

Students' Attitude towards Reading in English at Dalian University of Technology, China

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Abstract

The study was set to know, analyze, and finally realize the students' attitude towards reading, specifically their attitude toward reading in the English language (L2). To find out the students' attitudes towards reading was the main aim of the study. The participants' general attitudes towards reading and their reading preferences were investigated through a survey based on a descriptive research design. From the population of 1200 Graduate (Masters/M.Phil.) students, a sample of 641 were selected using random sampling. The data collected by the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS Statistics 20 program using mean, median, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, and graphical representation. The survey shows that the students of the Dalian University of Technology had healthy reading habits and they had a positive attitude towards reading. Also, it was found that students' reading habits had a significant impact on students' academic performance. Later, the results were discussed. Finally, this study put forward some suggestions to cultivate the reading habits and attitudes of college students and improve their language level. A few of those suggestions are; the teachers should encourage students in participating in reading activities; Parents should promote reading culture at home; the school administration/library should provide all the required materials for reading; Lastly, the students should take reading as a hobby.

Keywords: *Reading Attitudes, Academic Performance, Reading Preferences*

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1. Introduction

It is widely believed that reading is one of the best things to get our learned knowledge from. Moreover, reading in a language that is a source of international bondage would be bringing up more and more updated and authentic knowledge. English is a global language in today's world. To some of us, English is the mother tongue and to most of us, it is either Second or Foreign Language. Living and studying in DUT China, this became researcher's concern if one has to move with the fast-growing and developing world. Reading is also one of the biggest sources of knowledge. It can help students improve their academic performance. Reading makes students have a positive attitude toward learning. When a student is a good reader, his language skills are likely to improve. Besides, reading and writing skills are the main determinants of personal educational life and many other factors in life. In a person who fully masters macro skills, reading accounts for 25%, and 75% of them are writing, listening, and speaking. Therefore, for a brighter future, reading must be valued.

It is generally believed that extensive reading can make people more exposed to foreign languages. Some scholars have emphasized the benefits of extensive reading as a way to motivate students to learn a second language. Therefore, if a student tends to read, he is more willing to learn other languages than students who do not have good reading habits or are not positive about extensive reading. Reading habits and attitudes also vary by gender. Studies have confirmed that gender is the main factor affecting students' reading habits, and women are more dominant than men in reading culture. The role of parents in children's reading habits. Of course, parents everywhere are role models for children from all walks of life, but these parents have a great influence on children's future reading habits and attitudes in reading habits. Teachers also have a great influence on students' reading behavior. In summary, this study aims to understand students' reading habits and attitudes.

This study was conducted using survey methods. The data were collected through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire is based on the Likert scale and has very simple 50 statements. This research is of great significance to help the school, teachers, and students understand the real-time reading habits and attitudes of the tested students. Besides, this study also helps teachers and schools to improve students' reading habits. Also, future research will cover all aspects that affect students' reading habits and suggest how to make them better.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the students' attitude towards reading in English.
2. To find out the reading preferences of the students.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What is the students' attitude towards reading in English?
2. Do these students have any Reading preferences?

1.3 Significance of the study

The study aims to understand the second language reading and attitudes of graduate students of the Dalian University of Technology (DUT) and connect them with the students' academic performance. The study, with its findings, will be highly significant to many stakeholders, to name a few, Universities, Schools, Colleges, Librarians, Teachers, Parents, and the students themselves. All the above-mentioned stakeholders will get significant help to address the reading-related issues in their respective areas. It is very important to understand the relationship between graduate students' reading habits, reading attitudes, and academic performance (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005).

2. Literature Review

Many factors affect reading, and many other areas of reading also affect reading. Factors related to reading development, such as socio-economic education, parental employment, genetics, social and behavioral skills, help to explain the complexity of the problem and the activities related to reading skills. In past research, the influence of reading ability on students' future is particularly obvious. Another study showed that prisoners in the study did not have access to the same level as in high school. The studies reviewed have shown that there are many barriers to reading development, highlighting the link between reading and achievements in other areas.

The literature review focuses on the central theme of reading effectiveness to understand the complexity and impact of reading skills. How do these factors relate to other factors that affect reading? Besides, some studies have examined other external factors, such as the influence of parents' work on reading. In another academic field, reading, using school performance data, some have studied behavioral factors, others have studied genetic factors of twins, others have studied socio-economic factors from the perspective of disability and special education, and the current study emphasizes the importance of reading for the success of students and citizens in industrialized countries.

Logan et al. (2013) views from a genetic point of view, this is a special study, focusing on fluency and its relationship with performance, without limitation, smooth decoding, and unrelated reading. They found that although the

mathematical knowledge of the language was interdependent, it did not depend on other indicators and they explained the differences between genetic factors, and they believed that escape academics might be genetically different, but they continued to find important evidence that there was genetic consistency between academics and reading factors.

Although the improvement of reading ability is related to the improvement of educational achievements, it has nothing to do with the crimes committed by boys or girls; on the contrary, attention, disadvantage, and antisocial behavior are interrelated. It is predicted that 9-year-old boys and girls who have racist behaviors will read less before the age of 15 (Cimmiyotti, 2013). With the improvement of education level, students say: besides, the study of 10-year-old children overestimated their children one year later and found that their independent reading ability one year later has no significant relationship with reading performance to improve reading independence. (Cimmiyotti, 2013).

Because of the existence of texts in our society, the relationship between reading and writing ability and academic performance seems to be a logical one (Espino & Deno, 1993). Cromley (2009) is another recent study for high school students. This research focuses on reading and understanding science from the international perspective of many countries, including the United States. The United States is one of the countries with the closest relationship between reading and science. Student assessment (PISA), designed to test the scientific results of research in 2006, highlights the close link between reading and scientific achievement (Cromley, 2009).

Reading is an art, which enables people to understand their own life and the elements of their world outlook (Akanda, Hoq, & Hasan, 2013). This study aims to understand the habits and attitudes of reading L2. Therefore, the relevant documents were reviewed. To study the habits and attitudes of Malaysian students in higher education. -Postgraduate Diploma, part I, Mara University of Technology (Malaysia), Johor University. A series of questionnaires about their reading habits and attitudes were provided to the respondents. The results show that students prefer certain types of reading materials, especially those non-educational ones (Neal et al., 2009). Also, in another study, based on these responses (Fosberg, 2011), the appropriate response to the technology may not be the same discussion of whether a paper book has died as one respondent wrote on the spot. The paper discusses the impact of the results on the development of reading materials. (Annamalai & Muniandy, 2013).

In almost all participating countries, girls had higher reading rates than boys in 2001 and 2006. In particular, the analysis of the girls data series for 2001 and 2006 was used to develop fact tables on fourth-grade boys and girls, who had

very weak reading habits, behaviors, and attitudes. Observations in 26 countries show that boys and girls differ in the distribution of achievement by a third, for example, girls are more active in reading and reporting than boys, regardless of achievement. Together with the rest of the family and school, they provide parents and teachers with valuable information about the complex relationship between gender and outcomes electronic reading (Kennedy, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to study the reading habits and gender differences of college students (Shafi & Loan, 2010). Most of the trainees are generally positive, girls read better than boys. This study reflects the gender perspective of the elderly and the need to increase students' participation in activities, leisure, and entertainment. Reading is better, higher, and more active (Ibarra-Guyos, 2012).

The purpose of this study is to compare the habits and results of British white and British students in Pakistan (Rana & Kausar, 2011). The sample includes 200 10th grade science students from four British multinational schools. Their study habits and attitudes are used to assess their preferences, while the previous year's assessment is used to assess their academic performance. Statistical analysis shows that the study of British white students Habits is better than British Pakistanis, but there is no significant difference between the home country and school, which has a great interactive impact on students' school habits, but students' academic achievements: research is important for educators; similarly, based on the research results, it is suggested to conduct research. Within the prediction level of language ability of the four major languages, it is necessary to research to determine the relationship between written achievements and written achievements. The attitude towards reading and the extent to which all comprehensive language skills influence the prediction of academic achievement. (Ünal & İşeri, 2012).

Another study (Burgess, Sargent, Smith, Hill, & Morrison, 2011) focuses on the relationship between primary school teachers' reading skills, children's literature knowledge, and best classroom literacy practice. The number of TV shows reads and watched, and the report on best practices in literacy are similar, but they are not mentioned in the report (Akarsu & Daryemez, 2014). Using best practices, this paper studies several possible reasons for these different conclusions. The researchers put forward suggestions for the development of reading habits and reading skills of middle school students in today's technological world. Adults with higher education think that their reading ability is better than those with lower education, but there is no difference between reading interest in education and professional category; adults with better education also use more complexity of "reading mode" to solve the difference

between readers with better education and those with lower education (Smith, 1990).

The modern proverb says, "today's readers are tomorrow's leaders." To acquire knowledge, we must read books and other materials. Without reading, it is difficult to understand what happens around us. Besides, in addition to reading their textbooks, students should also learn to broaden their thinking and action. Learning to read is an important tool for lifelong learning. Therefore, promoting reading culture among students is the basic goal of reforming the school curriculum to improve their learning ability. Reading is the primary link to education. This is not the only goal of the school, but it is almost impossible to think of education without considering what happened and what it means. Written or printed symbols. In the study, most of the students (79.53%) are interested in reading the teaching materials of the program. The results show that students generally answer that work most often interferes with their reading and learning (Thanuskodi, 2011).

Although there are few studies on reading and writing skills and college graduates' interests in recent years, the overall situation is as follows: the results of previous studies and more studies are almost the same: college graduates' reading ability is much higher than them, and there are many people with lower education and reading level (Porcella, 1964)., which seems to be a problem that enough graduates can read. Reading habits will affect students' academic performance (Osa-Edoh & Alutu, 2012). The review of relevant literature shows that there is no substantive study on L2 reading habits at DUT.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design is Descriptive Research, where a survey is used to collect data. A questionnaire is got filled by 641 Graduate (Masters/M.Phil.) students of DUT. The questionnaire is based on 10 statements, 5 points Likert scale. 05 related to reading habits and 05 related to reading preferences.

3.2 Population of Study

There are 1200 Graduate (Masters/M.Phil.) students altogether at DUT, both Male and Female. 641 are chosen randomly amongst the male (329) and female (312) students, with almost equal ratio. A total of 1200 questionnaires were distributed, 641 out of which go returned duly filled. These 641, were later analyzed using SPSS. The final discussion and conclusion are based on the findings of the survey.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

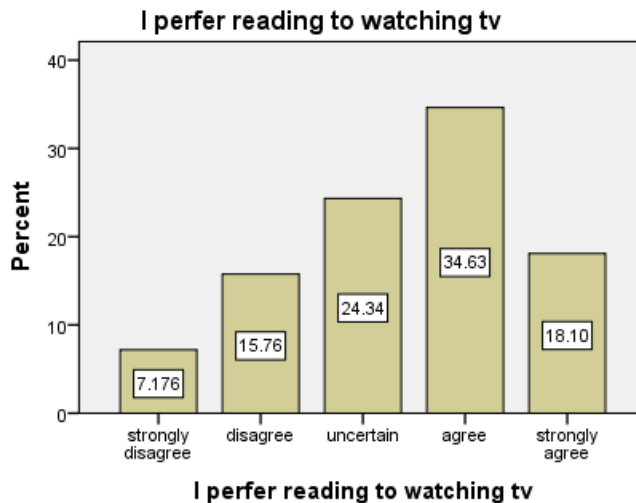
The total population of Graduate(Masters/M.Phil.) students at DUT is 1200, for the survey the sample size is calculated using an online tool (Marra & Bogue, 2006). The survey method is employed with a questionnaire for data collection following stratified random sampling (Shafi & Loan, 2010). 629 is the required sample size, 641 respondents responded to the questionnaire successfully, with an almost equal ratio of male (329) and female (312) students.

3.4 Instrument

The questionnaire was based on a 5 point Likert scale. These 50 items in the questionnaire are very suitable and convenient for this present study for learners' reading habits, reading attitudes, and the impact of reading on their language proficiency. This pilot study showed that the Cronbach Alpha is 0.747 which is more than 0.7. This means the questionnaire is reliable.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

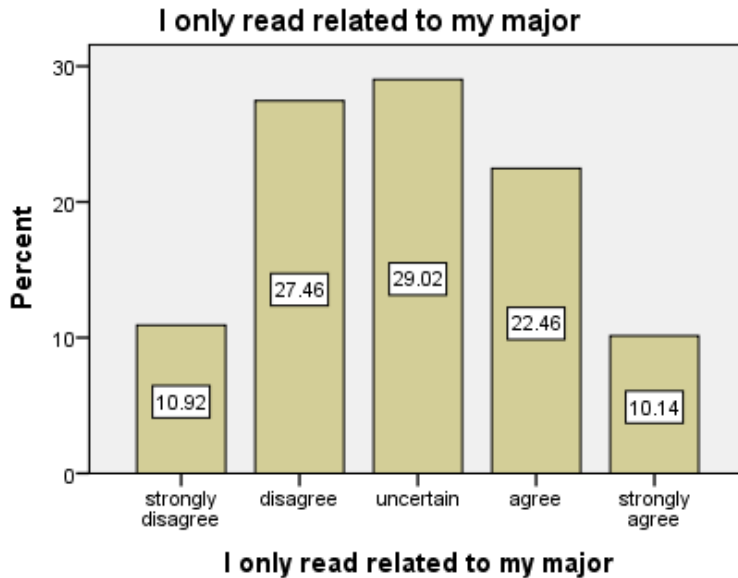
Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 20 was used for data analysis purposes (Karim, 2006). Graphical representation and description of results are presented below;



Graph 1

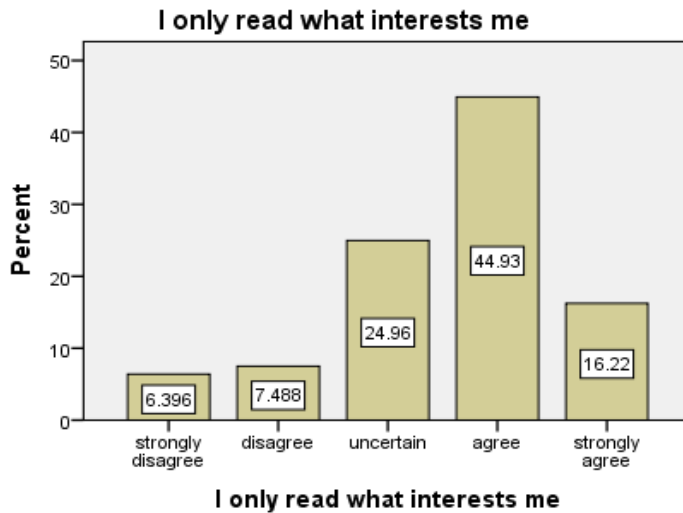
Out of the 641 respondents, 34.63% of the "Agree" to the statement. 18.10% of the respondents "Strongly Agree" to the statement. 24.34% is "Uncertain" about the statement. 15.76% "Disagree" to the statement. While

7.17% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, which makes 52.73%. It is stated that a certain majority of students at DUT prefer reading to watching TV. So it is made out they have positive reading habits.



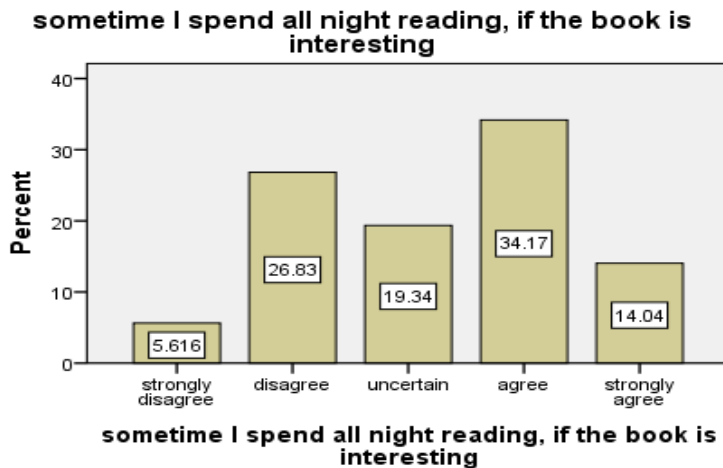
Graph 2

Out of the 641 respondents, 22.46% of them “Agree” to the statement. 10.14% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 29.02% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 27.46% “Disagree” to the statement. While 10.92% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”, which makes 38.38%. The majority of students are uncertain if they only read related to their major, but they are more inclined towards disagreeing with the statement with 38%.



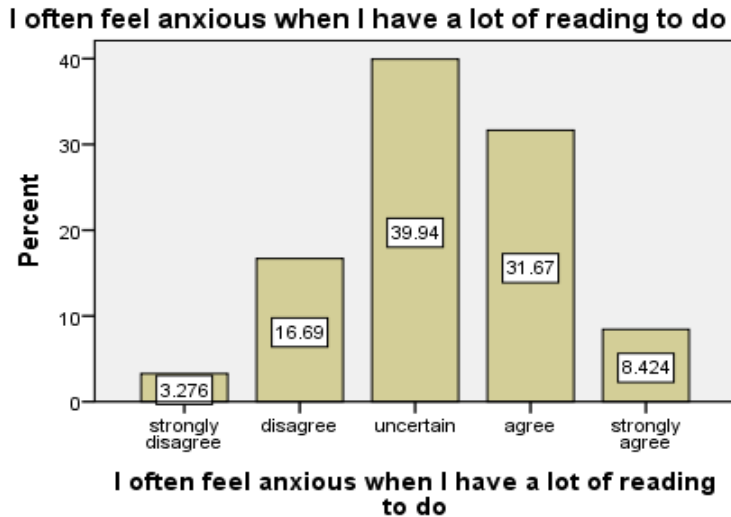
Graph 3

Out of the 641 respondents, 44.93% of them “Agree” to the statement. 16.22% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 24.96% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 7.48% “Disagree” to the statement. While 6.39% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, which makes 61.15%. We can say clearly that the majority of students at DUT read whatever interests them.



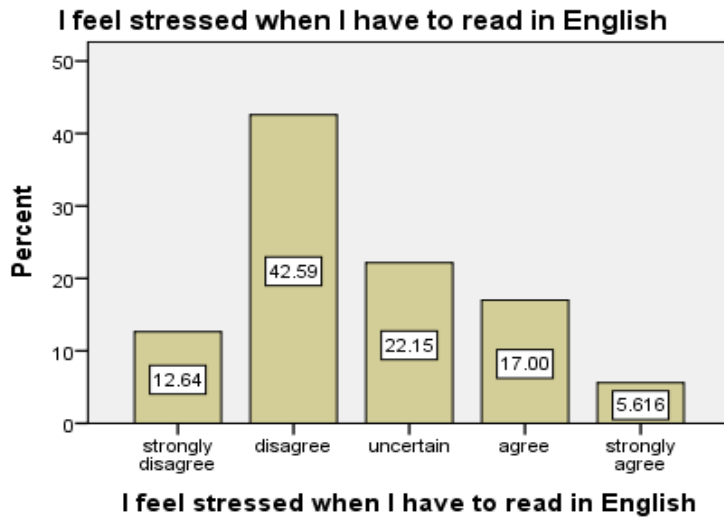
Graph 4

Out of the 641 respondents, 34.17% of them “Agree” to the statement. 14.04% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 19.34% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 26.83% “Disagree” to the statement. While 5.61% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, which makes 48.21%. We can say clearly that majority of students at DUT sometimes spend all night reading if the book is interesting.



Graph 5

Out of the 641 respondents, 31.67% of them “Agree” to the statement. 8.42% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 39.94% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 16.69% “Disagree” to the statement. While 3.27% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, which makes 40.09%. We can surely say, the students are uncertain about if they feel anxious when they have a lot of reading to do.



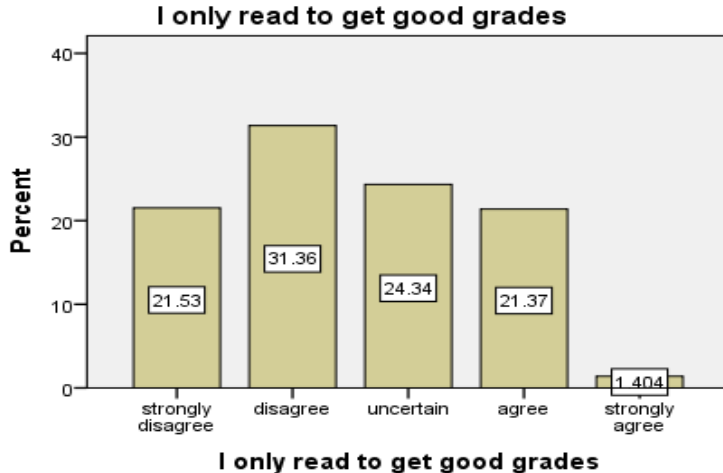
Graph 6

Out of the 641 respondents, 17.00% of them “Agree” to the statement. 5.6% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 22.15% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 42.59% “Disagree” to the statement. While 12.64% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”, which makes 55.23%. We can say that a certain majority of students at DUT don’t feel stressed when they have to read in English.



Graph 7

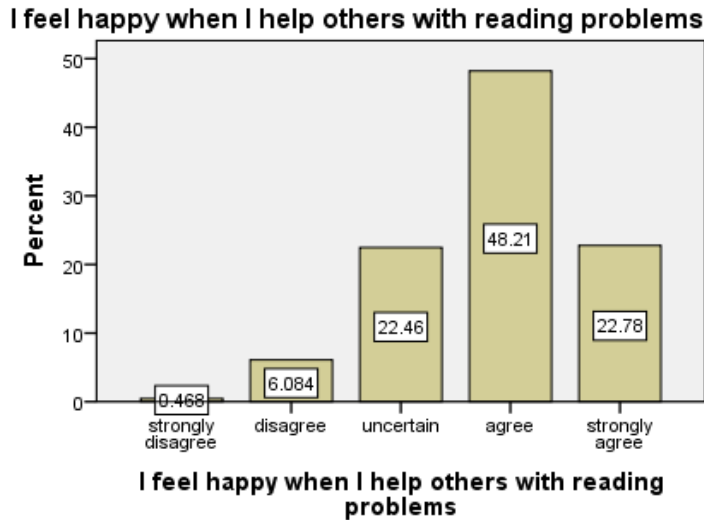
Out of the 641 respondents, 18.56% of them “Agree” to the statement. 1.71% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 29.95% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 36.82% “Disagree” to the statement. While 12.95% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree”, which makes 49.77%. We can say that a certain majority of students at DUT feel reading never makes them tired and sleepy.



Graph 8

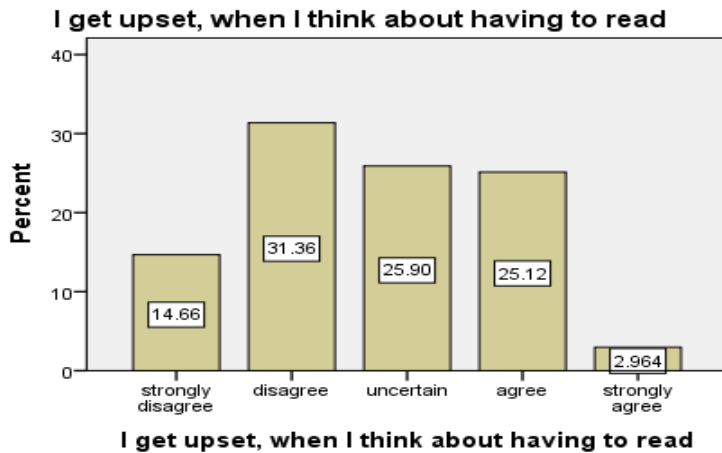
Out of the 641 respondents, 21.37% of them “Agree” to the statement. 1.40% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 24.34% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 31.36% “Disagree” to the statement. While 21.53% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree”, which makes 52.89%. We can say that a certain majority of students at DUT don’t only read to get good grades.

Out of the 641 respondents, 48.21% of them “Agree” to the statement. 22.78% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 22.46% is “Uncertain” about the statement 6.08% “Disagree” to the statement. While 0.46% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Agree” and “Strongly agree”, which makes 70.99%. We can say that a certain majority of students at DUT feel happy about helping others with their reading problems.



Graph 9

Out of the 641 respondents, 25.12% of them “Agree” to the statement. 2.96% of the respondents “Strongly Agree” to the statement. 25.90% is “Uncertain” about the statement. 31.36% “Disagree” to the statement. While 14.66% “Strongly Disagree” to the statement. So, by summing up “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”, which makes 46.02%. We can say that a certain majority of students at DUT don’t get upset when thinking about having to read.



Graph 10

Generally speaking, the students at DUT have positive reading attitudes. According to the finding of the research, 58% of the students at DUT believe themselves to be good readers. A total of 52.73% of students at DUT prefer reading to watching TV. The majority of students are uncertain if they only read related to their major, but they are more inclined towards disagreeing with the statement with 38%. 48.21% majority of students at DUT sometimes spend all night reading if the book is interesting. 61.15% majority of students at DUT read whatever interests them. The majority of the students at DUT are uncertain if they get they get anxious when they have a lot of readings to do. 55% of the students at DUT believe they don't get stressed if they have to read in English. Half of the students at DUT believe reading doesn't make them tired and sleepy. 52.89% of students at DUT don't only read to get good grades. 70% of the students at DUT believe they feel happy when they help others with reading problems. While 46% don't "Agree" to getting upset when they think about having to read. So, altogether the students here have positive reading attitudes. Having a positive attitude towards reading helps students improving their academic performance and English language proficiency.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study has come to conclude that the graduate students at DUT have proper reading habits and attitudes, inside and outside the classrooms helping them with academics. The students believe reading makes their English better. They spend good time reading English. Though new and difficult words are the hardest part for them in reading, yet they prefer reading to watching television. The majority of the students have read an entire book in the last six months. The graduate students at DUT read not only in their classroom. This is the time of technology, so the students do most of their reading on a computer, but they still feel more comfortable reading from books. The students disagree with the idea that reading is boring, and makes them feel tired and sleepy. Moreover, the students stand with the idea that reading is one of the best things to get knowledge.

A similar study was conducted to assess students' reading habits and their impact on academic performance. The results showed that most of the respondents were aware of the importance of reading. In the past two quarters, 81.9% of the respondents did not read novels or literary works, and 62% of them only read examinations. The study, which has confirmed the link between reading habits and academic performance, suggests that speakers should be encouraged, among other things, to stop distributing materials to students, instead of using libraries for research, and to consider assessing current student assessment

systems (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2014). Efficient reading is the key to successful foreign language learning. Another study focuses on the reading habits and attitudes of ESL students at the National University of Malaysia. The survey asked students about their general habits, preferences, and reading attitudes. Based on the following questions: what are the reading habits of these students? How do these students see reading as a useful language skill? What are these students' preferences for reading? Qualitative analysis shows that although they are dissatisfied, anxious, and difficult, college students usually take a positive attitude towards reading. They also pay attention to the results of the survey and put forward some suggestions to improve students' reading ability (Ahmed, 2016).

Reading has a great influence on learning achievement. According to the existing data, the continuous participation of examinees in special education is crucial to the success of students (Seitz, 2010). Besides, the attitude of students towards reading language learning and reading largely depends on their experience, which has been proved to be multidimensional and difficult to evaluate (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2001).

Students at DUT believe themselves to be good readers. Students at DUT prefer reading to watching TV. Students at DUT are uncertain if they only read related to their major, but they are more inclined towards disagreeing with the statement. Students at DUT sometimes spend all night reading if the book is interesting. Students at DUT read whatever interests them. Students at DUT are uncertain if they get they get anxious when they have a lot of readings to do. Students at DUT believe they don't get stressed if they have to read in English. Half of the students at DUT believe reading doesn't make them tired and sleepy. Students at DUT don't only read to get good grades. Students at DUT believe they feel happy when they help others with reading problems. Students at DUT don't agree to get upset when they think about having to read.

The major significant findings for the study are; the students at DUT read every day. The students at DUT manage their readings. The students read what interests them. The students at DUT use highlighter when they read. The students at DUT at least read twice a week. The students discuss good books with their friends. The majority of students consider themselves as good readers. The most important finding is; the students believe reading makes their English better. In other words, the students believe reading helps them improve their English proficiency.

To sum up, the students have a positive attitude towards reading. The students also have a strong belief that positive reading habits and reading attitude can help them improve their language proficiency. The students who have good

reading habits and positive reading attitudes will become a keen reader and will be exposed to knowledge. The language proficiency of these students, who have good reading habits is really good, which ultimately helps them in improving English language proficiency and academic performance.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations regarding reading habits and attitudes can be related to teachers, students, parents, and library/school administration.

Teachers

1. The teachers should encourage students in participating in reading activities.
2. The teachers should help students developing reading habits.
3. The teachers should give students reading tasks.

Parents

1. Parents should promote reading culture at home.
2. Parents should encourage kids in reading activities.
3. Parents should gift good books to kids.

School administration/library

1. The school administration/library should provide all the required materials for reading.
2. The school administration/library should provide students with a conducive atmosphere.
3. The environment of the library should be comfortable with reading.

Students

1. The students should take reading as a hobby.
2. The students should take part in reading activities.
3. The students should try to spend a good time reading every day.

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