

**READING ATTITUDES AND HABITS
OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

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**READING ATTITUDES AND HABITS
OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
IPTA	Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam (Public Higher Education Institute)
IPG	Institut Pendidikan Guru (Teacher Education Institute)
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EL	English Language
CPT	Cambridge Placement Test
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
HOTS	Higher Order Thinking Skills
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
JPN	Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (State Education Department)
PPD	Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah (District Education Office)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SMK	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan
RELC	Regional Education Learning Centre
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ERAS	Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
RBQ	Reading Behaviour Questionnaire
TATRS	Teachers' Attitudes Towards Reading Scale
SK	Sekolah Kebangsaan (Primary School)
SJKC	Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina (Chinese Primary School)
SJKT	Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil (Tamil Primary School)
ARP	Accelerated Reader Program
DEAR	Drop Everything and Read
SSR	Sustained Silent Reading

SIKAP DAN TABIAT MEMBACA DALAM KALANGAN GURU BAHASA INGGERIS SEKOLAH RENDAH

ABSTRAK

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk melihat sikap dan tabiat membaca guru-guru bahasa Inggeris di sekolah rendah di Daerah Kinta, Perak. Objektif kajian untuk mengenalpasti jenis bahan bacaan yang dibaca oleh guru-guru berkenaan. Selain itu, tujuan dan faktor-faktor yang menghalang guru-guru ini daripada membaca juga dikaji. Seterusnya, fokus kajian juga memberi cadangan yang diperlukan untuk meningkatkan sikap dan tabiat membaca dalam kalangan guru berkenaan. Metodologi penyelidikan deskriptif dengan menggunakan soal selidik dan temuduga telah digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklumat daripada 204 (untuk soal selidik) dan 13 (temuduga) daripada guru-guru bahasa Inggeris di sekolah-sekolah rendah di Daerah Kinta, Perak. Dapatan analisis kuantitatif menunjukkan pada keseluruhan, responden mempunyai sikap positif terhadap membaca ($M=4.24$, $SD=0.723$) dan tabiat membaca pada tahap sederhana ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.844$). Analisis Varian (Analysis of Variance – ANOVA) menunjukkan tiada perbezaan yang signifikan dalam sikap membaca berdasarkan pembolehubah demografi : jantina dan kualifikasi guru. Walaubagaimanapun, dapatan menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan signifikan di antara kaum, kumpulan umur dan jumlah tahun dan pengalaman mengajar. Tujuan utama guru-guru bahasa Inggeris di sekolah rendah membaca adalah untuk memperoleh ilmu, untuk menduduki peperiksaan dan untuk tujuan penyelidikan. Faktor-faktor yang menghalang mereka daripada membaca adalah kos bahan bacaan dan kurang motivasi diri untuk membaca. Walaubagaimanapun, dapatan kualitatif menunjukkan

guru mempunyai kesedaran membaca yang positif dan tabiat membaca yang baik. Ianya penting untuk meningkatkan kefasihan bahasa dan keyakinan mereka dan dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran di kelas. Dapatan kualitatif juga menunjukkan akibat daripada beban kerja, mereka kurang membaca kerana kebanyakan masa dihabiskan dengan melakukan kerja-kerja sekolah. Implikasi kajian ini, guru-guru bahasa Inggeris di sekolah rendah perlu meningkatkan sikap dan tabiat membaca. Langkah-langkah perlu diambil oleh Kementerian Pendidikan dan *stakeholder* untuk melihat isu ini dalam kalangan guru-guru bahasa Inggeris di sekolah rendah dengan lebih mendalam.

READING ATTITUDES AND HABITS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the reading attitudes and habits of primary school English language teachers in Kinta District, Perak. The study is also aimed to find the selection of reading materials, the purpose of reading and the factors that hinder primary school English Language teachers from reading. The study also focused to suggest measures that are needed to improve the reading habits among these teachers. An explanatory mixed method design using questionnaires and interviews were applied to obtain information from 204 and 13 respondents respectively from English language primary school teachers in the Kinta District, Perak. The findings from the quantitative analysis revealed that teachers had an overall positive attitude towards reading ($M=4.24$, $SD=.723$) but only moderate level of reading habit ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.844$). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed no significant differences in reading attitude based on demographic variables: on gender and teachers' qualifications. However, the results indicated significant differences between ethnicities, age groups and years of teaching experience. Results showed that the main purpose for teachers to read was for knowledge, examination or research purposes. The major factors hindering them from reading were cost factor and lack of self- motivation. However, in the qualitative findings, teachers revealed that they are aware of positive reading attitude and good reading habits are important to improve their proficiency level, build their confidence in the language and enhance their teaching practices. It also revealed that teachers were burdened with workload, thus hindering them from reading extensively. The implication of this study is, it is

essential for English language teachers to have positive reading attitudes and habits to improve their proficiency in the language and obtain pedagogy knowledge in teaching. It is suggested that measures need to be taken by the Education Departments and stakeholders regarding the reading attitude and habits of the primary school English language teachers with great concern.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A positive and effective reading attitude and habit within a society is an important and crucial need. A positive reading attitude and a good reading habit is a progressive way to sharpen and broaden the mind's intellect. Furthermore, it also gives room to a dissemination of experiences and knowledge as often highlighted by most researchers of reading habits. Abramson (2004) as cited in Scott and Saaiman (2006), stated that being a good reader is not a luxury in this 21st century. It is a necessary life skill since it is one of the most effective skills and means of personality refinement and proficiency development.

According to Lone, 2011, reading skills can be seen as a necessary tool for a person to participate effectively in social life. It is also a vehicle to transform individuals to become better and successful people in terms of their speaking and writing skills besides creating opportunities to achieve scholastic success. It is a necessary behaviour to polish one's survival skills and in making better judgements in viewing ideas, thoughts and the surroundings in this advance age where information is sought every second.

An individual's regular reading in a consistent manner creates positive reading attitude and habit within himself or herself. In accordance to that, these characteristics are vital for the individual to see the world in a more refined manner, such as in making

correct judgements or decisions in a systematic and rational manner. To achieve this level, extensive reading is definitely important for the enhancement of reading skills and acquisition of knowledge (Tien, 2015). Teachers are often referred to as knowledge providers to their students, thus they need to possess a good reading behavior and should be motivated readers.

Reading is an essential and effective language skill to extract information, attain knowledge and deliver views on many genres. To the language teachers, especially English language teachers, reading should be enjoyed as its benefits are many. Reading extensively and continuously would help transcend the information, knowledge and views read in various ways. One way is to build their ideology and perspective in many aspects as in helping them in their teaching methodology and also in instilling reading culture among their students. In addition, a good reading attitude and habit among the people in the society would help develop and progress the society's education, social and economic condition effectively.

Literacy and language are intertwined. Reading and the language used for reading are also interrelated. Since this study focuses on English reading attitudes and habits among primary school English language teachers, the language and literacy would address mainly on English language and teachers who teach this language. To language teachers, especially primary school teachers, who are providers of knowledge and values to young minds in the school, it is an essential habitual action that they should possess a very positive reading attitude and good habit to keep abreast with the needs of their pedagogical principles and strategies of teaching.

A habitual reading teacher is very important and relevant as a role model and means of reference for his or her students. Besides, where language is concerned, the primary school English Language (EL) teachers play major roles in portraying model readers to their students. Gambrell, (2011), also mentioned that this was obviously true for students to also be good readers in their later grades as well. Teachers by and large should then portray themselves as good readers first before they teach reading or other language skills effectively to their students. The importance of adults modelling reading as an important and pleasurable skill (Brown, 2009) creates a greater impact on their students rather than teachers often telling their students to read.

In the Malaysian context, EL plays an important role not only as a second language, but also as a language of reference and importance in schools and higher learning institutions. Attaining the proficiency of this language is indeed an asset to its learners, especially the teachers and students alike. EL proficiency is a desirable form of social and linguistic capital, whereby individuals seek to acquire it and governments want to promote it (Baldauf, 2012).

A model and proficient language teacher carries many forms of characteristics as an educator in and outside classroom. Teachers are often looked upon by parents and the society in two aspects. Firstly, teachers are looked upon for their credibility in delivering knowledge and information effectively to their students. Secondly, the portrayal of their personality traits such as being helpful, kind, caring and motivating towards their students.

Therefore, to be able to carry out the 21st century teaching environment in the classroom, teachers have to be affluent, efficient and effective in delivering their lessons with the latest strategies and approaches. To do so, they need to possess positive attitude towards reading which would lead them to be habitual readers. Thus, EL teachers play very crucial role as good readers to promote a higher level of EL proficiency and also as examples of good readers to their students.

1.2 Background of the Study

In the Malaysian Education Blueprint year 2013-2025, the Second Shift mentions the need in up skilling the EL teachers' language proficiency. One good way for the EL teachers to attain that is through reading extensively. It is mandatory for the EL teachers to cultivate positive reading attitude and good reading habit within themselves. A high level of standard and language proficiency in the English language is a necessity for teachers who are teaching that subject. Generally in all countries, teachers are the assets of the development of the society. Their commitment to instill knowledge and values besides language proficiency in their students are very essential. In addition, the need to be affluent in EL is a must to teachers of the EL. The weight is even greater since EL is the second language in Malaysia. Indirectly, EL teachers become an important factor who fulfill the aspirations of the country and their students' future achievements.

Teachers who read widely and who are interested in reading are often exemplars to their students and schools. Furthermore, it is undeniable that primary school teachers are relatively important in influencing their pupils to have a passion

for reading. As language teachers, they are the models to create a reading-promoting classroom environment. In relation to that, teachers have to patronize themselves in positive reading attitude and good reading habit so that they can instill these characteristics in their students.

In the lifespan of a teacher, reading is an essential behavioural factor particularly as they respond to new demands and changes in their teaching career. However, the question is always how much and what the teachers read to make them proficient readers. Researchers have also often mentioned that a teacher's ability to encourage a disposition to read may be linked to their personal reading habits and views of literacy (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Powell-Brow, 2004). If the teachers' personal reading habit and his or her view on literacy is positive, then his or her disposition to read would be higher. Hence, it can be summarised that teachers who possess more enthusiasm in literacy attitudes and behaviours would be more effective in reading and at the same time their pedagogical practices and in cultivating their students to read inside and outside of the classroom would be greater. Nevertheless, it can also be stated that teachers who are good readers may enhance their teaching practices, proficiency level and their confidence in their EL.

Malaysia aspires to become a fully developed industrialized nation by the year 2020. Based on the aspirations to become an industrialized nation, Malaysia has made many conscious efforts to improve and develop literacy so that it will achieve a literacy rate of 100% by the year 2020 (Inderjit, 2014). Knowing this, the National Library of Malaysia has initiated various efforts to encourage reading to the population in Malaysia. Furthermore, in developing an information rich society means that there

need to be sufficient local and abroad reading materials to meet the needs of the people. Various reading genres and resources are still scarce in departments of education in Malaysia, especially in school libraries. Authentic or e-reading materials are not available in abundance for teachers. It is indeed an issue to be looked into by the responsible departments. It is also an urgent matter because most reading materials are expensive in Malaysia.

In the last decade, concerns on improving the quality of education have led to several initiatives being taken by the Malaysian government. In regard to that, in year 2012, the Malaysian Education Blueprint was presented to enable a reconstruction in the educational policy. One of the many reasons seriously debated was the declining level of English language proficiency and fluency among graduates. It was considered as one of the major factors contributing to the graduates being unemployed.

A survey conducted by the Malaysian government published the results on graduate employability in 2012. One of the survey findings from Malaysian employers stated that the most common problems among graduates seeking jobs was their poor command of the English language (55.8%) followed by poor character/attitude or personality (37.4%) and unrealistic salary/benefits (33%), as stated by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2012). It was and still is a serious issue because though many ways and channels are available to learn and apply the English language, the tendency of not being competent in the language is still obvious among many students and teachers. Where English language competency is specifically concerned, studies have shown that there is a global concern about the increasing gap between the level

of competency of the graduates and the level needed for employment (Sarudin et al. 2013).

A survey done by the Ministry of Arts and Culture in 1996 indicated that Malaysians do not have much interest in reading because 60.4% survey respondents mentioned that they have other interests besides reading. 15.2% stated they have no leisure time and the rest indicated having no interest in reading.

The issue of literacy and English language proficiency among teachers are often highlighted in the media. Generally, Malaysians' reading habits are not considered very satisfying. The survey conducted by the National Library of Malaysia in 2010 revealed that Malaysians have shown a better increase in their book reading, which is 8 to 12 books a year. The recent statistic highlighted by the National Library of Malaysia showed that the reading materials borrowed by readers increased from 24,715 books in January 2017 to 28,846 in March 2017. However, statistics still show that readers in the western countries read at least 20 books per year.

To address the reading issue recently, the Youth and Sports Ministry of Malaysia, Khairy Jamalluddin, came up with a 'Read Malaysia' campaign to cultivate the reading habit amongst the Malaysian youth. He mentioned that, as stated in the daily newspaper 'The Sun' on 16 April 2016, that it is important to encourage Malaysians to develop the reading habit from young. He added the programme is launched with the collaboration of relevant parties like the National Library and Education Ministry of Malaysia. Khairy also quoted the popular statistics which

revealed Malaysians on average read only two books per year and emphasised this has to change.

In the popular Bernama news, dated June 15, 2016, the Raja Muda of Perlis, Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Ibni Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Jamullail also mentioned that the nation's reading habit is still considered quite low. He stressed the reading habit was found to decrease as a person aged. He highlighted Malaysia as being far behind where the reading habit is concerned compared to other developed countries in the world. His speech at 'Titian Kasih Mega' programme at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Merpati, Kangar, Perlis also addressed the importance of reading practice to increase knowledge as well as to cultivate the language at an early stage and the best approach in fostering knowledge of a nation, as well as to generate mental development of a person is through the practice of continuous reading, and not just for examination-oriented reasons. He further urged schools to encourage the reading habit by giving several suggestions such as by classifying important topics for easy focus by the students, holding an hour after school hours and participating in activities such as short stories, essays and article writing contests or competitions. He also added that besides conventional reading materials, the use of electronic reading materials such as laptops and electronic books should be encouraged.

In the Malaysian Vision 2020, the government of Malaysia has set a goal to achieve the status of a developed country by 2020 (Sarji, 1993). One of the key objectives was to ensure that the Malaysian population has achieved a certain level of competency in the nation's second language which is the English language. This burden is in fact put upon the shoulders of the language teachers and it is a big

responsibility for English language teachers. If the English language teachers are not competent enough in that language, there would be another major issue here. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that English language teachers prepare themselves by having a positive attitude towards reading, often indulging in reading and making reading a routine habit.

In line to that, the Ministry has worked with the Teacher Education Institutes or Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to ensure that the quality of the curriculum and lecturers are upgraded to deliver the kind of teachers desired for the nation. The Ministry also introduced more stringent graduation requirements in the hope that only the best trainees are able to graduate and be guaranteed placement in the Malaysian schools.

The MOHE starting from year 2013 intended to raise the entry bar to Teacher Training Institutes and only the best candidates were to be recruited as teachers. This meant that the Ministry of Education was seriously enforcing entry standards to ensure that 100% of every teacher training intake meet the minimum academic requirement. In accordance to that, the Ministry also worked hand in hand with the MOHE to ensure that the same standards were put in place in the Public Higher Education Institutes or Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam (IPTA) teacher training programmes. Though the move or rule was a positive one, it also has to consider the candidates' other qualities such as their abilities in speaking and reading. If these individuals do not have the reading interest, they may surely cause a certain degree of harm to the entire programme.

Reading helps to mould a person's character and having a positive attitude and good reading habit, reading the right type of books; that is, books that entertain but, at the same time educate, is very crucial (Busayo, 2005). Teachers' lives are much connected to the requirement of reading because many activities surrounding their environment need the ability to read. In this scenario, the role of the teacher as a good reader or who reads at a regular basis is more likely to provide opportunity for students to engage more in reading. This is because teachers who are avid readers of various types of reading materials would absorb certain types of methodology or strategy in their teaching practices which would benefit their students' knowledge and proficiency level. It would also promote the teachers' status-quo in the teaching profession.

Teachers who read for pleasure gain benefits in terms of increased vocabulary, enhancing their writing skills and critical thinking and also on new or latest ideas in the teaching and learning which are much needed in today's 21st century classroom. Reading for pleasure or recreational reading has been found to improve reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and grammatical development (Krashen, 1993). These rewarding effects will help the development of the language teachers. Positive reading attitude and good reading habits play critical roles in the development of academic and intellectual prowess and the associated socio-economic benefits which is much needed for teachers generally. The influx of reading teachers definitely would have positive influence on the public education at all levels gradually.

Reading has to be generally accepted as a way for reaching new information and should be consistent with the comprehension capabilities of the individuals (Ozbay, 2006). In this light, teachers in this era must instill this culture in them first

and be more advanced readers than their students. Only then can they arouse a positive reading sensation among their students. In other words, the reading preference of one person as a pastime or pleasure can be seeking for information for another (Ogeyik, 2008). Cultivating a positive and good reading habit thus is vital especially among language teachers.

A study conducted by Ambigapathy (2000) on trainee teachers to extract information on their literacy behavior stated that trainee teachers should understand the critical role they play in the education of young people. In his research he also claimed that the teachers' literacy behavior influences their students' literacy behavior. Thus, the study indicated that the trainee teachers have to instill positive reading attitude and habit toward reading from the time they are trained in the teacher training institutions so that this attitude and habit would continue to manifest when they become trained teachers later.

The role of EL teachers, in students' reading development has been a debatable subject in the past years in Malaysia and in even every part of the world. Reading, especially reading English language materials, helps the students to progress better in the language. It is thus the duty of the language teacher to instill this value in their students. A teacher should be a reading model because literary skills have concrete stand on affecting the cognition development. A good reading habit actually helps the process of 'mental growth.' In addition to personal and mental developments, reading is an access to social, economic and civic life development (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). As EL is the second language in our country, EL teachers should play the important role in seeding the 'mental growth' in their students.

In fact, teachers' habits and practices are important for improving the educational processes in terms of mastering the language skills, especially in primary schools. Trelease (2006) observes that teachers are seldom seen reading. A good teacher must have a broad information base and should not depend on their lesson notes, which cannot contain all the information on a given topic (Palani, 2012). In brief, positive literacy behavior has to be inculcated throughout the lifespan of a language teacher.

The researchers, Sulentic-Dowell, Beal, and Capraro (2006), based on their study, found that Mathematic teachers who read for pleasure were more likely to engage students in various exciting strategies to solve mathematic problems. In line with that, the survey conducted by Applegate & Applegate (2004) also agree that literature circles and book clubs are more optimistic when led by teachers who view reading as an aesthetic value. Reading teachers stand as role models to motivate their students to read as a pleasurable task. Since reading is a complex process and can be challenging, it is believed that if it is cultivated and motivated, it would eventually develop a love for reading for the teachers, as this is a necessity in their career.

Teachers who possess good reading habits exhibit good reading culture which can help the growth of the students' academic achievement and their judge mental analysis. Therefore, it is definitely important to participate in various types of reading because one could increase his or her "vocabulary development, fluency, comprehension and general intellectual development" (McKool, 2007, p.111). Reading also helps broaden the readers' experiences and general knowledge (Abreyrantha & Zainab, 2004). In saying so, the important people who can play

effective role in encouraging pupils to read actively and extensively would be teachers who are avid readers.

Applegate and Applegate (2004) stated that the teacher as an explicit reading model is believed to be one of the key factors in motivating students to read. Recent research has also indicated teachers' classroom teaching methodology may be linked to their leisure reading habits as what Mc Kool and Gespass (2009) highlighted that teachers who read often for pleasure were more likely to use a variety of best practices in classroom teaching. In short, by modeling a personal excitement for reading, teachers can help to motivate students (Applegate & Applegate, 2004) to be better readers.

Reading endearment and putting passion towards reading as a routine habit in teachers should be a prerequisite task instilled in all teachers. Teachers, especially primary school teachers are the pillars of building a young reading society. They are actually the foundation to this fast-moving society of high technology and automation. Hence for sure they need to possess a good reading behaviour to create a reading culture among their students. It is a fact that the organisations of all academic achievement has caused a high demand for the quest of reading. And the ability to read efficiently and effectively is definitely a key to success for language teachers. Since reading is one of the most effective means of developing an individual and to maximize the potential of an individual, a strong culture of reading is essential. The lack of good reading habit may threaten the society deeply for professional advancement.

Reading habit among Malaysians has been stressed since the early 1970s because reading had an impact on the growth of Malaysia's socioeconomic development. However, the interest or habit of reading among Malaysians is not an encouraging scenario as until today the percentage of habitual reading among Malaysians is not very encouraging. According to the National Literacy Survey carried out in 1996 by the Malaysian National Library, the average Malaysian reads only two books a year. In 2010, the statistic showed an average Malaysian only reads two to eight books per year, though the Malaysian government targeted to have Malaysians read at least 10 books yearly from 2010. On 31st January 2007, Datuk Wong Kam Hong, the then Cultural, Art and Heritage Deputy Minister, stated that Malaysians only read an average of 5 books a year in 2006. The statistic he mentioned revealed that people in Britain and Japan read an average of 20 books a year. That information on reading habit does not reflect a reading society among Malaysians.

The Audit Bureau of Circulation released its first half of 2016 The Star newspaper readership, revealing that it remains the nation's highest circulated English daily newspaper in Malaysia at a circulation of 359,442 on a daily basis. Even the epaper rose by 5% from 105,645 to 110,883 in the second half of 2015. This revelation though is positive and heart-warming, however, showed that half the total number of readers were from the age group of over 40. The second highest group comprised readers' aged between 30 and 39. Seriously, this cannot be much applauded because the reading group was not from the age group 18 and 25. In fact, based on Nielsen's latest survey, the daily readership of 'The Star' grew to 1.4 million readers in 2016, the readership statistic does not exactly reveal who were the readers.

In another survey, the National Statistics Department as mentioned in the daily newspaper 'The Malay Mail' on August 27, 2006 stated that more than half of the 60,441 odd Malaysians surveyed, said they read less than 7 pages a day. It also revealed that 55% of those aged 10 to 24, read books. The National Statistics Department's statistics earlier in 2002 in fact exposed that Malaysian students read two books a year. However, it did not reveal any e-reading statistic. The whole scenario indicates that most young Malaysians do not read enough. A nation that is developed should have the quality or state of a literate society which means reading takes place not only at surface level but at all levels of age and situations.

To add on Cox and Guthrie (2001) observed that, teachers' reading culture has a strong impact on the acquisition of reading skills and strategies which are vital in acquiring reading frequency, motivation, and cognitive ability. Thus, an increase in reading attitudes may boost the cognitive abilities of the teachers. Teachers somehow or rather need to face the 21st Century reading culture, whereby reading becomes a continued resource for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, for gaining information through media like newspaper, books, magazines, television, computers and hand phones. It is evident that reading and information skills need to be often updated and if teachers lack to attain all these resources to read actively, they may be left behind in this fast moving generation.

Most teachers in both primary and secondary level, focus their interest in reading when there is a necessity, for example to obtain information to substantiate their teaching materials or merely reading the newspaper for the sake of knowing the current issues. It is not done in a regular basis or as an enjoyment. Most teachers at

this present situation have to be computer competent, furthermore the information age requires one to operate the computer well, to master the skills of computing and understanding or adopting the new technology. And to be able to operate all these functions, one still needs to read. Currently, online reading, particularly in the EL, is another important means of reading habit in today's scenario which compliments to other mediums of reading.

However, the latest audio visual and online materials may not fully take the significant role of reading the conventional way. It is because the conventional form or method of reading often spreads to a wider dissemination of knowledge and effective critical information. In such situations, our society may suffer when its citizens cannot read adequately. Reading is a fundamental and reliable essence to boost the mind capability and it is definitely necessary when a literate society is to be formed.

There is no single doubt that reading makes a huge difference in Education and Information. Reading makes great difference as an entertainment tool with its expansion of internet activities. Teachers are able to use computer games as tools to tackle classroom activities, tests, and examination. To do so one still requires cognitive stimulation for better reading understanding. Though games are fun and enjoyable and are excellent on computers, reading is still required for better functioning of the games. Obtaining this reading skill is therefore a pivotal requisite for all especially teachers, because they have to keep track with changes and an effective reading habit can help them to be better educators. Therefore, the teachers' attitude towards reading have to be positive to enable them to make the significant change in education and information.

The context of literacy instruction and personal attribution in addition to cognitive development will influence the teachers' reading success in profound ways. Wang (2000) suggests that a positive attitude toward reading is essential for adequate literacy development whereby the teacher's knowledge of reading development and pupil reading achievement are closely related. Therefore, when planning instruction, they will make provision in daily lessons for factors such as pupils' motivation to read. For example, choosing to read will be an important ingredient of interest to them which will mold a powerful motivator to foster independent reading habits in their teaching career. In a research conducted by Martinez, Arical, and Jewell (2008), it is stated that children's attitudes toward reading, in and out of school, influence the amount of reading in which they engage, which influence their actual reading skill. Therefore, if the teacher is a reading teacher, she will encourage and motivate her students to read too.

A large portion of time of the language teachers is spent on working with written sources of information, and because there is a great deal of material to be covered in a short amount of time, it is essential that their reading is both purposeful and efficient. Knowing how to read effectively involves understanding the structure of texts, how to read for different purposes and how to reflect their reading. We read to discover meaning in a text, that is, to determine that conclusion can be drawn about the various messages the text contains. This ability is needed to be good teachers in their teaching process because as teachers, they have to be creative and innovative in digesting reading materials and processing them into motivating activities in classroom teaching. Wagner (2002) stated that reading is not only a language skill but also a means of educating and developing an individual and a society.

Reading is merely not about comprehension or how much you read at surface level, but is about readers who are able to assess text-content critically because only through this type of reading, it would create a better human resource development. Thus, in order, to keep abreast with current development, the teacher society must read relevant publication and materials abundantly. Block, Oakar & Hurt (2002) indicated that successful literacy teachers in the primary phase are often knowledgeable about children's literature, prioritize the importance of meaning, and teach through whole texts. These teachers deliver their lessons effectively and in an enjoyable manner.

Applegate and Applegate (2004) in their study identified that though many students are proficient cognitively but they are reluctant readers. This is because reading is not a preference to them. As such, it is the duty of the teachers to be the mediator to instill and cultivate in their students good reading habits because a lack of this reading habit in them may lead them to not take reading seriously. As teachers, they have to be cognitively active too

Being role models, teachers need to set examples to their students as proclaimed by Applegate and Applegate (2004) in their metaphoric reference "Peter Effect- How can I give what I myself do not have? (as cited by Nathanson, Pruslow & Levitt, 2008). Teachers are considered to be the chief drivers to ignite a lifelong reading habit in their pupils. Since education all around the world revolves around teaching and learning, materials and approaches, teachers themselves must initiate a picture of avid readers to promote good reading habits.

McKool and Gespass (2009) who surveyed 65 elementary school teachers on leisure reading habits found out that less than half of them reported reading for pleasure on a daily basis and 26% reported no time spent for leisure reading. Some other researchers who conducted similar research also exposed that teachers are not usually enthusiastic readers and mentioned little or no pleasure in reading (e.g., Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000; Mueller, 1973; Smith, 1989). The ascending levels of reading interest among teachers who are responsible to carry out the task to educate the society to become a successful literate society may have negative implication for young children, if they do not deliver their tasks effectively. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to cultivate within themselves good reading habits.

Research by McKool's (2007) in addition has found that there is a strong relationship between the number of out-of-school reading and their success academically in school. It has also been found that students' academic levels do not remain the same with no growth, but their academic level actually drop if they do not read during their free time (Hughes-Hassell & Lutz, 2006). This clearly reflects that leisure reading also helps broaden the readers' experiences and general knowledge as mentioned by Abeyrantha and Zainab (2004). Thus, when teachers portray and mirror positive and good reading habits, their students would be motivated and guided to be good readers too. Hence, it is definitely important for the language teachers to be teachers of reading.

Besides, teachers should be acquainted with various reading strategies such as engaged reading. Engaged reading actually broadens a reader's interaction with the

text and it becomes a connection between a community of readers and society at large. Teachers who are engaged readers, often recognize the value of reading and their own potential as readers and learners (Cremin, 2009). It is also a necessity that teachers should practise this development of recognition by providing themselves with access to multiple sources of reading and resources for learning. This coincides with Rosenblatt's (2005) belief that teachers should often focus on measurable skills rather than merely on enjoyment of reading.

It is apparent therefore that teachers, especially language teacher to realize that reading is one of the most important skills that would help enhance their teaching and learning plus the pedagogical application process when they are in the classroom, conducting the lesson. Besides, teachers should be aware of the materials they choose to read which would help them boost their reading attitude and habit. In Malaysia, much of the interest in literacy in reading is due to the perception that it is merely a skill to master and the materials that they read are not so important to be taken into consideration. However, the importance of reading and the materials they read are actually the benefits they gain due as habitual readers are often not discussed widely.

There is also widespread agreement that the nation's teaching scenario and environment are not giving much room for reading. This is because the pressure and burden of paperwork and workload of teachers, take much of their time in school, hindering them to create a positive attitude towards reading. Teachers who are burdened with much clerical work such as keying in marks and recording scores and progress of their students, leave them with little time to concentrate on leisure reading. Furthermore, most Malaysians, including teachers, do not practice the culture of

buying books on a regular basis. Thus, their reading habits do not progress positively. The tendency of instilling a good reading habit is therefore shattered. Most libraries in schools in Malaysia do not cater suitable materials for teachers to read, especially English reading materials. This is another reason English language teachers lack the interest to read.

To add on the reason why teachers may not be interested in reading is because their reading habits are not instilled from young and in school. According to a survey conducted among eighty first year students who enrolled for the Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature Studies programme at the School of Humanities, USM by Rosy and Sarjit (1998), revealed the reading habits and the students' perception of their reading ability did not commensurate with the expectation of the lecturers. The study was on English Language and Literature Studies programme students who were undergoing their programme in English. The situation is more alarming among our teachers who are not from the English option. In short, EL teachers reading attitude and reading habit cannot be said to be sustainable.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Teachers generally should possess positive reading attitude and good reading habit to improve their language proficiency and teaching strategies in the classroom. Since most teachers are the main vehicle to design curriculum and syllabus, their behavioural reading habit play an important role to the education system. Teachers generally need to have a good grasp of reading because they are directly involved with learners in schools. A good teacher must have a broad information base and should

not depend on their lesson notes, which cannot contain all the information on a given topic (Palani, 2012). However, Trelease (2006) stated that teachers are seldom seen reading. A study conducted by Tharumaraj (2016) among 65 secondary school EL teachers around the Klang Valley revealed that respondents do read but is not their main choice when it comes how they spend they spare time.

In a latest campaign to address staff skills, 70,000 teachers of English were required to pass the Cambridge Placement Test by 2015, or be moved to other roles (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The Education Ministry introduced the Cambridge Placement Test (CPT) and Aptis test to assess the English language proficiency level among English language teachers. The question here is why these types of tests are required for EL teachers? Are they not proficient enough in the language or are they not avid readers of the English language?

Teachers who have yet to meet this standard would have to attend intensive up skilling courses which is actually stipulated in the Malaysian Blueprint. This is an issue of concern because obviously this signalled the poor performance of the EL teachers' language proficiency and competency. One of the reasons maybe due to the EL teachers' ignorance to read extensively which reflects their reading attitude and reading habit.

The habit of reading for pleasure and as a pastime is limited among the general Malaysians. Most teachers are often confined to heavy workload at school such as paperwork activities (filing, filling in daily, weekly and monthly information of their students learning progress and exam marks, preparing and marking test and exam

papers etc.), courses and meetings to attend which take away much of their time and resulting in them not having much time and opportunities to indulge in leisure reading.

Therefore, teachers hardly have much time to read during their working hours. When they reach home, they just want to relax maybe by watching television or merely just reading the newspaper. For them this is sufficient reading. Mass media is a great influence which diverts people from showing much interest in reading books, magazines and journals, among other factors (Palani, 2012). Thus, teachers' reading habit may not be due to their literacy problem but due to other affecting factors as described above.

Since Higher Thinking Order Skills (HOTS) are included in our present curriculum, teachers who are effective readers would be better practitioners in embarking these skills to the pupils in the classroom. Teachers of all levels not only need to be effective readers but they also need a strong foundational knowledge about the literacy process (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Dobler, 2009). A teacher who reads vastly would be able to identify and apply various teaching strategies and approaches effectively in her lessons. A teacher who reads regularly also would gain a lot of knowledge and information to tackle her or his students to participate and learn better in the classroom situation. In the long run, it would enrich and enhance not only the teacher's content knowledge but also instill positive reading values in her. Only through a positive reading attitude, teachers can develop and share best practices among their English Language counterparts in their school, district, state and also the nation.

One cannot discard the importance of the English Language as being the lingua franca and the vehicle to extract information worldwide through its reading materials, both printed and online. Many reference books and resources are available in English, and in most of the local libraries and bookstores, English materials are widely displayed. As language teachers, they need to keep abreast with all these reading materials so that they are not left behind to pursue the latest information which they can transfer to their students.

There are gaps in the existing reading research. In Malaysia, most studies on reading attitudes and habits do not focus specifically on primary school EL teachers. Thus, due to this limitation, it is commendable that this survey research is conducted to investigate the reading attitudes and habits of primary school English language teachers, their purpose of reading and factors that hinder them from reading. This study also provides necessary recommendations to the various educational departments concerned on the importance of positive reading attitude and habits among primary school English language teachers in Malaysia.

1.4 Objectives of the study

Reading is an important tool in this era of information technology to personal social development and in imparting knowledge for teachers. Being the second language in the country, EL teachers in primary schools play a very vital role in enhancing their proficiency of the language first. The most significant skill for them to enhance their proficiency in the EL is through the reading skill. Hence the main

objectives of this study are to gather and analyse relevant information, and at the same time, provide necessary data on:

- a. primary school EL teachers' attitudes towards reading,
- b. reading habits of primary school EL teachers in terms of time spent on reading English materials weekly
- c. reading habits of primary school EL teachers' in terms of
 - i. preference of reading printed and on-line materials in English
 - ii. preference of reading printed and on-line books of different genre English
 - iii. preference of reading different types of printed magazine in English
- d. primary school EL teachers' purpose of reading and factors that hinder them from reading

1.5 Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to obtain and analyse information on primary school EL teachers reading attitude and habits. Thus this study attempts to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: What is the primary school EL teachers' attitude towards reading?