

# Assessing Reading Habits of Future Classroom Teachers in the Context of Their Socio-Demographic Features

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**Abstract**—The purpose of the present study is to determine the level of reading habit of future classroom teachers, to discuss the obtained results according to their socio-demographic features and to define the factors which are influential on taking up reading in the context of future teachers' experiences. The target population of the study consists of the fourth grade students at 62 faculties of education, department of classroom teaching from Turkish state universities. The sampling of the study consists of the fourth grade students from seven faculties of education, department of classroom teaching from each region. In the study, in the first and the second aspects, there will be a questionnaire to be developed concerning the measurement of future teachers' level of reading habits and their socio-demographic features. The questionnaire was applied to all the students in the sample.

**Keywords**—Reading, Reading Habits, Teachers

## I. INTRODUCTION

READING habit means an individual's constant reading in a critical manner, as a result of his considering this activity as a need to be met and a source of pleasure [10].

The most striking common point highlighted by research in Turkey on reading habit is the fact that the level of reading habit is low. According to a questionnaire conducted by the Ministry of National Education in 1993, 61% of the young population did not read any books over the last one month, whereas 13,4% of them had read only one book. In a study conducted by [4] about university students, it was seen that only 5% of the students were spending their time in the library, the number of those who read newspapers on a regular basis was too low and they were not following periodicals enough. According to the result of a study conducted to determine teachers' interests in reading in Turkey, it was shown that 15 teachers out of 675 had read over 10 books in five years' time, and the number of the books that the rest 660 had read was below 10 per year and that 510 teachers, which corresponded to about 75% of the teachers included in the study, had not read at all. As it is clear from these results, most teachers who are supposed to teach future generations do not have reading habits [10].

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According to [5], a love of reading can be instilled in children with the help of role model adults. Teachers who are interested in reading and who are eager to read will be better examples for students than others. Mana and Misheff (1987) suggest that the joy and enthusiasm of reading cannot be taught but modeled. Accordingly, students could only become good readers through modeling. Mueller (1973) argues that particularly all primary teachers are responsible for instilling reading habits in pupils and they have a potential imponderable influence on pupils concerning their attitude towards reading. The most remarkable emphasis on instilling reading habits by teachers in the related literature is that those without reading habits and a love of reading have serious difficulties in instilling reading habits in students (cited in, [3], [8]. This is what is called "the Peter Effect" [2].

The purpose of the present study is to determine levels of reading habits of future classroom teachers in Turkey and discuss these results in terms of their socio-demographic features. Reading habits can be instilled during the first years of primary school. For this reason, classroom teachers have a great responsibility for instilling reading habits in students. It is expected from teachers, as individuals with basic reading habits, to set a good example for their students and to improve their professional knowledge through reading. It is important at this point to examine reading habits of future teachers being trained as classroom teachers at faculties of education

### A. Study Model

The present study is a descriptive survey model study because survey model is a study design which attempts to describe the previous and the current cases as they are.

### B. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of the fourth grade students at 62 faculties of education, department of classroom teaching from Turkish state universities. For the sampling of the study, seven geographical regions in Turkey are taken as a basis. Accordingly, seven faculties of education from each region are chosen according to their level of development. The sampling of the study consists of the fourth grade students from these faculties of education, department of classroom teaching. The numbers of the students are presented in Table I.

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION OF FUTURE TEACHERS BY REGIONS

Regions	F	%
Southern East Anatolia	78	19,4
Central Anatolia	60	14,9
Aegean Region	51	12,7
Mediterranean Region	56	13,9
Black Sea Region	67	16,6
Marmara Region	51	12,7
Eastern Anatolia	40	9,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>100</b>

### C. Data Gathering Tool

In the study, a data gathering tool developed by [7] was used. However, the tool was not originally used; it was elaborated according to the goals of the study. For structure validity of the data gathering tool, experts were consulted.

### D. Data Analysis

Data, as the basis, was analyzed, using SPSS 13.00. For analysis of demographic features of the students, percentage and frequency were used. Correlations between the obtained demographic features of the students and their reading habits are given as cross tables.

## II. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### Findings About Demographic Features

In this section, the socio-demographic features of the future classroom teachers included in the study are presented.

TABLE II  
GENDER

Variable	F	%
Gender		
Female	203	50,4
Male	200	49,6

As it is clear from Table II, genders of the participants are evenly distributed (Female 50,4%; male 49,6%).

TABLE III  
FAMILY ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Variable	F	%
Family Economic Conditions		
Have financial difficulties	38	9,4
Normal	270	74,1
Good	64	15,9
Very good	2	,5

When economic conditions of families of future teachers listed in Table III are considered, it is seen that families of 74,1% of the future teachers have moderate economic conditions. The rate of those who have financial difficulties is about 10%.

TABLE IV  
POLITICAL VIEWS

Variable	F	%
Political view		
Nationalistic	141	35,0
Islamist	69	17,1
Liberal	42	10,4
Social Democratic	99	24,6
Socialist	52	12,9
Other	58	14,4

As it is clear from Table IV, 35% of the future teachers included in the study define themselves as nationalists, which is followed by those with social democratic views (24,6%).

### II. Findings About Reading Habits

There are various standards for measuring reading habits. Among them, one of the most common ones is the standard set by the American Library Association [1], which is preferred in this study: (1) Those who read below five books per year are called *seldom readers*, (2) Those who totally read between six and twenty books per year are called *moderate readers*, (3) Those who totally read above twenty books per year are called *constant readers* [6].

Therefore, the future classroom teachers were asked how many books they read over the last years in order to determine their reading habits. The answers are listed in Table V.

TABLE V  
LEVEL OF READING OVER THE LAST ONE YEAR

Variable	F	%
Level of Reading		
None	42	10,4
1-5	144	35,7
6-20	174	43,2
20+	43	10,7
Total	403	100,0

As it is clear from Table V, about 45% of the students state either they do not read books at all or they hardly ever read.

The students mostly gave the following excuses for not reading more books. 1. Lack of time (56,6%); 2. High prices of books (44,4%); 3. Lack of reading habits (35,7%); 4. low number of those who read books around them (34,5%).

TABLE VI  
TYPE OF BOOKS

Variable	F	%
Type of Books		
Novels	315	78,2
Poems	88	21,8
Essays	58	14,3
Research	116	28,8
Biographies	79	19,6
Other	66	16,4

As it is clear from Table VI, most of the students (78,2%) often read novels.

The students gave the following three reasons for reading: 1. to get information about their fields of interest (59,8%), 2. to get information about different cultures and ways of thinking (58,8%), 3. to contribute to development of their social life skills (43,7%).

TABLE VII  
DAILY READING TIME

Variable	F	%
Daily Reading Time		
0-30 Min.	115	28,5
30-60 Min.	166	7,2
60-120 Min.	79	19,6
120 Min.+	27	6,7

As it is clear from Table VII, 35,7% of the students daily spend nearly one hour or less time with reading. The rate of

those who read more than one hour a day is  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

TABLE VIII  
REGULAR MAGAZINE READING

	F	%
Yes	88	21,8
No	315	78,2

As it is clear from Table VIII, about 80% of the students read magazines regularly.

TABLE IX  
REGULAR NEWSPAPER READING

	F	%
Yes	310	76,9
No	93	23,1

As it is clear from Table IX, about 77% of the students read newspapers regularly.

TABLE X  
INSTILLING READING HABITS IN STUDENTS THROUGH  
EDUCATION SYSTEM

	F	%
Yes	110	27,3
No	278	68,7

As it is clear from Table X, 68,7% of the students do not think that the education system instills reading habits in students.

TABLE XI  
OWNING BOOKSHELVES

	F	%
Yes	238	59,1
No	165	40,9

Table XI presents the findings about whether the students have bookshelves of their own or not. As it is seen, more than half of the students have bookshelves at home.

### III. Findings About Correlations Between Level of Reading Habit and Socio-Demographic Features

TABLE XII  
GENDER AND LEVEL OF READING HABIT

Gender	Level of Reading Habit							
	None		Seldom Reader		Moderate Reader		Constant Reader	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Female	16	7,9	72	35,6	94	46,5	20	9,9
Male	26	13,1	72	36,2	80	40,2	21	10,6
Total	44	10,5	144	35,9	174	43,4	41	10,2

As it is clear from Table XII, there is a slight difference between gender of the students and levels of reading habit in favor of the women.

TABLE XIII  
POLITICAL VIEW AND LEVEL OF READING HABIT

Political View	Level of Reading Habit								Total
	None		Seldom Reader		Moderate Reader		Constant Reader		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Nationalistic	1	8,5	66	46,8	56	39,7	7	5,0	141
İslamist	7	10,3	27	39,7	29	42,6	5	7,4	68
Liberal	1	2,4	12	28,6	24	57,1	5	11,9	42
Social Democratic	9	9,1	37	37,4	45	45,5	8	8,1	99
Socialist	1	1,9	15	28,8	27	51,9	9	17,3	52

As it is clear from Table XIII, 46,8% of the students with nationalistic views are seldom readers; 42,6% of the Islamists, 57,1% of the liberals, 45,5% of the social democrats and 51,9% of the socialists are moderate readers. Also, those who have socialist views are the most frequent readers, and they are the least seldom readers.

TABLE XIV  
OWNING BOOKSHELVES AND LEVEL OF READING HABIT

Owning Bookshelves	Level of Reading Habit								Total
	None		Seldom Reader		Moderate Reader		Constant Reader		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Yes	1	8,4	77	34,1	10	46,5	2	11,6	22
No	2	13,3	67	38,8	69	39,1	1	9,1	17
Total	4	10,7	144	35,9	177	43,3	3	7,7	40

As it is clear from Table XIV, 56,4% of the students have bookshelves. However, only 46,5% of those who have bookshelves have moderate levels of reading habit. Moreover, there is a linear correlation between owning bookshelves and reading. It is seen that the rate of bookshelf ownership increases from those who do not read at all to constant readers.

TABLE XV  
READING TIME AND LEVEL OF READING HABIT

Reading Time	Level of Reading Habit								Total
	None		Seldom Reader		Moderate Reader		Constant Reader		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
0-30 Min.	22	19,3	65	57,0	27	23,7	0	0	11
30-60 Min.	7	4,2	60	36,4	85	51,5	13	7,8	16
60-120 Min.	6	7,6	11	13,9	48	60,8	14	17,7	79
120 Min.+	0	0	2	7,4	11	40,7	14	51,9	27
Total	35	9,1	138	35,8	171	44,4	41	10,6	38

When the correlation between reading time and level of reading habit presented in Table XV is considered, it is seen that 42,9% of the students spend between 30 and 60 minutes at maximum level. 51,5% of those who spend 30 to 60

minutes with reading are moderate readers. It is shown that 51,9% of those who read for 120 minutes or more are constant readers. In other words, there is a positive correlation between daily reading time and reading habit.

TABLE XVI  
NEWSPAPER READING ACCORDING TO FAMILY INCOME

Family Income	Newspaper Reading					
	Yes		No		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
100-500TL	32	69,6	14	30,4	46	13,5
501-1000TL	110	78,0	31	22,0	141	41,2
1001-1500TL	56	86,2	9	13,8	65	19,0
1501-2000TL	39	78,0	11	22,0	50	14,6
2000-2500TL	13	72,2	5	27,8	18	5,3
2501-3000TL	10	90,9	1	9,1	11	3,2
3000+TL	10	90,9	1	9,1	11	3,2

When the correlation between family income and level of newspaper reading presented in Table XVI is considered, it is generally seen that the higher the family income is, the more the newspaper reading habit.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

403 students were included in this study which was planned to examine the reading habits of the future classroom teachers who constituted the sample of the study. 203 of these students are female (50,4%), and 200 of them are male (49,6%).

When compared to the male students, it was shown that the female students slightly read more books. About 45% of the future teachers hardly ever read or did not read at all. The fact that the mostly uttered excuse by the future teachers for not reading books more is "lack of time (56,6%)" is thought provoking.

Future teachers prefer reading newspapers to reading magazines. Most of the future teachers (76,9%) read newspapers, whereas the rest read magazines (21,8%).

The fact that about 60% of the future teachers do not believe the education system instills reading habits in students is a remarkable finding. In this context, it is essential to reconsider the formal education system.

It is seen that more than half of the sample group have bookshelves at home (59,1%). There is a linear correlation between owning bookshelves and reading books. Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between family income and reading magazine or newspaper habits of the future teachers.

As a result, the oral culture which has survived in the Turkish society enables daily life practices that are not based on writing. This cultural atmosphere prevents reading habits from extending. At that point, teachers' critical role becomes clear. Teachers, as important agents to instill reading habits in future generations, are of course expected to have reading habits. As it is clear from the present study, future classroom teachers do not have enough reading habits, which is an issue to be focused on. For this reason, serious measures must be taken immediately.

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