

# Reading Culture of Pre-service Turkish Language Teachers: The Case of Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the reading culture and determine the characteristics and dispositions of pre-service Turkish language teachers as readers. The study was conducted with 160 pre-service Turkish language teachers studying in the Department of Turkish Language Teaching at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University's Faculty of Education in Turkey. The study took place during the 2015-2016 academic year and all participants were volunteers. The data were obtained through questionnaires, and data analysis was conducted by using frequency and cross tabulation analysis. Pre-service teachers' responses were analyzed using the content analysis method. According to the results of the study; it was identified that pre-service Turkish language teachers prefer "reading books" in order to make good use of their leisure time and also their teachers and friends have some influence on the development of their "reading habit" and "reading culture". Additionally, the pre-service teachers proposed "doing research as a course requirement" as another reason for their reading. Nonetheless, they remarked that they prefer "literary works" among the book types and especially "novels". In addition, the pre-service teachers stated that they often prefer "borrowing from the library" to buying books they would like to read. It was also determined that they also read an average of 11-20 books in a year and therefore they might be classified as "medium level readers".

*Key Words:* Turkish education, pre-service Turkish language teachers, reading culture



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## INTRODUCTION

Reading culture is defined as a “conversion of the skills acquired by individuals regarding the act of reading into a living style in the society” (Sever, 2013) and explained as the culture acquired by individuals who have been introduced to the world of written cultural products; have gained the competency of sharing, analyzing and questioning the messages conveyed to them by this world and have got used to living with the opportunities offered to them by this world (Sever, 2013). The purpose of reading and reading materials vary depending on variables such as age, gender, marital status, parental education level, library usage habits etc. and thus a person’s reading culture is formed. The reading process sustained by individuals of their own volition with the books, aside from those including encyclopedic information (text books etc.), gives insight into their reading culture. Factors such as the type of books, their authors and the extent to which they are acclaimed in the literary world are taken into consideration while identifying the identity and reading culture of the reader (Ayyıldız, Bozkurt, & Canlı, 2006; Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı [Turkish Culture & Tourism Ministry], 2011)

There are three important periods in the acquisition of a reading habit, which are childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, and also three institutions of family, school, and environment (Çocuk Vakfı [Children's Foundation], 2006). Thus, there are different stages making up the process of acquisition/inculcation of reading culture. The first stage of this sequential process of “acquiring a reading culture” is constituted by “*the habit of listening*”, the second stage is constituted by “*reading writing skill*”, the third stage is constituted by “*reading habit skill*”, the fourth stage is constituted by “*critical reading skill*”, and the fifth stage is constituted by “*universal reading-writing skill*”. According to Sever (2003), critical reading skill is the structured form of “reading culture” whose basis is laid during the childhood period.

According to Samur (2016), one of the most important requirements of a modern democratic society is its members acquisition of a reading culture; interacting with quality books starting from childhood. Therefore, during the pre-school period, “love for reading” should be imparted to individuals; during the elementary school period it should be “reading habit”, and during the secondary school period “reading culture” should be imparted. The first period of inculcating reading culture in individuals is the pre-school period. This is a period of interaction with visual reading/visual and linguistic stimulants. This period includes “*introduction of children to books*” (0-2 years old), “*making friendship with books*” (2-4 years old) and the “*formation of love for books in children*” (4-6 years old). The second stage is the elementary school period. This is a period of transition from visual reading to linguistic reading including “*the inculcation of reading writing skill*” (6-8 years old) and “*reading habit in children*” (8-10 years old). The third stage is the secondary education period. It is a period of transition from linguistic reading to critical reading; reading, monitoring and listening. It includes “*the inculcation of critical reading, monitoring and listening skills*” (10-12 years old) and “*reading culture*” (12-14 years old). According to the stages of inculcating reading culture, the process of “reading culture acquisition” is arrived at as a result of the process of acquiring visual reading, linguistic reading and critical reading and during this process, important responsibilities should be taken on by the family and school/ as part of the educational and instructional process.

Involvement of reading within the daily activities of life is an important indicator of the possession of reading culture by the society. Children’s acquiring reading habit is directly

associated with the richness of the reading culture formed around them. Hence, their being exposed to images of reading and their families and other peoples' sharing their reading experiences with them can play an important role in children's acquisition of reading habit (Samur, 2016). "The basis of reading culture should be laid during the early childhood period and images of reading should be introduced to the world of children" (MEB [Turkish Ministry of Education], 2015). On the other hand, there are some factors preventing the development of reading culture. Some of the leading factors are (Gültekin, 2011; Samur, 2016):

1. Mass media/particularly television;
2. Lack of importance attached to the principle of relativity by translators translating foreign literary works into Turkish;
3. Lack of care in the preparation and publication of books produced for children, adolescents and adults and lack of literary and aesthetic value in them;
4. Obstacles in front of the production and publication of quality books;
5. Public libraries for children and adolescents' libraries are not attractive in terms of the books they offer readers or their interior designs.

Research has revealed that the reading habit in Turkey is not at the desired level. According to research by Çocuk Vakfı [Children's Foundation] (2006), 40% of the Turkish population never goes to a library, 70% of adolescents never read, 95% of the adult population only watches television, and the remaining 5% both watches television and reads books, and 63% of teachers sometimes read books. The rate of regular book reading of the Turkish population is one thousandth. Moreover, the findings reported by the International Reading Skills Development Project (PIRLS) place Turkey 28th among 35 countries; thus, the reading skills of Turkish students are below the international standard. These results show that Turkey does not have a habit of reading. According to Samur (2016), individuals in Turkey can reach basic literacy level but not reading habit level. On the other hand, some steps are being taken for Turkish society to possess reading culture. The Tenth Development Plan (2014-2018) includes a statement in Article 308 under the heading of Policies, "that reading culture will be promoted and culture and art education will be offered to children at early ages" (Kalkınma Bakanlığı [Turkish Ministry of Development], 2013); this seems to be an important step taken in the direction towards the development of reading culture.

As stated above, in the reading culture development process, important responsibilities should be fulfilled by families, teachers, and others who are close to the learner. In particular, the reading habits demonstrated by teachers are taken as role models by students, and are therefore of great importance. In the inculcation of love for reading and reading habit, Turkish language classes and Turkish language teachers play an important role. With Turkish language instruction affecting students' achievement in all other courses, it is aimed to develop their comprehension (reading, listening) and expression (speaking-writing) skills and also to train individuals having acquired reading culture, with skills of thinking and sensitivity. Students' acquiring a reading habit is one of the basic factors affecting achievement in the Turkish language course. Therefore, possession of reading culture by and the characteristics as a reader of pre-service Turkish language teachers who will inculcate and shape the reading culture in students are of vital importance. Despite the significance of this issue, the research focusing on pre-service teachers in general (Arı & Demir, 2013; Aslantürk, 2008; Batur, Gülveren, & Bek, 2010; Bozpolat, 2010; Kırmızı, Fenli, & Kasap, 2014; Saracaloğlu, Yenice, & Karsakaloğlu, 2009) and on pre-service Turkish language teachers in particular (Kurt & Ungan,

2015; Kuş & Türkyılmaz, 2010) mostly looks at reading habit and paucity of research dealing with pre-service teachers' reading-related preferences, tendencies and reading culture in an integrated manner. Essentially, there is a need for further research to explore reading culture in a more integrated manner. The current study aims to elicit the pre-service Turkish language teachers' characteristics, interests, preferences, and tendencies as a reader in order to reveal insights regarding the reader profile of pre-service Turkish language teachers. Thus, suggestions will be considered for pre-service Turkish language teachers to graduate with the skills and competencies necessary for them to inculcate reading habit and culture in children/adolescents. In this way, this study will contribute to the literature and provide guidance for further research.

## METHOD

### Research model, study group

In the current study, the survey model was employed in order to reveal the existing state. In this model, the phenomenon, individual or object under investigation is attempted to be described in its own conditions and as it is (Karasar, 1999).

The study was conducted on pre-service Turkish language teachers attending the Department of Turkish Language Teaching in the Education Faculty of Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey, during the 2015-2016 academic year. The study group comprised of 161 pre-service Turkish language teachers who participated on a volunteer basis. Of the participating students, 96 are females and 65 are males. Of the female students, 24 are 1<sup>st</sup> year students, 27 are 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 23 are 3<sup>rd</sup> year, and 21 are 4<sup>th</sup> year students; of the male students, 23 are 1<sup>st</sup> year students, 14 are 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 13 are 3<sup>rd</sup> year, and 15 are 4<sup>th</sup> year students.

Variables such as age, gender, education level are influential on the development of reading culture. However, as the current study was conducted on pre-service teachers from similar age groups and education levels, the effect of such variables was not investigated in this study; only grade level-based differences were explored.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The data of the current study were collected through a questionnaire developed by the researchers in order to determine the pre-service Turkish language teachers' reading culture. The first section of the questionnaire consists of two parts and includes items aiming to elicit the demographic features of the pre-service teachers. In the second section, there are a total of 10 items, four of which are open-ended questions and six are closed-ended questions. The piloting of the questionnaire, which was developed by seeking expert opinion, was performed on 30 students from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> year who were attending the department of Turkish language teaching on February 25, 2016. Some items were found to be difficult to understand during the piloting. These items were reorganized and a final form of the questionnaire was then administered to the study group on March 03, 2016. This application was performed outside of normal class hours, but within the classroom environment after taking oral consent of the participant students.

The collected data were entered to a computer and frequencies and cross tabulation analysis were employed in the analysis of the data. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated to be 0.83. The responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed using content analysis method. In content analysis, the aim is to reach

concepts and associations that can explain the collected data, with similar data placed together in a framework of specific concepts and themes. Then they are arranged and interpreted in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). For this task, the pre-service teachers' responses to the questionnaire items were analyzed, coded and classified by specific categories. The classified data are presented in tabular format. In addition, some quotation extracts from the pre-service teachers' responses are included to reflect their opinions more effectively. Given that the participants gave more than one answer to some items, percentages were calculated on the basis of the number of responses rather than the number of students.

## FINDINGS

In this section, the findings derived from the pre-service teachers' responses to the questionnaire items are presented under ten headings, determined based on the questionnaire items and each with related tables.

### Leisure Activities of Pre-service Teachers

Under this theme, findings concerning the pre-service teachers' state of reading books from different genres are presented.

Table 1. *Leisure activities of pre-service teachers*

<i>Leisure activities</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> year</i>		<i>2<sup>nd</sup> year</i>		<i>3<sup>rd</sup> year</i>		<i>4<sup>th</sup> year</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Sports (e.g. football, basketball, swimming)	4	8.5	4	9.7	5	13.8	1	2.7	15	9.3
Walking around/with friends	5	10.6	8	19.5	5	13.8	4	11.1	22	13.7
Fishing	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	0	0	1	.6
Playing with Internet, computer or phone	2	4.2	5	12.1	4	11.1	3	8.3	14	8.7
Researching	2	4.2	3	7.3	2	5.5	0	0	7	4.3
Studying	3	6.3	3	7.3	6	16.6	2	5.5	14	8.7
Reading	14	29.7	14	34.1	21	58.3	21	58.3	70	43.7
Watching films/sports match (TV, cinema)	2	4.2	4	9.7	0	0	7	19.4	13	8.1
Doing creative drama activities	0	0	1	2.4	0	0	0	0	1	.6
Listening to music	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	1	.6
Playing an instrument (piano, guitar)	1	2.1	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	2	1.2
Dancing	0	0	2	4.8	1	2.7	0	0	3	1.8
Painting	1	2.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.6
Writing essay	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	0	0	1	.6
Translating	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	1	.6
Sleeping	3	6.3	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	4	2.5

As can be seen in Table 1, the most popular leisure activity among the pre-service teachers is "reading" (43.7%) followed by "walking around/with friends" (13.7%) (for 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, "sports" has the same percentage). Then they are followed by "sports" in total; yet, across the grade levels, the third most popular activities vary in that it is "sports" for the 1<sup>st</sup> year students (8.5%); "playing with Internet, computer or phone" for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students (12.1%); "studying" for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (16.6%) and "watching film/sports match" for the 4<sup>th</sup> year students (19.4%). When we look at the study in general, it is remarkable that activities known to be popular among young people such as listening to music, going to the cinema and watching TV do not seem very popular within the study group and that the pre-service teachers are engaged in a great variety of activities.

### Pre-service Teachers' Opinions on Period when Reading Habit should be Acquired

In Table 2, the pre-service teachers' opinions about the period in which reading habit should be acquired are presented.

Table 2. Pre-service teachers' opinions about period in which learning habit is acquired

Period	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Pre-school	5	11.5	6	15.0	9	25.0	13	36.1	33	21.0
Elementary school	33	73.3	26	65.0	23	63.9	18	50.0	100	63.7
Secondary school	7	15.6	8	20.0	4	11.1	5	13.9	24	15.3
TOTAL	45	100.0	40	100.0	36	100.0	36	100.0	157	100.0

As can be seen in Table 2, the majority of the pre-service teachers (63.7%) think the best period in which reading habit can be imparted to children is "elementary school". The second most suitable period to impart reading habit is believed to be "secondary school" by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year pre-service teachers, and "pre-school" by the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year pre-service teachers.

### Pre-service Teachers' Purposes for Reading Book

Under this theme, findings related to pre-service teachers' purposes for reading books are presented.

Table 3. Pre-service teachers' purposes for reading books

Purposes	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Research as a course requirement	29	61.7	29	70.7	30	81.1	31	86.1	119	73.9
Relaxing	17	36.2	20	48.8	15	40.5	16	44.4	68	42.2
Having fun/ for literary pleasure	22	46.8	25	61.0	24	64.9	22	61.1	93	58.1
Personal development/ being informed	19	41.3	30	73.2	23	62.2	20	55.6	92	57.5
Making use of spare time	14	29.8	23	56.1	22	59.5	15	41.7	74	46.0
Getting ready for exams	25	53.2	29	70.7	30	81.1	26	72.2	110	68.3
Other	0	0.0	1	2.4	2	5.4	1	2.8	4	2.5

The leading purpose of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students for reading book is "research as a course requirement" and it is the second most important reason for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. In general, "research as a course requirement" takes the first place and is followed by "getting ready for exams" and "having fun/ for literary pleasure". This might indicate that passing courses and achieving high grades are motivating students to read. Moreover, the least important reasons for reading book seem to be "others" and "relaxing".

### People Influential on Development of Pre-service Teachers' Reading Habit and Culture

Findings related to people who are influential on the development of the pre-service teachers' reading habit and culture are given in Table 4.

Table 4. People influential on development of pre-service teachers' reading habit and culture

People of influence	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Mother	5	11.1	7	17.9	8	22.9	8	22.2	28	18.1
Father	10	22.2	3	7.7	5	14.3	7	19.4	25	16.1
Friends	15	33.3	21	53.8	15	42.9	17	47.2	68	43.9
Siblings	7	15.6	8	20.5	6	17.1	4	11.1	25	16.1
Teachers	27	61.4	27	69.2	23	65.7	22	61.1	99	64.3
Others	5	11.1	3	7.7	3	8.6	4	11.1	15	9.7
None	9	20.0	4	10.3	5	14.3	7	19.4	25	16.1

The findings presented in Table 4 show that those most influential on the development of the pre-service teachers' reading habit and culture are their teachers (64.3%), followed by their friends (43.9%), and their mother (18.1%). This order of the most influential people does not change for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students; but for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, while the first two places remain the same, the third place is taken by the father and siblings respectively. Thus, it is clear that the third place is taken by family members like the mother, father or siblings.

### Book Types Preferred by Pre-service Teachers

Findings related to the book types preferred by the pre-service teachers are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Book types preferred by pre-service teachers

Book type	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Personal development books	16	34.0	24	58.5	21	56.8	21	58.3	82	50.9
Literary works	31	66.0	34	82.9	29	78.4	32	88.9	126	78.3
Areas of interest (history, politics, psychology, education...)	27	57.4	28	68.3	23	62.2	25	69.4	103	64.0
Scientific books	19	40.4	14	34.1	21	56.8	15	41.7	69	42.9
Others	7	14.9	5	12.2	7	18.9	2	5.6	21	13.0

As can be seen in Table 5, the book type most preferred by the pre-service teachers is literary works (78.3%), followed by the books written about their areas of interest (64.9%).

### Literary Genres Pre-service Teachers Prefer to Read

The findings related to the literary genres which the pre-service teachers prefer to read are given in Table 6.

Table 6. *Literary genres which pre-service teachers prefer to read*

Literary genre	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Novel	27	57.4	27	65.8	26	72.2	29	80.0	109	68.1
Story	9	19.1	15	36.5	12	33.3	16	44.4	52	32.5
Poem	9	19.1	11	26.8	5	13.8	14	38.8	39	24.3
Essay	5	10.6	4	9.7	7	19.4	6	16.6	22	13.7
Article	8	17.0	5	12.1	10	27.7	19	52.7	42	26.2
Folk tale	0	0	2	4.8	3	8.3	1	2.7	6	3.7
Biography	0	0	0	0	2	5.5	0	0	2	1.2
Theatre	3	6.3	3	7.3	2	5.5	3	8.3	11	6.8
Epic	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	3	8.3	4	2.5
Memoir	0	0	2	4.8	1	2.7	0	0	3	1.8
Travel writing	0	0	1	2.4	0	0	0	0	1	.6
Column	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	0	0	1	.6
Critical review	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5.5	2	1.2
Reportage	0	0	1	2.4	0	0	0	0	1	.6
All literary works	4	8.5	3	7.3	2	5.5	4	11.1	13	8.1

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the genre most preferred by the pre-service teachers is the novel (68.1%), followed by story (32.5%), article (26.2%), poem (24.3%), and essay (13.7%). The least preferred genres are travel writing, column and reportage (0.6% each).

### Ways Preferred by Pre-service Teachers to Obtain Books

Findings related to the ways preferred by the pre-service teachers to obtain books for them to read are given in Table 7.

Table 7. *Ways preferred by pre-service teachers to obtain books*

Ways to obtain books	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Purchasing	31	65.9	33	80.4	32	88.8	31	86.1	127	79.3
Borrowing from library	38	80.8	33	80.4	30	83.3	34	94.4	135	84.3
Borrowing from acquaintances	25	53.1	32	78.0	30	83.3	26	72.2	113	70.6
Other	2	4.2	2	4.8	1	2.7	1	2.7	6	3.7

When the ways through which the pre-service teachers obtain books are examined, it is seen that the most popular one is "borrowing from library" (84.3%), followed by "purchasing" (79.3%), and "borrowing from acquaintances" (70.6%). The percentages are close to each other, which might show that the pre-service teachers utilize all of these ways on a frequent basis. The pre-service teachers marking "others" as a way of obtaining their books explained them as "computer/electronic reading (PDF), exchanging".

### Factors Affecting Pre-service Teachers' Book Choice

The findings related to the factors affecting the pre-service teachers' book choice are given in Table 8.



Table 8. Factors affecting pre-service teachers' book choice

Factors affecting book choice	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4th year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Author	39	82.9	32	78.0	29	80.5	29	80.5	129	80.6
Name	20	42.5	18	43.9	22	61.1	20	55.5	80	50.0
Subject	39	82.9	35	85.3	29	80.5	32	88.8	135	84.3
Price	10	21.2	9	21.9	16	44.4	15	41.6	50	31.2
Cover image	11	23.4	11	26.8	16	44.4	16	44.4	54	33.7
Preface	12	25.5	19	46.3	10	27.7	15	41.6	56	35.0
Language and narrative features	17	36.1	23	56.0	22	61.1	20	55.5	82	51.2
One of the classics	21	44.6	26	63.4	19	52.7	12	33.3	78	48.7
On best sellers list	9	19.1	20	48.7	16	44.4	13	36.1	58	36.2
Randomly reading a section	9	19.1	12	29.2	13	36.1	12	33.3	46	28.7
Mood	13	27.6	17	41.4	17	47.2	13	36.1	60	37.5
Recommendation of a friend	13	27.6	22	53.6	18	50	23	63.8	76	47.7
Reviewers' opinions	15	31.9	20	48.7	17	47.2	9	25	61	38.1
Advertisement	8	17.0	13	31.7	13	36.1	10	27.7	44	27.5
Feeling close to authors world view	11	23.4	22	53.6	19	52.7	12	33.3	64	40.0
Other	2	4.2	-	-	2	5.5	1	2.7	5	3.1

As can be seen in Table 8, the most important factor affecting the pre-service teachers' book choice is "subject" (84.3%). It is followed by "author" (80.6%), "language and narrative features" (51.2%), and "name" (50%). Moreover, "one of the classics" (48.7%) and "recommendation of a friend" (47.7%) are important factors affecting the pre-service teachers' book choice. The ratio of the pre-service teachers attaching great importance to "feeling close to authors world view" while selecting their books is also remarkable (40%). In short, factors such as the subject and author of a book, the author's world view and name and its being one of the classics are taken into consideration by the pre-service teachers while selecting their books.

The factors having the least impact on the pre-service teachers' book choice are "advertisement" (27.5%), "randomly reading a section" (28.7%), and "price" (31.2%). The pre-service teachers saying "other" mentioned reasons such as watching series based on books, recommendations of their instructors and assignments given by their instructors.

### Factors Negatively Affecting Pre-service Teachers' Reading Habits

In the formation of reading culture, the preliminary step should be to turn reading into a habit. Therefore, the factors that pre-service teachers think negatively affect their own reading habit are also addressed in this study and the related findings are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Factors negatively affecting the pre-service teachers' reading habit

Factors negatively affecting reading habit	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Course intensity (assignments, exams, etc.)	11	23.4	6	14.6	12	33.3	14	38.8	43	26.8
Spending a lot of time on technological tools (TV, computer, phone, social media, etc.)	10	21.2	11	26.8	10	27.7	5	13.8	36	22.5
Milieu (family, friends, dormitory environment, etc.)	6	12.7	4	9.7	6	16.6	0	0	16	10
Financial situation	2	4.2	1	2.4	0	0	0	0	3	1.8
Personal pleasures such as walking	2	4.2	1	2.4	1	2.7	0	0	4	2.5
Environmental factors (noise, light etc.)	4	8.5	3	7.3	3	8.3	0	0	10	6.2
Lack of library facilities	0	0	2	4.8	0	0	0	0	2	1.2
Book-related properties (content, thickness, price, translation etc.)	0	0	2	4.8	3	8.3	0	0	5	3.1
Books to be read as a course requirement	0	0	2	4.8	2	5.5	4	11.1	8	5
Mood	0	0	1	2.4	1	2.7	0	0	2	1.2
Exam system (KPSS, private courses)	0	0	0	0	3	8.3	6	16.6	9	5.6
Lack of desire to read book	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.7	1	.6
No negative factor	22	46.8	15	36.5	9	25	14	38.8	60	37.5

Contrary to what was anticipated, the highest ratio of the pre-service teachers stated that there is no negative factor affecting their book reading habit (37.5%). Aside from this, the most important factor negatively affecting their reading habit is "Course intensity (assignments, exams, etc.)", which prevents them from spending time reading. Then it is followed by "Spending a lot of time on technological tools (TV, computer, phone, social media, etc.)" with 22.5%, and "Milieu (family, friends, dormitory environment, etc.)" with 10%.

Some excerpts from the pre-service teachers' (PST) responses related to the factors negatively affecting their reading habit are given as follows:

*After I started to study in this department, I started to behave more consciously; yet, computer and mobile phones still negatively affect to some extent (PST 47)*

*Social media, computer, internet, telephone (PST 107)*

*When teachers oblige us to read certain books, I lose my desire to read (PST 54)*

*Exams that I will have to take (ALES, KPSS, school exams), and meaningless assignments (PST 76)*

*If the language and narration of the books we are required to read are not engrossing, then I cannot finish it. We should be left free to select our own books to read (PST 77)*

*Bad translations (PST 85)*

*No, if a person wants to read, he/she can find time to do it in any case (PST 109).*

### Average Number of Books Read Annually by Pre-service Teachers

The findings related to the average number of the books read annually by the pre-service teachers are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Average number of books read annually by pre-service teachers

Number of books	1 <sup>st</sup> grade		2 <sup>nd</sup> grade		3 <sup>rd</sup> grade		4 <sup>th</sup> grade		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1-5	8	19.0	5	13.9	6	19.4	8	25.8	27	19.3
6-10	12	28.6	8	22.2	7	22.6	8	25.8	35	25.0
11-20	15	35.7	11	30.6	13	41.9	9	29.0	48	34.3
21 or more	7	16.7	12	33.3	5	16.1	6	19.4	30	21.4

The findings presented in Table 10 reveal that in general, the highest ratio of the pre-service teachers (34.3%) read 11-20 books per-annum, followed by 6-10 books (25.0%). However, these ratios change by grade level because among the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, the highest ratio of pre-service teachers (33.3%) read 21 or more books per-annum, which seems to be a positive differentiation from the other grade levels. In total, the biggest group of the pre-service teachers (59.3%) read 6-20 books annually. Thus, the pre-service teachers are in the group of “medium level readers”.

### RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of the current study conducted to elicit the characteristics of pre-service Turkish language teachers, their interests and preferences as readers revealed that both across all grade levels and in total, “reading” was found to be the most popular leisure activity (43.7%) among the pre-service teachers. It is followed by “walking around/with friends” (13.7%) and “sports” (9.3%). In a similar manner, in their study on faculty members and students, Gümüş et al. (2011) found that the most popular leisure activities among the were “listening to music” (86%), “reading” (76%), and “surfing the net” (67%). Aslantürk (2008) reported that 30.5% of classroom teachers watch TV in their free time, 30.0% read books, and 11.3% chat on the Internet. Bozpolat (2010) conducted a study to explore the attitudes of pre-service teachers from the Education Faculty of Cumhuriyet University, a public university in Sivas, Turkey, towards reading habits and found no significant difference in the dimension of “loving reading” based on the department variable. Yet, though not significant, the attitude (strongly agree) of the students from the department of Turkish language teaching was higher than the attitude (agree) of students from other departments towards this dimension. In the same study the attitude of the pre-service teachers towards the dimension of “habit” was also found to be “strongly agree”. Thus, it can be maintained that “reading” is a popular leisure activity among pre-service teachers, particularly among pre-service Turkish language teachers.

Majority of the pre-school teachers (63.7%) stated that the period in which reading habit should be imparted/acquired is the “elementary school” period. While in the literature, it is reported that in the development of reading habit, childhood, adolescent, and adulthood periods are all important, it is also widely recognized that children not having pre-school education acquire the lowest levels of these skills and children having pre-school education can acquire these skills in a shorter time in the first grade of elementary school. This shows that though reading is a skill mostly related to elementary and post-elementary education, pre-school education seems to be of great importance for the healthy development of this skill in the latter periods of schooling (Çocuk Vakfı, 2006).

The findings of the current study revealed that the people most influential to the development of reading habit are “teachers” (64.3%), which was followed by “friends” (43.9%). In their study, Akagündüz, Top, and Alkan (2011) asked 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade

students the people who are influential in the inculcation of love for reading and the most popular answer was the willingness of the person himself to read (60%). This was followed by friends and teachers each with 12%. In the study conducted by Arı and Demir (2013), it was found that the most important influence comes from the willingness of the person himself/herself (40%), followed by friends (22%), teachers (19%), father-mother (12%), and siblings (5%). Can, Türkyılmaz, and Karadeniz (2010) conducted a study on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students and found that the father's education level is influential on the reading frequency of the students. They also found that the children whose fathers hold a post-graduate degree read more than the children whose fathers are secondary school or high school graduates. Odabaş, Odabaş, and Polat (2008) reported that in particular, fathers and mothers whose education levels are high are more influential on their children in terms of inculcation of reading habit; and with increased education level of fathers and mothers, tendency to read also increases.

Presence of people who can be taken as role models by school students in the acquisition of reading habit and culture is of significant importance. In this connection, the current study also revealed the importance of teachers, friends, and families in the acquisition of reading habit. On the contrary, in a study conducted in the city of Ankara, it was found that families are mostly indifferent to whether or not their children read (65.1%) and this ratio increased in low socio-economic neighborhoods (77.8%) (Yılmaz, 2011). Batur et al. (2010) investigated the effect of parental education levels and found a significant difference. The researchers believe this difference indicates the importance of inculcating reading habit in the family environment. In the current study, it was elicited that family members (mother, father, sibling) took third place among those influential to the development of reading habit of pre-service teachers; yet, their influences are regarded to be relatively low (mother 18.1%, father 16.1%, and sibling 16.1%).

According to Gültekin (2011), in the life of a child who does not see their parents, elder brothers or sisters reading in the house; teachers reading at school; or friends reading at school or in the neighborhood, it is not possible for books to occupy an important place. Therefore, the greatest responsibility in the acquisition of reading habit by children and adolescents should be taken first by families and then by teachers. Yılmaz (2011) also reported that having a reading family (particularly a mother and father) has positive effects on the development of individuals' reading habit. Different from what was found in the current study, in the literature it is reported that "a person's his/her own willingness to read" exercises the greatest influence on their reading habit and culture; however, in the current study the teacher was found to be the most influential figure in this sense. Family members were found to be among the least influential in all the studies. This shows that, although claimed to be very important, the family has a limited positive affect on children's reading habit and culture.

The pre-service teachers' primary reasons for reading were found to be "research as a course requirement" (73.9%) and "getting ready for exams" (68.3%), followed by "for literary pleasure" (58.1%). According to Geçgel and Burgul (2009), 40.7% of the pre-service teachers read for personal development, 32.4% read to learn something and only 10.1% read for literary pleasure. The study of Yılmaz, Köse, and Korkut (2009) revealed that 56.7% of university students read because of their course requirements, 52.9% read to be informed, and 31.7% read as a leisure activity. Tokay Arğan, Arğan, and Kurulgan (2008) found that 63.3% of university students use the library for textbooks and only 18.7% use it for pleasure reading. In the current

study, the pre-service teachers' primary reasons for reading were found to be "research as a course requirement" and "getting ready for exams" and this shows that from among the reading types proposed by Maurois, the type of "reading for work" is dominant among the pre-service Turkish language teachers. In this type of reading, the reader has some expectations from the text or book he/she reads. Thus, the reader feels obliged to take notes not to forget what has been read. That is, in this type of reading, the reader, for instance, is in the position of someone "reading to find the raw materials to complement a structure in his/her mind although he/she has already designed some certain knowledge and outlines" (Gültekin, 2011). According to Gültekin (2011), those reading for pleasure are classified as effective readers. This type of reading means exposing the reader to the facts of life and the author. Those with this type of reading habit are considered to have acquired a healthy reading habit. Thus, it can be argued that the pre-service Turkish language teachers having participated in the current study read for work rather than for pleasure; accordingly, that they have not yet acquired a healthy reading habit. Can et al. (2010) reported a similar finding for in a study of secondary school students. In their study on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 39.1% of the students stated that they read to learn something, 22.0% of them read as a leisure activity, and 10.7% of them read for relaxing. The researchers interpreted these results as many of the students could not make reading a part of their lives.

The findings of the current study showed that from among the types of book the pre-service Turkish language teachers prefer to read, "literary works" are the most popular (78.3%) and among the literary genres, the "novel" is the most preferred (68.1%). In general, these findings are similar to that reported in the literature. According to a study conducted by Yıldız, Ceran, and Sevmez (2015), from among the reading materials preferred by the pre-service Turkish language teachers, the most popular are "literary works" (32.5%) and among the literary genres, the most preferred are "novel" and "story" (55%). Similarly, Geçgel and Burgul (2009) found the most read literary genres by students from the Education Faculty of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey are novel, story, poetry and essay, respectively. Yılmaz et al. (2009) conducted a study in Bilkent University in Ankara and found that 61.5% of the students like to read literary genres (novel, story, and poetry). Akagündüz et al. (2011) reported that the high school students most prefer to read novel and story (52%). Moreover, 71.13% of the elementary and secondary school students most prefer to read novel (MEB [Turkish Ministry of Education], 2007). These findings show that children and adolescents most prefer to read literary works and from among the literary works, they most prefer novel and story.

The way most preferred way that the pre-service teachers obtain books for reading is "borrowing from the library" (84.3%), followed by "purchasing" (79.3%). However, in the literature it is reported that "borrowing from the library" is not that much preferred. According to Kurulgan and Çekerol (2008), 65% of the students purchase the book they will read and 17% of them borrow from the library. Of the students studying in Hacettepe and Bilkent universities in Ankara, 85.6% purchase the book they will read and 44.2% of them prefer to borrow them from the library (Yılmaz et al., 2009). Özensoy and Şimşek (2011) stated that 7<sup>th</sup> grade students generally prefer to buy books and sometimes they borrow from people in their milieu (friends, relatives etc.). The students stated that they do not prefer to borrow from the library as the books found in the library do not appeal to them. Odabaş et al. (2008) concluded that 72.7% of the students borrow at most three books from the library a year; thus, that they do not make enough use of libraries. On the basis of the findings of the "Reading

Map of Turkey” project commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2011, it was concluded that in general people do not feel the need of making use of libraries (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2011).

According to the findings of the current research, the highest ratio of pre-service teachers read 11-20 books on average a year (34.3%). This is followed by 6-10 books (25.0%). In the determination of the level of reading habit, the criteria proposed by the Association of American Libraries are the most widely agreed upon worldwide. According to these criteria; people reading 1-5 books a year are classified as “low level readers”, those reading 6-20 books annually are “medium level readers”, and those reading 21 or more books are classified as “high level readers” (Kurt & Ungan, 2015). According to these criteria, the pre-service Turkish language teachers are “medium level readers”. According to the results of the “Reading Map of Turkey” issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, on average 7.2 books are read per person in a year, which correlate to the findings of the current study. Yıldız et al. (2015) found that in general the highest ratio of the Turkish language pre-service teachers read 6-10 books a year (37.59%), followed by 11-15 books (25%), and 1-5 books (17.5%). Geçgel and Burgul (2009, p. 346) reported that nearly half of the pre-service teachers (48%) read 12 books on average a year and thus they can be classified as “medium level readers”. They also stated that 16.1% read two books per-annum and are classified as “low level readers”, 12.2% of them read 21 or more books a year and thus are classified as “high level readers”. Arı and Demir (2013) found that nearly 80% of the pre-service teachers read 1-12 books a year and in this range of books, the highest ratio belongs to 3-7 books with 37.1%. Susar Kırmızı et al. (2014) reported that of 217 pre-service classroom teacher participants, 80 read 1-5 books a year, eight read 21 or more books, 119 read 6-20 books, and 10 of them read no books. This study also shows that nearly half of the pre-service teachers are in the group of “medium level readers”. Moreover, according to a study conducted within the five provinces that border the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, the age group reading the most books is the age group of 15-24 (Yılmaz, 2011). As a result, the literature indicates that pre-service teachers are in the group of “medium level readers”.

Similar results are reported by studies conducted on secondary school students. Demirer, Çetintaş, and Sünbül (2011) reported that 30% of 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students read more than 25 books a year (high level readers) and 21% of them read 1-5 books a year (low level readers). Thus, nearly half of the secondary school students are “medium level readers”.

The findings of the current study revealed that while selecting books to read, the pre-service teachers attach the greatest priority to the subject of the book (84.3%), then to the author (80.6%), and then language and narrative characteristics (51.2%). According to Akagündüz et al. (2011), the most important factor affecting the book choice of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders is “the subject” (73%). In a study conducted by Kolaç (2007) to determine the reader profile of pre-service classroom teachers, it was found that the most important reason for 33.9% in selecting their books is “the subject of the book”, followed by “reviews of the book” with 31.0%. Geçgel and Burgul (2009) found that the pre-service teachers attach the greatest importance to “the subject of the book” (68.7%), followed by “the author of the book” (6.4%) while selecting their books. The only different finding in this regard is reported by Yıldız et al. (2015), arguing that the most important factor affecting their selection of books to be “friend recommendation”. According to findings of the “Reading Map of Turkey” project

commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2011, pp. 6-10), 45.3% of the people randomly select their books; yet, the most important factor affecting the selection of books is “recommendation” with 61.5%. The literature, on the other hand, reports that the most important factors determining book choice are “the subject of the book” and “the author of the book”, and that pre-service teachers do not select their books randomly, but rather on the basis of specific characteristics, which is an important point in terms of reading culture.

When the pre-service teachers were asked to state the factors negatively affecting their reading habit; contrary to the expectation, they put the option “no negative factor” in first place (37.5%). The most important factor negatively affecting the pre-service teachers’ reading habit was found to be “course intensity” (26.8%), followed by “spending too much time on technological tools (TV, computer, etc.)” (22.5%). Similar results are reported in the literature. Yıldız et al. (2015) found that the factors preventing the pre-service Turkish language teachers from reading are “spending time with friends” with 32.5%, “use of computer and internet” and “course intensity” with 25% for each. Arı and Demir (2013) reported the most important factors preventing pre-service elementary education teachers from reading more books are “internet and television” (32%) and “course intensity” (28%). Again, Akagündüz et al. (2011) found that the most important factors negatively affecting reading are “computer and internet” and “course intensity”. According to Kuş and Türkyılmaz (2010), the most important reasons for the pre-service classroom teachers’ low reading scores are “course intensity” (27%) and “getting ready for exams” (22%). Saracaloğlu et al. (2009) determined the reasons for university students’ not reading enough books as follows; “high prices, attractiveness of chatting with friends, course intensity and watching television”. According to the majority of the students (60.6%) from Hacettepe and Bilkent universities, computer and TV reduce the time allocated to reading (Yılmaz et al., 2009).

Research shows that the factors negatively affecting the reading habit of secondary and high school students are similar. Şahin (2009) found the most important factors preventing 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from reading are course intensity and getting ready for exams (67%). Working with 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, Özensoy and Şimşek (2011) found the reasons to be the Internet, television, financial problems, and the circle of friends. Aral and Aktaş (1997) conducted a study on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Ankara and found the students spend more time watching television and studying on weekdays and spend more time watching television at the weekend and that they spend less time painting, listening to music and reading. Can et al. (2010) conducted a study on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders and determined the reasons for students’ not reading as large amounts of homework, surfing the Internet, and finding reading boring. Aksaçoğlu and Yılmaz (2007) reported that nearly 60% of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students watching television for 0-1 hour and using computer for 0-1 hour a day are high level readers. Among the students watching television for four hours or more, this ratio falls to 45.1% and among the students using computer for four hours or more this ratio falls to 35.5%. Demirel et al. (2011) found that using computers for more than one hour negatively affects reading habit. As a result, it can be concluded that not only among pre-service teachers but also amongst young people, the same factors of course intensity, watching television and using computer negatively affect reading.

Given that reading habit and culture are acquired in a child’s early years, new regulations should be introduced to educate Turkish language teachers in order to better equip

them with the qualifications necessary to fulfill their role effectively. This is vital, given the important role that language teachers play in the inculcation of the reading habit. In order to impart reading habit as the foundation of reading culture, first texts of high literary value should be used in Turkish and Literature textbooks and activities should be designed to promote reading and research. Teachers at schools and parents at home should encourage students to read more by rewarding them and teachers shouldn't give too much homework for students to have enough time to read. With difficulties for a child not seeing role models reading a lot at school or elsewhere to acquire reading habit, parents and teachers should be seen reading at home and at school. Reading hours should be arranged so that reading can have a more important place in students' lives. Opportunities should be created for students to share their opinions about the books they read at home or school. Books that can appeal to students should be found at libraries and the atmosphere and facilities of libraries should be rendered attractive for students. Moreover, students should be allowed to select the book they will read, they should be encouraged to visit book fairs and should be provided with opportunities to meet with well-known poets, authors, researchers etc.. "Reading culture" as a course needs to be incorporated into the curricula of the programs of Turkish language teaching and Literature of the education faculties, and in-service training programs should be designed to inform teachers about how to develop reading culture.

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