

Jovan R. Kraguljac

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8032-8324>“Milica Milošević” Primary School
Jagnjilo

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READING HABITS IN THE DIGITAL AGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERATURE TEACHING

Abstract: This study examines the reading habits, attitudes, and genre preferences of fifth- to eighth-grade primary school students in the contemporary digital environment, with a particular focus on the relationship between the use of digital media and the reading of printed books. The sample comprised 156 students attending schools in rural, suburban, and urban areas. The data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed through quantitative methods, including descriptive statistics, the independent-samples *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, as well as correlation and regression analyses. The findings indicate a moderate level of reading engagement, with statistically significant differences between genders and ages. Female students have a stronger preference for genres characterized by emotional and narrative complexity, whereas male students adopt a more instrumental approach to reading. The reading frequency declines with age. The correlation analysis reveals a moderate positive relationship between the use of digital resources and book reading ($r = 0.453$, $p < .01$), suggesting that these practices are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The regression analysis identifies the family cultural context, measured by the number of books in the household, as the strongest predictor of reading habits ($\eta^2 = 0.361$), alongside the significant influence of students' attitudes toward reading and their previous reading experience. The findings highlight the need for pedagogical approaches that integrate digital media into literature teaching, strengthen students' motivation to read systematically, and encourage a supportive family environment.

Keywords: reading habits, digital media, literature teaching, primary school, family context, gender differences

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary literature, reading is defined as a complex cognitive process; it involves not only the decoding of symbols but also the active construction of meaning, accompanied by the indispensable critical interpretation of texts within a broader social and cultural context (Snow 2002: 11). Reading constitutes the foundation of functional literacy and enables lifelong learning. According to the theoretical principles of the social development of cognitive functions (Vygotsky

1978: 86), more recent studies emphasize that reading habits are deeply rooted in the social context; they emerge and develop through the child's active interaction with the family, school, and the wider community. Hence, early exposure to books in the family environment plays a particularly important role: It contributes to the formation of a reading identity and fostering intrinsic motivation for reading (Guthrie, Wigfield 2000: 417).

Reading can be viewed through its two fundamental functions. On the one hand, it is a practical skill, essential for acquiring knowledge and engaging in independent learning and self-improvement. On the other hand, for many people, reading is also a source of enjoyment, a stimulus for imagination, and a means of intellectual growth. These two aspects are complementary (Clark, Rumbold 2006: 5). Today, literacy is no longer understood merely as the ability to decode written text (OECD 2019: 28).

Introducing these broader perspectives into school practice is not a simple task, particularly within the framework of compulsory school reading (Krnjajić et al. 2011: 268). Traditional approaches to teaching literature often fail to foster genuine interest in books among students, causing required reading to be perceived as just another obligation to be completed (Ilić et al. 2007: 42).

The digital age has introduced distinctive reading practices to which today's students are increasingly exposed. One of these is fragmented reading, or *text scanning*, which is primarily aimed at the rapid extraction of key information. Although functional in many contexts, this practice may reduce the ability to engage in deeper analysis and comprehend more complex material (Wolf 2018: 14). The habit of simultaneously processing multiple streams of information directly conflicts with the demands of analytical reading, as the constant shifting of attention prevents the deep cognitive processing of text (Kosier 2017: 22). Digital literacy should not replace traditional literacy; rather, it should build upon it by teaching students how to critically evaluate sources and manage information effectively (Liu 2022: 302). Nevertheless, empirical evidence from Serbia points to a crisis in reading culture, with data indicating that only 46.9% of secondary school students read all of the prescribed compulsory reading materials (Božić, Novaković 2020: 17).

Despite the dominance of digital media, printed materials continue to retain a clear advantage when it comes to cognitively demanding tasks and the deep acquisition of knowledge (Nedeljkov 2016: 99–102). The discrepancy between the theoretical importance of reading and actual reading practices highlights the need for further research that takes into account the hybrid nature of reading in the contemporary era (Turner et al. 2020: 295). Accordingly, the aim of this study is to examine the reading habits of primary school students, identify the factors that shape their attitudes toward books, and explore models for improving educational practice.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explores the complex relationship between digital media and printed literature, seeking to determine how the traditional book maintains its place within the contemporary reading habits of young people. The research has two primary objectives: to map the extent to which both formats are used and to examine the relationship between genre preferences and the choice of reading medium. More specifically, the study aims to determine whether digital and print formats are mutually exclusive, complementary, or used in parallel for different purposes.

The research also assesses the relative importance of various factors that shape these reading practices, including individual characteristics (gender and age) as well as broader social-contextual variables, such as the family environment and the school's location.

2.2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The study was conducted on a sample of 156 primary school students enrolled in grades five through eight. The research sample consisted of students from three schools located in the city of Belgrade and its surrounding area. This design enabled a comparative analysis of the influence of the local context on students' reading habits. The rural setting was represented by students from "Milica Milošević" Primary School in Jagnjilo. The suburban (urban-peripheral) setting was represented by "Sveti Sava" Primary School in Mladenovac. The urban setting included students from "Vladislav Petković Dis" Primary School in Belgrade.

With regard to gender distribution, the sample comprised 75 male students (48% of the total sample) and 81 female students (52%). The data were collected between January and February 2025 using an anonymous online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The research procedure was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, with written parental consent and approval from the participating school administrations obtained prior to data collection.

2.3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

A structured questionnaire was designed, consisting of two main sections: the first section included demographic data, while the second comprised a set of questions related to specific reading practices. Respondents' attitudes were measured using a standard five-point Likert scale. The acceptable internal consistency

of the scale was confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was 0.82.

After data collection, the data were entered and processed using the statistical software package IBM SPSS Statistics. The analysis employed standard statistical methods, including descriptive statistics, the t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the χ^2 (chi-square) test. To ensure the appropriate application of parametric tests, the distribution of the data was previously examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test.

2.4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the established objectives and theoretical background, three hypotheses that can be statistically tested were formulated.

H1: Students' reading habits are more strongly influenced by the socio-cultural context (particularly the family context) than by individual demographic characteristics.

H2: In the contemporary media ecosystem, digital and analogue (printed) formats have complementary rather than substitutive roles, with each format dominating in different functional domains.

H3: There is a significant positive correlation between students' affective attitudes toward reading and their self-assessed level of cognitive engagement during reading.

3. RESULTS

3.1. RESEARCH SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 156 students ($N = 156$) from upper grades of primary school participated in the study. The sample was constructed to be stratified according to four key independent variables: gender, grade level (as an indicator of age), geographical type of settlement, and students' achievement in Serbian Language in the previous grade (Table 1).

The obtained sample showed a satisfactory balance in terms of gender distribution, with a slightly higher proportion of female students (52.0%) compared to male students (48.0%).

Regarding age-related structure, the largest number of participants were sixth-grade students (32.0%), followed by seventh-grade students (30.0%), fifth-grade students (21.0%), and eighth-grade students (17.0%). Such distribution enabled the analysis of the developmental continuum of reading habits throughout adolescence.

Table 1. Sample structure based on the demographic variables ($N = 156$)

Characteristic	Category	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Boys	75	48.00%
	Girls	81	52.00%
Grade (Age)	5th grade	33	21.00%
	6th grade	50	32.00%
	7th grade	47	30.00%
	8th grade	26	17.00%
Settlement	rural (Jagnjilo)	67	43.00%
	urban (Belgrade)	55	35.00%
	suburban (Mladenovac)	34	22.00%
Grade in <i>Serbian Language</i>	Excellent (5)	80	51.30%
	Very Good (4)	42	26.90%
	Good (3)	26	16.70%
	Sufficient (2)	7	4.50%
	Insufficient (1)	0	0.00%

To examine sociocultural differences, the sample included students from three types of settlements: a rural environment (“Milica Milošević” Primary School, Jagnjilo – 43.0%), an urban environment (“Vladislav Petković Dis” Primary School, Belgrade – 35.0%), and a suburban environment (“Sveti Sava” Primary School, Mladenovac – 22.0%).

The majority of respondents (51.3%) had achieved an excellent grade in Serbian Language in the previous school year, while smaller proportions of students had very good (26.9%), good (16.7%), or satisfactory achievement (4.5%).¹ Therefore, the sample was sufficiently diverse to enable the examination of the influence of various demographic characteristics on reading practices, which represented one of the primary objectives of the study.

3.2. PSYCHOMETRIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCALES

The reliability and validity of the measurement instruments were examined. Most of the scales demonstrated satisfactory to high reliability levels (Table 2). The highest level of internal consistency was observed for the Scale of Attitudes toward the Benefits of Reading ($\alpha = 0.871$), indicating the homogeneity of respondents’ affective attitudes toward reading. High reliability values were also recorded for the Scale of Reading Frequency of Literary Genres ($\alpha = 0.792$) and the Family Context Scale ($\alpha = 0.760$).

¹ In Serbia, the grading scale is numerical: 1 – insufficient, 2 – sufficient, 3 – good, 4 – very good, and 5 – excellent.

Table 2. Psychometric characteristics of the scales: reliability and the number of items

Scale Name	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Reliability Level
Attitudes toward the Benefits of Reading	7	0.871	Very high
Frequency of Reading Literary Genres	6	0.792	High
Family and Individual Context	6	0.760	High
Use of Digital Sources	6	0.738	Satisfactory
Genre Preferences	10	0.720	Satisfactory
Device Use	4	0.548	Low (interpret with caution)
Free Reading Scale	2	0.496	Unacceptable (excluded)

Note: Cronbach's alpha (α) values indicate the internal consistency of the scales.

Values above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable, while lower values require cautious interpretation. The Device Use Scale ($\alpha = 0.548$) and the Free Reading Frequency Scale ($\alpha = 0.496$) demonstrated lower reliability; therefore, their results were interpreted with caution and were not included as primary predictors in the regression models.

A principal component analysis (PCA), with confirmed sample adequacy (KMO and Bartlett's test, $p < 0.001$), established construct validity. In the analysis of genre preferences, two factors were identified: (1) Educational-adventure genres (travel writing, historical literature, adventure) and (2) Emotionally intense genres (horror, crime, romance).

3.3. DESCRIPTIVE INDICATORS: DOMINANT READING PATTERNS

The descriptive analysis reveals clear patterns in students' reading habits (refer to Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive indicators for the key dimensions in reading habits

Dimension / Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
<i>Literary genres</i>			
Drama	2.76	1.44	1–5
Novels	2.72	1.20	1–5
<i>Digital sources</i>			
Social networks	3.67	1.46	1–5
Educational content	1.70	1.27	1–5
E-books	1.82	1.30	1–5
<i>Motivation (perceived benefits)</i>			
Functional benefits	[high]	—	1–5
Escapism	2.55	1.44	1–5

Note: *M* = arithmetic mean; *SD* = standard deviation. The scales are of the Likert type (e.g., 1 = never / not at all, 5 = very often / completely agree).

Among literary genres, the most frequently read are drama ($M = 2.76$; $SD = 1.44$) and novels ($M = 2.72$; $SD = 1.20$). In the digital environment, social networks ($M = 3.67$; $SD = 1.46$) and smartphone use are dominant. Educational digital formats ($M = 1.70$; $SD = 1.27$) and e-books ($M = 1.82$; $SD = 1.30$) are used considerably less frequently, suggesting that the digital environment primarily serves for entertainment and informal communication, rather than for in-depth reading. Regarding motivation, functional benefits (learning and personal development) are the dominant factors, whereas escapism (escape from reality) is less pronounced ($M = 2.55$; $SD = 1.44$).

3.4. CORRELATION ANALYSIS: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL READING

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships between the key variables. The results (Table 4) do not support the assumption of a substitutive relationship between printed and digital formats.

Table 4. Intercorrelation Matrix (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Frequency of reading books	—			
2. Use of digital sources	0.453	—		
3. Perceived benefits of reading	0.614	—	—	
4. Family context	0.606	—	—	—

Note: r = Pearson's correlation coefficient $p < 0.01$; a correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

A moderate positive and statistically highly significant correlation is found between the frequency of reading printed books and the intensity of using digital reading formats ($r = 0.453$; $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that, in students' practices, digital media are not perceived as a replacement for printed books but rather as their complement. It appears that students who read books more frequently also show a greater tendency to use digital sources.

A particularly strong positive correlations were identified between reading frequency and the perceived benefits of reading ($r = 0.614$; $p < 0.01$) and between reading frequency and support from the family environment ($r = 0.606$; $p < 0.01$).

3.5. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES AND FAMILY CONTEXT

The analysis of differences (t -test and ANOVA) reveals significant variations in relation to gender and social environment (Table 5).

Table 5. Significant gender differences in reading habits (*t*-test)

Variable	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Frequency of reading novels	Boys	2.10	-5.506	< 0.001
	Girls	3.25		
Frequency of reading dramas	Boys	2.15	-5.572	< 0.001
	Girls	3.32		
Frequency of reading historical novels	Boys	2.95	3.778	< 0.001
	Girls	2.20		
Instrumental approach	Boys	3.75	2.210	0.029
	Girls	3.35		

Note: *M* = arithmetic mean.

The results indicate that there is a statistically significant and consistent difference between genders. Female students read novels and dramas significantly more frequently ($t = -5.506$, $p < 0.001$ and $t = -5.572$, $p < 0.001$, respectively), indicating a greater preference for emotionally rich themes and the analysis of complex interpersonal relationships. Male students, on the other hand, choose historical novels more frequently ($t = 3.778$, $p < 0.001$) and demonstrate a more pragmatic approach to reading, primarily oriented toward achieving better academic grades ($t = 2.210$, $p = 0.029$).

The results of the ANOVA reveal that the number of books in the household is the strongest individual factor ($F(5,150) = 16.93$, $p < 0.001$). The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.361$) confirms that the home environment accounts for as much as 36.1% of the variance in students' reading habits. Students growing up in households with a rich home library (more than 20 titles) demonstrated twice the reading frequency ($M = 21.43$) compared to their peers without such encouragement ($M = 10.13$).

The influence of academic achievement was also significant: students with excellent academic performance not only evaluate the benefits of reading more positively ($F(4,151) = 4.214$, $p = 0.003$, $\eta^2 = 0.100$), but also demonstrate more developed abilities for critical text analysis ($F(4,151) = 6.493$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.147$).

3.6. INFLUENCE OF GRADE LEVEL (AGE) AND THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PREDICTORS

The analysis of variance reveals a clear developmental trend: as students get older, their interest in reading decreases. The highest frequency of reading activities was recorded among fifth- and sixth-grade students, whereas with seventh- and eighth-grade students, there is a statistically significant decline in motivation and cognitive engagement ($F(3,152) = 3.564$, $p = 0.016$) (Table 6).

Table 6. Differences according to grade level and home library size (ANOVA)

Variable	Category	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Grade (Frequency of reading books)	5th grade	17.18	3.564	0.016	—
	6th grade	15.90			
	7th grade	14.25			
	8th grade	12.77			
Home library (Frequency of reading books)	0 books	10.13	16.930	< 0.001	0.361
	1–20 books	16.80			
	Over 20 books	21.43			
Academic accomplishments (Perceived benefits)	Excellent (5)	4.45	4.214	0.003	0.100
	Very Good (4)	4.20			
	Good (3)	3.95			
	Sufficient (2)	3.40			
Academic accomplishment (Critical analysis)	Excellent (5)	4.30	6.493	< 0.001	0.147
	Very Good (4)	3.95			
	Good (3)	3.65			
	Sufficient (2)	3.10			

A hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the factors influencing different dimensions of reading (Table 7).

Table 7. Regression analysis

Model (criterion)	Indicators	β	<i>p</i>	R^2	<i>F</i>
1. Frequency of reading	Use of digital content	0.284	< 0.001	0.710	17.833
	Prior reading experience	0.245	0.004		
2. Perceived benefits	Critical understanding of content	0.352	0.001	0.601	10.963
	Analysis of visual information	0.298	0.001		
3. Educational genres	Perceived benefirs of reading	0.315	0.005	0.561	9.323
	Gender (1 = boys, 2 = girls)	-0.287	< 0.001		

The model predicting reading frequency explains a high proportion of variance ($R^2 = 0.710$). The key predictors identified are the previous reading experience ($\beta = 0.245$) and the use of digital content ($\beta = 0.284$). This finding suggests that digital literacy does not suppress traditional reading practices but rather supports them in a complementary manner.

The model predicting perceived benefits of reading explains 60.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.601$). The most significant predictors are critical understanding of content ($\beta = 0.352$) and the ability to analyse visual information ($\beta = 0.298$), indicating that students' awareness of the value of reading is directly associated with the level of their developed cognitive abilities. It should be noted that both vari-

ables were operationalised through students' self-assessment within the attitudes toward the benefits of reading scale, rather than through objective cognitive tests.

The model predicting interest in educational genres explains 56.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.561$). The most significant predictors in this model are gender ($\beta = -0.287$) and previously formed attitudes toward the benefits of reading ($\beta = 0.315$). The results indicate that female students, on average, demonstrate a somewhat lower affinity for educational genres compared to male students.

3.7. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The empirical findings of this study reveal a complex and multifaceted relationship between students' reading habits and their media practices.

The relationship between digital and print reading. The findings confirm that digital and analogue reading formats are not opposing forms but rather complementary ones. The moderate positive and statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.453$; $p < 0.01$), together with the results of the regression analysis ($\beta = 0.284$), indicates the complementary nature of different media platforms in students' reading behaviour.

Family context. The family environment appears to be a key determinant of reading habits. The size of the home library was identified as the strongest individual factor, explaining 36.1% of the variance in reading frequency ($\eta^2 = 0.361$). A significant disparity is observed: students from families with extensive home libraries demonstrate approximately twice the level of reading engagement compared to students from families with limited book collections.

Age- and gender-related specificities. The study documents significant differences in reading practices. A statistically significant decline in reading motivation and frequency is observed among older students ($F = 3.564$; $p = 0.016$), with the seventh and eighth grades identified as critical periods for the decline of these habits. Female students demonstrate a greater preference for narrative and emotional complexity, whereas male students show a stronger affinity for historical genres and a more instrumental approach to reading ($p = 0.029$).

Cognitive abilities and attitudes. The analyses highlight a strong relationship between cognitive abilities and attitudes toward reading. The regression model explaining students' awareness of the benefits of reading ($R^2 = 0.601$) shows that the ability to analyse content and visual information represents the primary factor shaping positive attitudes toward books.

Functional fragmentation of digital practices. The use of digital media indicates a functional division: students actively use digital platforms for recreation and social interaction ($M = 3.67$), whereas educational and in-depth reading content ($M = 1.70$) occupies a marginal position.

These findings provide an empirical basis for theoretical interpretation and emphasise the need for an integrated pedagogical approach that acknowledges the

hybrid nature of contemporary literacy and systematically promotes motivation and critical thinking in literature education.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that reading habits represent a dynamic construct based on the synergy of various factors, ranging from media-related and socio-cultural influences to cognitive and developmental dimensions. Within this framework, three key aspects can be identified: the hybrid nature of digital and analogue formats, the crucial role of the family environment, and the inseparable relationship between students' attitudes and cognitive skills (Antić, Pešikan 2015: 105).

4.1. CONTINUUM BETWEEN DIGITAL AND ANALOGUE: THE PARADIGM OF INTEGRATION

The empirical findings obtained in this study challenge the assumption of the mutual exclusivity of digital and printed formats (Liu 2022: 304). The identified moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.453$) indicates a significant relationship between traditional and digital reading, while the regression model confirms that these factors, together with previous reading experience, explain as much as 71% of the variance in book-reading frequency. These findings suggest a pronounced hybridity and functional complementarity of contemporary media (Turner et al. 2020: 298).

However, this relationship is not symmetrical: while the digital sphere dominates the domain of recreation, which is characteristic of generations of “digital natives” (Prensky 2001: 2), the educational utilisation of digital formats (e.g., e-books) remains marginal. This functional fragmentation demonstrates the need for the education system to connect rapid digital processing with in-depth analytical interpretation, in accordance with the principles of network-based learning (Bosanac, Milutinović 2021: 132) and a strategic approach to the use of technologies (Glušac et al. 2023: 255).

4.2. THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENTAL SPECIFICITIES OF READING HABITS

The conducted study confirms the predominant role of the family context (Božić, Novaković 2020: 19; Vuong et al. 2021: 7). The size of the home library ($\eta^2 = 0.361$) and a supportive family climate ($r = 0.606$) are identified as the strongest predictors of reading frequency. This influence is most clearly illustrated by the twofold higher average reading frequency among students who have access to a home library ($M = 21.43$) compared to those who do not ($M = 10.13$).

Contrasting with this stable factor is the developmental decline in reading interest, reflected in a statistically significant decrease in reading frequency from the fifth to the eighth grade ($F(3,152) = 3.564, p = 0.016$), which identifies adolescence as a critical period (Chen et al. 2021: 8). Gender differences in genre preferences are also confirmed (Chen et al. 2021: 12).

4.3. COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT AND ATTITUDES TOWARD READING

The findings indicate a strong relationship between how students perceive their own ability to analyse texts and their attitudes toward reading. The role of this self-assessed cognitive dimension, measured through items concerning the ability to critically analyse the content read within the attitudes scale, emerged as the most significant predictor of the perceived benefits of reading ($R^2 = 0.601$).

Although this does not represent an objective measurement of intelligence or critical thinking skills through a standardised test, the finding suggests the existence of a positive psychological cycle. Students who believe they are capable of understanding and analysing texts effectively also perceive greater value in reading, which further motivates them toward deeper cognitive engagement. This is consistent with the principle that the affective and cognitive dimensions of reading are not independent but mutually constitutive (Antić, Pešikan 2015: 110).

4.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings of this study lead to several concrete pedagogical implications. It is crucial that literature instruction integrates digital tools in order to bridge the gap between recreational and educational reading. At the same time, active cooperation with families is necessary to promote the home library as a cultural resource. Furthermore, teaching approaches should be differentiated, taking into account both developmental and gender differences among students. Most importantly, instruction should focus on the systematic encouragement of cognitive engagement during reading, recognising it as the foundation of intrinsic reading motivation.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the perceptions that contemporary students' reading habits as divided between the digital and analogue worlds do not reflect reality. The practices demonstrated by the students participating in this study indicate that they actually operate within a unified reading space of a hybrid nature, in which different media do not exclude one another but mutually complement each other (Turner et al. 2020: 295). Nevertheless, within

this hybrid reading space, the dominance of activities that favour rapid information acquisition and entertainment is clearly evident, which presents a specific challenge for literature teachers.

The findings obtained clearly confirm that reading habits do not emerge simply as a consequence of technological availability. Rather, they represent a complex network of factors deeply rooted in the family context (Božić, Novaković 2020: 17; Vuong et al. 2021: 7), which is activated and sustained through the interaction of individual cognitive abilities and emotional attitudes. In this respect, the two most reliable indicators of reading engagement continue to be the size of the home library and students' self-assessed cognitive engagement during reading (Antić, Pešikan 2015: 110).

From the perspective of educational practice, these findings imply the need to move beyond a protective stance and resistance toward young people's digital habits. Instead, the role of literature instruction should be organised around three central principles: the systematic encouragement of critical thinking, support for diverse genre choices that correspond to students' age and gender characteristics, and the activation of and intensive cooperation with the family environment (Clark, Rumbold, 2006: 4). Only such a comprehensive approach can contribute to navigating the challenges of the contemporary media environment while ensuring that the fundamental values of reading culture continue to occupy a central position in the educational process.

However, the study has certain methodological limitations. The cross-sectional design, convenience sampling, and moderate reliability of some scales ($\alpha = 0.496$ for the Free Reading Scale) prevent the drawing of causal conclusions and limit the generalisability of the findings. These limitations point to clear directions for future research, including the application of longitudinal designs and the expansion of the sample size. In addition, it should be emphasised that the cognitive dimension in this study was operationalised through students' self-assessment within the attitudes scale, rather than through objective tests of critical thinking. Therefore, future studies should incorporate standardised measures of reading literacy in order to determine the relationship between actual cognitive abilities and affective attitudes toward reading more precisely.

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Јован Р. Крагуљац
ОШ „Милица Милошевић”
Јагњило

ЧИТАЛАЧКЕ НАВИКЕ У ДИГИТАЛНОМ ДОБУ: ИМПЛИКАЦИЈЕ ЗА НАСТАВУ КЊИЖЕВНОСТИ

Резиме: Дигитална трансформација суштински је променила начин на који ученици приступају текстовима и комуницирају са њима, што отвара озбиљна питања о будућности читалачке културе младих. Емпиријски подаци из Србије указују на постојање читалачке кризе: свега 46,9% ученика средњих школа прочита целокупну прописану лектуру. Упркос доминацији дигиталних медија, штампани материјали и даље задржавају примат у задацима који захтевају сложеније когнитивне процесе. Ово истраживање бави се проблемом читалачке кризе, тј. испитивањем односа између традиционалног читања књига и употребе дигиталних медија код ученика старијих разреда основне школе, са циљем да се утврди да ли се дигитални и аналогни формати међусобно надмећу или допуњују, као и који фактори најснажније обликују читалачке праксе ученика.

Спроведено је квантитативно истраживање на стратификованом узорку од 156 ученика од петог до осмог разреда, из три основне школе које представљају различита окружења: урбано (ОШ „Владислав Петковић Дис”, Београд), приградско (ОШ „Свети Сава”, Младеновац) и рурално насеље (ОШ „Милица Милошевић”, Јагњило). Узорак је чинило 75 ученика (48%) и 81 ученица (52%). Подаци су прикупљени у првом кварталу 2025. године путем анонимног онлајн-упитника (*Google Forms*), уз претходно прибављену писану сагласност родитеља, а у складу са етичким стандардима истраживања.

Структурирани упитник састојао се из два дела: демографских података и ставки које су се односиле на читалачке праксе, мерених петостепеном Ликертовом скалом. Унутрашња конзистентност инструмента потврђена је Кронбаховим алфа коефицијентом од 0,82. Подаци су обрађени применом програма *IBM SPSS Statistics*. Коришћене статистичке методе обухватиле су дескриптивну статистику, *t*-тест за независне узорке, једнофакторску анализу варијансе (ANOVA), Пирсонов коефицијент корелације, хи-квадрат тест и хијерархијску регресиону анализу. Пре примене параметријских тестова, нормалност расподеле података проверена је Колмогоров–Смирновљевим тестом. Конструктивна валидност скала за испитивање жанровских преференција потврђена је анализом главних компоненти (*Principal Component Analysis* – PCA), којом су издвојена два фактора: едукативно-авантуристички жанрови и емоционално интензивни жанрови.

Резултати истраживања оповргавају претпоставку да су дигитални и аналогни облици читања међусобно искључиви. Утврђена је умерена позитивна и статистички значајна корелација ($r = 0,453$, $p < 0,01$), која указује на то да ученици који су активнији у дигиталном окружењу такође чешће читају штампане књиге. Хијерархијска регресиона анализа потврдила је комплементарни однос ових облика читања, при чему су употреба дигиталних садржаја ($\beta = 0,284$) и претходно читалачко искуство ($\beta = 0,245$) издвојени као кључни предиктори учесталости читања,

објашњавајући заједно 71% варијансе ($R^2 = 0,710$). Употреба дигиталних медија код ученика показује јасну функционалну подељеност: друштвене мреже доминирају у рекреативној употреби ($M = 3,67$), док се образовни дигитални формати и електронске књиге користе значајно мање ($M = 1,70$ и $M = 1,82$). Породични контекст показао се као најзначајнији појединачни индикатор читалачких навика. Величина кућне библиотеке, мерена бројем књига у домаћинству, објашњава 36,1% варијансе у учесталости читања ($\eta^2 = 0,361$, $F(5,150) = 16,93$, $p < 0,001$). Ученици који имају приступ богатој кућној библиотеци читају приближно двоструко чешће ($M = 21,43$) у односу на вршњаке који такав приступ књигама немају ($M = 10,13$). Подстицај породице такође је показао снажну позитивну корелацију са учесталошћу читања ($r = 0,606$, $p < 0,01$), што потврђује централну улогу породичног окружења у формирању читалачког идентитета.

Статистички значајне разлике у односу на пол утврђене су у више аспеката. Ученице чешће читају романе ($t = -5,506$, $p < 0,001$) и драмска дела ($t = -5,572$, $p < 0,001$), што указује на већу склоност ка емоционалној и наративној сложености. Ученици су показали већу наклоност према историјској фикцији ($t = 3,778$, $p < 0,001$), као и израженији инструментални приступ читању, превасходно усмерен ка постизању бољег школског успеха ($t = 2,210$, $p = 0,029$).

Када је реч о интересовању за жанрове, регресиона анализа показала је да су пол ($\beta = -0,287$) и претходни ставови према читању ($\beta = 0,315$) главни индикатори интересовања за едукативне жанрове ($R^2 = 0,561$). Уочен је и значајан развојни пад мотивације за читање у вишим разредима, тј. ученици седмог и осмог разреда ређе читају од ученика петог и шестог разреда ($F(3,152) = 3,564$, $p = 0,016$). Резултати указују да је рана адолесценција критичан период за очување читалачке ангажованости.

Регресиони модел перципиране корисности читања може да објасни 60,1% варијансе ($R^2 = 0,601$). Најзначајнији чиниоци јесу самопроцена способности критичке анализе садржаја ($\beta = 0,352$) и процењена способност анализе визуелних информација ($\beta = 0,298$). Треба нагласити да су обе варијабле операционализоване путем самопроцене ученика у оквиру скале ставова, а не путем стандардизованих когнитивних тестова. Ипак, налаз указује на постојање позитивног психолошког циклуса: ученици који верују да добро разумеју и анализирају текстове истовремено препознају већу вредност читања, што их додатно мотивише за дубље когнитивно ангажовање — у складу са принципом да су афективна и когнитивна димензија читања међусобно условљене.

Истраживање потврђује да се читалачке навике данашњих ученика не могу разумети кроз једноставну поделу на дигитално и аналогно читање. Ученици функционишу у јединственом, хибридном читалачком простору у којем се различити медији међусобно допуњују, а не искључују. Ипак, у оквиру тог простора јасно доминирају активности усмерене на брзо проналажење информација и забаву, што представља посебан изазов за наставу књижевности.

Истраживање указује на потребу да настава књижевности превазиђе традиционалне методе и отпор према дигиталним навикама ученика. Педагошка пракса требало би да буде заснована на три кључна принципа: систематском развоју критичког мишљења и когнитивног ангажовања у раду са текстом; подршци жанровској разноврсности која одговара развојним и полним специфичностима ученика; и активној, континуираној сарадњи са породичним окружењем. Јачање партнерства

између школе и породице — посебно кроз промовисање кућне библиотеке као културног ресурса — од пресудног је значаја за очување мотивације за читање у дигиталном добу. Будућа истраживања требало би да укључе лонгитудиналне дизајне, веће и репрезентативније узорке, као и стандардизоване мере читалачке писмености како би се омогућили поузданији закључци о узрочно-последичним односима.

Кључне речи: читалачке навике, дигитални медији, настава књижевности, основна школа, породични контекст, полне разлике.