



AENSI Journals

Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences

ISSN:1991-8178

Journal home page: www.ajbasweb.com



Reading Habits and Reading Activities: a Bibliometric Study

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 September 2014

Received in revised form

17 November 2014

Accepted 25 November 2014

Available online 6 December 2014

Keywords:

Reading Activities, Reading Habits,
Reading Readiness, Reading
Motivation, Bibliometric.

ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the tools in learning and also a source of pleasure and satisfaction. Reading can be considered a tool when one utilizes the ability to read and to learn other subjects in a language or use it for reference work. Reading is likely to be a pleasurable activity in its own right when one engages in reading as a recreational activity. A study of reading habits would reveal to what extent one values reading as a useful activity and the extent of involvement in the act of reading in one's free time. This paper explores the issues in reading habits and reading activities in Malaysia, the pattern and trend of publish materials, the initiatives taken by the government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO), private institutions and also academic research that will give maximum impact toward reading habits and to suggest means or methods in nurturing reading habits among Malaysian. Bibliometrics study is used to find out who has written about reading activities and reading concepts in which literatures, what topics have been discussed, and which research methods applied. Many research fields use bibliometric methods to explore the impact of their field, the impact of a set of researchers, or the impact of a particular paper. In addition, the most important articles are identified, and the quality of the articles is assessed with citation analysis which carried from the journals, reports, research papers, newspapers, online databases and books. This study hopes to provide useful insights based on the reading activities and reading concepts outcomes which can contribute to develop reading habits in a community.

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To Cite This Article: SaifulFarik Mat Yatin, Shaharom TM Sulaiman, Hasnah Shuhaimi, Mansor Ibrahim, Mirahida Murad., Reading Habits and Reading Activities: a Bibliometric Study. *Aust. J. Basic & Appl. Sci.*, 8(23): 163-170, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Life without reading and appreciation of cultural knowledge are seen as a major weakness in life. Reading is very important to progress and expand our minds and disseminating views in order to improve performance in the areas of career or life. Through reading, society can diversify paradigms about their field of expertise and add valuable knowledge. To promote the interests and reading habits of the community, the government, the private sector, non-government or anyone else should join efforts to encourage and improve the reading level. Strong reading culture is central and prerequisite to becoming a developed nation. The rise and fall of nations are dependent on the level of thinking and minds of the citizens in becoming a civilized society. Reading is one of the tools in learning and also a source of pleasure and satisfaction, a tool when one utilizes the ability to read and to learn other subjects in a language or use it for reference work. It is an interactive process that involves interaction between a reader and the text, a psycholinguistic guessing game which involves an interaction between thought and language. Interest in reading can be nurture and interest requires an awareness of self and pursuit of what someone's like.

Reading Readiness, Motivation And Habit/Behaviours:

Reading is a continuous development process and readiness is merely a concept in various stages of reading (Majzub, 2010). Teachers and parents should realize that reading readiness for children does not only involve basic reading skills but also includes other relevant factors that also contribute to reading skills such as poor motivation, parent's educational background and teacher's involvement. In Malaysia, reading readiness is a fundamental and critical component as Year One children will be assessed on basic fundamentals such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Badariah (2011) claimed that reading motivation does not only explain why

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some children read more than others but also how the children utilize the strategic skills which allow him or her to engage in the reading and there is a widespread concern among educators and parents about children not having the ability and lacking the motivation to read. Zulhilmi (2005) observed that reading is often confined to classrooms and for educational pursuits. This could be one of the reasons why children have not developed good reading habits and need further encouragement to motivate them to read. Reading means action of person who reads whereas habit is a thing that a person does often and almost without thinking, especially something that is hard to stop doing. Reading habit can be defined as the frequency of how often the person does an activity to read books including literature books, stories, magazines and newspapers (Hornby 1995). Izani Daud (2012) said reading practice in society will determine the success or failure of a nation. Developed and highly civilized is a nation that inhabited by members who are knowledgeable and always explore a variety of knowledge.

Time is an important element in reading. The importance of reading is same as exercise. It will produce an intelligent mind, elevation in their status, advanced, successful and able to compete. Pandian (1997) shares a habitual reader will read a variety of materials (newspapers, story books, magazines, journals and comics) and he will actively acquire his reading material from various sources (neighbours, relatives, friends and bookshops). The individual will also spend at least an hour a day reading materials for pleasure. Positive and conducive environment can increase interest in reading among children and adults. Environmental factors influence reading habits. From the Malaysian Reading Profile 1996 by National Library of Malaysia (1998), showed that approximately half (48%) of Malaysian households have a special space for reading. It shows that Malaysians read 2 books a year, a rate that is still low, with regard to literacy and awareness of higher education. In 2005, it showed a high increase to 8-12 books a year (NLM, 2007). In publishing industry, Malaysia has not been able to publish 7,000 new titles a year under Material Act 1986, while developed countries such as Japan have published an average of 52,000 titles a year. In 2009, Malaysia only manage to published 15,767 titles including books that are not published in the current year (Shaharom and SaifulFarik, 2011).

Promotional Activities Towards Nurturing Reading Cultures In Malaysia:

The reading habit can be learned and nurtured (Zin Mahmud, 2001). Based on the study by Atan Long (1984), the reading interest and habits of Malaysians is very low. The findings from the report of Malaysian Reading Profile (1996) found that Malaysian's literacy rate is 93%. Out of that, only 87% are practicing reading. In 2002, it shows some increment at 93.8% but in 2005 the literacy rate is decrease to 92 % and there had been no increase in the amount of reading as compared to the past ten years.

Government Contribution:

The National Library of Malaysia as the Secretariat for the National Reading Campaign launched two new reading promotions that are the *SinarPintar National Reading Club* in 2008 and the *Door to Door Service* in 2009. SinarPintar National Reading Club is a program to enrich the lives and future of children with the gift of reading and to provide children, their families and the community with fun, creative and engaging activities inspired by books and to encourage reading as a fun past time. It also aims to hone children's skills and sense through activities that involve reading, writing, arts and crafts as well as information technology. In 2008, 420 reading campaign activities were carried out at national and state level for adults, youth and children. The Door to Door Service is a new strategy to inculcate reading habits among the rural community. This is an outreach program whereby the librarian will visit the village community to promote library services. Among the objectives of this service is to increase membership, to inculcate reading habit, to identify the user's needs and to increase the number of users in rural libraries (NLM, 2012).

Ministry of Education with its program, *NILAM or Nadi Ilmu Amalan Membaca* is a combination of activities to encourage reading that conducted in primary and secondary schools throughout Malaysia. Implementation of this program will include ongoing assessment reading scores collected throughout the year and cumulatively until they complete their schooling. This program is an effort with the aim to build the reading habit among students. A civilization or a nation can only be built through a culture of knowledge society. The main way in building a culture of knowledge in a society is through continuous reading habits. Based on data collected in 2010, the average student is reading 20 books a year for primary schools and 10 books a year in high school, (Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan, 2012).

Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair (KLiBF) was organized by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia through the National Book Council of Malaysia (MBKM). The KLiBF provides a networking opportunity to meet with the local and international publishing community. More than 1 million visitors attend the KLiBF every year, (KLiBF, 2014). The activities include book launches, seminars, conventions and lots of other activities are in place to suit all levels of the reading community. This kind of festival also been organized frequently by the state government such as *Perlis Book Fair, Selangor Book Fair, Pahang Book Fair, Islamic Book Expo etc.*

The *15 Minutes Reading Break* was held for the first time in 2011 from the hours of with the theme *Stop a moment, Let's Read!*. This program was inspired by the concept of Earth Hour. This campaign was held

simultaneously throughout the State of Selangor. Through this campaign, they hope the habit of reading at least 15 minutes will be a very valuable time for the people of the State on an ongoing basis, then from there reading society can be successfully nourished on the people.

The British Council launched the *Power of Reading Project*, which involves donating over 30,000 books to schools and helping teachers to adopt simple methods to use the books. This project saw the introduction of high quality children's picture and story books in 40 schools across Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan, and expectations to significantly develop and improve pupils' literacy of the language. The project, which comes under the Education Ministry's *PenuturJati Bahasa Inggeris* program, provides teachers in East Malaysia with one-to-one mentoring. This allows Malaysian teachers to expand their own reflective practice to take ownership of their own professional development and build new and attractive approaches in the classroom that fit the context in which they work.

Private Contribution:

READ: One Nation Reading Together (Readtogether, 2014) is a program mission to help children around the world to read and learn as they knowing that literacy is the foundation of a child's intellectual, personal and cultural growth. It started since 2008 and since that moment this program has helped many children to read better. Scholastic's READ2012 was a huge success with a record of over 1 million students across Malaysia with a total of 1,032,352 students from 2,278 schools and each school received their share of 113,900 books. The campaign, in collaboration with the Education Ministry's KM1M, was held at SMK Seksyen 9 Shah Alam on October 24, 2012.

Goodreads (2014) is a "social cataloging" website established in December 2006 and launched in January 2007 by Otis Chandler, a software engineer and entrepreneur, and Elizabeth Chandler, (Miller, 2011). Its mission is to help people find and share books they love and to improve the process of reading and learning throughout the world. This website allows individuals to freely search their wide-ranging database of books, annotations, and reviews. Users are able to sign up and register books to create library catalogs and reading lists. Users can as well create their own groups of book suggestions and discussions.

Shelfari (2014) is a social cataloging website for books. Shelfari users build virtual bookshelves of the titles they own or have read, and can rate, review, tag, and discuss their books. Users can also create groups that other members may join, create discussions, and talk about books, or other topics. Recommendations can be sent to friends on the site for what books to read. Shelfari promotes its "virtual bookshelf" as one of its main features. The virtual bookshelf displays cover of books which the user has entered, with popups to show the user's book information (review, rating, and tags). Sorting by author, title, date, rating, or review is available to the viewer of the shelf. Users may organize books into different shelves, including already read, currently reading, planning to read, wish list, currently owned, and favorites.

LibraryThing (2014) is a social cataloging web application for storing and sharing book catalogs and various types of book metadata. Most of the LibraryThing users are authors, libraries, publishers, and individuals. The primary feature of LibraryThing is the cataloging of books by importing data from libraries. Users can catalog books from Amazon, the Library of Congress and 690 other world libraries.

BookMooch (2014) is an international, on-line book exchange community initiated by John Buckman in 2006. The membership is open to anyone and is free, and the number of their members has grown to around 74,000 in over 90 countries. There is heavy community participation in its running and organization and they have more 500,000 book titles accessible and about 2,000 books are swapped per day. The exchange books are using a points system and it allows its members to change the books among them. Members earn points as well by adding books to their inventories, sending books to other members and by providing feedback when they receive books. The points received can then be used to "buy" books from other members. All books "cost" the same number of points, with a multiple point surcharge for international mooches.

BookCrossing (2014) is defined as "the practice of leaving a book in a public place to be picked up and read by others, who then do likewise." The term is derived from bookcrossing.com, a free online book club which was founded to encourage the practice, aiming to "make the whole world a library. The 'crossing' or exchanging of books may take any of a number of forms, including wild-releasing books in public, direct swaps with other members of the websites, or "book rings" in which books travel in a set order to participants who want to read a certain book. The community aspect of BookCrossing has grown and expanded in ways that were not expected at the outset, in the form of blog or forum discussions, mailing lists and annual conventions throughout the world.

POPULAR (2014) is recognized and listed in the Malaysian Book of Records, as the largest bookstore chain in Malaysia, with over 600,000 square feet of retail space. There is currently a total of 65 POPULAR outlets located nationwide. POPULAR sells a wide variety of fiction, non-fiction and general interest books in English, Chinese and Malay languages, as well as school textbooks and revision books. In addition, it also offers a large selection of magazines, stationery, multi-media products, gift items and CDs. It is a one-stop center for all schooling needs and for booklovers from all walks of life, To attract their customers, POPULAR create

promotion such as customers who have the Popular Student Card can obtain a rebate of 10% off the retail price. They also run promotions where books are sold at affordable prices and set different themes to attract readers.

Ngos Contribution:

Baker & Moss, (1993) in *Communities of Reader* stated that trade books are readily available, uninterrupted time for reading is scheduled, and readers reflect on and discuss what they read. In a supportive community of readers, successful readers support less effective readers and talk their way through the reading with a partner. The reading and writing endeavors center on meanings, shared understandings, and authentic purposes and audiences.

Readathon (2014) is one activity for encouraging children of any age to read for pleasure. It is mainly good for struggling or hesitant readers, including boys. In late 2010 Readathon founded ReadWell who bring books and live storytellers to children in hospital. Readwell is in some measure funded through Readathon sponsorship and partly by direct donations. At the same time they brought both Readathon and Readwell under the umbrella brand Read for Good.

Baca@LRT was firstly held on 16 January 2010, at Terminal Putra, Kuala Lumpur, and attracted more than 100 fans of the book and the reader firmware. Participants are allowed to carry and read all kinds of books because the goal of the program is to instill reading in public (RashiqahImiAbd Rahim, 2010).

Laura Moulton initiated a program which she called a *Street Books*, a unique enterprise created for the purpose of helping those who live outside to get books and read. She uses bicycle-powered mobile library to distribute the books. As this program is running, everyone can get a book, even those without proof of address or identification, as is required at any state public library, just to make them have chances to read (Shimogawa, 2012).

Little Free Library were established with the mission to promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide and to create a sense of community by share skills, creativity, and wisdom across generations (Stephens, 2012). Little Free Library has come with a simple rule: Take a book, return a book.

Pattern And Trend Of Publish Materials:

Abu Abdillah (2012) stated that generally the reading culture among Malaysians had increased. The first evidence is the Malay language newspapers' that sales more than 1 million copies per day. It shows that there is a reading culture and very healthy lifestyle among Malaysians. The same goes for books, the amount of titles published were increased every year. This number is based from the National Library statistics on books received and registered under the Preservation Books Act and the Deposit of Library Material Act.

Table 1: Trend of Malaysian Book Production.

Year	Number of Titles	Increase (%)
1994	4 050	9.60
1996	5 843	44.27
1998	5 816	-0.46
2000	5 341	-8.16
2002	7 040	31.81
2004 (est.)	8 550	21.44

With the emergence and advances of the Internet technology, the traditional media such as newspapers have to reassess their role in the Internet age. Steve Outing of Editor & Publisher thinks that electronic newspapers are supplemental services, with little in common to print newspapers and they would not replace the print (Erlindson, 1995).

Table 2: Circulation Trend of Bahasa Malaysia Newspapers in Peninsular Malaysia.

Name of Newspapers	1993	2001	2002	% Growth or Decline	
				1993-2002	2001-2002
BeritaHarian	314 240	222 142	235 775	-24.97	6.14
BeritaMinggu	418 790	321 898	342 040	-18.33	6.26
Utusan Malaysia	252 452	235 483	239 385	--5.18	1.66
Mingguan Malaysia	514 677	527 888	543 232	3.80	2.91
Utusan Zaman	16 485	8 057	7 872	-52.25	-2.30
UtusanMelayu	15 560	7 853	7 597	-51.18	-3.26
Harian Metro	-	75 895	121 154	-	59.63
Metro Ahad	-	90 029	136 974	-	52.14
Utusan Sarawak	-	31 801	35 520	-	11.69

Table 2 shows the circulation of Bahasa Malaysia Newspapers in Peninsular Malaysia in 1993 to 2002. Five of newspapers showed a decline between 5.18% to 52.25%. However, Mingguan Malaysia grew by 3.80%. A

year on year comparison (2002 and 2001) showed a more positive look. Harian Metro and Metro Ahad showed a strong growth with Harian Metro reaching 59.63% and Metro Ahad 52.14%.

Numerous articles have been published emphasizing on the importance of scholarly journals in the dissemination and use of scientific knowledge.

Table 3: Trend of Publishers of Scholarly Journals in Malaysia.

Publishers	No. of Journals	%
Government Agencies	96	20.6
Societies, Associations	104	22.4
Universities, Colleges	257	55.5
Private, Companies	7	1.5
TOTAL	464	100.0

Table 3 shows that universities are the main publishers of scholarly journals (257, 55.5%), followed by the professional or scholarly associations (104, 22.4%) and government agencies (96, 20.6%) and private agencies (7, 1.5%).

Table 4: Universities Publishers.

Universities	No. of Journals	%	Year Established
Universiti Malaya (UM)	63	24.8	1962
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	38	14.7	1970
Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)	33	12.8	1999
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	23	8.9	1973
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	21	8.1	1969
Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM)	13	5.0	1983
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	12	4.6	1971
Universiti Tun Hussien Onn Malaysia (UTHM)	11	4.3	2000
Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris (UPSI)	7	2.7	1997
Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)	7	2.7	1994
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	7	2.7	1984
Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTM)	4	1.6	2000
Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)	3	1.2	1998
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)	2	0.8	1992
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)	2	0.8	1999
Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UMP)	2	0.8	2002
Others (1 each)	9	3.5	
TOTAL	257	100.0	

Table 4 shows that UM is in the first rank in publishing journal which is 63, (24.8%) and the lowest are (2, 0.8%) from UNIMAS, UMT and UMP. The total number of journal publish is 257 journals. The total number of titles published by each university maybe exaggerated because of the inclusion of titles that may have ceased. However, the inclusion of older titles is necessary especially in the fields such as history, geography, geology, cultural and ethnological studies as older findings may still be relevant and continued to be used as well as it is important for libraries in their effort to bibliographically control Malaysian serial titles.

Table 5: Pattern and trend of publish materials about reading habits in Malaysia.

Materials	No	Materials	No
Journals	33	Handbooks	1
Thesis	3	Magazines	5
Books	20	Proceedings	4
Newspapers	8	Online sources	8
Dictionaries	4	Working Papers	2
Reports	2		
Total			90

Table 5 shows the numbers of publish materials about reading habits in Malaysia. The highest materials that is referred is journal which is 33 and the lowest is handbook. The total number of publish materials about reading habits in Malaysia that is referred is 90 materials.

Figure 1 shows the number of publish materials that was referred by year of publication from 1962 to 2012. There were 13 materials that was referred in year 2012 which is the highest from the trend. The latest materials that were referred were journals and online sources which is in year 2012. And, the total number of the publish materials was 90 materials.

Figure 2 shows that the year of journals publication on reading habits. There were 3 journals in year 2011, 2010, 2004 and 2003 which shows the highest publication. The total numbers of journals that was referred is 33 journals starting from the year 1982 to 2012.

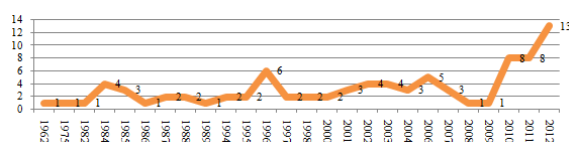


Fig. 1: Trend of publish materials by year of publication.

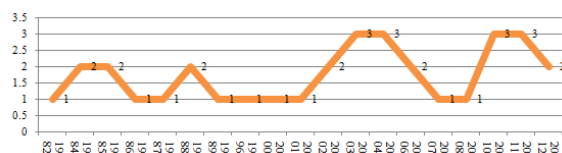


Fig. 2: Trend year of journals publication.

Figure 3 shows that the year of books publication on reading habits. The highest year of publish is 2002, 1998, 1997, 1996 and 1984. The total books that were referred is 20 books from various publications.

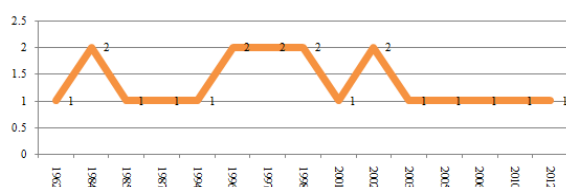


Fig. 3: Year of books publication.

Figure 4 shows that the year of online sources publication about the reading habits in Malaysia. There were 5 materials in year 2012, 2 materials in year 2011 and 1 material in year 1996. Whereas, Figure 5 shows that the year of newspapers publication on reading habits in Malaysia. The total newspapers that were referred is 8 from the year 2001 to 2012. There were 3 materials in year 2012, 2 materials in year 2010. Newspapers that were referred consist of online and printed newspapers.

Year of Online Sources Publication

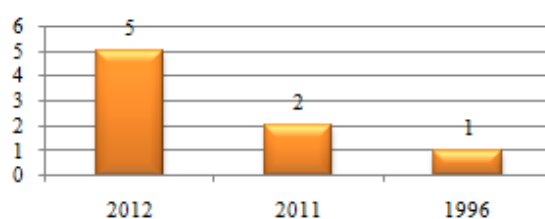


Fig. 4: Year of online sources publication.

Discussion And Recommendation:

To examine the initiatives taken by the Malaysian government agencies in reading activities and reading concept:

Malaysian government did introduce many reading activities to encourage reading habit for its citizens. The establishment of NILAM program, book fair organized by the Ministry, reading campaign and many activities related to reading, however still did not give excellent impacts. The reading campaign has been going on for very long time and now it has intensified. Promoting reading is not revolutionary, it does not work in the sense that when organize a campaign today and the public will storm bookshops in droves to buy books. Another way is to give school, state and district libraries more funds to fill their shelves with current and more interesting books. The public is still not aware of the existence of 'BulanMembaca' even though it was introduced in August 1995. Media should play their roles since it is suitable with their level as reading materials and very close to society. Thus, the government and responsible party should take a good initiative to use media to attract the

communities' interest by improving the reading programs, reading promotions or education programs to inculcate reading habits.

Year of Newspapers Publication

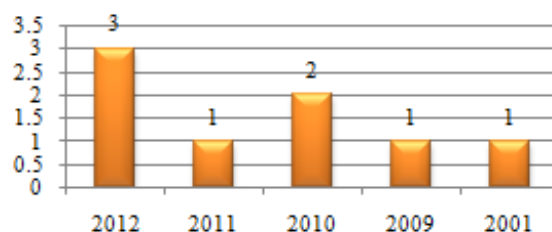


Fig. 5: Year of Newspapers publication.

To identify the reading activities and reading concepts initiate by private institutions:

Private institutions play an important role as well as to promote reading habits, reading activities and concepts to Malaysians. Many private institutions help to promote reading habits and reading activities such as Big Bad Wolf Book Fair, which they offered 75% to 95% discounts on 3 million books, (Big Bad Wolf Books, 2014). Bookstore like POPULAR, MPH and Kinokuniya also helps to nurture the readings among Malaysians as they always promote and give discounts to their books.

To identify the reading activities and reading concepts among the Malaysian community initiate by the NGOs:

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) involvement on readings in Malaysia also cannot be despised. These NGOs did many activities to promote readings such Baca@LRT, Book Community, Book Crossing that helped nourish awareness in reading among the community. Contribution in the form of financial and moral is very important as its aims to promote reading habit among Malaysians. NGOs like PersatuanPustakawan Malaysia, Persatuan Pembacaan Malaysia and MajlisBelia Malaysia can play their own roles in organizing various programs for example BengkelPenubuhanPerpustakaanKeluarga, BengkelBercerita, BengkelGalakanMembaca, BengkelPencarianMaklumat and KemKembaraIlmu.

To identify the reading activities and reading concepts initiate by research from overseas:

Research from overseas should help a lot to the researchers, or the authorities in Malaysia as the findings from the research, articles, or reports can help to compare the reading level between Malaysia and other countries. More than that, many activities of readings can be applied to Malaysians to promote readings. Collaboration between researchers in Malaysia and overseas in a research on reading habits and reading activities is important as well as the involvement of the authorities in Malaysia which specifically involved in promoting the reading habit among Malaysians must cooperate with any country which has succeed raised the prestige of reading in their countries.

Organized an online information literacy program to promote and increase cultural knowledge and cultural community of information technology (IT).

Information is the driving force of a modern society (Md. Anwarul Islam, 2010). When society expert in handling IT, they are able to find variety of online sources for example e-books, online newspapers, online journal and thesis. But, it is important to ensure that the sources that are referred are beneficial to hinder from involving in misuse technology.

The Reading Ambassador:

Usually our society is easily influenced by their idols. The National Library has appointed Malaysian icons Datuk Dr Sheikh MuszapharShukor Al-Masrie, Malaysia's first astronaut and actress Datuk Seri Michelle Yeoh to encourage young people to read and also to participate in reading programs.

Conclusion:

Generally reading habits in Malaysia is still low and the community needs more awareness about the important of reading in daily life not only for society itself but also to the nation development. Although there are many activities, programs and campaign that is organized but it still cannot give an impact to the society to make a reading as habits like other country for example, Japan.From the researcher's point of view, campaign can only inform and encourage the public to read but not to teach people to read. But, ongoing campaigns and

activities to promote positive attitudes toward reading and motivation can also influence the interest and practice in reading. In fact, to nurture the reading habits among society, beside the effort that has been made by various parties, the awareness that comes from society itself and fosters the reading habits since childhood is much more important. Thus, all of us notably parents should take attention and play their roles to nurture the reading habits to their children since childhood to give raise the knowledgeable society, competitive, shapes good personality, ideas, right thinking and attitude.

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