

**THE MDAB STUDENTS' READING ATTITUDES AND THEIR  
ACADEMIC READING PERFORMANCE**



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## **5.0 Report**

### **5.1 Proposed Executive Summary**

This study is conducted to investigate MDAB students' general reading attitudes. It also aims to discover the relationship between the students' academic reading performance with their reading attitudes. This study sets out to determine that if students practice good reading habits, the habits will eventually help them in dealing with the ESL reading, writing and speaking components for BEL011-The Introductory English course offered to Part 1 students of Pre-Commerce Programme, thus produce favourable academic reading, writing and speaking results. At the same time, it also sets out to investigate whether the students' academic reading performance is solely influenced by their reading attitudes or otherwise.

The subjects of the study will consist of 400 MDAB students from January to April 2011 intake and May to October 2011 intake at UiTM Sarawak, Samarahan Campus. The data for this study will be collected via questionnaire which is adapted from Yamashita's Reading Attitudes in L1 and L2 and their Influence on Extensive Reading Questionnaire (2004). The questionnaire is aimed to seek feedback from the students on their general attitudes towards reading. The questionnaire employs the 5 point Likert-scale that measures the degree of agreement or disagreement of the respondents. The data obtained from the questionnaire will be coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

The research design in this study is descriptive in nature. The descriptive data will be described through frequency distributions. The quantitative data are to be analyzed in terms of their reliability and correlations. It is necessary to look into correlations to determine the relationship between the independent variables (students' reading attitudes) and the dependent variables (students' academic reading performance). To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, the inter-item consistency reliability is tested by looking into the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. In addition, the data from the questionnaires will also be supported with data gathered from the semi-structured interview.

It is hoped that the findings of the study will be a useful point of reference for further discussions on ways to establish relevant designs, planning, remedial and preventive measures in language learning. The findings will also help guide UiTM in its noble aspiration to change the destiny of these students, to consider the factors that may contribute to the failure of achieving the objectives of this MDAB programme.

### **5.3 Introduction**

This section features the main aspects of conducting a study on students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure. There are seven divisions in this section. First, is the introduction that explains on the major divisions covered in the section followed by the background of the study which justifies on the need to conduct the study in relation to students' reading interest at present. The next division describes the statement of the problem that leads to the reason why the study is carried out. Then, it highlights the significance of the study and scope of study. After that, the research objectives and research questions are specified clearly one after another. The final division summarizes the section.

#### **5.3.1 Background of the Study**

Reading is a very important factor in enriching one's knowledge and in widening one's perspective. However, the Malaysian reading scenario does not reflect an impressive reading culture as society seems to be greatly ambivalent about reading. Ganakumaran (2004) revealed that many Malaysians are 'struggling readers'. By this, he referred to those who have minimal confidence in their ability to read and minimal sense of themselves as readers. Meanwhile, struggling readers according to Vacca and Vacca (1999) are those students who are low achievers. They lack cognitive competencies which may include reading comprehension, study skills, word recognition and reading fluency. On the other hand, Wigfield, Eccles and Rodriguez (1998) believed that struggling readers are notably unmotivated. They are especially likely to have low confidence in their reading, which is termed self-efficacy in the research literature.

Reading becomes necessary only when the students need to sit for exams and get excellent grades. In fact, not many Malaysians are able to find reading exciting because they have had bad experiences with reading. One of the reasons has very much to do with the reading material itself. This is because they have not connected with texts that are pleasurable to read. Malachi (2002) also pointed out that students tend to perceive reading as laborious and tedious. Some of them get turned off from reading because they have difficulties coping with complex texts. They feel 'burdened' when they have to refer to the dictionary and guess the meanings of the words all the time through the process of reading. When the reading material is inappropriate as it is not at the students' level of competence or area of interest, they will find it difficult to connect and enjoy the text.

## **5.4 Literature Review**

This section will serve to review existing research related to the field of study. The section is divided into four major divisions. Firstly, it will highlight on the importance of reading. Then, it will furnish on Malaysian students' interest and attitudes towards reading in general. Some review on literature pertaining to the roles played by the reading environment and reading materials with regards to reading habit will also be described.

### **5.4.1 The Importance of Reading**

People read for several purposes. Berardo (2006) claimed that there are three main purposes of reading, for survival, for learning and for pleasure. However, some learners are unable to understand this simple idea because they are not efficient readers.

According to Eskey (1988), no one can teach anyone how to read, or even how to read effectively but anyone can learn to read, and to read more effectively. This can only be done if only learners perceive reading as an activity that can contribute to an intellectual profit or pleasure. As such, the content of whatever the learners have chosen to read must be of something useful to them or will assist them in understanding the world better or provide them the special kind of pleasure that comes from the experience of reading the texts. Thus, learners need to realize the importance of reading in their daily lives in order to cope with the new knowledge in the changing world of the technological age. A great awareness of why reading is important is that it does not contribute only to an individual's well-being, self-development and progress but also to the whole nation and the world.

Berardo (2006) also believed that reading is associated with means of communication because it is considered to be an interactive process – a conversation between writer and reader. One of the benefits gathered from reading is when readers are able to associate the activity with the feeling of pleasure. This is clearly stated by Anderson (1999) when he claimed that reading with the feeling of pleasure gives many readers the opportunity to relax and enjoy the world of books.

Malachi (2002) stated that the reading of literature must be a pleasurable experience in order for the students to enjoy reading. The reading of literature should revolve around the learners' lives and experience. It is through reading that students will