



## VALUE AND SELF-CONCEPT: A STUDY ON READING HABITS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SARAWAK



Keezrawati Mujan Yusuf<sup>1</sup>

Dexter Sigan

John<sup>2</sup>

Katelynn Dawn

Kundrata<sup>3</sup>

Ambigapathy

Pandian<sup>++</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Faculty of Language and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Sarawak, Malaysia.

\*Email: [pambigapathy@unimas.my](mailto:pambigapathy@unimas.my)



(+ Corresponding author)

### ABSTRACT

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This study analyses the extent to which students' value of reading and self-concepts as readers affect their motivation to read. The participants included 45 students from a rural primary school in Malaysia aged 8 to 10 years old. They completed the Motivation to Read Profile-Revised (MRP-R) designed by Malloy *et al.* (2013) which consists of a survey and conversational interview to shed light on students' attitudes towards reading. The results from the survey demonstrated that the students held high self-concepts of themselves as readers and were able to use reading comprehension strategies. Overall they found reading enjoyable, and preferred collaborative reading tasks and books with visuals. Additionally, students were motivated by engaging classroom activities and trips to the library, and many students preferred digital text. However, the students found reading in another language to be challenging. Through these results, the role of the teacher is highlighted as essential in motivating students to read. By providing opportunities for students to read a variety of texts at students' reading levels and on different topics, in both students' native languages and target language. Students may gain reading motivation when they can choose what to read and when instructors create engaging activities that encourage not only independent reading, but incorporate a social aspect as well. Schools may also consider using technology to motivate young readers, and a reading culture should be supported in the students' homes to further encourage lifelong reading habits.

**Contribution/ Originality:** This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the extent to which the value of reading and self-concept affect reading motivation a rural primary school in Malaysia. This is one of very few studies which have investigated reading motivation within this context and student responses may inform instruction.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is of paramount importance as it enriches knowledge and broadens perspectives. Furthermore, it is essential that children develop literacy skills and a habit of reading at a young age, as these skills will be used throughout students' academic careers and beyond. Previous studies by Cunningham and Stanovich (2003);

Cunningham (2005) and Duff *et al.* (2015) revealed the benefits of reading in terms of vocabulary and language development. They found that reading exposes students to language, and can help develop vocabulary in both native and target languages. Additionally, there is an interrelationship between proficiency in reading and writing as the more students read, the better they will be able to write. This is because reading exposes students to a range of meaningful sentence structures and helps develop the ability to replicate these forms and create original ideas (Pretorius, 2000; Eldouma, 2005). By fostering regular reading habits, students will see a vast array of benefits within and outside of the classroom setting.

Recognizing the significance of developing strong literacy skills at a young age, the Malaysian government has aimed “to raise the literacy rates to 100 per cent by the year 2020” (Harji *et al.*, 2016). While the literacy rate among adults in Malaysia was reported to be at 94.64% in 2018 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), records show that Malaysians read fewer books than those in other countries. For example, on average, a Malaysian may read eight to eleven books per year, while in the UK, an average of sixteen books are read per year (Harji *et al.*, 2016). Thus, despite the vast majority of Malaysians having the ability to read, the reading culture in Malaysia is still poor as compared to other countries. Hence, it is important to study the factors that affect Malaysian students’ desire to read so that they may reap the myriad rewards that reading offers throughout their lives.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Expectancy-Value Theory

One method of examining reading motivation is through the use of the expectancy-value theory as purported by Eccles (1983). This theory posits that one’s expectancy, or self-concept, in addition to value, can predict future outcomes. One aspect of this theory is motivation, which was defined by Wigfield and Eccles (2000) as a function of the extent to which one values a task and expects for achievement. It is proposed that when people feel they are capable of a task and expect to be effective, they are more likely to choose to participate in it, persist at it longer, and subsequently attain better results. Hence, multiple studies have been conducted on the roles of task value and expectation in reading motivation.

### 2.2. Task Value

The expectancy-value theory motioned by Eccles (1983) suggests that there are four interrelated components that contribute to one’s overall task value which are: intrinsic value, utility value, achievement value, and cost. Intrinsic value is the feeling of enjoyment experienced during the task, while utility value concerns the usefulness of the task to reach immediate and future goals. Furthermore, attainment value refers to the perceived importance of being good at an activity for one’s individual identity. In contrast, cost refers to what has to be endured or given up as a result of participating in the task. It is theorised that intrinsic, utility and attainment values will increase one’s willingness to initiate a task and to persist in doing it, while costs exert the contrary impact.

Studies on motivation with regards to academic tasks suggest that students are more inclined to participate in activities that have more immediate rewards, usually in the form of enjoyment (Hofmann and Van Dillen, 2012; Grund *et al.*, 2014). Individuals tend to continue doing the activity longer when they are immediately rewarded, even when they believe that longer-term rewards are more important (Woolley and Fishbach, 2015). Therefore, it is suggested that intrinsic value, i.e. the enjoyment derived from doing a task, may be a better incremental predictor of one’s willingness and persistence to engage in an academic task rather than utility value, i.e. the usefulness of the task (Woolley and Fishbach, 2017).

Furthermore, the desirability of the topic of a reading material is linked to the interest of readers during the reading activity and their reading persistence (Ainley *et al.*, 2002; Ainley *et al.*, 2005). On top of that, previous research has also shown that topic interest leads to deeper text processing, as it is found that readers who reported

higher interest in the reading topic were better at recalling important ideas and elaborating on situational models than those who reported lower topic interest (Schiefele, 1999). The format and topic of the texts can lead students to develop greater reading comprehension skills which can support them throughout their academic endeavours and may, in turn, impact their desires to read.

### 2.3. Self-Concept

Expectations are also influenced by one's perception of self-ability. This perception is typically conceptualised as self-concept, referring to the collection of beliefs, knowledge, ideas and attitudes one has about oneself (Krause *et al.*, 2010). This concept is interrelated with the concept of self-awareness, which involves accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations. A high level of self-awareness requires the ability to recognise how thoughts, feelings and actions are interconnected (Durlak *et al.*, 2017).

Self-concept is formed through experience and becomes continuously more complex with increasing age (Harter, 1996). Children's interactions with the environment such as receiving reinforcements from significant others play a major role in the refinement of their beliefs of themselves. For example, in school, children receive more evaluation regarding themselves from their teachers and peers which, in turn, influences their self-concept. Self-concept is made up of various parts that reflect multiple features of a person, typically differentiated as academic and non-academic by researchers. This study focuses on academic self-concept, which is derived from views of one's achievements in areas of formal learning, including reading, and the perception of self-concept becomes more defined and specific across academic areas such as second languages (Marsh *et al.*, 1988; Vispoel, 1995).

Reading self-concept is described as the perception of readers about their own reading skills and the degree to which readers see reading as a valuable skill (Chapman *et al.*, 2000). Reading self-concept is found to be positively correlated with reading competence: the level of ability, mastery or confidence in reading (Schiefele *et al.*, 2012). There are several explanations that have been proposed with regards to this correlation. The self-enhancement hypothesis posited by Marsh and Yeung (1997) explains that when one puts forth effort and engages with a task, i.e. reading, he or she will develop a greater self-concept, and this then contributes to higher levels of achievement. In contrast, the skill-development hypothesis proposes that self-concept is the result of achievement, where high-performing students will develop a higher self-concept in the particular domain when comparing their achievements with their weaker peers. As such, low-performing students develop lower self-concept as they compare themselves with their high-performing peers (Möller and Pohlmann, 2010). The third hypothesis, the reciprocal effects model, attempts to reconcile these contrasting theories by stating that self-concept and achievement both cause and are the effects of each other (Marsh and Craven, 2006).

As students advance through their school years, a significant correlation seems to be present between their reading self-concept, reading habit and reading ability (Marsh *et al.*, 2005; Harackiewicz *et al.*, 2008). Students who are proficient readers are often aware of their reading abilities and tend to participate in reading activities more frequently, subsequently advancing rapidly as readers. Similarly, those with poor reading self-concept are usually poor readers and tend to avoid reading activities, consequently remaining stagnant in their reading abilities (Spear-Swerling and Sternberg, 1994; Poskiparta *et al.*, 2003). Additionally, a student with a positive reading self-concept will likely respond to reading positively. They will consider reading to be an enjoyable activity in which they will be more likely to employ reading comprehension strategies and have a desire to share their reading with others (Pressley, 2002; Guthrie and Wigfield, 2005).

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTION

According to the expectancy value model as proposed by Eccles (1983) both task value and self-concept are predictors of one's level of motivation to participate in an activity such as reading. However, a previous study by

Wigfield and Cambria (2010) examined these factors simultaneously and demonstrated that self-concept is a better predictor of task-performance, while task value is a better predictor of task choice. In the domain of reading research, more studies are to be conducted to study the interplay between these factors and readers' habits of reading, both within and outside of the school context. This will contribute to a better understanding of the expectancy value model in reading motivation. Therefore, this study attempts to determine:

1. The extent to which value of reading affects reading habits.
2. The extent to which self-concept as a reader affects reading habits.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in a rural primary school in a Bidayuh village in Bau, Sarawak, Malaysia. Instruction is given in Malay, the national language, and the Bidayuh language is commonly spoken by the students. The school was chosen as it is a daily school that does not require any prerequisite for enrolment. Moreover, the school does not stream the students according to their examination results and uses the national syllabus set by the Ministry of Education of Malaysia. Thus, it is considered an accurate representation of other national primary schools found in Malaysia. Throughout this study, 45 students (N=45) from the school were involved. There were 16 students from Primary Two (35.56%), 11 students in Primary Three (24.44%) and 18 students in Primary Four (40%). The participants' ages ranged from 8 years old through 10 years old. The participants consisted of 23 males (51.11%) and 22 females (48.89%). All were randomly selected thus there is a mix of language and academic competencies.

The instrument used to gather data for this study is the Motivation to Read Profile-Revised (MRP-R) designed by Malloy *et al.* (2013). The MRP-R uses Eccles (1983) expectancy-value theory of motivation to determine students' self-perception in their success towards reading to then evaluate the extent to which they are motivated to read. It also estimates the students' motivation to read by measuring their value of reading and reading self-concept. There are two parts of MRP-R: a survey and a conversational interview. The reading survey is designed as a self-report instrument which consists of 20 items, 10 of which measure their reading self-concept and the other 10 measure the respondents' value on reading. The items for self-concept and value are arranged alternately. The questionnaire has been tested and was found to be of high level of reliability (self-concept = .81; value = .85) (Malloy *et al.*, 2013). The second part, the conversational interview, further explores students' perceptions of the value of reading and their self-concept of themselves as readers. It consists of open-ended free response items with eight prompts on the value of reading and five prompts on reading self-concept.

The questionnaire was administered in small groups of four or five students of mixed ages, grouped by their reading performance (beginner, intermediate and advanced). Each group was guided by a researcher to help translate and explain the items which were written in English. The responses were tabulated in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and analysed.

#### 5. FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the questionnaire survey statements and student responses regarding their self-concepts as readers. Students chose the response that best completed the sentence from four multiple choice options. The frequency of student responses is illustrated in Table 1 for each of these questions. Analysing the self-concept information, it can be concluded that the respondents have high self-concept as readers. They reported that they can understand everything (37.78%) and almost everything (37.78%) they read, which means that they can comprehend any type of texts given to them well. When they were asked whether they could figure out words they did not know when they were reading, they mostly chose the option: 'sometimes figure it out' (46.67%). This indicates that the students have the ability to decode new words. Moreover, the majority of them (40%) said that they could think of an answer when the teacher asked them a question about what they read and this clearly implies that they are able

to use reading comprehension strategies. Their ability to apply reading strategies suggests that they are competent readers, and that their reading competence is closely tied to reading self-concept (Sewasew and Koester, 2019). This is also an indication that the students are reflective of their learning and have a high level of self-awareness as they are able to assess their own strengths and limitations accurately (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2015).

Table-1. Survey results of self-concept as a reader.

Self-concept as a reader	
Survey statement	Score
My friends think I am _____	42.2% a very good reader 37.7% a good reader 17.78% an OK reader 2.22% a poor reader
When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____	24.44% almost always figure it out 46.67% sometimes figure it out 17.78% almost never figure it out 11.11% never figure it out
I read _____	13.33% not as well as my friends 28.89% about the same as my friends 17.78% a little better than my friends 40% a lot better than my friends
When I am reading by myself, I understand _____	37.78% everything I read 37.78% almost everything I read 20% almost none of what I read 4.44% none of what I read
I am _____	8.89% a poor reader 40% an OK reader 28.89% a good reader 22.22% a very good reader
I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____	26.67% a lot 28.89% sometimes 15.56% almost never 28.89% never
When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, _____	20% I can never think of an answer 4.44% I almost never think of an answer 35.56% I sometimes think of an answer 40% I can always think of an answer
Reading is _____	35.56% very easy for me 42.22% kind of easy for me 13.33% kind of hard for me 8.89% very hard for me
When I am in a group talking about books I have read, _____	22.22% I hate to talk about my ideas 11.11% I don't like to talk about my ideas 35.56% I like to talk about my ideas 31.11% I love to talk about my ideas
When I read out loud, I am a _____	4.44% poor reader 31.11% OK reader 42.22% good reader 22.22% very good reader

Sources: Survey reprinted from Malloy *et al.* (2013).

A conversational interview was conducted in order to gain insights into students' self-concept as readers. Table 2 lists students' selected responses and these responses were analysed using thematic analysis.

Table-2. Students' responses to self-concept as a reader.

Questions	Themes	Students' Responses
What kind of reader are you?	High self-concept	Very good reader (R11)
		I like to read (R18)
What's the easiest thing about reading?	Visual learner	Good books with pictures (R3) <i>Buku bergambar yang tajuk upin ipin</i> (Book titled Upin Ipin) (R13)
	Collaborative reading	<i>Saya suka membaca bersama</i> (I like to read together) (R37)
	Preference	Reading in <i>Bahasa Melayu</i> (Malay language) (R33)
What's hard about reading?	Language barrier	<i>Buku Bahasa Inggeris</i> (English book) (R12)
		Language (R1)
		I don't know the meaning of words (R25)
	Length	<i>Perkataan yang baru</i> (New word) (R36)
		<i>Tulisan yang banyak</i> (Too many words) (R6)
What do you have to do to become a better reader?	Active reader	Read more books (R2)
		Always read (R40)
	Digital reading	<i>Tengok TV</i> (Watching TV) (R36)
		<i>Saya suka tengok television</i> (I like to watch television) (R45)
How could teachers help you become a better reader?	Expose to reading resources	Bring to library (R9)
		<i>Menggalakkan baca lebih banyak</i> (Encourage us to read more) (R30)
	Teaching reading skills	<i>Cikgu selalu mengajar membaca</i> (Teacher focuses on teaching reading) (R12)
		Teach me a reading book (R38)

Sources: Survey reprinted from Malloy *et al.* (2013).

Based on the students' interview, it is apparent that they have high self-concepts as readers. However, this could be affected by the reading material and situation. The students reported that they find reading to be easy when they read books with pictures and when they read collaboratively. Moreover, they also prefer to read Malay books, rather than books written in English. These findings are consistent with previous studies of reading behaviour of Malaysian primary school students where they prefer reading books in their native language (Ro and Chen, 2014). On account of the fact that students have high self-concepts, they nevertheless find language barrier and text length to be their obstacles in reading, and this leads them to choose simpler books as their reading materials. Previous studies have also noted that English language learners face difficulties decoding long and complex texts in the target language, resulting in a less pleasurable reading experience (Yunus and Jong, 2016). This may be one of the factors that explains why they do not prefer English books although they have high self-concepts in reading in general.

With regards to becoming better readers, the students are aware of the fact that being active readers would help them to comprehend texts to a greater extent. However, instead of reading physical books, some students opt for digital reading through smart gadgets and television. This is a reflection of the current development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Malaysia, which holds a high internet penetration rate at 77.6%, including internet connection at home, in schools and offices (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2016). However, it should be noted that digital reading is not entirely a replica of traditional reading as it demands different skills and strategies than reading from paper (Leu *et al.*, 2004). The students also noted that the role of their teachers with regards to supporting students' reading proficiency is to expose them to more reading resources, i.e., bringing them to the library. This suggests that the students are willing to read more books

but may not have access to many reading resources at home. This highlights the importance of exposure to a variety of texts in motivating students to read, and the vital role a teacher plays in encouraging literacy.

Moreover, the students mentioned that learning reading skills will also be helpful in developing their reading competency. These skills include scanning, skimming, decoding, and determining the meanings of words through context. All of these skills will help the students gather information and comprehend different texts.

**Table-3.** Survey result of value of reading.

Value of reading	
Survey statement	Score
Reading a book is something I like to do.	2.22% never 4.44% almost never 62.22% sometimes 31.11% often
My friends think reading is _____	66.67% really fun 17.78% fun 13.33% OK to do 2.22% no fun at all
I tell my friends about good books I read.	24.44% I never do this 2.22% I almost never do this 37.78% I do this some of the time 35.56% I do this a lot
People who read a lot are _____	71.11% very interesting 17.78% sort of interesting 6.67% sort of boring 4.44% very boring
I think libraries are _____	44.44% a really great place to spend time 44.44% a great place to spend time 8.9% a boring place to spend time 2.22% a really boring place to spend time
I think becoming a good reader is _____	6.67% not very important 6.67% sort of important 15.56% important 71.11% very important
I think spending time reading is _____	6.67% really boring 8.9% boring 26.67% great 57.78% really great
When my teacher reads books out loud, I think it is _____	35.56% really great 48.89% great 13.33% boring 2.22% really boring
When I have free time, I spend _____	6.67% none of my time reading 15.56% very little of my time reading 37.78% some of my time reading 40% a lot of my time reading
When someone gives me a book for a present, _____	60% I am very happy 33.33% I am happy 6.67% I am unhappy 4.44% I am very unhappy

Sources: Survey reprinted from Malloy et al. (2013).

Table 3 examines the extent to which students find reading to be a valuable activity through a multiple choice questionnaire. Examining the overall scores for four survey statements in Table 3 (*Reading a book is something I like to do*, *I think spending time reading is...*, *When I have free time, I spend...* and *When someone gives me a book for a present...*), it can be inferred that students believe reading to be a recreational activity. This result is consistent with previous studies that found that primary school students, such as these research participants, are usually more engaged in reading for leisure than older students (Howard and Shan, 2004). This is a positive trend as recreational

reading or reading for pleasure is associated with having a stronger vocabulary and increased reading comprehension (Nippold *et al.*, 2005). Additionally, the longer time spent on reading activities will eventually result in improved reading proficiency (Merga, 2014).

Apart from that, the score analysis of another four items (*My friends think reading is...*, *I tell my friends about good books I read, I think libraries are...* and *When my teacher reads books out loud, I think it is...*) indicates that students view reading as a social practice. Sharing their reading experience with peers and teachers may also contribute to their recreational reading frequency. This is consistent with the previous study done by Merga and Moon (2016) that found peers and teachers play an important role in encouraging recreational reading among students. On top of that, students perceived becoming a good reader as valuable for their future goals. This can be seen when they responded that people who read a lot are 'very interesting' and becoming a good reader is 'very important'. This indicates both intrinsic and utility value where they see reading as an interesting activity and regard it as useful for them.

Table-4. Students' responses to value of reading.

Questions	Themes	Students' Responses
What kinds of books do you like to read?	Fiction	<i>Buku cerita hewan</i> (Animal's story) (R5)
		<i>Pada zaman dahulu</i> (Once upon a time) (R11)
		Fairy Tales (R27)
		Princess (R45)
	Graphic book	Comic (R29) (R30) (R31) (R34)
What kind of things other than books do you read at home?	Digital reading	Laptop (R9)
		e-Books (R14) (R25)
How do you find out about books you might like to read?	Visuals	<i>Berdasarkan gambar</i> (Based on pictures) (R5)
		I like to see colour and picture (R18)
	Digital media	Internet (R20) (R31) (R37)
What books do you want to read now?	Fiction	<i>Buku hewan</i> (Animal's story) (R42)
		<i>Buku cerita</i> (Story book) (R35)
		Horror (R27) (R39)
	Graphic book	<i>Buku cerita komik</i> (Comic book) (R41)
What could teachers do to make reading more enjoyable?	Interactive	Game (R10) (R19)
	Interesting activities	<i>Membaca dengan suara yang menarik</i> (Reading with good voice) (R5)
		<i>Cikgu bercerita</i> (Teacher does story telling) (R11)
		The teacher should act (R18)
		Sing (R4)
Creating reading environment	Bring to library (R2) (R3)	
What kind of reading will you do when you're an adult?	Fiction	Novel (R16) (R29)
		<i>Buku pasal cinta</i> (Love story) (R44)

Sources: Survey reprinted from Malloy *et al.* (2013).

Table 4 illustrates the questionnaire regarding students' value of reading and their selected responses. In terms of book preferences (*What kinds of books do you like to read?*, *What kind of things other than books do you read at home?*, *What books do you want to read now?*, *What kind of reading will you do when you're an adult?*), the analysis of the conversational interviews in Table 4 reveals that students prefer to read fiction, graphic and digital material. Students may hold these preferences as visuals can help to enhance understanding of the content; this is especially significant for materials written in English, which is not the participants' first language. Furthermore, graphics may also be more engaging and stimulating for young or new readers who depend on context clues to comprehend the text. For students to find out about books they might like to read, students reported that they use visuals and digital media such as the Internet. At primary school level, it is undeniable that visuals, whether in the form of



colours or pictures, magnetise young learners. To make reading more enjoyable, most of the students prefer that teachers conduct interactive and interesting literacy activities, perhaps through the incorporation of games in reading instruction. The responses of the participants suggest that they prefer an interactive student-centered reading class, rather than a traditional literacy lesson.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

Instructors play a significant role in shaping students' futures. Reading is one of the skills that students will use throughout their lives, and it can play a vital role in their academic and professional futures. It is therefore the teachers' responsibility to try to impart not only the skills necessary to become a professional reader, but also instill a love of reading in their students. "[L]iteracy leaders share with their students their own belief that reading is a joyful activity that enriches the lives of all who open themselves to those joys" (Turner *et al.*, 2009). Looking at the students' responses, the teachers should also continue to encourage students as readers, building their reading self-concepts (Walgermo *et al.*, 2018). They can praise students on effort rather than solely on achievement, so that those who hold weak reading proficiencies do not become discouraged, but instead feel supported in their literacy endeavours. Teachers should also encourage students to read often, and read a variety of types of texts on different topics. Allowing students to choose their own reading material will motivate them to find materials that are of interest and thus encourage them to read more often. Additionally, motivation to read has shown to increase when students are given a variety of options and are allowed to choose their reading materials (Cordova and Lepper, 1996).

In terms of encouraging students to read books in English or any target language, teachers must provide literature at multiple levels; students find books that are too easy to be boring, and become frustrated and discouraged by books that are too difficult. As students do not all hold the same level of reading proficiency, having access to literature at multiple levels and difficulties will ensure appropriateness for each student. Teachers may need to assist students in finding reading materials that are appropriate for their own levels and monitor student progress throughout the year. Providing a variety of genres at multiple levels will encourage students to read literature that is at their literacy level and of their interest, which, in turn, will motivate them to continue reading (Protacio, 2012).

With students' preferences in reading digital materials rather than traditional texts, schools may wish to incorporate more online learning into the classroom. In this digital age, students should be fluent in using technology, and while there are different skills that go into reading online texts, digital materials may motivate students to read more often. Additionally, if integrated properly, technology can increase student interest and motivation in the task (Watts-Taffe *et al.*, 2003). When students are exposed to reading in different media, they may be more engaged with the text and more likely to continue reading in the future.

The students also considered reading to have a social aspect, and that is something that teachers can draw upon in the classroom by encouraging students to share about their reading materials and work with others. Teachers should use libraries and other resources available to them to bring students outside of the classroom and cement the idea for students that reading is an enjoyable and exciting activity. Malloy *et al.* (2013) described the importance of using libraries in a way that is authentic and will draw upon the interests of the students and demonstrate the value of these spaces as well. In addition, public libraries can increase student motivation to read outside of the classroom setting as well. Shrestha and Krolak (2015) explain that libraries must "be attractive and full of learning resources and materials" (p. 411). This will help to increase the amount of time students spend reading while supporting the development of a reading culture.

While teachers and other educational professionals play a major role in motivating students to read, family members, especially parents, are essential in helping children develop a love of reading. Harji *et al.* (2016) further explain that parental support, and in this context, specifically Malaysian parents, are significant in their children's

reading development. If possible, families should provide access to reading materials at home so that students will associate reading with leisure instead of it being solely an academic task. The more that students read, the better their reading proficiencies and higher their reading self-concepts will be.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

As this study was conducted with a selection of students from a primary school in Malaysia and focused on students' reading motivation in general, it is recommended that future studies investigate the role of language with regards to students' reading motivation. Students in Malaysia begin learning English in their first year of primary school, and by focusing on their English literacy skills rather than reading in their native languages, educators may have a clearer idea of how to approach reading in their target language. Students' language proficiency and anxiety when reading in the foreign language may also affect their willingness to read (Saito *et al.*, 1999) and this may further impact their academic performance.

Furthermore, the student responses demonstrated interest in collaborative reading. Building on this interest, it is suggested that future studies explore the effect of shared reading experiences in a foreign language on both reading motivation and language acquisition. Protacio (2012) explains how students' relationships and settings, particularly their home and school environments, may impact their motivation to read. Future research may delve into the effects of social literacy tasks in students' native and target languages to determine the influence of collaborative reading on reading motivation.

Additionally, as schools embrace the use of technology in the classroom, the question is raised as to the extent of transferability of digital reading skills to traditional reading tasks. While the use of digital media, such as electronic storybooks, may increase student motivation toward literacy activities (Ciampa, 2012) the ability of students to then transfer their literacy skills toward traditional reading tasks has not yet been explored within the Malaysian context. Future research may look into the extent to which technology may enhance reading motivation and whether adopting technology in the classroom can improve students' overall literacy skills.

Another question raised from the current study that could be investigated in future research is regarding the use of graphic books on students' reading motivation, especially on their reading skills in a foreign language. The participants noted that they enjoyed reading comic books, picture books, and graphic books. These texts serve as a means of scaffolding of complex texts, and further research may look at the extent to which the implementation of these text formats in the classroom may affect students' motivation to read, and, effectively, their reading performance.

## 8. CONCLUSION

While students may hold a positive task value and self-concept with regards to reading, having access to a wide range of quality literature is essential for students to develop regular reading habits. It is also important for students to develop skills to find reading materials that are at their appropriate level of difficulty, especially when choosing literature that is not in their native language. Furthermore, teachers and family members may play a role in encouraging students to read both inside and outside of the academic setting. While this study cannot in itself encourage students to read more, if students are provided a variety of appropriate literature materials and have the support of peers, teachers, and family members, it is hoped that a widespread culture of reading will be cultivated in Malaysia.

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