated on the possible harmfulness of these sited. In the end ultimately, the collaboration of both interactive online reading and traditional print should be inculcated to promote healthy reading habits. The interaction of online reading along with attractive content and high task authenticity boost motivation and eventually better students' performance in comprehension (Ryker and Ponnudurai, 2011).

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