

## FACTORS AFFECTING THE READING HABITS OF THIRD-YEAR-SOCIOLOGICAL STUDENTS AT CAN THO UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract.** Books are a treasure of knowledge, reading books helps readers to practice research skills, critical thinking, concentration to learn about the quintessence of mankind and perfect their personality. Moreover, reading books is the most effective and practical method of self-study that anyone can do. Practicing the reading habit will bring tremendous benefits. This study aimed to understand the current situation of students' reading habits and identify the factors affecting the formation of reading habits. The research data were collected from 95 third-year-students of Sociology at Can Tho University (CTU). The research results showed that the majority of students reading books for learning purposes accounting for 28.7% of the total survey, and the level of reading with the frequency of every once in awhile accounting for a high proportion (43.2%). However, the number of books in a month that students have read in a month of one to two books (non-majored) accounting for the highest percentage. The research results also showed that there are five factors affecting students' reading habits, including learning environment, family, individuals, the internet resources and friends respectively.

**Keywords:** Can Tho University, third-year-students, reading books, reading habits, sociology.

### 1. Introduction

The reading habits is no longer a strange topic, especially, the current audiovisual culture is growing and overwhelming the ancient reading culture. It is true that this has been attracting the attention of researchers about the reading culture as well as the reading habits of the modern society, that the object is often paid attention to is the pupils and students. There are numerous previous studies on reading habits of Vietnamese students. Most studies also showed that reading culture is has been encouraging in Vietnamese schools and most researchers always learn about and propose solutions aiming to develop a reading culture or reading habits for young Vietnamese people. Furthermore, there are several of related foreign research works. For example, McKool (2007), *Factors that Influence the Decision to Read: An Investigation of Fifth Grade Students' Out-of-School Reading Habits*, the study briefly analyzed the factors that influence students' reading decisions as well as reading habits outside of school. Oyewumi, Ebijuwu (2009), *Effect of Reading Habits on the Academic Performance of Students: A Case Study of the Students of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State*, it is indicated that reading habits have an important influence on students' learning outcomes, the study proposed some solutions to improve students' reading habits and other research projects.

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Reading books is an indispensable activity for everyone, especially for pupils and students. Reading books is considered an important part of the learning process because reading books not only helps students master the knowledge, skills, formation of the right career attitudes, but also helps students train their personality and morality. Another study confirmed that reading books is very important. For example, a person with a speech disability can become a good communicator, and a person with a leg injury can also acquire numerous knowledge through the reading book (Satija, 2002 cited by Nguyen Huu Viem 2009). Reading books (especially specialized books) is essential in improving academic results according to the current credit training program. Most students have confirmed that reading books and reference materials are extremely necessary for them, especially to enter the college/university or pass exams. However, it is difficult to make them become lifelong readers, active and passionate readers. Reading habits is quite poor due to the following reasons, including limitation of school libraries on conditions, reading environments like outdated book collections, and most students read only impressive text and color materials.

Besides, there are four major obstacles to promote the reading habits of current students. Firstly, the interests with friends, students prefer chatting together to focusing on reading books; Secondly, the interests with listening to music, students like listening to music than reading books; Thirdly, this is an attraction of media communication, students can spend a lot of time on seeing the information on media such as TV, Internet, and so on; Finally, the lack of reading resources in the school libraries, so students can not borrow, most of them have read materials at the libraries. Most reading is done primarily for academic purposes (Gunasekara, 2002 cited by Nguyen Huu Viem 2009) and students have a preference for watching TV or using the Internet rather than reading (Mori, 2004 cited by Nguyen Thi Thao 2018). Also, exploring the World Wide Web (WWW) is perhaps the greatest influence on the change in academic communication through reading books (Magara, 2002 cited by Vo Hoang Duy 2012). The Internet especially plays an important role in accessing information resources and they are growing exponentially according to the needs of human use (Amarasiri, Upali 2005). The increase in the internet use affects reading books very much because of the benefits of information resources the Internet owned (Humphreys, K.W. 1964; 1987).

In the era of information technology and the “Flat World” today, the learning quality of students depends greatly on their diligence in reading books to accumulate knowledge, students have to formulate their own of reading books and choose the right books for them, even practice reading skills most effectively (Nguyen Thi Hang, 2016). The specialized reading books and extra-curricular books are very necessary for students because the current students need to improve and further improve their reading habits in order to cultivate knowledge as well as lessons needed for the University entrance exam process, placement test or for future work, etc. For the above reasons, the study aimed at analyzing the current reading habits of third-year-students of sociology at Can Tho University, and at the same time, learning about the factors affecting students’ reading habits through practical study.

## **2. Content**

### **2.1. Research methodology**

Secondary data is collected from previous studies and magazines from websites on the Internet; It can be showed that many studies have mentioned on the related reading books of students, including Nguyen Thuy Quynh Loan, Vo Hoang Duy (2012); Nguyen Thi Thao (2018); McKool (2007); Humphreys, K.W. (1966); Oyewumi, Ebijuwa (2009); Amarasiri, Upali.(2005) and many other studies.

Primary data were collected by a questionnaire survey of 95 third-year-students of

Sociology. This is a group of students who have been acquiring to read, cultivate knowledge not only from specialized books but also non-majored books for final exams, exams of university outputs or doing graduation thesis, even collected the knowledge for future work. The descriptive statistical methods were used in the study to describe the current situations of reading habits of third-year-sociological students at CTU; and the quantitative analysis methods were applied in it to identify and analyze factors affecting the reading habits of sociological students at CTU.

## **2.2. Research results and discussions**

### **2.2.1. Purposes of reading books**

The research results indicated that students read books for many different purposes, but most of the purpose is related to individual learning activities and then entertainments. In today's training environment, students not only need to master basic knowledge but also require students to equip themselves with other additional knowledge. The form of assessment of each module is increasingly diverse, requiring students not only to have adequate knowledge but also to enhance the knowledge learned in the school as well as social knowledge. The purpose of reading is very important for forming a student's reading habits, and it is also a condition for students to maintain their reading habits. Through the survey of sociological students at CTU, it is illustrated that students selected to read for academic purposes accounted for 28.7%; reading books for scientific research purposes accounted for 9.2%; reading for the purpose of expanding specialized knowledge accounted for 19.9%; expanding knowledge in other fields accounted for 19.1%; and reading for entertainment purposes accounted for 23% (table 1).

Therefore, students need to read books to accumulate knowledge in the long run, it aimed to serve tests, group exercises or individual assignments and improve learning outcomes. Furthermore, reading also supports students with the ability to increase critical thinking, the ability to analyze and solve problems related to schools or daily life and creativity. These are also essential skills that can support both academic and later work. Besides supporting knowledge, reading is also selected by a part of students as a form of entertainment after stressful studying hours. It is true that choosing this form of entertainment not only helps students relax but also creates favorable conditions to support the formation of individual reading habits, providing a means of healthy entertainment for students, especially sociological students.

*Table 1. The purposes of reading books*

<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Proportion (%)</b>
Academic knowledge	28,7
Scientific research	9,2
Expanding majored knowledge	19,9
Expanding non-majored knowledge	19,1
Means of entertainments	23
Total	100

*(Source: Surveyed by author, 2019)*

### **2.2.2 Time of students' reading**

Allocating a schedule is one of the basic steps to establishing a reading habit. It is true that setting a reasonable time will limit the interruption of reading time. Research results showed that students who choose to read books from 0 - 30 minutes / day accounted for 32,6%; from 31 - 60 minutes / day accounted for 41,1%; from 61 - 90 minutes / day accounted for 14,7%; from

91 - 120 minutes / day accounted for 6,3% and over 120 minutes or more accounted for 5,3%. It can be seen that most students here spend 30-60 minutes a day for reading books to accumulate knowledge.

Surely, students have begun to be aware of reading books for the university output exams aiming to improve the results for themselves. However, the time for reading books from 30-60 minutes is still quite low, students believed that just reading available lectures from teachers is enough for studying in the classes, and there are little reference books to other sources to know more about the lessons. Therefore, students are somewhat passive, and they do not spend time in learning about other sources of books. It can be seen that the practical research results are different from the research on students of the HCMC University of Technology. Technological students only spent time reading from 0 - 30 minutes/day whereas the percentage of sociological students at CTU reading books from 0 - 30 minutes/day accounted for lower compared with 61 - 90 minutes/ day (Nguyen Thuy Quynh Loan, Vo Hoang Duy, 2012). On the other hand, the time of students is also influenced by many different factors, in addition to studying; students also have to participate in collective activities of schools, foreign language classes as well as part-time jobs. So, the time available for reading is limited and the time for reading is shortened (Table 2).

**Table 2. Time for reading books per day of students**

Time for reading books	Proportion (%)
0 – 30 minutes/day	32,6
31 – 60 minutes/day	41,1
61 – 90 minutes/day	14,7
91 – 120 minutes/day	6,3
Over 120 or more minutes/day	5,3
Total	100

(Source: Surveyed by the author, 2019)

### 2.2.3. The levels of students' reading books

The study survey was conducted with likert scale of five levels. There were five levels of students' reading books from the lower level to highest level, including Never, Rarely, Every once in a while, Often and Very often. The research results figured out that students who offered the level of reading as never accounted for 5.3%; rarely accounted for 20%; every once in a while accounted for 43,2%; often accounted for 24,2% and very often accounted for 7,4%.

**Table 3. The levels of students' reading books**

Level of reading books	Proportion (%)
Never	5,3
Rarely	20
Every once in awhile	43,2
Often	24,2
Very often	7,4
Total	100

(Source: Surveyed by the author, 2019)

Most sociological students at CTU have been aware that reading books is a key work in the final examinations as well as output university examinations. So several students have somewhat restricted their part-time jobs or participated in other volunteer activities in order to focus more on reading books at the level of often aiming to improve specialized knowledge along with knowledge in other fields, etc to achieve the best graduate results.

**2.2.4. The number of books read by students per month (Non-majored books)**

Research results indicated that the sociological students who did not read books in a month is 5,3% of total students surveyed; the students choose 1-2 books to read per month, accounting for 72,6%; over 2-3 books/month accounting for 17,9% and 4 books or more accounted for 4,2% respectively. From the practical results, it can be seen that students have spent a little time for reading books; in fact, almost students read one to two books in a month according to the survey. Students only focus on the information on social networks or the Internet, little or not even buying and reading books for themselves. The majored knowledge is only based on available documents, books and textbooks of teachers provided; there is so little practical knowledge. The actual results showed that there is a similarity with the study showing that the majority of students are moderate readers, reading 1-2 books a month and the habit of reading is less focused on development (Allen, 1993).

On the other hand, the current book market is becoming more diverse and rich in both content and form, making it difficult to choose a book to suit individual needs. The appearance of a group of people who follow the movement to read books without selecting appropriate content, as the results, readers can not acquire the whole mind of the author. In other words, the lack of reading skills also limits the selection of useful information from books. So, the number of books read hasnot increased.

**Table 4. The number of books read per month (Non-majored books)**

The number of books	Proportion (%)
No reading books	5,3
1 – 2 book(s)/month	72,6
Over 2 – 3 books/month	17,9
4 or more books/month	4,2
Total	100

*(Source: Surveyed by the author, 2019)*

**2.2.5. Factors affecting of students’ reading habits**

Through the results of factor analysis, there are five factors that affect students’ reading habits as a family (FAM); learning environments (LE); individuals (IND); internet sources (INT) and friends (FRI).

In the context of an increasingly developing country, human resources are required to meet the needs of modern development. Therefore, the quality of training is being focused and improved, requiring students to increasingly improve themselves in many aspects, to update the latest scientific knowledge suited to context. The ability to access to the information sources accurately and effectively in the subject, books are the means and the most effective tool that every individual can easily own. Reading purposes included in the study also showed that most students read for academic purposes. The development of modern technology, the common use of smart phones as well as the proliferation of the internet system, electronic websites have had a significant impact on reading habits of students in particular and all people in general.

Most students often search for the information of studying through websites because it saves time and has high convenience. The wifi is available everywhere that students only need a phone to find the source of information immediately, so there also is a limitation of accessing to book resources of students. Besides, the awareness of each individual student also affects the form of reading habits as well as the importance of reading. On the other hand, the interest in specialization that enhances the spirit of exploration, learning and thinking development for the field of study, it will become a motivation for students to learn about endless sources of books.

Another influential factor derived from the students themselves is that the ability to read and write information, students themselves can not filter information, capture the contents of the book offered, it is lead to easily feel bored and give up reading habits. Furthermore, the family's reading tradition is also one of the factors that influence the process of forming students' reading habits. The family education is considered as the basic educational environment for forming habits, behaviors in other environments such as school, society and so on. The family maintains the reading habits that will be formed for family members offering a similar habit.

Besides the above factors, friends are also the factor affecting reading habits, followed by the family and school environment, the development of each individual in social environment respectively. If students develop in a group of people where everyone has a habit of reading and loving reading, students will easily absorb and change themselves to integrate with that environment. Moreover, students also receive book recommendations from those around them without spending too much time to choose good and personal books. Conversely, if students develop in a group where their friends do not have the habits of reading, individuals will be caught up in other activities and skipped reading.

*Table 5. Results of multivariate regression analysis*

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Constant	-	4,933	0,000	-
X <sub>1</sub> : Family	0,237	1,172	0,000*	3,851
X <sub>2</sub> : Learning environments	0,248	1,447	0,000**	2,778
X <sub>3</sub> : Individuals	0,072	0,567	0,001*	1,521
X <sub>4</sub> : Internet sources	- 0,168	1,302	0,000***	1,574
X <sub>5</sub> : Friends	0,116	0,693	0,000***	2,655
<b>R<sub>2</sub> adjusted coefficient</b>				<b>0,633</b>

*(Source: Surveyed by the author, 2019)*

The factor analysis results were put into the correlation analysis among variables, it is clear that factors affecting student reading level are correlated with each independent variable, as well as among the independent variables to determine independence. Thus, between variables meet the conditions, and are given into the regression analysis. The regression model is as follows:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1 \text{FAM} + B_2 \text{LE} + B_3 \text{IND} + B_4 \text{INT} + B_5 \text{FRI}$$

In particular, the student's reading level is Y and dependent variable like FAM, LE, IND, INT and FRI are X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>, X<sub>3</sub>, X<sub>4</sub>, X<sub>5</sub> respectively.

The research results found that the VIF coefficient of the five independent variables is much smaller than 10, it meant that there is no multicollinearity phenomenon between the

independent variables. For the 10% significance level, a total of five independent variables is statistically significant. In particular, independent variables such as Family (X1); Learning environments (X2); Individuals (X3); Friends (X5) have a positive effect and the Internet sources (X4) has an opposite effect with the reading habits of CTU students. With the adjusted R2 coefficient of 63,3%, it meant that 63,3% of the dependent variable of student reading level explained by five independent factors. From the above information, the regression equation proposed:

$$Y = 0.237FAM* + 0.248LE** + 0,072IND* - 0.168INT*** + 0.116FRI***$$

According to beta coefficient, the greater the coefficient of factor, the greater the degree of effect on the dependent variable Y (Hoang Trong, Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc, 2008). In particular, the learning environments with beta coefficient is 0.248; the family as 0.237; individuals as 0.072; the internet sources as 0.168 and friends as 0.116. From the above results, the factor of the learning environments has the strongest impact on the reading habits of third-year sociological students at CTU. Academic performance as well as learning outcomes is considered as motivation to inspire the process of forming students' reading habits. In addition, factors such as family, individuals, the internet resources and friends also have an influence on the reading habits of students respectively.

### **3. Conclusions**

The research results of students' reading habits of third-year-sociological students at CTU showed that students' reading purposes are mostly focused on learning purposes. However, the time and the reading level of students are also in the relative range. It meant that students have not really spent much time on reading, and the number of books that students have read in a month of one to two books (non-majored), accounting for a high percentage. Moreover, there are a number of students who do not read any books a month. In addition, the study also pointed out five factors affecting the reading habits of sociology students at CTU. Among them, the learning environments has the strongest impact, and family, individuals, the internet resources and friends are also factors that influence students' reading habits respectively.

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