

For achieving those research goals, six questions and hypotheses were set, related to the literature reading habits of adolescents: the connection between the scope of reading and the amount of books in one's home; the connection between self-concept and reading; the connection between adolescents self-concept as readers and their perception of friends and family members as readers; the attitudes towards literature; the perception of reading and suggested ways to encourage adolescents to read.

This research used both qualitative and quantitative methodology. The research tools were focus groups (2 phases, 44 students in total) and semi-structured interviews with 10 students, on their perceptions and attitudes toward reading. In addition, a questionnaire, which was based on several categories that were identified in the academic literature, and additional themes that emerged during the pilot focus groups that were conducted for the purposes of this research were also used. The questionnaire was filled out by 323 students all of whom attend one particular middle school in Israel – The Reali Hebrew School in Haifa. This school is an independent educational establishment situated in the north of Israel. Students attending this school are accepted through a screening process. The majority of students are from urban environments, from upper socio-economic statuses.

In relation to the students reading habits, the findings showed that besides the scope of reading, there are discrepancies between the specific research population and earlier findings in the academic literature about preferred reading time, preferred format, the variety of genres, and the main motives for reading. For example, it was found that adolescents preferred printed books (to digital), afternoon and evening reading, and were exposed to a large number of genres. This finding contrasts earlier findings that showed preference for digital formats, a limited number of genres read,

and reading during school hours. Those discrepancies were explained by several factors such as the socio-economic status and the specific age group which compiled the research population. It was also found that adolescent reading habits is greatly influenced by the physical and human environment, both in terms of exposure and availability of books in school and in the home. Furthermore, students' perception of their family members and friends also greatly influenced their reading habits. Those findings echoed the early academic findings.

Another aspect of the research showed ambivalent attitude toward literature on one hand, and the attitude toward teenagers who are 'readers' on the other. Those positive attitudes toward reading literature in contrast of the neutral, positive and negative attitude toward adolescents that are readers, indicates that students are aware of the benefits of reading (general knowledge, improvement of language, fun), but the viability of those benefits stands against social perceptions and peer group interaction.

In addition, the research shows that adolescents are divided about the possibility to encourage reading at that age. Several suggestions were raised, related to the school involvement, the recommendations of friends and family, and the integration of reading technology. However, there was no clear agreement, and two contradictory opinions were evident. This apparently occurred because of the unique perspective, the different reading habits and preferences of each student. Nonetheless, the qualitative analysis showed that adolescents understand the significance of creating a suitable reading culture and social environment, which can produce a legitimacy to read and a social reality that promotes reading.

System No.
002392393