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Redefining Online Reading Behaviour among Malaysian Young Adults

Farina Tazijan¹, Nor Fazlin Mohd Ramli¹, Rofiza Aboo Bakar¹, Colette Drouillard²

¹ Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia

² Department of Library and Information Studies, Valdosta State University, Florida

farina762@uitm.edu.my, norfa707@uitm.edu.my, rofiza@uitm.edu.my, cldrouillard@valdosta.edu
Tel: 0192524834

Abstract

The reading trend among young adults has changed from reading printed materials to reading online. These led to significant changes in their reading habits, attitudes, and interests. This study was undertaken to investigate the online reading experiences of young adults in Malaysia. A mixed-method explanatory approach was adopted and data were analyzed using Drouillard's (2009) framework to identify their reading experiences. The results showed some critical implications such as factors identified as motivation to read intrinsically and types of reading materials. It is hoped that more research regarding the multidimensionality of reading among Malaysian young adults are conducted in the future.

Keywords: reading experiences; reading habits; reading interests; habits, attitudes; young adults

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1.0 Introduction

New literacies have surfaced depending on internet usage has emerged in this 21st century. One of the new literacies is the heavily engaging reading on the internet. Children and young adults of today search almost everything on the internet or google for information, contrastingly with the previous generation (Coiro, J, 2003; Kinzer, C.K., & Leander, K, 2003). Information is practically available at the tip of their fingers. Although the printed text is still significant, the fact that 21st-century learners are surrounded with abundant opportunities for reading when engaging in socializing, information searching, and gaming on the internet must not be overlooked.

Young adults aged 18-24 years old have distinctive behavior when it comes to reading. Being the largest group in the generation their reading behavior has dramatically changed due to the influence of internet usage. According to Pianzola, Rebora, and Lauer (2020) to understand this reading culture, a need to understand the mind of the reader is important. Furthermore, in their research, they elaborated that this need is important mainly because, firstly, a large amount of reading happens on digital social platforms and the users' comments are important to investigate the readers' responses. This is due to the reason that reading on digital social media platforms allows readers' comments in real-time, unlike the normal traditional reading which allows the reading to take place for enjoyment.

On the other hand, there has been a frequent murmur in recent years that second language learners of young adults of today do not read for enjoyment as reported in various universities in Malaysia such as Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and Universiti Teknologi MARA (Normazidah Che Musa, and Koo, Yew Lie and Hazita Azman 2016; F. Tazijan, R.A Bakar, N. Ramli, 2019).

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Investigations of UiTM learners (Jamiah Baba, Faiza Rostam Affendi, 2020; F. Tazijan, R.A Bakar, N. Ramli, 2019) revealed by far students have been focusing on grades rather than the enjoyment of reading, despite having to undergo English Language courses in the university.

Hence, with this in view, it is a need to look into Malaysian Young adults reading experience to understand better their behavioral perceptions towards reading in a 21st Century setting.

2.0 Literature Review

This review of the literature consists of past research on reading motivation among second language learners and trends in Malaysian young adults' reading motivation.

There have been numerous studies on reading motivation among first language learners but not many studies done on second language learners' reading motivation. Several scholarly research studies have attempted to explain reading motivation in second language learners, and what motivated young adults to read. Since 2018, over 6750 articles have been published about reading motivation among second language learners of young adults, however, about 139 articles were published on google scholar on Malaysian young adult learners and very few focused on second language learners. Each study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of reading motivation, practically mostly all the conclusions were constructed on the perceptions of reading rather than a description of reading experiences as second language learners and what motivates them to read. The researchers conducted a literature review search on google scholar in advanced search with selected keywords.

The ultimate purpose of reading is not to achieve results for examination but rather to become a lifelong reader who can engage with text for information, knowledge, aesthetics, and enjoyment (Guthrie, J. T., Klauda, S. L., & Ho, A. N., 2019). The motivation to read may be internal, external, or both. Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho (2019) defined reading motivation as a perspective from educational psychology rather than a language learning perspective that involves concepts and processes drawn from motivation theories. These include goal orientations, competence beliefs, and task values. Readers seem to incline either a task mastery (intrinsic) orientation or a performance goal (extrinsic) orientation. An intrinsically motivated reader would be driven by reading for its own sake, while an extrinsically motivated reader would be driven by external demands and values.

Motivation is an important element in reading engagement, which ultimately results in reading achievement. On the other hand, the young adults or the generation Z read differently from the previous generation. This generation, with the age group of 1996 and after is known as the digital natives where they do homework using the internet, and their everyday life is surrounded by the internet or the internet of things (IoT). According to Forbes (2017), young people are still consuming plenty of electronic text even as traditional publishing reports eBooks sales are soft. The same Pew Foundation analysis shows that millennials who follow the news are more likely than any other generation of readers to prefer reading. Though the vast majority of news-reading young adults prefer to read online, they are trending more towards phones and tablets. The results showed that millennials who follow the news are more likely than any other generation of readers to prefer reading. Though the vast majority of news-reading young adults prefer to read online, millennials are not giving up traditional books, but they are trending more towards phones and tablets.

A recent News Report in the News Straits Times by Mustapha (2018) reported that from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Malaysia's literacy rate stands relatively high at 94.64 percent following the standard of measurement set by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Mustafa (2018) further elaborated that The Adult and Youth Literacy: National Regional and Global Trends published in 2016 stated that out of 85 percent of Malaysians who read regularly, 77 percent preferred newspapers, three percent read magazines, and three percent read books and 1.6 percent read comics. According to the report, as Malaysia aspires to reach the literacy rate of 99 percent by 2020; one way of achieving this rate is by enhancing the quality of the material read. The International Journal of Research in Social Sciences highlighted that in Malaysia, the mainstream readers are students perusing books for examinations rather than for knowledge and pleasure. The habit of reading in the country has deteriorated with the prevalence of digital devices, which the young find much easier to access compared to books.

Increases in digital content and electronic books have initiated a wave of reading revolution, overturning the traditional reading experience. Online reading has been introduced in 1993 when electronic books or eBooks were made popular on the Internet. E-books are read on any computing device with the software to display their given file format which is a downloadable file that can be read offline and online (Artwell, 2019). The changing habit of reading among today's readers is apparent. From reading styles, reading materials, and initiatives by the institution or government. Students visited libraries mainly to read online materials rather than borrowing books. Universities like Universiti Teknologi MARA offer free-range internet usage in the library, whereas, at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman Sungai Long campus, more than 275,000 volumes of books, publications, and online resources catering were made available to all programs.

Another reason for changing habits among readers is the shift from reading printed materials to online materials. This is supported by a report by Limelight Networks (Wong, 2018). It highlighted the digital consumption habits of 5,000 respondents in 10 countries which are from France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, the UK, the US, and Malaysia. Thus, this enhances the fact that Malaysians are strong users of the internet. According to Limelight Networks, in the State of Digital Lifestyles 2018 report which is based on market research conducted on 5,000 consumers in ten countries including Malaysia, Singapore, and the United States. found more than 69 percent of Malaysians surveyed said they could not go a day without their mobile phones, topping the list among the ten countries surveyed. This confirms the fact that Malaysians depend on the internet heavily. In fact, according to Malaysia Communication and Multimedia Commissions (MCMC), 2020 revealed data that showed an increase in internet users from 2018 to 2020. The largest user group was from the age of 20-24 years old which were the young adult group. They comprised 34.1% of the age group below 15 years old to 65 years and above. With this in view, the age group of 20-24 years old are considered the young adults that are mostly the

undergraduates in the University. The undergraduates, hence belonging to the Y and Z generation claimed to be reading over online materials. Though they claim to be reading, they read differently online from the printed materials or books. There is a paradigm shift in the ways and role of reading in the Y and Z generations. Thus, it is seen as a time for this issue to be investigated focusing on Malaysian young adults' reading experiences.

3.0 Methodology

This paper attempts to answer the following research question which is, 'How do young Malaysian adults between the ages of 18 and 24 describe the factors that influence their reading experiences?'

To attempt to answer this question, the researchers analyze the data according to the research framework which is illustrated in figure 1. This study adopts the mixed-method research of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess most effectively young readers' views on what has motivated them to read. Since mix method allows to draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, as well as minimize the weaknesses of each of those methods, the mixed-method approach was chosen as the most applicable way to examine this research.

This research used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design with two distinct phases following Creswell's research design of the explanatory sequential mixed method. He further explained the study may begin with a quantitative method in which a theory or concept is tested, followed by a qualitative method involving a detailed exploration of a few cases or individuals. (Creswell, 2014) This is further explained in figure 1.

Data were collected among 238 young adults who participated in this study in. The young adults were selected based on purposive sampling whereby they have undergone at least one reading course in their institutions. All samples were aged between 18-24 years old from a Malaysian University. The results were analyzed using Drouillard's (2011) framework. In this framework, the data were analyzed to seek the young adult habit of reading.

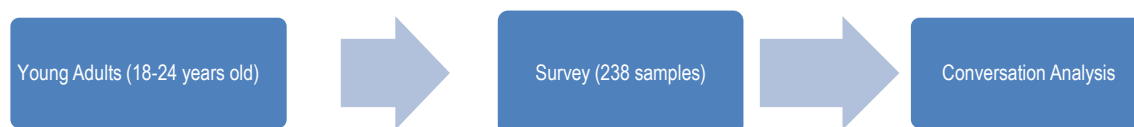


Fig 1: Research Process

The data was collected over 12 weeks until the data was saturated. The methodology was done in two stages where in the first stage, a survey was given out to the young adults. In the second stage, conversation analyses were conducted among 11 young adult readers as the data has saturated for data validity. The two stages took 12 weeks to be carried out. In the first stage, data were analyzed using SPSS to identify the intrinsic readers and the extrinsic readers. In the second stage, the intrinsic readers were interviewed, and a conversation analysis was carried out.

4.0 Findings

The purpose of this study was to describe the factors that influence Malaysian young adults' (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences. The results from the survey showed the reading interests, habits, and attitudes of the samples. Using Drouillard's (2011) framework to analyze the data, the results indicated factors that influence reading among Malaysian young adults. Similarly, in Drouillard's 2009 study, on the motivation factors for youth to read Harry Potter Book Series. Adopting this framework, the Malaysian young adults indicated their reading motivation which extends to their reading interest and materials. Below are the categories of themes of the Malaysian young adults' (aged 18 to 24) reading experiences.

- Category 1: The factor of the self-recognition
- Category 2: The factor of other people
- Category 3: The factor of forced reading
- Category 4: The factor of reading social connection

In category 1, the young adults agreed on the importance to read in tertiary education where they are motivated not to read for pleasure but to do well in the university and to be smarter in general to obtain better results. This result is congruent to studies of Malaysian young adults reading for extrinsic purposes as reading plays an important role in their studies. The table below showed the detailed reasons for young adults to read for self-recognition in their tertiary education. In category 2, the young adults claimed other people, like parents, friends, and teachers influences them to read. This is reported in table 1, where the young adults dictated that they read because of the influence of others such as their friends, social media followers, and influencers from the social media.

	A LOT LIKE ME (1)	A LITTLE LIKE ME (2)	A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM ME (3)	A LOT DIFFERENT FROM ME (4)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
I like reading in English to learn something new about people and things that interest me	42.02% 100	44.12% 105	12.18% 29	1.68% 4	236	3.26
I feel happy when I read about something interesting in English.	57.14% 136	36.12% 86	5.88% 14	0.84% 2	236	3.50
I like reading about new things in English.	45.80% 109	38.60% 92	15.12% 36	0.42% 1	236	3.30
When my teacher or friends tell me something interesting, I might read more about it in English.	35.20% 84	36.20% 85	22.27% 53	4.20% 10	236	3.08
I enjoy reading in English to learn what is going on in the world.	40.92% 97	35.90% 85	20.68% 49	2.53% 6	237	3.15
When the topic is interesting, I am willing to read difficult English materials.	36.24% 85	37.30% 89	18.91% 45	5.46% 13	236	3.08
I enjoy reading when I learn complex ideas from English materials.	26.02% 62	47.48% 113	23.11% 55	3.30% 8	236	2.96
I like it when the topic of an English reading makes me think a little more.	36.71% 87	51.90% 123	10.95% 26	0.84% 2	237	3.24
I like challenging myself when reading in English.	43.70% 104	36.24% 85	16.81% 40	1.20% 3	236	3.24
I like hard, challenging English readings.	17.72% 42	46.57% 108	29.54% 70	7.17% 17	237	2.74
When an assignment is interesting, I can read difficult English materials more easily.	26.47% 63	43.70% 104	23.96% 57	5.80% 14	236	2.91
I like reading a lot of interesting things in English. I sometimes lose track of time.	43.39% 103	40.34% 96	14.29% 34	2.00% 5	236	3.25
It's fun for me to read about something I like in English.	57.98% 139	28.41% 70	10.92% 26	1.00% 2	236	3.44
It is hard for me to stop reading in English when the topic is interesting.	44.12% 105	36.50% 87	15.12% 36	4.20% 10	236	3.21
I enjoy reading good, long stories in English.	29.41% 70	41.18% 98	23.52% 56	5.80% 14	236	2.94
When I am reading about an interesting topic in English, I sometimes lose track of time.	33.61% 80	41.18% 98	18.91% 45	6.30% 15	236	3.02
I enjoy telling my friends about the things I read in English materials.	27.23% 64	34.69% 82	27.23% 64	10.64% 25	236	2.79
My friends and I like to share what we read in English.	19.63% 47	29.54% 70	33.30% 79	17.30% 41	237	2.62
I like talking with my friends about what I read in English.	24.47% 58	32.07% 76	28.27% 67	15.19% 36	237	2.66
I like joining class discussions about what I read in English.	16.48% 39	33.70% 80	33.70% 80	16.03% 38	237	2.51

Table 1: Category 1 & 2: The factor of the self-recognition & The factor of other people

In category 3, the young adults resulted to be the reason for completing their assignments and obtaining good results for their grades is by reading. Most perceived results as a lot like me' when it comes to grading and scores on tests. In this category, most young adults scored highest in 'A lot like me' due to the extrinsic motivation of getting better grades in their exams and assignments. This is concurrent with extrinsic readers such as Komiyama (2013) among university students.

	A LOT LIKE ME (1)	A LITTLE LIKE ME (2)	A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM ME (3)	A LOT DIFFERENT FROM ME (4)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
When I complete English reading assignments for class, I try to get more answers correct than my classmates.	38.14% 90	41.52% 98	16.90% 40	3.20% 8	236	3.14
When I read in English, I like to finish my reading assignments before other students.	26.27% 62	41.52% 98	24.58% 59	7.63% 18	236	2.86
I want to be the best at reading in English.	48.00% 113	36.00% 86	13.19% 31	2.81% 7	236	3.31
When some classmates read English better than I, I want to read more English materials.	40.43% 96	36.30% 86	17.40% 41	5.83% 14	236	3.16
When I read in English, I often think about how well I read compared to others.	36.17% 85	42.12% 99	18.13% 43	2.55% 6	236	3.12
I practice reading in English because I want a higher Competition.	22.38% 54	43.43% 103	28.38% 68	7.23% 17	236	2.79
Finishing English reading assignments on time is very important for me.	35.96% 84	43.18% 101	18.80% 44	2.14% 5	234	3.13
I usually try to finish my English reading assignments on time.	43.50% 102	41.46% 97	11.97% 28	2.90% 7	234	3.28
I do my English reading assignments exactly as the teacher tells me to do them.	38.89% 91	48.37% 113	8.97% 21	2.50% 6	234	3.26
I practice reading in English because I need to do well in my future classes.	51.40% 121	38.72% 91	8.00% 19	1.70% 4	236	3.40
It is important for me to receive a good grade in my English reading course.	67.00% 157	26.82% 63	4.70% 11	1.30% 3	234	3.60
I look forward to feeling out my grades in English reading.	60.20% 141	33.30% 79	5.10% 12	1.30% 3	234	3.63
I want to read in English to improve my grades.	64.39% 150	30.04% 70	4.20% 10	1.20% 3	233	3.58
I work harder on English reading assignments when they are graded.	50.00% 119	37.61% 89	10.20% 24	1.20% 3	234	3.38
I try to read in English because I need a good score on tests.	63.25% 149	29.81% 70	5.00% 12	1.20% 3	234	3.56

Table 2: Category 3: The factor of forced reading

In Category 4, the reading experience showed factors of reading for social connection. The young adults believed that reading has allowed them to connect with others in the internet world. They find it interesting reading stories written on the internet with others whom they have just met online or converse online through reading. A similar study yielded results that uncover the connection to reading where young adults encounter, engage, and evaluate. (Turner, K. H., Hicks, T., & Zucker, L., 2019)

	A LEFT LABEL (N=123)	A LEFT LABEL (N=123)	A LEFT LABEL (N=123)	A LEFT LABEL (N=123)	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
2. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
3. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
4. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
5. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
6. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
7. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
8. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
9. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
10. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
11. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
12. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
13. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
14. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
15. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
16. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
17. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
18. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
19. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
20. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
21. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
22. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
23. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
24. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
25. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
26. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
27. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
28. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
29. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
30. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
31. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
32. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
33. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
34. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
35. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
36. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
37. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
38. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
39. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
40. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
41. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
42. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
43. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
44. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
45. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
46. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
47. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
48. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
49. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24
50. I like reading in English to learn something	92.32%	48.32%	3.32%	2.32%	100	0.24

Table 3: Category 4: The factor of reading for social connection

As result, significant evidence showed the changes in reading habits, attitudes, and interests among Malaysian young adults. Reading habits changed as the young adult spends more time reading on screen compared to reading hard copy books. Malaysian young adults named transmedia reading as part of their reading preferences. They tend to spend a long time reading with a selection of vast genres of reading such as adventure, mysteries, detective fiction, anime, and horror. When asked about transmedia reading, the young adults gave fanfiction names to show they were active readers and also to a certain extent writers of the stories themselves. This surely showed the changes in the reading experiences of young Malaysian adults.

5.0 Conclusion

This study gave a new definition of online reading among Malaysian young adults. Online reading is no longer about clicking one page to another. Young adults of this century read differently as a new way of reading emerges. An online reading trend that emerges in this study is transmedia reading. Transmedia reading is reading a single story using multiple platforms and formats of current digital technologies. According to Du Plessis, (2019) transmedia stories can be experienced across a range of platforms or incorporate multiple modes such as games, blogs, video, and text. It is a narrative form of a hybrid field of gaming, documentary, film influence, and the role of fans and audiences. Transmedia narratives are known as transmedia storytelling or multiplatform storytelling, or cross-media seriality are fiction stories that create their fans and develop stories through multiple platforms such as social media.

Reading motivation among young adults is an important area of literacy in need of further research. Furthermore, young adult reading motivation is an area in need of ongoing research so that educators and interested individuals can stay abreast of the factors that influence young adult reading habits and behaviors, particularly during this digital age (Nelson, 2013). Moreover, the reading habits of individuals are evolving as a society and the digital age is constantly changing (Mokhtari, 2019). Therefore, educators must keep abreast of everchanging generations to reach their learning needs. A study among young adults that focused on the factors that influence their reading experiences will offer further insight into the reading trends among young adults. Understanding those factors that influence the reading experiences among young adults could benefit individuals, families, communities at large, and our country as a whole. Ultimately, reading and its promotion are important. Educators must be at the forefront of understanding the multifaceted layers of this new reading phenomenon to reach all ages of potential readers.

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