

A Study on Reading Habits among Ordinary Level Students of Pilimathalawa Central College

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Reading is considered as one of the main pillars of language skills and is undoubtedly essential for academic success. Students may achieve good grades as well as perform well academically. In the modern context, teachers and parents often complain that children have poor reading habits because of poor performance in class, semester examinations, and assessments. Recent studies worldwide have revealed that modern day children do not show much interest in reading due to number of reasons. Mass media and online gaming have contributed to a decline in quality reading time. The main objective of this study is to identify the reading habits among Ordinary Level (O/L) students of Pilimathalawa Central College. The specific objectives are to identify the types of information material read by O/L students, to examine the purposes of reading, to identify the time allocated for reading, and to investigate the preferred places and format for reading. The study involved 120 students selected through a purposive sampling technique and a descriptive survey was used to gather data. An online self-administered questionnaire was circulated among ordinary-level students of Pilimathalawa Central College. This study found that students primarily engaged with materials for leisure and relaxation (73%) and general knowledge acquisition (62%). This indicates a preference for non-academic reading purposes. Further, it was found that a significant portion of students either spent less than 30 minutes daily or allocated time based on specific purposes, suggesting limited time allocation to a consistent reading habit. Interestingly, it was found that most students (55%) preferred reading at home, while a few students utilized school libraries (25%) or read while traveling (15%). It was identified that print formats were overwhelmingly preferred (71%) as students found it easier to concentrate on physical books compared to electronic devices. The study recommendations are to encourage diverse reading habits by introducing a curated reading list and promoting the importance of regular reading and also to improve school library facilities and create more inviting spaces to encourage library use. In addition, it is suggested to conduct workshops on effective time management to support more consistent time to reading; provide access to digital reading platforms; provide guidance on selecting age-appropriate and engaging materials for students; and introduce programs that teach students how to effectively use devices for educational purposes.

Keywords: *Cognitive development; Intellectual development; Ordinary level; Reading Habits; School students*