# A LITERATURE REVIEW ON DEVELOPING READING KIOSK CONCEPT FOR NURTURING READING HABIT AMONG YOUTH

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## ABSTRACT

Many activities and strategies had been implemented to nurture reading habit among Malaysian citizens. In a bid to boost reading programs, the Malaysian Government has outlined several approaches that are hoping to expand the reading culture among the citizens. However, statistics revealed by the National Library that Malaysian read 8 to 12 books per year. Compared to our nearest neighbor, Singaporeans read 30 books per year .People in Britain and Japan read an average of 20 books per year. So this means that, in the reading level perspective, Malaysia is far behind developed countries in the world. Empirical studies found that teenagers are reading fewer books in general and reading is declining as an activity among teenagers and they had a bad impression towards the library. Consequently, the library is used by teenagers mainly to study or do homework rather than to borrow items to read at leisure. De Medina (1976) found that reading which is outside school hours occurred when there was an allocated place to carry out reading activity. Having all these considerations, the main part of this research intention is to develop the concept of reading kiosks specifically to attract the teenagers in the study area. Based on the review undertaken, there is no study being conducted in assessing reading habit in relation to the built environment. Thereby, it is the interest of the research to investigate the relationship between reading habit and built environment, thus investigating the suitable design criteria of a reading place that can attract people coming for reading and finally proposing the concept of reading kiosk as a final output of the research. The participants of the research were the secondary school students at SMK Gombak Setia and SMK Bandar Baru Sentul. This paper however, discusses the literature review on the reading habit, the approaches and the concept of the library being applied to promote reading activity among the citizens and also outline the research methodology that likely to partake. This study and review might be helpful in formulating the recommendations on the concept of reading kiosk as a final output of this research.

**Keywords:** reading habit, reading kiosk, teenagers, built environment, concept

## INTRODUCTION

The love of reading is not innate; it is a habit which must be cultivated. But Jean Grambs (1959) asserted "the habit of reading will not flourish if the only nourishment comes from a text. If we rely too heavily on textbooks, and then we cannot expect to nurture the reading habit" (Jean Grambs, 1959, pg.220). Many activities and strategies had been implemented to nurture the reading habit among the citizens including Malaysia. In a bid to boost reading programs, the Malaysian Government has outlined several approaches that are hoping to expand the reading culture among the citizens. However, statistics revealed by the National Library that the

Malaysian reading level is far behind developed countries in the world (New Straits Times, 2012).

In order to create appropriate conditions and encouraging Malaysian to read, there are a few tools that the government and related organizations would be used, such as libraries which includethe National Library, Rural Library, Mobile Library, School Library and etc. However, the conventional space arrangement of library for reading activities leading to a stressful and boring reading activity because reading is considered as passive activities. Many groups of people could not stay long with the reading activity in such provided spaces especially kids and youngster. In addition, G.Freeman (2005) asserted that the library would become obsolete due to the emergence and integration of information technology in reading activity. Regardless of this phenomenon, a reading place should be designed attractively in term of the concept, layout design and also complemented with various facilities including the information technology to be in line with the current reading trend.

Having these considerations, this research deals with developing the concept of reading kiosk for secondary school students at suburban villages in Kuala Lumpur. Through built environment, perhaps this idea would contribute to cultivate reading attractiveness thus improving the level of reading among Malaysian citizens.

Specifically, this research is intended to cover the following objectives:

I. To identify the demographic characteristics of the secondary school students in relation with reading habit.
II. To assess the attitude and values of the secondary school students towards reading activity and library
III. To analyze the relationship between built environment and reading factors
IV. To recommend the concept of reading kiosk
V. To formulate reading strategies to implement the reading kiosk

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Reading Definition

The definition of reading has undergone through many modifications. According to Fayaz Ahmad (2011), in the past, reading simply meant to extract visual information from any given codes or systems. However, thereafter, reading became much more complex and involved the understanding of a whole text composed of written signs (Fayaz Ahmad, 2011).Islam had also emphasized on reading. The very first surah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH began with the word 'Iqra' which means both read and proclaim, and which had widely been understood as a call to knowledge in the Muslim world (Stian,2008). Another scholar asserted that 'Iqra' is not just reading text, but also reading and understanding what happens around us" (Wilanduri, 2003, pg 99).  From these statements, it can be concluded that reading is the ability to identify the sentences and understand the information within. It is a cognitive process of understanding a written linguistic message and to examine and grasp the meaning of written or printed characters, words or sentences. Reading is not only relying upon the text, it can either through understanding the situation happens around us.

## Reading Habit

Sangkaeo (2000) refers reading habit as to the behaviour which expresses the likeness reading of individual types of reading, and tastes of reading. In other word for this study, it refers to the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading and the amount of reading materials being read. The importance of reading has resulted in much research work conducted to understand the nature of the reading habits of individuals. Research on reading habit has been done on teenagers or young people (Wicks, 1995; Machet, 2004), on college students and adults (Gallik, 1999; Kirsch and Guthrie, 1984; Ali, 1994), and on specific cultures and society, such as Malaysian (Long, 1984; Frank Small and Associates, 1996). Based on literature review undertaken, previous studies conducted are concerned with the factors that associated with a reading habit including gender, location either rural or urban area, time spent in reading, reading purpose, reading motivation and reading material. The factors which associated with a reading habit as found by the previous researcher illustrated in the Table 1 (refer to appendix).

Based on the Table 1(refer to appendix), the gap in this literature has been identified and it is found that there are no studies had been conducted in assessing the association between built environments and reading habits. Review undertook found that there is a lack of evidence to substantiate that the built environment influencing the reading habit as concerned by this research. Thereby, it is the interest of the research to investigate the relationship between reading habit and built environment, thus investigating the suitable design criteria of a reading place that can attract people coming for reading and finally proposing the concept of reading kiosk as a final output of the research.

## Built Environment in relation to Reading Habit

According to De Medina (1976), reading outside school hours occurred when there was an allocated place to carry out reading activity. Therefore, in order to nurture the reading habit among the teenagers even outside school hours, such an attractive reading place which is other than school library needs to be developed.

Clanley (2007) asserted that good internal design can have a significant impact on library use, as well as enabling staff to manage the diverse needs and behaviors of a range of users and age groups. Based on this assert, it can be concluded that the built environment which refer to the internal design of a reading place will influence the users' behavior towards reading activity.

In Ireland, as reported in the 2007 National Recreation Policy, the larger public libraries have dedicated "teen zones" with sofas, CD-listening posts, free Internet access and multimedia and music collections. The availability of these services can draw young people into accessing literature, as well as information relevant to their needs. (OMC, 2007). Therefore, it can be concluded that the various facilities provided influencing teenagers to visit the library.

Based on the survey conducted for young people at 32 city and county public libraries in Ireland, it is found that the young people emphasized a desire for comfort, relaxation and refreshments, and spaces where they could meet other young people. (McGrath, Rogers and Gilligan, 2010). The authors added that the comments from the respondent such as 'being allowed to talk (quietly)' and 'more comfortable furniture' were also common (McGrath, Rogers and Gilligan, 2010). Hence, it can be concluded that young people demand the informal environment while reading at the library in order to avoid a stressful reading activity.

Physical barriers for young people to visit library have been found to include issues such as distance and transport, competition from other services and attractions, and limited opening hours; psychological barriers include an association with the study, silence or boredom, a stereotype of library staff as unwelcoming and a lack of family tradition of using library services (Coradini, 2006; Lynch, 2007). Based on this statement, one of the factors that contribute to the barrier or visiting the library is the distance and transport. Therefore, it can be concluded that the location of a reading place plays a vital role in attracting people to visit the place. Such places should be accessible in walking distance and transportation access especially to cater the needs of young people.

Based on the review undertaken, there are some point could be highlighted in relation to built environment and reading habit. It can be concluded that, in nurturing the reading habit, a reading place should be attractive in design, equipped with interactive facilities, accessible in term of location, and surrounded by comfort and enjoyful environment to attract people coming for reading.

**Reading Habit in Malaysia**

According Atan Long (1984), the reading interest and habits of Malaysians are very low. Based on his study, Atan Long (1984) found that libraries are not fully utilized due to some reasons which are insufficient time, the presence of other important tasks and unavailability of reading material. Similar results are also found by Frank Small and Associates (1996), Pandian (1997), and the Malaysian National Library (2006). In a survey conducted by the Malaysian National Library (1996) it was found that Malaysian read an average of only two books a year in 1996. However, a survey conducted by the Malaysian National Library in 2006 has revealed that the literacy rate has slightly decreased to 92% from 93% in 1996 (Malaysian National Library, 2006). Based on this result, there has been no increase in the amount of reading as compared to the past ten years.

In year 2010, a survey was conducted by the Malaysian National Library and it revealed that individual Malaysians were reading twelve books annually by 2010 (Malaysian National Library,2010) It is shown that reading rate have improved among Malaysians from year 2006 until 2010. However, statistics revealed that National Library visitors declined from 464,317 in 2010 to 416,672 in 2011(Bernama, 2012). Basically, this is due to changes in reading trends, especially among Generation Y, who are more exposed to sophisticated technologies and smart gadget applications that assist in reading (Bernama,2012). Similar results found by Guthrie (2002) where consumers preferred electronic media such as e-books, search engine websites and digital library for reference purposes. Besides, Long (2003) also found that readers preferred digital books rather than reading from cover to cover of hard copy books as their reference sources. Consequently, the electronic media was found to be more convenient which can save time and money and can be accessible online anywhere and anytime (Roesnita and Zainab, 2005).

Based on the review undertaken regarding Malaysian reading habit, it is found that the Malaysian reading rate is still at the lower level even though there is an improvement on the reading rate in the year 2010. However, there is slightly declination on the National Library visitor numbers. This is due to the changing on the reading trend as the trend shifted from print to digital material. Therefore, it should be a consideration for this research to develop reading

kiosk which considers the present reading trend in order to instill the love to read among the citizens.

## Youth and Reading

According to Agnes Nieuwenhuizen (2000), reading does not have a very negative image at all amongst 10–18 year olds; at worst it is slightly nerdy. She also added that the enjoyment of reading for pleasure drops dramatically in teenagers, with 45% of primary students saying they really like reading for pleasure, down to 24% amongst secondary school students. Clearly something happens to the reading experience of young people to make it seem a lot less enjoyable when they reach secondary school than it was in primary school (Agnes Nieuwenhuizen ,2000).

According to American National Endowment (2004) on their study of the literacy reading in America, it showed that teens and young adults read less often and for shorter amounts of time when compared with other age groups and with Americans of the past (American National Endowment , 2004). The survey concluded that young adults are reading fewer books in general and reading is declining as an activity among teenagers (American National Endowment, 2004).Similar result found by India National Book Trust (2012) where three fourth of total literate youth in India do not read books other than their textbooks, be it classics or best sellers. On the other hand, Abdul Khalik (2011), Chief of Bandung Language Center revealed that reading habit is declining among Indonesian youth.

Based on the review undertaken, the reading habit among adolescent had a decrease in many countries such as India, Indonesia, Ireland and etc. Young people had seen reading as a less enjoyable activity. Such a phenomenon could be addressed not only from the role played by parents and teachers, but also need extra attention from the institution such as school and library.

## Youth and perception towards library

The 2007 American Harris Poll found that the major reason young people gave for visiting libraries was to borrow books for personal use (78%), for school assignments (67%), to read on the premises or to use the library website for information, research or recreation (34%),or to 'hang out' with friends (18%) (Harris Interactive, 2007).

Abeyrathna and Zainab (2004) also found that secondary school students read regularly outside school hours. This reading however, is mainly confined to textbooks and mainly carried out for the purpose of acquiring knowledge or to study (Abeyrathna and Zainab, 2004). Consequently, the library is used mainly to study or do homework rather than to borrow items to read at leisure (Abeyrathna and Zainab, 2004).

According to McGrath, Rogers and Gilligan (2010) on their study of Irish young people aged 13 to 17 years old towards the library in Ireland, most of the respondents seen libraries as a resource for reading, study and Internet use and, simultaneously, as boring, silent spaces, primarily for older people and younger children. Based on the interview, only one group described them as comfortable, while many, as noted above, stressed their lack of comfort, specifically in relation to seating. Some young people reported experiencing libraries as dark, drab and functional, rather than stimulating and inviting (McGrath, Rogers and Gilligan, 2010).

Based on the review undertaken, it can be concluded that these brief impressions illustrate the contrasting perceptions and attitudes towards libraries held by young people. This

contradicting impression towards libraries could be the barrier for young people to use the library for reading. Therefore, it should be a consideration for this research to cater the needs of young people in nurturing the reading habit among them.

## How to attract young people to visit the library?

According to McGrath, Rogers and Gilligan (2010) many public libraries, particularly larger branches in urban areas, have increasingly promoted libraries as places for teenagers to 'hang out', responding to the needs and interests of young people. Based on the report by Ireland National Recreation Policy (2007), the larger public libraries have dedicated zones for teenagers with sofas, CD-listening posts, free Internet access and multimedia and music collections. The availability of these services can draw young people into accessing literature, as well as information relevant to their needs. Public libraries have also undertaken innovative projects such as drama and drumming workshops, specifically aimed at young people' (OMC, 2007, p. 63).

According to Clancey (2007) good internal design can have a significant impact on library use, as well as enabling staff to manage the diverse needs and behaviors of a range of users and age groups. Creating spaces that provide access to a range of materials including magazines, computers, study space, CDs and DVDs and listening posts  across a spectrum of ages has been shown to generate interest among young people (Clancey, 2007).

Locating 'teen zones' close to other materials of interest, such as music, magazines, DVDs and computers, allows young people to access a range of materials and to make the transition to full library use (Sissons, 1997). According to ChomhairleLeabharlanna (2004), improving the library collection such as having more CDs and DVDs would convince young people to make more use of public libraries. On the other hand, Blanes (2005) asserted that creation of specialized collections including items appealing to young people's interests such as music, sport, films, fashion, performance and materials such as magazines, comics and young adult literature has been noted to result in higher usage by young people.

Based on the review undertaken, some point could be highlighted to be a consideration for this research. It can be seen that a reading place for teenagers should be designed according to their needs and should be attractive in term of the design and facilities provided in order to attract young people to visit the reading place thus nurturing reading habit among them.

## Concept of libraries with various facilities

Many of the countries had developed reading kiosk to nurture the reading habit. The function of the library had been modified by providing such interactive facilities and surrounded by the enjoyful environment to attract the community. The examples of the mini library in around the world demonstrated as follows:

## I.　　Open-air Library (Refer to Appendix: Image 1)

The Open-air Library Magdeburg was established in 2005 in an abandoned district centre in East Germany and has been started with a public intervention. According to a website,   the library was built from recycled beer crates and wood from an old warehouse. Residents were involved in the design, books were donated to fill the shelves, volunteers ran the cafe, and people took part in

a poetry slam events and book readings. The library is open 24/7 and book borrowing and returning is managed entirely on trust (http://www.archdaily.com/39417/open-air-library-karo-architekten/, 2012)

Based on the review undertaken, the concept of an open-air library is suitable for a young group of people as it offers sports facilities and also reading facilities. People could enjoy reading and also their sport activities at the same time. Previous literature found that young people prefer a reading place which they can actually meet their friend and perform their daily activities together (McGrath, Rogers and Gilligan, 2010). Thus, this concept could be a consideration in designing the concept of reading kiosk as the final output of this research.

## II.      Incubator Library (Refer to Appendix: Image 2)

Libraries can also be spaces that develop and grow local businesses, support artists and cultural activities or trial other new ways of doing things (Tessa, 2011). One of the examples of incubator library is Library Lab. Library Lab is located in Willesden, UK and it has been set up in the Willesden Green Library Center. According to a website, Library Lab offers free workshops, lectures, a pop-up co-working space and play school aimed at accelerating local entrepreneurship in the Brent community. The play school provides free temporary childcare for those 0 to 4 years old, provided parents remain on site to take advantage of the co-working and/or learning series that The Library Lab provides (http://www.architecture00.net/blog/?p=2163, 2012).

Based on the review undertaken, various services provided within the library could be one of the factors that can attract people for coming. As stated in the previous literature, the availability of various facilities and services can draw young people into accessing literature, as well as information relevant to their needs. (OMC, 2007). Therefore, the library lab concept which offers various services can attract not only for a young group of people for workshop services but also for adults and parents as it provides crèche for their children.

## III.     Park Library (Refer to Appendix: Image 3)

In Bogota, there are about 50 library kiosks around the city's parks and 100 across the country (www.parklibrarycolumbia.com, 2012). The kiosk called "ParaderoparaLibrosparaParques" or known as "Places in Parks for Books". The mini-libraries are part of a joint program run by the city's parks and a literacy organization (www.parklibrarycolumbia.com, 2012). The kiosks offer people the opportunity to read and borrow books, children can get help with their homework and various activities including book reading and music events bring people together around literacy Volunteers staff the kiosks, helping patrons check out books and organizing activities and homework assistance for kids. The volunteers are onsite 12 hours a week. (http://www.takepart.com/article/2012/06/25/street-corner-libraries-are-all-rage-bogota, 2012)

Locating a reading kiosk within a park area is a brilliant idea to promote reading habit. People could enjoy reading in a surrounded greenery environment. Developing reading kiosk in a park area can attract many groups of people as the park is commonly visited by the community to have their leisure activities. While performing those activities, people also can enjoy reading hence promoting communication among them.

**IV. Uni Project (Refer to Appendix: Image 4)**

According to a website, the Uni Project is a portable reading room which aimed to temporarily transform almost any available urban space into a public reading room and venue for learning. Uni structure is based on a system of 144 open-faced cubes and it can be installed in different configurations or heights to create an inviting space for people to gather in public. (www.uniproject.com , 2012).  The Uni collection consists of new and gently-used books and materials donated to the Uni and it was managed with the help of a team of volunteer librarians, the goal is to offer an engaging collection of books and learning experiences to an urban audience, children and adults alike (www.uniproject.com , 2012). The collection is organized into modules that help librarians adapt the Uni to different locations and communities, and even change the content over the course of a day (www.uniproject.com , 2012).

As mentioned in the previous literature, young people especially have contradicting impressions towards the library (McGrath, Rogers and Gilligan, 2010). Previous literature also mentioned that young people would prefer to have an informal environment for reading such as allowing them to talk, having music, meal and etc.  In order to address the issue, developing temporary reading facilities in public areas could be one of the approaches to attract that group of people to read as it offers reading facilities within this environment which preferred by the young people. Moreover, this idea also can promote reading as a leisure activity as it might attract the visitors who are surrounding that area to come for a reading.

**V. Virtual Library (Refer to Appendix: Image 5)**

In Austria, virtual library had been promoted to nurture the reading habit. The virtual library had contained in public QR code stickers and 70 stickers are placed in public locations such as bus stops, containing QR codes and NFC technology that enable citizens to download e-books. The project seeks to make literary classics more easily available to citizens of the city, which currently does not have a public library. According to Mark (2012) the users of virtual library, some 70 recognizable yellow stickers have been placed in locations around Klagenfurt mostly at the bus stops courtesy of support from STW Mobilitat and passersby can either hold their Smartphones next to them or use a QR code reader to be directed towards one of 70 different titles.

As mentioned by Guthrie (2002) in previous literature, consumers preferred electronic media such as e-books, search engine websites and digital library for reference purposes. Besides, Long (2003) also found that readers preferred digital books rather than reading from cover to cover of hardcopy books as their reference sources. Therefore, virtual library could be one of the possible approaches to promote reading as it supported the current reading trend.

Based on the review undertaken on the concept of mini library in another part of the world, some design criteria have been outlined. Figure 1 (refer to appendix) indicates the mind map of design criteria formulated based on the review undertaken on the concept of mini libraries as applied in other countries. These design criteria as outlined from this study will lead to the formulation of the questionnaire for this research thus leading to the recommendation on the concept of reading kiosk for the case study.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The overall research design involves four main stages. The four methods have been identified based on literature review and they have also been selected and adopted according to the appropriateness of the stages. For problems identification, content analyses have been utilized in explaining and identifying problems, the study is utilizing and analyzing the contents. Journals, books, theses, reports and documents have been collated and analyzed according to the related topic. Identification of problems, and areas less researched have been the focus of this content analysis.

The stages are Preliminary Study, Data Collection, Analysis and Conclusion. At the preliminary Study stage, it has analyzed the content of the literature. The second stage which is Data collection, methods adopted are observations, questionnaire surveys, interviews and focus group discussion. Analyses of data have been conducted using tabulation approach where it involved Microsoft Excel, SPSS, etc. The last stage which is recommendations and conclusions will be drawn based on the findings of the analyses.

### Data Collection

Survey and questionnaires had been designed to collect the data. The population is the secondary school students and the samples are the students of SMK Bandar BaruSentul and SMK Gombak Setia aged between 13 to 17 years old. Total sample size is 300 students at two secondary schools. There were 150 questionnaires were distributed to the students in SMK Gombak Setia and 150 questionnaires forms were distributed to the students at SMK Bandar BaruSentul.

Stratified random sampling had been chosen as the method of sampling where the population is stratified into a number of non overlapping sub-populations or strata and sample items are selected from each stratum. The samples were selected randomly and it was deemed that students of SMK Bandar BaruSentul and SMK Gombak Setia were having the same opportunity to be selected as the sample in this study.

### Instruments

The data had been collected by using a questionnaire and the questionnaire comprises of four sections. The first section is designed to capture the respondents' demographic including gender, age, hobby, parent's household income, and the favorite activities after the school day. The second section is designed to capture the attitude of the respondents towards the library as a place for reading including their feelings about the library in term of facilities, services, location, interior and exterior design and etc.

The third section is designed to capture the perception and attitude of the respondents towards reading as an activity including the time spent in reading, preferred reading material, preferred subject, reading purpose, and reading motivation.

The last section is designed to capture the preferences of respondents towards the environment of the reading places are referred to reading kiosk including the facilities, environment, services, location, management, and operation.

**Analysis of Data**

The analyses will be both descriptive and inferential in nature. Data entry and analysis were conducted to provide some inputs to the overall discussions of the survey results. At the final stage, some conclusions were drawn based on data synthesis, findings and other results of researches elsewhere.

# CONCLUSION

This study outlines the five important elements relevant to the literature. First, it has discussed the various definitions of reading and the Malaysian reading trend as compared to the other countries. It has also extracted four fundamental variables explaining the factors that influencing the reading habit. Several major thoughts have been distinguished with regards to the factors associated with reading habit; gender, location (urban and rural), types of reading material, time spent in reading, reading purpose and reading motivation . However, there are no studies being conducted in proving that built environment are also playing their roles in influencing the reading habit. Therefore, the review has identified the gap which is built environment as one of the external factors that influencing the reading behavior.

Essentially, the review has substantiated the need for this research. It is still unclear that the built environment influencing the reading habit. It is therefore be the interests of this research to investigate the relationship between built environment and reading habit thus proposing the concept of reading kiosk as a final output of this research.

Review undertaken also had confirmed four fundamental problems; Malaysian reading rate is still at the lower level, reading is declining as an activity among teenagers, some teenagers had a bad impression towards libraries, and the library was used by school students to study rather than for leisure reading.

Lastly,the literature had also identified several approaches and concepts of reading kiosk being applied in other countries to promote reading activity among the citizens. This study and review might be helpful in formulating recommendations on the concept of reading kiosk as a final output of this research.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## APPENDIX

**Table 1 :** Matrix on factors associated with reading habit by previous researchers

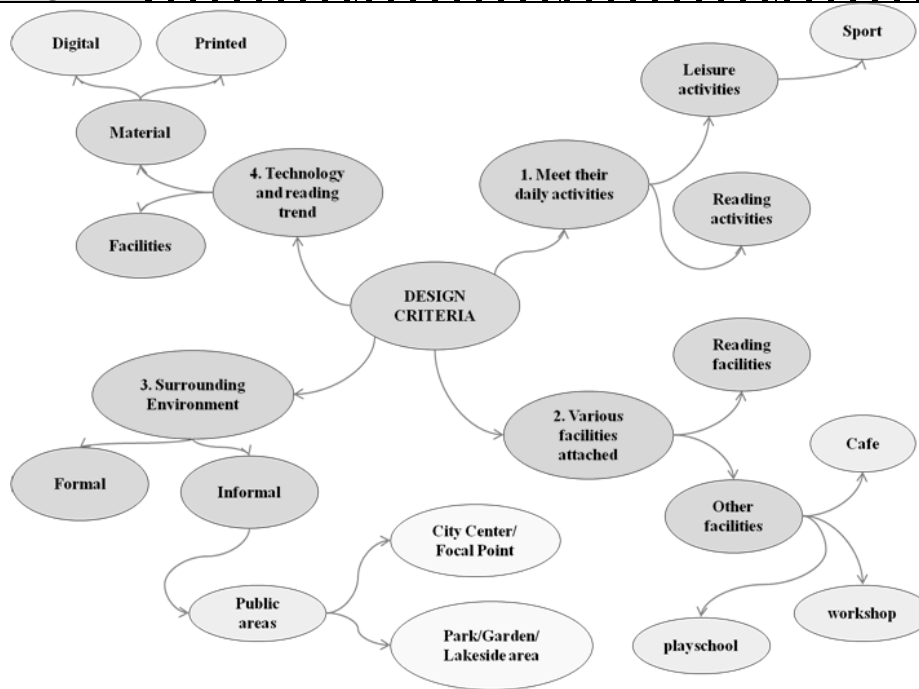| | READING HABIT | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Time Spent for Reading** | **Reading Purposes** | **Reading Motivation** | **Reading Material** |
| **Gender** | Hastings and Henry (2006) | Zainab(1977) Chai(1996) Abilock(2002) | Clark and Foster (2005) | Moffit (1992) and Simpson (1998) |
| **Location (Urban and Rural)** | Fayaz (2011) | Fayaz (2011) | Fayaz (2011) | Fayaz (2011) |
| **Built Environment (Interior Exterior Design)** | | | | |

Research Gap



**Figure 1 :** Mind Map of Design Criteria

**Image 1 :** Open Air Library, Magdeburg



**Image 2 :** Library Lab, Willesden



**Image 3 :** Park Library, Columbia



**Image 4 :** Uni Project, New York City



**Image 5 :** Virtual Library