
INVESTIGATING THE PLEASURE READING HABITS OF EFL LEARNERS IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: Reading literacy is significant for learners' academic success, and high levels of reading literacy can be established through strong engagement in pleasure reading. It seems that the advancement of competing media, such as television and computer games and the fluctuating socio-cultural contexts have made a significant influence on learners' pleasure reading habits. The purpose of this study was therefore to investigate lower secondary school learners' pleasure reading habits using descriptive survey design. The data were collected from 377 randomly selected learners in North Wollo Zone, Ethiopia, using a survey questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential (independent samples t-test) statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study indicated that majority of the learners' habits toward pleasure reading was poor. The findings of the study also showed that the students' mostly read for academic purposes. It was also found that there was no significant difference ($p > .05$) between gender and age of learners regarding their pleasure reading habits. Lack of reading materials, low English ability, and lack interest in reading are the major factors that affect learners' pleasure reading habits. Based on the results, it can be suggested that integrating pleasure reading programme in the curricula, being accessible to a wide range of books (based on the learners' level and interest) in the school libraries, and establishing school reading clubs in input-poor English as a Foreign Language contexts like Ethiopia is essential to promote learners' pleasure reading habits.

Keywords: lower secondary school; pleasure reading; pleasure reading habit; reading

1. Introduction

It is undeniable that reading literacy is significant for learners' academic success. It is because reading literacy is a prerequisite for successful performance in any school subject (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012). Various research findings also show that reading is a key predictor of learners' academic success (Al-Mahrooqi & Roscoe, 2014). This shows that reading is the foundation for almost all processes of learning.

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Reading is essential mainly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context like Ethiopia, where there is scarcity of input, as it offers great opportunities for learners to be exposed to English.

Despite its importance, most of the lower secondary school learners of Ethiopia lack the required performance in reading (Ambachew, 2003; Endris, 2018; Teshome, 2014; Tirunch, 2014). Difficulty with reading negatively affects achievement in all areas of the curriculum (Hassell, & Rodge, 2007). Moreover, learners who are poor in reading often develop poor reading habits (Tunde-Awe, 2014).

The students' lack of proficiency in reading might be because reading is a very complex process that involves various components:

“Reading ability is not only about the ability to decode the written word but also involves other skills, such as comprehension and interpretive skills and these are interactive and simultaneous” (Grabe, 1991: 379).

Reading literacy includes not only comprehension, but also behaviours that support lifelong reading (Mullis, Kennedy, Martin, & Sainsbury, 2004). This indicates that reading is a multifaceted process that incorporates the cognitive (comprehension) and behavioural (reading habits) aspects.

In order to involve in the complex process of reading successfully, foreign language (FL) learners should be engaged in pleasure reading, as they learn to read better by reading more (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004; Stoller, 2015). Pleasure reading, also called extensive reading, is reading for enjoyment (in or out of the classroom), in contrast with academic reading for education purposes (Day & Bamford, 1998). According to Nuttall (1982: 168), *“the best way to improve one's knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers the next best way is to read extensively in it”*.

In addition to offering abundant input, learners' freedom to choose their own reading materials based on their level and interest is the main principle of a pleasure reading programme (Day & Bamford, 1998). This shows that pleasure reading is crucial to provide a large quantity of input for learners in EFL contexts like Ethiopia, where English input is inadequate. Pleasure reading is also vital to create a tension-free environment as students themselves select reading materials based on their level and interest. Pleasure reading is important *“to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading”* (Richard & Schmidt, 2002: 193-194).

A number of studies have also revealed that students who read regularly become better readers, and better reading leads to success in school and life. According to Krashen (1989), learners, who are exposed to pleasure reading, become better readers, and achieve higher scores on tests than learners who do not. Besides, Spaulding (2014), in his extensive literature review and synthesis, indicates that learners from grade four to college who enjoy and engage in pleasure reading experience higher academic success than those who do not. Several studies (e.g. Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Sheu, 2003; Nakanishi, 2015) have also provided positive evidences for the effectiveness of pleasure reading for overall language

proficiency at different levels and in diverse EFL situations. Positive effects of pleasure reading on the behavioural (reading habits) and affective (motivation and attitude) aspects of reading have also been reported (Day & Bamford, 1998; Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Grabe, 2009). These research findings suggest that pleasure reading is crucial to enhance students' academic achievement and reading habits.

However, various international research findings in different countries have reported that a growing number of young people do not read for pleasure. According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), for instance, on average across the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, more than half of the 15-year-olds reported not reading for pleasure (OECD, 2010). The data also revealed that between 2000 and 2009, across OECD countries the number of students who report reading for pleasure daily dropped by five percent (ibid). Similarly, Mullis et al. (2012) survey of 10-year-olds reported that although 74% of students labeled themselves as motivated readers, on average only 28% of them really liked to read (PIRLS, 2011). Likewise, some studies (e.g. Nippold et al, 2006) have shown that interest in pleasure reading declined during the age range (11–15 years), and boys were more likely than girls to report that they spent no time reading for pleasure (Clark & Foster, 2005; Nippold et al, 2006). This indicates that the likelihood that learners will enjoy reading and engage in pleasure reading is influenced by demographic factors like gender and age.

The deteriorating of pleasure reading habits is more serious in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular. Research findings (e.g. Okebukola, Owolabi, & Onafowokan, 2013) have also expressed concerns about African children's deteriorating pleasure reading habits, and Ethiopians are not an exception.

Nevertheless, a review of the literature shows that little research has been conducted on learners' pleasure reading habits in Ethiopia. Hence, the present study was conducted to investigate the lower secondary school learners' pleasure reading habits in Ethiopia.

2. Review of Related Literature

Reading is a complex process affected by the cognitive and socio-cultural factors. This study is, thus, guided by cognitive and sociocultural theory. The following sections present a brief review of concepts of the theories that lend themselves to the framework of this study.

Cognitive Views

Reading is a complex cognitive process affected by different factors. The factors relate to the reader, the text, and the purpose of reading. That is, reading is a cognitive and interactive process between reader and text based on the purpose of reading. Thus, providing appropriate input seems to be essential to facilitate the complex reading process. Thus, one of the most important concepts under the paradigm which guides this study is Krashen's (1985) "input hypothesis" and his suggestion of the importance of "comprehensible input." In his input hypothesis, Krashen (1982) stresses the importance of providing learners a large amount of comprehensible input for acquiring

language. Regarding this, Waring, (2006) also suggests that pleasure reading helps learners to read enormous amounts of language at a comfortable level to gain input. Based on input hypothesis, the input to which learners are exposed should be a little beyond their current level of language competence, i.e., 'i + 1.' Based on this hypothesis, when learners frequently and repeatedly meet and focus on a large number of input which is a little beyond their level of competence, they gradually acquire the forms. Regardless of whether or not one thoroughly agrees with these hypotheses, increasing interest in pleasure reading has been observed among researchers and educators involved in L2/FL instruction.

Day and Bamford (1998) proposed a new model, which is different from Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis. According to this model, pleasure reading is beneficial if it provides the language learners with input, which is slightly below their current level of competence (i.e., 'i - 1'). In this model, 'i - 1' provides a situation for automaticity training and developing a large sight vocabulary rather than learning new target structures (Mikeladze, 2014). In fact, 'i - 1' is viewed as the learners' comfort zone where language learners can quickly build up their reading confidence and reading fluency (Chiang, 2015). Recent research findings, however, reveal that both 'i + 1 and 'i - 1' text difficulty levels significantly improved the participants' reading comprehension (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017). This suggests that pleasure reading is effective regardless of the level of materials learners choose. That is, whether the learners choose easier or harder stories, they gain more or less similar results. In other words, self-selection of reading materials based on students' needs is a key to a successful implementation of pleasure reading.

Nevertheless, some interactionist theorists (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Swain, 1993) claim that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient and must be supplemented by output. It is believed that learners need to be pushed to produce output that is meaningful and syntactically appropriate. Pleasure reading can play in this cognitive approach to language acquisition is that it can provide input, allow for interaction, and offer the opportunity to produce output.

However, the cognitive theory of the reading process as a solitary individual activity in which the reader processes and interacts with the text in isolation is not entirely adequate. Scholars also agree that the cognitive processes are greatly influenced by social factors (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). This indicates that the reading process is influenced by the socio-cultural contexts, which are crucial issues in reading development. To fill this gap, the sociocultural theory has been added to the framework for this study.

Socio-Cultural Views

The socio-cultural context, where the teaching learning of reading takes place also affects the reading process (Snow, 2002). Hence, this study is also framed within the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes the dominant role that social relationships and participation in culturally-organized practices play in learning. It stresses the role that social interaction plays in learning reading and the nature of reading as a communicative activity rather than as a formal linguistic system. Regarding

sociocultural context, theorists (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978), of learning and reading describe how children acquire reading through social interactions with more expert peers and adults. He argues through his concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) that providing students with assistance enables them to complete reading activities they would be unable to do alone (ibid). In general, the reading process is influenced by a variety of sociocultural factors connected with the school, the classroom, peer and teacher, etc., and these factors influence how and how much students read and contribute to their reading habits (Geld & Stanojević, 2007).

Pleasure Reading

Grabe and Stoller (2002: 286) define pleasure reading as an approach in which “*learners read large quantities of materials that are within their linguistic competence*”. According to the Extensive Reading Foundation Guide (2011), pleasure reading is an approach in which “learners read very easy and enjoyable books” (ERF, 2011: 1). From the above definitions, there are three key ideas regarding pleasure reading. The first is that the learners read large quantities of materials. The second is that to read large quantities, the materials should be easy and interesting. The third is reading materials should be in line with the learners’ reading proficiency level to read a lot.

Day and Bamford (2002: 137-140) expand the scope of the definition of pleasure reading by proposing the top ten principles of pleasure reading:

The reading material is easy; a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available; learners choose what they want to read; they read as much as possible; the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding; reading is its own reward; reading speed is usually faster rather than slower; reading is individual and silent; teachers orient and guide their students, and the teacher is a role model of a reader.

Pleasure reading is one of the effective approaches to improve EFL learners’ language skills by offering abundant language input (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 1982) and pleasurable environment.

Studies on Pleasure Reading Habits

Some studies have been conducted on the pleasure reading habits of EFL students. For instance, Majid and Tan (2007) conducted a survey study on the reading habits of upper primary school learners in Singapore. Data were collected from 440 learners, aged between 9 and 12 years, from three primary schools. The findings suggest that a majority of the participating students were motivated to read for academic purposes, such as to achieve good scores. Reading was the third most preferred pleasure activity after hobbies and playing on computer. It was also found that girls were more keen readers than boys were.

Tella and Akande (2007) also conducted a study on the reading habits and accessibility of books in primary schools in Botswana. Hence, 150 students, aged 10-13 years were participated in the study. The results indicated that learners did not have a good reading habit: only 36.7% of them read daily, and most of them read only textbooks for examination purpose.

Besides, Kavi, Tackie, and Bugyei, (2015) carried out a study to investigate reading for pleasure among Junior high school students of Ghana using case study approach. Data were collected from 87 students, 5 teachers, and 1 principal. Questionnaires were used to collect data from students; whereas, interview was used to gather data from the teachers and the principal of the school. The findings suggested that majority of the respondents did not read for pleasure, and they mainly read to pass their examinations. It was also found that most of the learners read between 1-2 hours daily. The research findings also showed that majority of the participants consider television watching as a serious shortcoming to their engagement in pleasure reading. In general, the findings of the above studies indicate that the learners had poor reading habits, and they mainly focus on study-related reading to pass examinations or score high grades.

However, the cause of this possible decline is unclear. Some critics would claim that it is the result of national strategies and tests; others would argue that it is the result of competing media, such as television and computer games (Clark & Foster, 2005).

Although some studies were conducted on reading habits in other countries, as discussed above, as far as the reading of the researcher is concerned, little research has been conducted on students' pleasure reading habits in Ethiopia in general and lower secondary school students in particular.

The main purpose of this study was, therefore, to investigate Ethiopian lower secondary students' pleasure reading habits. It is expected that the findings of this study will be useful for EFL teachers, schools, curricula designers and educators to design appropriate intervention that promote learners' pleasure reading habits.

Specifically, the study was conducted to assess learners' reading frequency, purpose of their reading, determine whether their pleasure reading habits would show gender and age related differences, and identify the possible challenges that affect learners' pleasure reading habits. To achieve the stated objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. How frequently do EFL learners read for pleasure?
2. Is there a significant difference in EFL learners' pleasure reading habits as a function of demographic factors (sex and age)?
3. What are the possible challenges that affect EFL learners' pleasure reading habits?

3. Methodology

This study was carried out to investigate the lower secondary school EFL learners' habits toward pleasure reading in North Wollo Zone, Ethiopia. For this purpose, a mixed (both quantitative and qualitative) methods design was used in this study. Descriptive survey was used in this study as it enabled the researcher to describe the learners' pleasure reading habits as it is. The qualitative one was used to enrich the survey data.

Participants

The total population from which the sample was selected was 660 students (grades 7-8) in four schools (two rural and two urban areas) in North Wollo Zone, Ethiopia. The schools and the participants were selected using simple random sampling technique by lot. Hence, 377 learners were participated in the study, and the sample size (57.1%) was thought to be representative of the target population. Detailed information related to demographic characteristics of participants is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographics of the participants

		Number	Percent
Sex	Male	178	47.21
	Female	199	53.31
Grade level	7*	146	38.72
	8**	231	61.27

*Average age range of grade 7= 13.8year

** Average age range of grade 8 = 14.6year

Instrument

A Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of three parts was developed based upon aspects drawn from reading habits literature. It was designed to investigate the students' pleasure reading habits. The first part requests participants to provide their personal information on two demographic factors: sex and gender. The second part requires participants to offer their ideas regarding pleasure reading habits. That is, two of the items focus on reading frequency: the number of books read last year and time spent daily on reading. One item asks students to respond about their purpose of reading. The third part of the questionnaire focuses on the factors that affect the students' pleasure reading habits. The questionnaire items were translated to students' mother tongue (Amharic Language), to avoid misunderstanding of the ideas.

Before the actual data collection, the designed instrument was validated by content and face validity methods. The translated questionnaire was given to two TEFL instructors at Woldia University to get valuable comments. Based on the comments, necessary modifications were made.

To confirm the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was used. That is, the modified questionnaire (the Amharic version) was piloted to one section ($n = 49$) out of the envisaged population. Five weeks after the first administration, the

questionnaire was administered a second time to the students ($n = 49$). The reliability coefficient (Pearson r) of the questionnaire was 0.81.

Procedures

First, the researcher received approval from the school principals, teachers and students. In this regard, the participants were assured that their participation in the study is voluntary and the information they provide is confidential. Then, the administration was given to the participants in their classrooms at the selected schools by the researcher. The administration took about 15 minutes.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Both descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential (independent samples t-test) statistics were used for different purposes. Frequency and percentage, and mean and standard deviation were employed to analyze the frequency and distribution of scores, respectively. Independent samples t-test was used to investigate whether there is a difference in students' pleasure reading habits as a function of demographic factors (gender and age).

4. Results

Pleasure Reading Frequency

Regarding the first research question, an attempt has been made to investigate the students' pleasure reading frequency. Hence, the students were asked the number of books read last year, and the amount of time they spend daily on reading. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Number of books read last year

Items	Frequency	Percent
None	288	76.4
1	61	16.2
2-3	20	5.3
more than 4	4	2.1

As indicated in Table 2, the majority (76.4%) of the lower secondary school students did not read any book for pleasure over the last one year. Only 16.2% of them read one book, 5.3% read 2-3 books, and 2.1% read more than 4 books.

In addition to the number of books read, the participants were also asked the amount of time they spend on pleasure reading per day.

Table 3: Time spent on reading daily

Items	Frequency	Percent
None	176	46.7
5-10 min	62	16.4
10-20 min	39	10.3

Items	Frequency	Percent
20-30 min	33	8.8
30-60 min	31	8.2
1-2 h	31	8.2
2-3 h	5	1.3

As indicated in Table 3, the majority (46.7%) of the students did not read per day at all, and 16.4% of them read 5-10 minutes daily. This shows that the students' pleasure reading habits was low.

Purposes of Reading

Table 4: Purposes of reading

	Frequency	Percent
Pass exam	202	53.6
Knowledge	144	38.2
Pleasure	12	3.2
Information	19	5

As indicated in Table 4, the students mostly read for academic purposes (passing examinations or scoring better grades) (53.6%) followed by knowledge (38.2%) and information (9.4%). Nevertheless, only 3.2% of them read for pleasure.

Pleasure Reading Habits of the Participants in Terms of Demographic Factors

The study also examined whether there was a difference in students' pleasure reading habits (in terms of the number of books read and time spent on reading) a function of demographic factors (sex and gender). An independent-samples t test was conducted to assess whether the mean scores are statistically significant or not; the results are given in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Pleasure Reading habits of the participants in terms of sex and age

Items	N	Mean	SD	t	P
No of books read last year					
male	165	1.22	.52	.17	.86*
female	209	1.22	.48		
grade 7**	146	1.19	.47	-.79	.42*
grade 8***	231	1.23	.51		
Time spent on reading					
male	165	1.93	1.24	-.25	.79*
female	209	1.97	1.22		
grade 7	146	2.03	1.24	.90	.36*
grade 8	231	1.91	1.22		

* $p > .05$

** Average age range of grade 7 = 13.8 year

*** Average age range of grade 8 = 14.6 year

Regarding the number of books read, the results, as shown in Table 5, indicated that there was no difference between male ($M = 1.22, SD = .52$) and female ($M = 1.22, SD = .48$), and between grade 7 ($M = 1.23, SD = .47$) and grade 8 ($M = 1.22, SD = .51$) students. With regard to time spent on reading, the results also showed that male ($M = 1.93, SD = 1.24$) and female ($M = 1.97, SD = 1.22$) and grade 7 ($M = 2.03, SD = 1.24$) and grade 8 ($M = 1.91, SD = 1.23$) students were almost similar in their mean scores.

As can be seen in Table 5, the independent samples t-test result also indicated that the comparison of the mean score of male and female and grade 7 and grade 8 students on reading frequency was not significant. That is, the scores $t(372) = .17, p = .86$ and $t(372) = -.79, p = .42$ indicate that there was no significant difference between males and females and grade 7 and grade 8, respectively regarding the number of books read last year. In relation to time spent on reading, the t test results $t(372) = -.25, p = .79$ and $t(372) = .90, p = .36$ also showed that there was no significant difference between male and female and grade 7 and grade 8 students, respectively.

Factors Affecting Pleasure Reading Habits

Table 6 shows the extent of the factors affecting students' pleasure reading habits. Six factors that are assumed to be affecting pleasure reading habits of students are given.

Table 6: Factors affecting pleasure reading habits

Items	Frequency	Percent
Lack of time	52	13.8
Low English ability	83	22
Lack interest in reading	53	14.1
Lack of self confidence	7	1.9
No reading model	20	5.3
Lack of reading materials	156	41.4
Other	6	1.6
	377	100

As can be observed in Table 6, lack of reading materials (41.4%), low English ability (22%) and lack interest in reading (14.1%) are the major factors affecting students' pleasure reading habits.

5. Discussions

The purpose of this study was to investigate lower secondary school students' habits toward pleasure reading in North Wollo Zone, Ethiopia. Regarding pleasure reading frequency, the findings of the study revealed that the students' pleasure reading habits was poor. That is, a great majority of respondents did not read something in English for pleasure over the last one year (see Table 2). The findings of this study also indicated that majority of the students did not read per day at all (see Table 3).

The findings of this study seem to be inconsistent with Kavi and his colleague's (2015) study. That is, while most of the junior high school students of Ghana read between 1-2 hours daily, majority of the participating students in Ethiopia did not read per day at

all. This might be due to lack of suitable reading materials based on the students' level and interest. In relation to this, the findings of this study also showed that lack of reading materials, low English ability, and lack interest in reading are among the major factors that affect students' pleasure reading habits (see Table 6).

Regarding the purpose of reading, most of the students read for academic purposes (passing examinations or scoring good grades) (see Table 4). This finding is consistent with most of the previous studies (Majid & Tan, 2007; Tella & Akande, 2007; Kavi, et al, 2015). For instance, according to Tella and Akande (2007), Botswana pupils read only textbooks for passing tests. Likewise, majority of the upper primary school students of Singapore were motivated to read to obtain better grades in examinations (Majid & Tan, 2007). This could possibly be due to stressful Ethiopian education system, which places great emphasis for academic reading and good grades. In such situations, students often face pressure from their teachers, parents and the community to improve their academic performance, and the lower secondary school students may not be free from this force. As a result, the students have no interest for pleasure reading.

Concerning the demographic factors, most of the lower secondary school students, irrespective of gender and age differences, their pleasure reading habits were poor, and the independent samples t-test results also indicate that there was no significant difference between male and female and grade 7 and grade 8 students, respectively (see Table 5). However, this finding appears to be inconsistent with most of the previous studies (Clark & Foster, 2005; Nippold et al, 2006; Majid & Tan, 2007) that showed there were significant differences between boys and girls supporting girls regarding pleasure reading habits. That is, girls read more books, and spend more time on pleasure reading than boys do. The result of this study is also contradictory with earlier studies in relation to age. That is, interest in pleasure reading declined during the age range (11–15 years) (e.g. Nippold et al, 2006). This suggests that Ethiopian lower secondary school EFL learners (without gender and age difference) develop poor habits toward pleasure reading. This might be due to lack of reading materials, low English ability, and lack interest in reading (see Table 6). This finding is encouraging in that all these problems are addressed by an extensive reading approach (Day & Bamford, 1998; Day & Bamford, 2002; Extensive Reading Foundation Guide, 2011).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is indisputable that reading literacy is essential for learners' academic success, and high levels of reading literacy can be established through strong engagement in pleasure reading. However, the findings of this study showed that Ethiopian lower secondary school students' pleasure reading habits was poor. That is, most of the students did not read any book in English for pleasure over the last one year, did not spend significant amount of time on reading per day, and they mostly read for academic purposes. It was also found that there were no significant differences between gender and age regarding learners' pleasure reading habits. The results of this study also indicated that lack of appropriate reading materials, low English ability, and lack interest in reading English are the main factors that hinder the students' pleasure reading habits.

Based on the findings of the study, it would be possible to conclude that integrating pleasure reading programme in the EFL curricula is necessary. It would also be possible to conclude that being accessible to a wide range of books based on the learners' level and interest in the school libraries, and establishing school reading clubs in input-poor English as a Foreign Language contexts like Ethiopia is essential to promote learners' pleasure reading habits.

On the basis of the findings, some implications are forwarded for teachers, schools, curricula designers and educators to design appropriate intervention that promote students' pleasure reading habits. Various research findings showed that pleasure reading enhances the cognitive (comprehension) and behavioural (reading habit) aspects of reading (Krashen, 1982; Day & Bamford, 1998). Therefore, integrating extensive reading approach into the EFL curriculum is one of the mechanisms to develop students' pleasure reading habits. That is, access to a wide range of interesting reading materials based on the learners' needs and linguistic level, freedom to choose, and assign time and place to read; with little or no testing are the key features of a successful extensive reading programme (Day & Bamford, 1998). Teachers should also serve as good role models of reading for the students and motivate them to read more (*ibid*). In addition, a functional school library (with a borrowing system) that should be well-equipped with reading materials should be established. This helps students to engage in pleasure reading out of the classroom and at home as an extension of classroom activity that will continue throughout their lives. Moreover, teachers should implement extensive reading as extracurricular activity by establishing reading/book clubs. Furthermore, the media can play a great role in educating children and parents how to keep a balance in their pleasure activities, including watching television and pleasure reading. Finally, to design and implement an appropriate extensive reading programme that improves students' pleasure reading habits, all parties (teachers, school principals, educators, government officials, the media and other concerned bodies) should be involved.

However, there were several limitations in this study. The first one is that it was conducted in four schools; in a relatively small total sample, there were also too many grade 8 students. The research was also limited by the fact that the sample schools did not include privately owned schools, as there were no private lower secondary schools in North Wollo Zone. Therefore, large-scale study in various schools and contexts enable greater generalization regarding the students' pleasure reading habits in Ethiopia. Besides, the present study was limited by quantitative data. Thus, conducting further research using both quantitative and qualitative data could be important. Finally, it would be useful to conduct an experimental study on the effectiveness of a pleasure reading programme on language skills, reading habits, attitudes and motivation. It might also be interesting to carry out a second survey to determine learners' pleasure reading habits after the pleasure reading intervention and then compare the findings with the findings of this study to identify possible changes in pleasure reading habits.

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