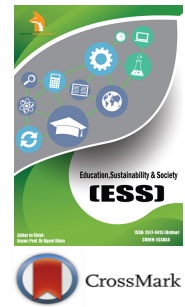




ZIBELINE INTERNATIONAL™  
P U B L I S H I N G  
ISSN: 2617-9415 (Online)  
CODEN: ESSDAX

# Education, Sustainability & Society (ESS)

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.26480/ess.01.2021.33.38>



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# INVESTIGATING FACTORS AFFECTING POOR READING CULTURE AMONG EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History:

Received 10 January 2021  
Accepted 21 February 2021  
Available online 08 April 2021

## ABSTRACT

Reading books has not become a habit among university students in Kurdistan; one can count the good readers in a class with fingers of a hand. This is a big crisis and needs serious work. The problem is demonstrated through the students' performance and proven knowledge in the academic years and it matters because when the students graduate in the university and during the university academic years they do not have sufficient knowledge that a university student needs to have. This study aims to investigate the factors that affect poor reading culture of the EFL learners in Kurdistan universities. It provides the major factors that affect the reading interest of EFL learners. For this purpose, a questionnaire, and an interview are used. The questionnaire is designed to obtain certain information regarding the learners' reading culture, environment, factors that motivate and demotivate them. The interview is designed to ask certain questions which are answered by university lecturers and one of them is the director of the general library in one of the universities. Through the study, it was found that reading books has not become a habit among university students in Kurdistan and they have given little or no attention to reading books, and students' cultural environment demotivates them from reading books. Kurdish culture, lack of role models, and insufficient libraries are among factors of poor reading culture among university students. However, it was found that university libraries are quite sufficient for reading books. Therefore, the results indicate that the reading culture is not at the needed level and students are not used to providing a decent time for reading daily. They spend their free time on other things rather than reading. The findings of this study may serve as reliable data regarding the culture and habit of reading which shows an up-to-date piece of information about one of the great aspects of EFL learners in universities in Kurdistan which is reading culture.

### KEYWORDS

reading culture, Kurdish EFL learners, poor reading culture.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Kurdistan universities, one can count the good readers in a class with the fingers of a hand. This is a big crisis and needs serious work. This problem can have effects in different levels: it affects one's background level in their academic life in university and post-university period, it also has effects on the one's society and family because unarguably proven that reading and reading habit affects the way readers behave think and act to improve their society. The problem is not necessarily concerned with a geographical area or a specific group but it is concerned with Kurdish EFL students in general. The problems are demonstrated through the students' performance and proven knowledge in the academic years. This problem can have wider relevance to the students in different departments and also for people in society. The study investigates the factors that make the reading habit to be at a low level and finds possible solutions. This paper works to find out the factors affecting the poor reading culture of the EFL students of English language department students across three universities, namely the University of Halabja, University of Sulaymaniyah, and Salahaddin University. This study was carried out during the academic

year 2019/2020, starting from October 2019 up to February 2020.

The paper hypothesizes that:

1. The students have given little or no attention to reading books both concerning the textbooks and extra reading.
2. Students do not provide much time for reading books.
3. Kurdish culture, lack of role models, and insufficient libraries are among factors of poor reading culture among university students.

## 2. READING CULTURE: AN OVERVIEW

Reading means to look at and understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols; reading is a unique human activity that is characterized by the translation of symbols or letters into words and sentences that communicate information and mean something to the reader. The reader seeks to understand the meaning of a written text; evaluates its significance and uses what he or she has read to enhance his or her knowledge, effectiveness, or pleasure. Reading is important not just for personal uses and life-long education, but even for learning in schools.

### Quick Response Code



### Access this article online

Website:  
[www.educationsustainability.com](http://www.educationsustainability.com)

DOI:  
10.26480/ess.01.2021.33.38

It requires a lot of reading to become a fluent reader (Dallman, 1982; Karshen, 2011). Reading culture or, culture of reading refers to reading books regularly. It gives individuals the development in vocabulary, creativity, memory, skills, and discipline. It also enhances at the national level by developing education and enlighten people in society. It is also known as a reading habit, in which an individual can have, or a culture of a group of people together have a habitual way of reading whether they provide time for it or read in their leisure time (Isaac, 2020).

Reading is important both for individuals and society. On the individual level, reading in the past was considered as receiving an essential message, but today researchers on reading have defined the act of reading in itself as a multi-level mental process which serves to a great extent as the development of the intellect and cognitive skill. It will play a great role in the development of language and personality. Books help readers to master the ethical, moral, and socio-political problems of life by providing real-life examples, helping the reader pose and answer questions. Books for young readers help to reach the basic goal of developing the personality (Bamberger, 1975). For society, the next generation's society is described as a "learning society". The progress of learning is necessary and adjusting to ever-changing necessities. It is a fact that science and technology are in progress at a rate that schooling and education's knowledge is not sufficient for tomorrow. The solution for facing such an issue is by relying on life-long education, or even self-education. As a result, people in the society can be helped through books to create developments in their way.

It can increase their critical ability and learn to get sufficient outputs from mass media. Additionally, reading is not an issue of the small percentage of society. According to a study, "Developing the right reading culture helps nations to develop and no nation can develop without its people reading. Reading makes a man, and it helps to develop the mind, to be informed, thoughtful, and constructive" (Desmond, 2014). It has been important and necessary for most of society. The subjects and areas of information that reading can offer are constantly growing in public programs. Comparing to movies, radio, and television, reading has special advantages as well. One of the essential findings of reading researches shows that a good reader is a good learner. This fact is important in the success of the students in university as an academic period and later life when we need to be flexible to adapt to new situations (Bamberger, 1975; Towey, 2000).

### 2.1 Variables that affect the Nature of Reading

The following variables affect the way the readers read a text. There are different types of variables. Besides, there are stable characteristics of readers that affect the nature of reading such as sex, age, and personality (Nation, 2019). The variables that Nation mentions are background knowledge which includes knowledge of language, knowledge of genre/text type and cultural knowledge, Reader's purpose in reading by which he means different purposes why a person reads books; most importantly, there are three main purposes in reading. It can be for entertainment or pleasure, perhaps it is for learning new things or to review someone's work to write a report or assignment. Reader's interest is another variable that plays a remarkable role in reading. It refers to the personal interest in the act of reading, it can be counted by how much reading is done, and what a reader wants to read (Nation, 2019).

### 2.2 Role of the library and E-library on reading culture

Library has a priceless role in the educational sector and it is the base for any country's intellectual aspect. It can be regarded as a treasure of knowledge whether it is printed or non-printed formats. Libraries are regarded as the house of information and it allows the users to get through the printed and non-printed sources because it is regarded as a necessary aspect of the world's system of knowledge and education. Library provides an appropriate and effective environment in the society for reading because the library readers have a high awareness compared to other people in other public places. Another crucial characteristic of an effective reading environment is that the libraries make the appropriate number of books available. If there is no book there cannot be a reader. If the readers

exist there should be a book to be read (Hapel, 2009; Itsekor and Nwokeoma, 2017).

E-library on the other hand mostly refers to an online library that provides access to books, journals, novels, or articles. Readers at different levels or researchers may have access to many different libraries at home via the network. It is also called digital library in which collections of digital formats are stored. It's mainly opposed to printed books and other media that can be accessed and stored locally. Hence the idea of changing the university libraries into an online library is seen as a solution to encourage the reading habit. It's likely to discourage and decrease literacy rather than advancing it (Höppner et al., 2009). A study shows that electronic books have helped the students to get more reading material for students and it helps students improve their reading skills and comprehension as well. Electronic books allow users to be able to search and find specific information and manipulate the content (Grant, 2004; Elizabeth, 2003).

### 2.3 Poor Reading Culture

Reading universally is agreed to be a great activity to engage. However, cultures or people individually slowdown in reading and read a little or do not read at all for a long time. This phenomenon is regarded as a bad or poor reading culture. It can affect the personal career, academic and social life of the person or a group of people. Moreover, it can affect society, region, or the country as a whole. There are several reasons and factors that make this phenomenon exist, and different authors mention different factors to overcome this situation (Mohammed, 2011). The following reasons are the most effective reasons among all reasons according to different authors and they are:

#### 2.3.1 Lack of role models

A role model is a person that sets an example for a group of people in an aspect or several aspects of life. The number of role models can affect adults who are college students because they are influenced by other adults or role models. If the surrounding peers and adults especially those who are considered to be role models engage in bad habits or play an inactive role in reading promotion it will develop unhealthy or bad reading habits (Aina et al., 2011).

#### 2.3.2 Lack of adequate libraries

A study state that libraries are useful in giving the readers a big number of books and appropriate types of books (Aina et al., 2011). The readers also use library to get books for obtaining background information, pleasure, or college assignments. all of them will make a person develop, but what if a good library is not available in the area? According to the author, the lack of a decent library can build an unhealthy culture of reading. Especially those areas that cannot have access to E-library. If the readers cannot have the needed types of books on time even if the act of reading is done the effect will not be remarkable and they lose interest in reading.

#### 2.3.3 Effects of social media on reading culture

Previously, students and ordinary people were used to spending time with books in their leisure time and for pleasure. Most of the people were reading books to get novel knowledge and obtain up-to-date information. However, social media and technology have changed the lifestyle of many people, and even it distracts their attention. Hence it has a bad effect on reading habits (Agyekum, 2018).

#### 2.3.4 Video games

A researcher mentions that nowadays technology has controlled every aspect of our life such as emotions, minds, feeling, as well as reading (Mohammed, 2011). Most of the adults, including college students, have smartphones that they habitually use for gaming, they have even become common among them. Additionally, a considerable number of adults including university students have consoles that they use for gaming, and more dangerously they are reported to be addicted to gaming at that age. If the adults especially boys, according to the results of the writer, contribute that amount of time for gaming, they will grow a bad habit of reading since they do not have time for reading.

### 2.3.5 Teacher's responsibility

Teachers, instructors, and professors as individuals and the administration and authority in universities can have a role in improving reading culture. They can enable students to rely on different references for the course instruction and academic years. If they encourage students to read books for assignments and projects, it will grow a good habit of reading. Vice versa can make the students stop reading books or at least be discouraged. If students are provided with prepared handouts for their courses by teachers, they do not try to read books (Mohammed, 2011).

### 2.4 Strategies for improving Reading culture

The task of improving and developing reading culture is important for all organs in the society including the family, teachers, librarians, religious people, independent organizations, and the government, etc. The strategies include:

#### 2.4.1 Establishment of family libraries

Parents have a remarkable role to play in the development of the reading habit of their children at any age. Parents should always be aware of what their progenies read. Adults nowadays spend much more time watching television, video games, smartphone, and computers. Some of the adults nowadays consider reading to be boring, and some of them claim that they do not have time for it. Building a small library at home and filling it with books will give the owner an initial love for books. "Whoever loves books wants to own them, whoever owns books will love them" (Igwe, 2011).

#### 2.4.2 Group task activities in the university

Books and reading should be considered as a priority by meetings and seminars, especially when combined with discussions are highly important and the activity should not be expected only from university and library work, but youth groups should work and organize clubs and events for this purpose. Young people and adults show interest in group assignments which can be combined with books. Reading clubs, especially pocketbook clubs. The teacher should give them books to read and discuss under the leadership of one of the classmates. In the book clubs, books can also be related to young people's hobbies and used as the basis for discussions, exhibitions, and other activities, perhaps in photography, sport, film, etc. Often those who had hardly looked at a book suddenly begin to read about their hobbies or vocational interests as they discover that books can give them a great help (Aina et al., 2011).

#### 2.4.3 Promotion by parental activities

A child becomes a user of the public libraries early in life if their parents read books for them at early ages and give them appropriate books to read. They would be encouraged later when they grow up and become young at college. Parents can provide time for discussion of the books that their children have read to see the development of their children. Who is better than parents for recommending books for a person? Of course, no one, if they interact and understand their child to a good level (Aina et al., 2011).

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading culture is an important subject and so many researchers and scholars have conducted researches about the topic. The following studies are listed and mentioned chronologically from the oldest to the most recent ones:

Related research is about what teenagers read. The author surveyed 30 schools and mentioned gender differences. School students were between 11 to 15 years old. She used questionnaires that were filled by school students. In the aspect of reading habit, the results of the study evidenced that there is no remarkable decline in their reading habit compared with previous studies, and students were choosing to read non-fiction other than fiction, adolescents chose the books that their classmates or friends recommend for them i.e. they read what their friends have enjoyed, and this shows that adolescents mirror their peers (Hopper, 2005).

In 2007, another research was conducted by about reading habits in the digital age. This research was done at the Islamic University of Malaysia

(Abdul Karim and Hasan, 2007). They used a survey approach for data collection in which IT students and Arts students participated. The results of the paper confirmed that websites have an important role in developing a reading habit. Some researchers investigated the factors that encourage adolescents to read. Data, as analyzed, stated that the majority of the participants read in their spare time for three main reasons: fun and relaxation, to learn new things and because they were bored (Hughes-Hassell and Rodge, 2007). Respondents of those who did not enjoy reading indicated that they would rather watch television, spend time with their friends, surf the Web, or play video games.

Igwe did research about reading culture and Nigeria's quest for sustainable development. He mentioned the importance of libraries for developing a reading culture (Igwe, 2011). In the research, he mentioned some strategies to improve reading culture in Nigeria which are: giving education prior attention, the establishment of the national commission for libraries, creation of library periods in School timetable and, establishment of family libraries. Ruterana's aim was similar to the aims of our research, but his concern was about the lack of a reading culture among Rwandan's students (Ruterana's, 2012). He tried to find the answer of "What do students claim are the reasons for a poor reading culture in Rwanda?" and used an open questionnaire for the data collection. According to the findings of the paper, their education system, reliance on verbal communication, and limited access to reading materials were among the major reasons.

Some researchers talked about the effects of electronic books on college students (Chen et al., 2012). They did a questionnaire with a series of questions about college students to the address issue of "for what purpose do college students decide to purchase e-book for their study?" According to the results of the research, electronic books have a positive effect on the students. A group researcher defined the reading culture and showed the benefits of reading culture at the individual and national levels (Ogugua et al., 2015). They also mentioned the local and international strategies for reading improvement at different levels. The paper contained problems and constraints that face reading culture development in that country by mentioning the major factors affecting it. The authors have concluded it by listing a remarkable number of different solutions for previous local problems.

Palembang demonstrated the major differences in reading habit and reading comprehension achievements between the eleventh graders who used e-books and those who used printed books, He used a descriptive survey design, a questionnaire, and interviews (Palembang, 2016). It was concluded that e-books help students in improving their reading and reading comprehension achievements. Reading and developing countries are considered incompatible as mentions; his focus was on Africa (Nsiah, 2019). He tries to find the factors causing the problem and find some measures to solve it. The findings of the paper show different factors as the increasing apathy towards the habit of reading, an oral and necessarily chatting society, and social media. And he suggests that the government and educational institutions should work to encourage the reading culture by mentally supporting, and motivating, and providing requirements so that reading can affect t

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Setting and Participants

This study is conducted in three universities in the Kurdistan regional government of Iraq (the University of Halabja, University of Sulaimani, and Salahaddin University-Erbil). Participants in the study were 128 students (28 male and 100 female) students in stage 1 (n = 13), 2 (n = 60), 3 (n = 23), and 4 (n = 22). Approximately 38 percent of the students were in the University of Halabja, 25 Percent of the students were in the University of Sulaimani, and 37 percent of the students were in Salahaddin University-Erbil. The number and percentage of the participant's gender are shown in table one.

**Table 1: Number and percentage of the participant's gender**

gender	Frequency	Percentage
male	27	21.5%
female	95	78.5%

The following table shows the number and percentage of the participants in three different mentioned universities:

Table 2: Number and percentage of the participants		
University	Frequency	Percentage
University of Halabja	51	42.1%
University of Salahadin	39	32.2%
University of Suleimani	32	25.6%

Table 3 Shows the number and percentage of the students according to four different stages.

Table 3: Number and percentage of the students according to stages		
Stage	Frequency	Percentage
First	13	9.9%
Second	54	44.6%
Third	22	27.3%
Fourth	33	18.2%
Total	122	100%

Table 4 shows the number and percentage of the students' age groups:

Table 4: Participants age groups		
Age	frequency	Percentage
18-20	71	58.7%
21-23	44	35.5%
Over 23	7	5.8%

#### 4.2 Instruments

The instruments used in this research are a questionnaire and some interviews. The questionnaire was made by researchers and carried out through google form. As well as the draft of the questionnaire was drawn based on the researchers' reading, experience, and previous global studies. In the preparation of this instrument, good design collection requirements are considered. Such as, Yes, No questions, and Likert scale items. These ways were effective to obtain the desired responses from the participants in the study. Next, the interview was done equally in the three mentioned universities. The teachers and employees were interviewed who were in the field and were considered to be aware of the issue. The interviewed people are at a good level of responsibilities and academic experience. They are asked five remarkable questions that they can answer based on their experience, perspective, vision, and creativity. The questions can be

answered subjectively and their responses tell us great things regarding the study, and their ideas are important for the study.

#### 4.3 Procedure

We have used almost equivalent numbers of participants from all three universities. It is to obtain the characteristics regarding reading, reading culture, and libraries. The participants randomly have participated in the questionnaire among all universities and four stages of their department. The questionnaire was meant to consider the genders to be equal for both genders, but the participants are remarkably female. It is only because male participants were fewer, and they didn't want to participate. The questionnaire at the University of Sulaimani couldn't be given to the participants and explain to them because of the recent case in the region and across the world, which is co-vid19 spread, and universities and administrations are shut. Hence it was given to them in a Google Doc, to fill it online. The questionnaire required 10 to 15 minutes to fill.

#### 4.4 Ethical Consideration

This research contains a questionnaire and an interview for the questionnaire. Some personal information was asked and required for submitting the questionnaire. All the information is used only for the research and the identity of the participant is completely anonymous. However, the participants in the interview are known to some extent and their identities are known. It is all conducted under the supervision of the university and the supervisor. After approval from the University of Halabja was obtained to conduct the study. Permission and sufficient support are obtained for the mentioned tools in all three universities. The research has not violated the three main principles of the Belmont report, soundly beneficence, respect for human dignity, as we as justice.

### 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the quantitative data collected through the survey questionnaire and demonstrated with the help of the tables will be presented and explained. After the presentation of data findings, discussions, and implications of findings to theory and practice are discussed. Then the qualitative part starts which is an interview with some specialists.

#### 5.1 Yes/No Questions

Table 5 shows the number and percentage of students answers for yes/no questions:

Table 5: Number and percentage of students answers for yes/no questions						
Questions	Yes	No	Undecided			
	frequency	percentage	Frequency	Percentage	frequency	percentage
Is there an appropriate place for reading on the university campus?	93	76.9%	21	17.4%	7	5.8%
Are there sufficient types of books in university libraries that you want to read?	53	43.8%	42	34.7%	26	21.5%
Do you use e-books?	50	41.3%	60	49.6%	11	9.1%
Do you have access to e-books at university?	26	21.5%	67	55.4%	28	23.1%

For the first question, 76.9% of the students said that they have appropriate places for reading in university and 17.4% said we do not have an appropriate place for reading, and 5.8% were undecided. This means that in Kurdistan universities, there are appropriate places for reading; the university environments are good for reading. For the second question, 43.8% of students said that there are sufficient types of books in

university libraries. 34.7% of students said there are not sufficient, and 21.5% undecided. This data tells us we have a place for reading but we do not have enough sources. For the third question, 41.3% of students use e-books, 49.6% of students do not use e-books, and 9.1% are undecided. This data shows that many university students in Kurdistan are not still familiar with e-books. For the fourth question, in universities just 21.5%

said they have access to e-books; 55.4% of them do not have access to e-books and 23.1% are undecided. This means that most of the students do not get benefits from e-books. But we know that e-books help students to get sources easier. So, we have to motivate students to use e-books.

## 5.2 Statements

Table 6 shows the percentage of the participants' answers for the statements of the questionnaire:

Statements	Strongly agree	agree	natural	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. University libraries provide a good atmosphere for reading.	13.2%	36.4%	35.5%	9.9%	5%
2. Library staff treats me fairly and without discrimination.	9.1%	40.5%	37.2%	9.2%	4.1%
3. Resources are appropriate for my academic needs.	4.1%	37.2%	37.2%	16.5%	5%
4. Resources are up to date and relevant.	8.3%	28.1%	45.5%	10.7%	7.4%
5. I usually find the resources I need.	3.3%	34.7%	33.1%	20.7%	8.3%
6. I habitually read books for pleasure.	13.2%	40.5%	31.4%	12.4%	2.5%
7. E-Books are more user-friendly.	11.6%	28.1%	32.2%	24%	4.1%
8. I provide more than an hour to reading each day.	15.7%	22.3%	33.1%	18.2%	10.7%
9. My teachers motivate me to read.	28.9%	41.3%	14%	9.9%	5.8%
10. My cultural environment motivates me to read.	10.7%	23.1%	24.8%	28.9%	12.4%
11. My family motivates me to read.	26.4%	31.4%	20.7%	17.4%	4.1%
12. I read books to get background knowledge.	32.2%	51.2%	12.4%	2.5%	0.8%
13. Books are affordable to buy in my country.	19%	42.1%	28.9%	8.3%	1.7%

According to the data collected for the first statement, university libraries have a good atmosphere for reading; 13.2% of students strongly agree with that 36.4% are agree and 35.5% are said it is neutral. 9.9% disagree and 5% strongly disagree, they said that universities do not have a good atmosphere for reading. For the second statement, library staffs are very helpful. They help students to get what they want in university libraries. 9.1% strongly agree and 40.5% agree with that. 37.2% said they are natural, 9.2% disagree and 4.1% strongly disagree. They said that the library staffs are not good. For the third statement, approximately half of the students agree that the resources are appropriate for academic needs. 4.1% strongly agree, 37.2% agree. Also, 37.2% said natural 16.5% disagree and 5% strongly disagree.

For the fourth statement, 8.3% strongly agree and 28.1% agree that the resources are up to date and relevant. 45.5% said that they are neutral. 10.7% disagree and 7.4% strongly disagree. In the fifth statement, 38% said that they get what they want in university libraries. 3.3% are strongly agreed and 36.7% agree. 33.1% natural. 20.7% disagree and 8.3% strongly disagree, they said that they do not get enough sources in university libraries. For statement six, most of the students read books for pleasure 13.2% strongly agree with that 40.5% are agree, 31.4% are neutral. There are few students that they do not read for pleasure. 20.7% disagree 8.3% strongly disagree. For the seventh statement, e-books are more user-friendly, 11.6% strongly agree, 28.1% agree, 32.2% natural, 24% disagree and 4.1% strongly disagree. In statement eight those students who read for an hour each day are less than half of the students 15.7% strongly agree 22.3% agree. This data shows that 38% of the students read books daily. 33.1% natural, 18.2% disagree and 10.2% strongly disagree. In statement nine, teachers motivate students to read 28.1% strongly agree and 41.3% agree. This data shows that teachers are good motivators for students. 14% natural. 9.9% disagree and 5.3% strongly disagree. In statement ten, the cultural environment has affected the habit of reading and it is one of the reasons for poor reading culture.

We asked students if the cultural environment motivates them to read. 12.4% strongly disagree and 28.4% disagree. 24.8% natural. 23.1% agree with that and 10.7% strongly agree. In statement eleven, to which extent families motivate their children. 26.4% strongly agree, 31.4% agree, 20.7% natural, 17.4% disagree and 4.1% strongly disagree. This means that Kurd families motivate their children to read. In statement twelve, most of the students read to get background knowledge. 32.2% strongly agree, 51.2% agree, 12.4% natural, 2.5% disagree, 0.8% strongly disagree. In statement thirteen, books in our country are not much expensive are affordable to buy. 19% strongly agree, 42.1% agree, 28.9% natural, 8.3% disagree, 1.7% strongly disagree.

## 5.3 Interviewers

Despite the questionnaire, the researchers carried out a short interview

with three university lecturers, one of them is the director of the general library in one of the universities, to ask about reading culture among their students. In answering the first question "How do see the level of reading habit in Kurdistan?", all three participants mentioned that it was weaker than needed. One of them said "culturally we as Kurds have not used to read" another one said "in Kurdistan reading has not been habit yet" and they gave different reasons for that shortage including the Kurdish culture, historical factors, quality of translated books, social media. While the third participant was more optimistic he said "we have to be optimistic, there are a lot of people who read who want to read they have this potential and this desire to read".

In answering the factors affecting poor reading culture among university students, the participants mentioned the following factors:

1. In the university, students think that they are under the world wants to get certifications. This mindset is a big problem they think when they get a certification, that's at the highest point of the desires and goals there is nothing more too.
2. Some university students think the textbooks in the program are enough but that is not enough they should follow more
3. A part of this is the responsibility of the teachers they do not push and encourage the students to go and research other books. They do not be great at marks. You know they behind marks, look after marks. So, the teacher may not give them this mark to follow the desire of reading books. They provide providing handouts and pamphlets to their students.
4. Misuse of technology is another factor mentioned by the interviewees. The third question was "what needs to be done to develop and promote reading culture, especially by teachers and universities?" and all of the interviewees stated, unfortunately, Kurdistan universities do not set very much plan for planting and installing the desire of reading in the mind of the students. The government should have a plan, educations institutions and the universities should have a plan they should hold meetings to discuss that in conferences and workshops, they should provide good books and fill in the library shelves with modern sources, plus e-library, teach the students to love books. Media should take a role, teachers should be leaders to encourage and push their students to be readers. Unfortunately, some teachers are not happy with the critical thinking that the students have. When they read something else outside the curriculum. The teachers think that the students should not think outside the box they just said follow the things that the teachers ask them. This mentality should be changed. Social awareness among parents to bring up their children on the principles of reading is highly important and so that we build a kind of awareness in the society that reading is as important as food. Another one thinks the creative active reading group is effective, concentrating on books inside the classes by teachers and limiting the usage of social media and technology are also important points.

The answer to “do eBooks improve reading habits?” was yes by one of the interviewees, both dimensional by the second and no by the other. One of them thinks that e-books are developing the student’s skills like problem-solving, time management, and communication, contributing to lifelong learning and carrier skills that will be very helpful and supportive for the readers disregarding their fields and language sorts. On the other hand, another interviewee believes that some pdf books have had given chance to the readers generally because they are very cheap and do not cost money given the access to get reach the books that only not found on libraries but also found on the internet, therefore they have broadened the chance of the readers to get access to the books that are not found in libraries or bookshops, but another thing is the pleasure and the enjoyment that we get from the hard copies but not from eBooks that much. The third interviewee has the opposite opinion. He thinks students do not want to read books as pdf. Because they get to enjoy more from books not form pdf books, and books are better. This does not mean that eBooks are not good. They have a benefit and make things easier. But he was with books note-book.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion of the questionnaire and the interview answers. The following conclusions are drawn:

- Reading books has not become a habit among university students in Kurdistan, and they have given little or no attention to reading books both concerning the textbooks and extra reading.
- Students do not provide much time for reading books; they read books for less than an hour per day.
- Kurdish culture, lack of role models, insufficient libraries, and handouts of lectures provided by lecturers are among factors of poor reading culture among university students; cultural environment demotivates them to read. However, families motivate them to read.
- There are appropriate places for reading at Kurdistan universities and library staff are helpful. But there are not sufficient types of books in university libraries.
- Kurdish students do not use e-books, and they do not have access to e-books. Hence e-book is not a reliable and familiar version of books to Kurdish EFL learners.
- Most of the students read for pleasure. and university lecturers motivate students to read more.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

- When the teachers and professors of the university provide students with handouts, most of the students will no longer search for extra sources regarding the topic, and it results in less extra reading. So teachers should encourage students for reading whether it is about the subject or not by giving assignments and/or group reading and programs like reading competition. Teachers should create environments that promote students’ interest in reading.
- Universities and the departments in specific should set a specific time in the schedule for the students to read their favorite books.
- Parents should encourage their children by providing time for reading at home, having a decent library at home, creating an interesting environment for reading such as a specific area for reading, and being a role model for their surrounding people.
- the students should use technology carefully to avoid wasting their time with unnecessary and irrelevant information.

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