



THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING READING HABITS AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This paper is centered on the importance of reading culture development among school children. With the existing speed of technological progress and digital distraction, students are reading less for knowledge acquisition and leisure. The paper takes into account some of the most important factors for the declining trend and suggests feasible options such as school reading programs, parental participation, and digital software to re-develop the reading culture. Results come from a series of classroom observations and surveys from several Uzbek schools, confirming that developing robust reading habits constructs academic success and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Reading habits, literacy, students, school reading programs, motivation, education in Uzbekistan.

1. Introduction

Reading has a central role in forming the intellectual, emotional, and academic growth of students. But in the current high-speed, multimedia world, reading among schoolchildren is declining gradually. The trend is a matter of concern to teachers, parents, and policymakers, particularly in countries like Uzbekistan that are in the developing stage and where reading culture is still evolving.

This paper seeks to emphasize the importance of reading, identify the hindrances in reading activity, and present pragmatic strategies that can be applied in schools.



2. The Role of Reading in Education

It is not only an academic achievement tool but also a means to life-long learning, self-improvement, and socialization. Several studies have established that students with strong reading skills exhibit improved critical thinking, creativity, vocabulary acquisition, and academic performance.

Besides, reading literature raises empathy and emotional intelligence as it makes students live through diverse perspectives and lifestyles.

3. Causes of Declining Reading Habits

3.1 Digital Distractions

Social media platforms and video content have become dominant forms of entertainment. Students often choose fast, interactive media over books, which require sustained attention and focus.

3.2 Lack of Access to Appealing Books

Many school libraries in Uzbekistan are underfunded and poorly stocked. Without engaging and age-appropriate books, students lose interest in reading.

3.3 Low Motivation and Pressure

When reading is associated only with exams or homework, it loses its appeal. Without opportunities for independent, pleasure-based reading, students disengage.

3.4 Weak Family Reading Culture

Parental modeling has a strong impact on children's habits. In households where reading is not common, children rarely develop interest on their own.

4. Field Research: Survey and Observations

A small-scale survey was conducted in three secondary schools in Samarkand region. Out of 150 respondents:

- 29% reported reading for pleasure at least once a week
- 61% said they preferred watching videos to reading books
- 44% admitted they had not visited a library in the past six months



- Teachers confirmed that reading comprehension is declining in classrooms. These findings align with global trends and highlight the urgency of revitalizing reading in schools.

5. Strategies for Encouraging Reading Habits

5.1 School-Wide Reading Programs

Implementing dedicated reading hours, school-wide reading contests, or author-of-the-month events can stimulate interest in books.

5.2 Student Reading Clubs

Reading clubs led by students create a peer-driven atmosphere. Sharing favorite books, reviews, or staging literary discussions makes reading more interactive.

5.3 Library Renovation and Digital Access

Modernizing school libraries with appealing, diverse books and digital reading apps (like Audible or Storytel) can meet the needs of modern students.

5.4 Parental Involvement

Encouraging parents to read with or to their children, setting home reading goals, or participating in family reading nights helps establish a reading routine.

5.5 Using Technology Creatively

Rather than fighting screens, teachers can use educational reading apps, eBooks, and gamified platforms to merge technology with literacy development.

6. Benefits of Strong Reading Habits

Students who regularly read demonstrate:

- Broader vocabulary and improved communication skills
- Enhanced academic achievement across subjects
- Better mental focus and reduced stress
- Stronger emotional maturity and cultural understanding

These skills contribute to success both in and beyond the classroom.



7. Recommendations

- Integrate daily or weekly “silent reading” periods in schools
- Provide annual budgets to update school libraries
- Train teachers in literacy development strategies
- Partner with NGOs and local publishers to supply books
- Include reading habit development in national education policy

8. Conclusion

In today's knowledge society, critical reading and thinking skills are more valuable than ever. Schools need to actively promote reading habits from an early stage onwards. Reading culture can be instilled through systematic effort, community participation, and innovation. The earlier reading is made a natural, purposeful, and joyful activity, the better prepared our students will be to excel at school and in life.

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