

The Causes of Poor Habits of Literature Reading Among EFL Undergraduates in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region

Kurdistan Mohammed Qadir¹ & Aziza Kavlu²

¹College of Languages, University of Sulaimani, Sulaymaniyah, Iraq

²English Language Teaching Department, Faculty of Education, Tishk International University, Erbil, Iraq

Correspondence: Kurdistan Mohammed Qadir, College of Languages, University of Sulaimani, Sulaymaniyah, Iraq

Email: Kurdistan.qadir@univsul.edu.iq

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Abstract: Literature reading is perceived as one of the most prominent language skills in second and foreign language acquisition. However, it is observed that students, in general, are reluctant towards reading in Iraqi Kurdistan. Poor reading habits have become a culture, and it has been overspread not only among students but also in the society as a whole in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The main objective of this study is to identify the major causes of poor literature reading habits among undergraduates at both private and public universities in the Kurdistan Region and recommend possible solutions to eliminate these habits. The main focus of the study is on the poor reading habits of First-year students who are enrolled in English-taught courses. The study presents a descriptive investigation and data collected through questionnaires and interviews. Three different methods were implemented to solve the problem: (1) book-based PBL (Project-based learning) type poster presentations; (2) discussing books through debating; and (3) holding motivational workshops, as an academic extra-curricular activity, about the significant role of reading in academic achievement. The study found that some of the root causes of poor reading habits are: social media, being taught by teachers who lack motivation and experiencing instability in life in the region. The study revealed that methods applied by the researchers have to some extent raised students' awareness about the crucial role of reading in broadening their horizons and achieving academic success. Thus they increased students' willingness to read and reconciled students with books by making them read several books during an academic semester.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Literature Reading Habits, Undergraduates

1. Introduction

In this age of digital technology, individuals can easily access books and indulge themselves in getting information even if they cannot have access to libraries. However, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, students of all levels, from school to university, are not generally in the habit of reading books despite the crucial role that literature reading plays in their lives. This is a serious problem because these poor reading habits can be transmitted cross-generationally within society, and this can result in forming an ill-informed society. This is a problem many countries have faced and has become the main concern for researchers

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researchers, although, in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, it has not been investigated before as necessary. Thus, this study is an attempt to examine the issue in order to provide insight into solving it as much as possible and detect the factors that contribute to it. To achieve this goal, the paper sets out to answer some questions.

First, do Kurdish students have poor literature reading habits? Second, what are the factors that make students disinclined to read? Finally, what actions should be taken to tackle the problem and motivate students to develop good habits of literature reading?

To answer the above-mentioned questions, the reading habits of the freshmen who enrolled in English-taught courses at the University of Sulaimani and Tishk International University were examined. The study is a descriptive survey that utilizes questionnaires and open-ended questions for collecting data. Moreover, to solve the problem, various approaches were taken, such as book-based PBL (Project-based learning) type poster presentations, book analyses through debating, and holding motivational workshops, as an academic extra-curricular activity, about the significant role of reading in academic achievement.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Defining Literature

Reasoning and the ability to express are what make human beings distinguished from all other species. One way to express themselves is through language via the means of written symbols. Thus the ability to read these symbols plays a vital role in generating a bridge for humans to understand each other which in succession, benefits them in various respects. However, before pointing out the significance of reading, what is meant by literature in this study should be explained.

Literature is defined in two senses. Taking the looser and more general definition, it is “anything that is written” (Rees, 1973). In this sense, any kind of written record, imaginative or factual, which “expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards life” is categorized as literature (Rees, 1973). However, in a narrower sense, literature is defined as a “written art,” which means any collection of written works of artistic value. In that respect, literature is a kind of writing which carries more than one meaning and which as such deserves to be read thoughtfully and with attention (Collins, 1992, p. 2).

Based on the above-given definitions, reading books, magazines, journals, and even newspapers is significantly important to define one as a good reader. As how there are different types of books regarding quality and effectiveness, there are also different types of readers. Perrine (1974, pp. 5-8) identifies two types of readers: the immature (inexperienced) reader who only reads for entertainment and escape from reality and the discriminating reader who reads to get a more profound sense of life. In this article, these two types have not been distinguished since only the amount of reading is considered when studying reading habits.

2.2 The Importance of Reading

It is significant to illustrate the importance of reading at both individual and societal levels. Reading both types of literature, imaginative or factual, can be valuable in many ways. To start with, reading unimaginative literature increases our knowledge, makes our lives easier, and saves us from numerous

problems that we face on a daily basis. The importance of reading factual books is crystal-clear to everyone. However, a small number of people are aware of the value of reading imaginative literature in our life.

Reading imaginative literature is equally important as it feeds our minds and soul. Firstly, reading this kind of literature can be counted as a recreational activity, and thus imaginative literature is beneficial for relaxation and breaking the monotony of daily routines (Mayhead, 1965, p. 9). It is also advantageous in increasing our experience of real life without having to live for a long time experiencing what others have experienced (Mayhead, 1965, p. 10; Rees, 1973, p. 14). In addition, it inspires the reader since numerous moral lessons can be taken from imaginative literature which is fundamental for our spiritual and mental well-being because literature presents life more wisely. It also generates our understanding of other cultures. Reading imaginative literature on a regular basis can also enhance an individual's cognitive and emotional abilities which in turn lead to a clear understanding of life from a social, cultural, and political point of view.

Furthermore, according to Fabunmi and Folorunso (2010), reading books is fundamental to literacy. It provides individuals with enlightenment and enough knowledge to tackle disease and poverty and liberates them from any obstacle that comes in the way of their development in all aspects of life. Apart from these advantages of reading different types of literature, one can argue that it has a special place in the language learning process. According to Krashen (1993) (cited in Doğan, 2014, p. 160), good readers become more proficient in certain language skills such as reading and writing skills, enriched vocabulary bank, and mastering grammar and punctuation rules. However, students' unwillingness to read negatively affects all aspects of their lives. Keles (2006) (cited in Aramide, 2015) states that students lacking good reading habits face serious problems and perform poorly both in school and later in their professional life.

2.3 Habits of Reading

For more than fifty years, adolescents' reading habits have been studied, and a significant number of studies have indicated a drop in adolescents' reading habits (Hopper, 2005; Rhee, 2001). According to Pennington and Waxler (2017) over the period of 150 years, although the literacy rate has considerably increased, there is a noticeable decrease in the amount of reading. Harris and Sipay (1990) defined reading habits as the measure of how often, what, and how well adults read. Aramide (2015) describes reading as the activity that reflects the likeness of reading, preference for reading, and the regularity of reading. The average time spent on reading, frequency of reading, and the amount of material are some indicators of reading habits (Bana, 2020; Gallik, 1999; Mu'awana, Ash, & Nafiah, 2018; Wagner, 2002). If reading is perceived as a pleasurable necessity and done regularly over a long period, it will become a habit (Fitri, 2020; Tuba, 2017). It means that to reach the level of good comprehension, individuals need to allocate and devote a necessary amount of time and do the necessary amount of reading.

2.4 Attitude Toward Reading

Studies have shown that while most students reported positive attitudes toward reading, only a small percentage read regularly or often, and more than %50 percent of students read only sometimes or never (Gallik, 1999). It means students theoretically believe that reading is a very important and beneficial

activity. However, in reality, practically they are not able to incorporate reading activity neither into their academic life nor private life, and they cannot even do it for pleasure.

2.5 Factors Affecting Reading Habits

Since reading can be acquired as a habit, many factors contribute to cultivating it in students. Some researchers mentioned some factors which affect reading habits; among them is the socioeconomic status of the student which can be categorized into three variables: income, education, and occupation (Aramide, 2015). Based on these views, a family's low income, parents' poor education level, and low-paid occupations exert a deep effect on students' reading habits. Similarly, Fabunmi and Folorunso (2010) emphasize the fact that harsh economic situations can have a negative effect on students' reading habits. Additionally, having available reading resources, such as possessing a mobile phone, computer, newspaper, desk, or books of their own in the home, can have a positive influence on students' attitudes towards reading and their fluency in reading which can play a great role in forming a habit of reading in them (Clark & Hawkins, 2010). Numerous studies have also shown the vital role of families who provide a motivating environment at home to their children in their academic performance, even if they do not have a strong socioeconomic background (Le et al., 2019; White, 1982).

In addition, Adetunji and Olagunju (2014) state that educational environment factors, such as teacher's performance and provided learning facilities considerably influence the students' reading progress. Moreover, this factor not only affects students' reading ability but also affects their competent usage of language Brunel (1991) (cited in Adetunji & Olagunju, 2014).

3. Methodology

This study was conducted on the students of a public and a private university in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG), namely the University of Suliamani and Tishik International University, Sulaimani. In the study, (140) students participated. The participants consisted of first-year students of the Architecture Engineering Department, Civil Engineering Department, Business and Management Department from Tishik International University, Sulaimani, and the Department of Translation from the University of Sulaimani.

The instruments used in this research were pre-treatment and post-treatment questionnaires with two open-ended questions. The pre-course questionnaire was designed by the researchers based on the literature review and distributed to students over the course of an academic year. The pre-treatment questionnaire was carried out at the beginning of the academic year which started in December for the first-grade students. It was designed to investigate students' literature reading habits and the factors that affect them. The open-ended questions were directed to the students at the end of the pre-treatment questionnaire to let the participants be able to point out any other factors that have affected their reading habits and were not included in the conducted questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed based on the Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The prepared questionnaire was piloted away by five (5) academicians who speak English proficiently. They gave feedback on the piloted questions, and the researchers made corrections and required clarifications based on their feedback. The questionnaire which was originally prepared in English

Language was translated into Kurdish language in order to let the students express themselves without a language barrier and misunderstandings that might have been caused by their English level. The questionnaire was also translated into Kurdish by the researcher whose native language is Kurdish, who has academic Kurdish Language competency and who holds a master's degree in English Literature.

After being piloted, English and Kurdish versions of the pre and post-questionnaire were executed. The pre-treatment questionnaire was divided into six sections; 1. demographic information, 2. reading habits, 3. home environment, 4. school environment, 5. social environment, and 6. attitudes toward reading. The collected data were carefully entered into SPSS 26 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistics program and have been analyzed with the SPSS. The data, which has been obtained as a result of the analysis, have been interpreted after being presented in the form of tables. The open-ended questions have been analyzed through thematic approach analysis. After taking some steps to assist the students in developing their reading habits, the post-treatment questionnaire was distributed to them so as to examine the changes in their habits and attitudes toward reading.

As different ways to develop students' reading habits, during the two semesters of the academic year, the students were assigned books to read in order to prepare Project-based learning type poster presentations, PowerPoint presentations, and debate books. Then, they were asked to participate in a motivational workshop which was organized and presented by the researchers. In addition, the first lectures of the English Language related courses were allocated to discuss and explain the importance of literature reading in students' academic and personal lives.

4. Findings and Discussion

Demographic variables

Table 1: Distribution of students in the departments in terms of the number of participants and gender

Name of Department		Number of students
Architecture Engineering	private	30
Civil Engineering	private	11
Business and Management	private	9
Translation	public	90
Total		140

Gender	Number of students
Male	82
Female	58
Total	140

Table 1 shows that the total number of respondents that filled out the questionnaire was 140. There were 90 students from the public university and 50 students from the private university from different departments.

Table 2: Distribution of parents' education

Education Level	Mother		Father	
	No.	%	No.	%
Primary School	46	32.9	33	23.6
Secondary School	14	10.0	17	12.1
High School	31	22.1	27	19.3
Diploma	22	15.7	30	21.4
Bachelor Degree	26	18.6	29	20.7
Master Degree	0	0	3	2.1
PhD	1	0.7	1	0.7
Total	140	100.0	140	100.0

Table 2 shows the education level of the students' parents. 32.9% of the students' mothers are primary school graduates, 10% are secondary school graduates, and 22.1% are high school graduates. In total, only 35% of the students' mothers have an undergraduate degree. On the other hand, 18.6% of the mothers have a BA degree which could be accepted as a high percentage for female education in Kurdish society. Also, for fathers' education, primary school graduates have the highest percentage. There is no MA holder among 140 students' mothers, and only 2.1% of students' fathers are MA holders. Overall, the data shows that fathers' education level is higher with a mean of 3.128 compared to mothers' education level with a mean of 2.800. In total, the highest percentage of education level among mothers and fathers is primary school graduates with mode value 1 (primary school was coded 1 and entered as 1 to SPSS).

4.1 Students' Reading Habits

To understand students' habits of literature reading, students were asked to answer some questions.

Table 3: Number of books read in the last year

Number of books	Frequency No.	%	Cumulative Percent
0	33	23.6	23.6
1	14	10	33.6
2	17	12.1	45.7
3	17	12.1	57.9
4	14	10	67.9
5 and more	45	31.1	100.0
Total	140		

Table 3 represents that 23.6% of the participants have not read any books over the course of the previous year, while 34.2% of the students read between 1-4 books. 31.1% of them have read 5 or more than 5 books in the previous year. 23.6% of students reported that they do not read at all, and 34.2% read less than 4 books in a year which is lower than the number of subjects that they need to cover during an academic year. The data represents that these students have poor reading habits while they are undergraduate students.

Table 4: The purpose of reading

Why do you read books?	No.	%
To pass exam	44	31.4
To gain knowledge	40	28.6
For pleasure	11	7.9
For self-development	40	28.6
To impress my family and friends	1	0.7
To keep up with current events	1	0.7
Total	137	97.9

Table 4 shows that 31.4% of the participants read to pass exams and 28.6% of the students read to gain knowledge. On the other hand, a very small percentage of students (11%) read for pleasure which means reading is not an enjoyable activity for them. The items of reading books to pass an exam, to gain knowledge and self-development showed that students read more when they are made to read rather than for pleasure. That means they are not good readers as studies show that those who do not read for pleasure are poor readers (Blake & Dearborn, 1935)

Table 5: The type of texts they read

What type of text do you read?	No.	%
Newspaper	6	4.3
Magazine	10	7.1
Course Notes	18	12.9
Book	106	75.7
Total	140	100.0

Table 5 shows that the majority of those students who read (75.7%) read books and a small percentage of them (4.3+7.1 % = 11.4) read newspapers and magazines, which indicates that students are not in the habit of reading periodicals which are primary sources of general up-to-date information. 12.9% of students read their course notes (handouts provided by teachers and lecture notes). This represents that students do not get in-depth information and are satisfied with the summarized notes given to them by their lecturers.

Table 6: Time spent on reading

How many hours do you spend reading general books per day?	No.	%	How many hours do you spend reading course books per day?	No.	%
I don't read at all	52	37.1	I don't read at all	20	14.3
10-30 min	46	32.9	10-30 min	31	22.1
31 min - 1h	30	21.4	31 min - 1h	54	38.6
2h	10	7.1	2h	18	12.9
3 - 4 h	2	1.4	3 - 4 h	17	12.1
Total	140	100.0	Total	140	100.0

Table 6 illustrates that 37.1% of the students do not read at all, 32.9% of them read 10-30 minutes a day, and 21.4% spend more than 30 minutes reading general books. Only 8.5% of the participants read more than 2 hours a day. In the case of reading course books, the percentage of those who said they do not read at all decreased by 22.8% (37.1% - 14.3%), and the percentage of the students who studied more than two hours a day increased by 16.5% (25% - 8.5%). The data shows that students read when it is mandatory, but they are not willing to read when they are not obliged to. This indicates that they have a poor habit of reading literature.

Table 7: Time spent in the library

How many hours do you spend in the Library per day?	No.	%
I don't visit library at all	121	86.4
10-30 min	4	2.9
30-min - 1 h	7	5.0
1-2h	4	2.9
more than 2h	4	2.9
Total	140	100.0

Table 7 shows that the majority of the students (86.4%) do not visit the library at all, and only 13.6% what makes the rest of students reported that they visit the library.

Table 8: Student's attitude towards reading

No.	Student's Attitude	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I do not think buying books is necessary.	23.6	30.7	19.3	19.3	7.1
2	Reading general books is not necessary.	31.4	30.7	5.7	11.4	10.7
3	I like reading books.	46.4	37.9	4.3	5.7	5.7
4	I believe if I read more books, I will be more successful in my life.	6.5	6.5	12.9	25.2	48.9

Table 8 examines students' attitudes toward reading. It shows that 54.3% of the participants believe that buying books is necessary, and also 62.1% think that reading general books is necessary. 84.3% of them show that they do not like reading, while 74.1% believe that if they read more, they will be more successful in life. This indicates that they recognize the significance of reading: yet they do not endeavor to read.

Table 9: Shows how they spend their leisure time

How do you spend your leisure time?	No.	%
Visiting social media	55	76
Reading Books	13	9.3
Watching TV	4	2.9
Hanging out with family and friends	10	7.1
Lazing around	7	4.7
Total	140	100

To understand their reading habits and the factors that affect them, the students were asked 'how they spend their free time.' The participants' response implies that the main factor that contributes to their poor

reading habits is likely to be related to using the Internet as 76% of them spend their leisure time surfing the Internet and using social media, while only a few numbers of them (9.3%) shows a positive response regarding spending their free time on reading. Overall, the reported data shows that the students understand the importance of literature reading, but they do not put this positive attitude into practice to form a good reading habit.

4.2 Factors Affecting Literature Reading Habits

4.2.1 Home Environment

Table 10: Participant's home environment

No.	Questionnaire statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My parents provide me with reading materials.	14.3	13.6	10.0	30.0	32.1
2	My parents have guided me to read.	25.7	31.4	12.1	20.0	10.7
3	My parents read books.	37.7	26.1	12.3	12.3	11.6

Table 11 illustrates that students' home environment is not friendly enough to help them cultivate good reading habits. Although the answers show that the respondents' parents or carers are supportive in providing reading materials (62.1% provide their children with facilities that encourage them to read), they have failed in being successful role models for them and guiding them to read (57.1% have not received guidance from their parents, while 30.7% have received it). This is mainly related to the fact that their parents are not good readers themselves, and reading has not become a habit among them (63.8% of their parents do not read). This implies that most parents are aware of the importance of literature reading but do not practice it themselves. Therefore, it leaves a negative impact on their children.

4.2.2 School Environment

Table 11: Participant's school environment

No.	Questionnaire statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My teachers recommend me books to read.	31.2	25.4	20.7	13.8	8.7
2	My teachers guide me to read.	50.7	27.9	10.0	2.9	8.6
3	My teachers' teaching methods require me to do extra reading.	25.7	33.6	17.9	13.6	9.3
4	There have been workshops/seminars/talks/lectures held about the importance of reading in my school or university.	27.1	28.6	28.	6.4	9.3
5	We have a library rich with newly printed books at the university.	11.4	17.9	20.7	35.0	15.0

Examining the factors contributing to a poor reading culture among undergraduates, the table above shows some factors related to their educational environment. Items (1, 2, and 3) investigate the teachers' effect on generating literature reading habits in students. The answers show that 56.6% of the students do not get book recommendations from their teachers, while only 22.5% of them stated that their teachers recommend books to read.

The second item of the school environment section of the questionnaire, which examines teachers' role in guiding students to read, indicates that 78.6% are not guided by their teachers to read, only 11.5% of the participants receive guidance from their instructors, and (10%) are not sure whether they get it or not.

The third item points out that 59.3% of the respondents state that their teachers' teaching methods do not require them to do extra reading. On the contrary, 22.9% of the students stated that their teachers' teaching method requires them to do extra reading. It shows that the education system relies on handouts and reading them is enough for the students to pass their courses.

Item number 4 shows that 55. % of the participants have not been provided with informative events about the crucial role of reading in improving their lives, while 28% of the students are not sure which shows that it is not even on their agenda to consider such events. Only 15.7% of them claim that they have been given information about the significance of reading.

The fifth item shows that 50% of the students believe that they have a library enriched with newly printed books at their university, but 29.3% do not believe so, and 20.7% are not sure which means they have not even visited the library.

To sum up, the school environment-related factors show that either low or no contribution from teachers' part is made to construct a habit of literature reading in students. In addition, they clearly indicate that, at educational institutions, there are not sufficient efforts made to arrange encouraging academic or non-academic activities concerning informing students about the significance of reading.

However, they mention that their library is equipped with new books and technology-based facilities which is contradictory to their answers to the question they were addressed on the amount of time they spend in the library. The majority of them said that they do not visit the library at all, so it seems that they are not aware of the facilities, and that is why they cannot differentiate between a good library and a poor library. Some of the reasons behind this are the lack of motivating teachers and efforts to inform students about the significance of reading and not hosting events that intrinsically or extrinsically motivate them to read.

4.2.3 Social environment

Table 12: Participant's social environment

No.	Social environment	Strongly disagree	disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I get book recommendations from my friends.	25.0	18.6	37.9	12.9	5.7
2	I join strangers in public places for the purpose of reading.	15.0	25.0	30.7	15.7	13.6
3	My financial state affects my reading habits negatively.	18.1	27.3	12.2	19.4	23.0
4	I do not have enough time for reading because I have a part-time job.	7.3	5.0	10.8	30.9	46.0

The items in table 13 represent the effect of the social environment factors on students' literature reading habits.

According to item number 1 from Table 13, 43.6% of the students do not get book recommendations from their friends, while 37.9% of the respondents are not sure whether their friends recommend books to read, and 8.6% of them get it from their peers. This implies that most of the students are not affected by their peers, and reading has not become a culture among them.

Item (2) investigates students' attempts to utilize the public sphere to form a reading culture in themselves. It shows that 40% of them are not willing to pursue reading and socialize with people who read, and 30.7% are not sure. On the other hand, 29.3% state that they join reading groups.

Item (3) shows that 45.4% of students believe that their financial situation does not affect their literature reading practice negatively, while approximately the same percentage (42.4%) state that their financial

state affects it negatively. Item (4) shows that 76.9% of students do not have enough time because of having a part-time job, and they believe that they are not able to read because of a lack of time.

4.2.4 Other Factors

To explore other factors that affect students' reading habits, the participants were asked two open-ended questions: What motivates you to read? (Mention any other factors that have not been mentioned above); what demotivates you to read? (Mention any factors that have not been mentioned above). The answers in this section were analyzed thematically.

Out of 140 participants, only 50 students answered the first question. One of the most repeated factors reported by them was reading for the purpose of personal development. Their answers show that they are in need of skills related to improving their emotional intelligence, such as gaining knowledge and information in various fields, understanding people and communicating with them, and opening their eyes up to the world and different cultures and points of view. The second most reported factor is to help them learn languages and improve their vocabulary skills. The third most reported motivator is family and friends. Then they mentioned other factors, such as reading for pleasure, getting away from the hectic life, and impressing their peers and society members. The result shows that they are aware of the importance of reading.

When they were asked about the factors that demotivate them to read, they mentioned several factors, some of which have already been mentioned in the questionnaire statements. The factors include lack of time due to having part-time jobs, studying at the university, and doing house chores. The answers show that reading is not a priority for them, most of them are busy with work and house chores. The majority indicated that they do not love reading. Some of them even hold very negative attitudes toward readers, believing that “those who read are not psychologically stable.” Some others believe that reading takes their time, and think that it is better to allocate time for studying for college. That shows that they do not realize that reading brings them success in education and life, and that builds on the idea that the education system which is based on rote memorization does not encourage them to read. Some participants stated that the economic and political instabilities in the region make them lose interest in everything, not only demotivate them to read. They also contributed their poor literature reading habits to the fact that reading has not become a habit in their community, and thus they do not have someone to guide them to read. Another factor reported by a few is the complexity of writing style and topics that are difficult to understand.

4.3 Cultivating Reading Habits in Students

4.3.1 Post-questionnaire

A post-questionnaire was conducted after giving lectures, holding some seminars and a workshop on the crucial role literature reading plays in our lives, and assigning the participants some assignments. Each participant was assigned some books to read to prepare for poster presentations, asked to read a book and debate the main themes of the book in class, and they were asked to read two books for a quiz and an exam. To measure the effectiveness of the attempts that were made to increase their awareness about the

significance of literature reading, and hence cultivate a habit of reading in them, as presented in table 14, the undergraduate participants were asked some questions in the post-questionnaire.

The items of the post-questionnaire were divided into two sets: a set of questions (items number 1 and 2 in table 14) were asked to find out whether they have read the assigned books or not; the second one (items 3-9 in table 14) was asked to examine the effectiveness of the methods applied by the researchers to change their attitudes towards reading which can be a crucial step in trying to form a reading habit in them.

Table 13: Post-questionnaire

No.	Post-questionnaire items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have read the books which were assigned to me during the course.	6.6	11.6	14.9	38.0	28.9
2	I managed to accomplish my projects (posters presentation, PowerPoint presentation) only through using the Internet without reading any books.	13.2	32.2	19.0	21.5	14.0
3	I like reading	10.7	4.1	7.4	34.7	43
4	I found that reading English books as assignments (quiz, paper exam, debate, poster presentation, and presentation) are useful to improve my English.	4.1	4.1	3.3	39.7	48.8
5	After I was obliged to read books by my teachers as assignments, I realized that reading books is useful for self-development	11.6	19.0	24.8	31.4	13.2
6	I realized that I need to read to be successful at university.	9.9	9.9	17.4	39.7	23.1
7	I realized that I need to read to be successful in my personal life.	12.4	9.1	13.2	38.8	26.4
8	I believe if I was obliged to read more during my school years, I would have developed reading habits.	7.4	6.6	10.7	35.5	39.7

The first item of the first set of the questions shows that 66.9% of the participants had read the books which were assigned to them, while 18.2% had reported that they did not read the assigned books, and the response of 14.9% was not clear. In addition, the second item illustrates that 35.5% of them were relying on the Internet in getting prepared for exams and assignments instead of reading assigned books. The responses show that the students do not have a good literature reading habit. When they were asked by the researchers how they prepared for the exams and assignments, they admitted that they were reading the short readymade online summaries of the books, online readymade PowerPoint presentations, or watching the movie adaptation of the books instead of reading the books.

The items in the second set show that the methods used by the lecturers to tackle this problem were to some extent effective in changing the students' attitudes toward reading literature in a positive way. Item 3 reveals an increase in the participants' desire to read by 77.7%. Being obliged to read, 85.5% of the students started to realize the significance of reading in improving their language skills, and 44.6% of them reported that they have realized that reading books is useful for self-development. Furthermore, the respondents state that they have realized that they need to read to be successful at university (62.8% agree) and in their personal life (65.2% agree). Finally, 75.2% of the participants have come to the conclusion that they could have developed good reading habits if they were made to read from early childhood in school.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, despite of the significance of literature reading in improving individuals' personal, academic and professional lives and developing society, students in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region are not in the habit of reading. Overall, the reported data showed that the students understand the importance of literature reading, but they do not try to form positive attitudes towards it and put them into practice to form a good reading habit. Although they are aware that buying books and reading is necessary, they do not put so much time into reading and visiting the library. Instead, they mostly spend their free time surfing the Internet. This study attempted to identify the factors that have led to students losing interest in reading.

The lack of a conducive environment is the main reason behind students' poor reading habits. The first factor is a home environment which is the most effective place where students can be taught to read, and good habits can be inculcated by family members in students from early childhood. However, the home environment is not reader-friendly, and parents do not often teach their children or motivate them to do reading.

Another factor that contributes to students' poor literature reading habits is a demotivating educational environment. Teachers play a significant role in fostering good reading habits in students by developing and consolidating a culture of reading books that is promoted at home. They can become role models for students. However, in this region where reading habits are not fostered at home, the teachers and education system also play a negative role in that respect by inducing rote memorization instead of encouraging active and critical reading. Poor facilities and services at educational institutions are other causes that encourage students to be consistent with their bad habits of literature reading.

Moreover, the social environment discourages students from developing good literature reading habits. Social and peer pressure can sometimes influence citizens in a positive way. However, in this community, reading has not become a culture yet. Thus students are not usually encouraged by their peers or fellow citizens. Also, financial and political instabilities and problems that force students to spend most of their time working just to make a living can contribute to nurturing poor reading culture.

All in all, these factors demotivate students, and exposing and tackling them is the responsibility of parents, teachers, and the people in authority. Educational institutions and organizations, and mass media can play a significant role in nurturing a culture of good reading habits. Television programs, academic and cultural events, such as competitions, lectures, and workshops can be held constantly to encourage individuals of all ages to read. Moreover, a culture of reading books from childhood must be established at home as the problem arises from there, and later once it is established, it should be strengthened and consolidated in school. Finally, it would easily become a culture within the society, and only then it will be having a fruitful effect.

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