



TRENDS IN READING LITERARY FICTION IN PRINT AND CYBER MEDIA BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

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This research investigated the trends in reading literary fiction by students of Hasanuddin University and their main reasons for reading works of fiction. Reading tendencies were grouped into types, reading of fiction in print and fiction in electronic (cyber) media. The purposes of this study were: 1) to quantify the literary fiction reading media preferred by students; 2) to identify specific reasons for their choice of media; 3) to identify perceived personal benefits obtained from reading literary fiction, and 4) to evaluate readers' personal choices in terms of contents. The majority of students preferred to read using electronic media (62%), although a substantial majority preferred the classical printed book format (38%). The reasons given for preferring cyber literature (defined as works of fiction presented in an electronic medium) to printed literature were mainly practical, such as ease of access using electronic devices (tablets, computers, smartphones, etc.) as well as capacity and versatility, and that one multi-functional device can hold many books or other reading media. This research indicates that young people view reading fiction not only as entertainment, but also as a valuable and rewarding activity. The trend towards electronic media provides a growing and increasingly used opportunity for casual readers and enthusiasts to access and enjoy a wide cross-section of literary fiction.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to existing literature on the influence of cyber literary media on reading habits, apart from exploring undergraduate student attitudes to and perceptions on reading literary fiction as well as their reading methods and behaviour. The students view reading fiction as both valuable and pleasurable. Cyber literature is considered more practical than printed matter, in terms of ease of access and the capacity of a single easy to carry device to hold or access many literary works.

1. INTRODUCTION

The pleasure experienced from reading literary fiction is generally very positive (Oriogu, 2015; Pino and Mazza, 2016; Yildirim and Soylemez, 2018) so much so that for many people reading is perceived as a necessity. Several recent studies have found that reading works of fiction (books) and getting to know the characters in them can help to develop emotional intelligence and the ability to empathize with fellow humans, and can improve our psychological responses when interacting with others. Literature shapes the readership.

Reading literary fiction can expand our perspectives, make way for appreciation of life, provide virtual experiences, aid in problem-solving situations, inspire and motivate readers in their endeavours, and help us recognize the cultural aspects of other people. Literature is a source of learning and entertainment for readers. This

was recognized by the Greek philosopher, Horatius, when he referred to literature as *dulce et utile*, (pleasant/sweet and useful), meaning that the practice of moral values should be combined with an element of entertainment. By reading literature, readers can appreciate a wider sphere of life, adding to our awareness of and sensitivity to the surrounding social and natural environment, thus contributing to maintaining social harmony and environmental stewardship. The development of information technology and the progress in digital systems have brought a flow of changes to the dissemination of information in many fields, from science to entertainment. One of the tools is the increasingly ubiquitous electronic device commonly referred to as a tablet. Easy to carry, tablets are not operated via mouse or track pad, but rather contact is made right on the screen itself, by the fingertips of the user (Schnackenberg, 2013). This tool is increasingly utilized to maximise effectiveness in the world of industry, banking, online business, advertising, education and even literature. The birth of cyber literature (Rahman, 2017) or the literary use of cybernetics is a tangible consequence of the advancement of information technology. Literary works are no longer read exclusively as printed books but can be accessed through digital libraries and even as new forms of literary text media. Some people switch to reading electronic works because they are more accessible and in many cases there is open access to these works, rather than books that can be purchased from specialised stores or are only available in the library. The logical consequences of the digital cyber literature expansion have given rise to criticism. Some studies have showed that screen based reading which can involve activities such as scanning of large amounts of data, searching through keywords, intertextuality, and non-linear reading can have a significant influence on conventional reading habits. This is of course, a potential consequence that cannot be avoided. The role of research is to observe and study this phenomenon from various perspectives.

What are the methods or media being used to read literature? And why do you or should you read literature? These questions become important in the discourse regarding the perceived erosion of printed literature due to the advancement of audio-visual media and other applications of digital technology. There is widespread perception that people are increasingly switching from a culture of reading printed matter to the habit of listening to the radio, watching television and even exploring cyber text media while surfing the internet. That is why this study was designed to explore the extent to which the phenomenon of reading literature using electronic devices and media is prevalent among young people, specifically undergraduate students who tend to use the internet as a major or main source of news and information, and the reasons for their choices.

2. SCOPE OF CYBER LITERATURE

In the context of this study, cyber literature is an exclusive term for several types of literature which can be accessed using an electronic device. Figure 1 depicts the various types of cyber literature:

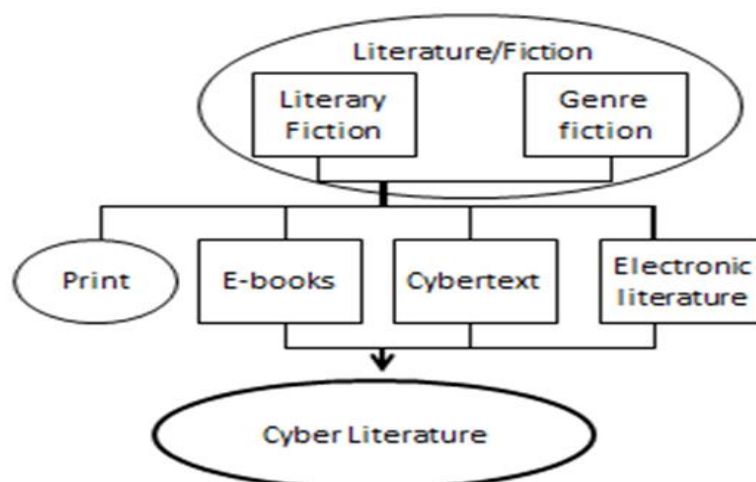


Figure-1. Conceptual Framework of Cyber Literature.

The term genre fiction is often used to describe works of fiction written for pure entertainment and enjoyment, captivating stories or stories which give readers a sense of escape from reality. The term literary fiction is widely considered to refer to works providing a means to a better understanding of life and expressing or evoking deep emotional reactions (Levine, 2015). Many literary works can be classified as either and both can be made available in electronic (digital) format, and hereafter the term literary fiction comprises the term genre fiction.

In addition to the reformatting of literary works (written for production as printed books) into electronic book formats (e-books), the advent of the electronic era has opened up new avenues for literary creativity, all of which can be considered to belong to the wider category referred to in this study as cyber literature (Refer to Figure 1). Electronic literature or digital literature can be defined as comprising literary work created exclusively on and for digital devices, such as computers, tablets and mobile phones. The intersection between games and literature has led to the development of 'cybertext' (Aarseth, 1997) where each reader has a different experience depending on the choice made during the reading activity. Cybertext can thus be seen as ergodic literature making use of an electronic medium.

3. RELATED STUDIES

One purpose of this study was to explore the trends among undergraduate students in reading literary texts on paper and on screen. Reading activities have primarily been from texts printed on paper until relatively recent advances in technology began to provide a number of electronic appliances with screens to enable reading, such as e-readers, computers, tablets and even mobile phones (Shenoy and Aithal, 2016). It is implicit that advances in media technology lead to developments in the field of electronic text.

Several studies have focussed on the reading of literary fiction in print and on cyber media. Some have examined the problem of reading using electronic sources (cyber media) rather than paper sources (printed media) in terms of the performance of reading and text reading assessments (i.e., the reading process and the pleasure gained from reading). Comparative studies have shown marked differences between the reading habits associated with different formats, for example print based textual reading versus on-screen media reading (Kazanci, 2015).

A study on reading literary fiction in both print and electronic media involving young Swedish adults (Nilsson, 2016) found that reading fiction is beneficial to readers. In particular, the participants in the Nilsson study believed that reading fiction was important for self-awareness and personal development. The participants felt that they derived more benefits from reading fiction in traditional printed formats compared to reading fiction on cyber media, and that the benefits of reading are greater than that derived from viewing literature in visual form or films. This is in line with Nilsson (2016) and Clinton (2019) findings which reaffirmed previous research findings that readers tend to be more efficient and more knowledgeable about their performance when reading texts on printed paper than on screens. Unfortunately this study does not take into account the trends among young students.

It is important to know the reasons why those who read literature on electronic media like to do so. However, it is not as simple as comparing the reasons between reading text on paper and electronic media. Reading on screen has become an increasingly popular practice for educational reading (e.g. scientific texts) as well as recreational reading (e.g. works of fiction) (Hyman *et al.*, 2014). Recreational reading includes reading literary texts. A study conducted by Noyes and Garland (2008) concluded that reading on paper was preferred to reading on screen, but the authors noted that technological advances might well change this model. In other words, cyber literature was born as an alternative to the established print media.

In fact, reading text on screen, also known as digital reading or reading electronic text, has in some contexts become controversial. In the same vein, the various terms such as cybertext, electronic text, e-book and cyber literature, are sometimes seen as a contrast to or opposed to the hard copy; they raise new and complex copyright issues. It is also evident that costs are a strong driving force in the use and development of electronic texts (Hancock *et al.*, 2016). For a variety of reasons, many now perceive e-books as generally more profitable than

paper books (Bando *et al.*, 2016). In addition to costs, to both producers and readers alike, an increased volume and a variety of texts are easily accessed electronically through various devices (electronic readers, computers, smartphones, etc.), as long as an internet connection is available; one device can hold many books or other reading media.

Based on the current discourse it is evident that the above-mentioned features provide electronic media with several advantages over paper, in terms of ease of access and transportation of reading materials. Despite these benefits, some bitter critics worry about the negative effects of prolonged reading via screens (Herold, 2014). Eye fatigue associated with reading texts from the screen (Ziefle, 1998) has been a long-standing concern, despite being less of a problem with advances in screen technology (Rosenfield *et al.*, 2015). This problem still requires further attention from researchers.

Other critics have mentioned that the experience of reading on-screen is often described as less attractive than reading printed matter, and even unpleasant (Mangen and Kuiken, 2014). For example, students in a study by Kazanci (2015) preferred to read on paper rather than on screen and tended to choose paper text books rather than cheaper electronic versions (Rockinson-Szapkiw *et al.*, 2013). These trends might not apply to all populations, or to different reading texts such as fictional literary texts which are the subject of this research. It has also been noted that reading time tends to be longer on the screen than when reading material printed on paper, and often without relative or commensurate advantages for understanding (Daniel and Woody, 2013). Such statements mostly apply to target-oriented reading; they cannot readily be proven and may not be relevant for relatively relaxed literary reading.

Some experts believe that there is an inherent screen inferiority, with readers having lower performance and metacognitive awareness of their performance, based on judgments made based on screen reading as compared to reading text printed on paper (Ackerman and Lauterman, 2012). It is therefore perhaps not surprising that some claim that reading on-screen is only suitable for easy, light reading (Baron, 2015). This can be seen as a gap in the research on reading literary texts.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this study, the researchers aimed to address the question of how the present generation of students, growing up in the age of internet and new media, regard the significance of conventional and novel ways of reading fiction in terms of their own thoughts and opinions. In particular this study focussed on the reading of fiction in printed books versus various electronic media (cyber literature) including cybertext literature.

The following are some of the questions asked to initiate responses from the research subjects: 1) how do the respondents experience the importance of reading fiction; 2) how is reading fiction in printed matter experienced as opposed to the experience of reading fiction in screen cyber text media (cyber literature); and 3) how do respondents assess the significance of reading fiction in terms of broadening their horizons and personality development.

Those questions are not related to the structure and content aspects of literary fiction (e.g. plot, theme, character, etc.) or about reading habits. The focus is rather on the respondents' understanding of and arguments on why reading trends today are important, and what personal reasons for and benefits from reading fiction there might be. Within this wider context, the specific objectives of this study were: 1) to quantify the literary fiction reading media preferred by students; 2) to identify specific reasons for their choice of media; 3) to identify perceived personal benefits obtained from reading literary fiction, and 4) to evaluate readers' personal choices in terms of contents.

5. METHODOLOGY

The target group for this research project comprised undergraduate students of Hasanuddin University. Students of language and literature from the Faculty of Cultural Sciences were excluded, since reading literary works is compulsory for them, making it difficult to measure their interest through this type of research.

The research was carried out using two methods: a questionnaire, and a series of focus group interviews. During the latter, the interactions between respondents were noted during dialogue and discussion sessions. A total of one hundred and twenty five students from 5 (five) faculties, namely Social & Politics, Law, Dentistry, Husbandry, and Agriculture were initially recruited through the Hasanuddin University Library service help desk and asked to complete a questionnaire. To facilitate communication, each respondent who completed the questionnaire was asked to provide personal information, especially his or her gender, and contact details (mobile phone, WhatsApp, email). The questionnaire asked two introductory questions: 1) do you read literary fiction? 2) if your answer is 'yes', do you read in print format or in cyber media, or both? For those answering 'yes' to question one, further related questions explored when, how, and why the students read literary fiction.

This study focused on the reading tendencies of students who read literary fiction using electronic media (cyber literature). The answers to the first two questions were used to determine the respondents to be included in the next stage of the study. Respondents who answered 'no' to the first question were informed that they did not meet the study requirements. Out of the 125 students who filled in the questionnaire, 76 stated that they read literary fiction including cyber literature (Refer to Figure 2).

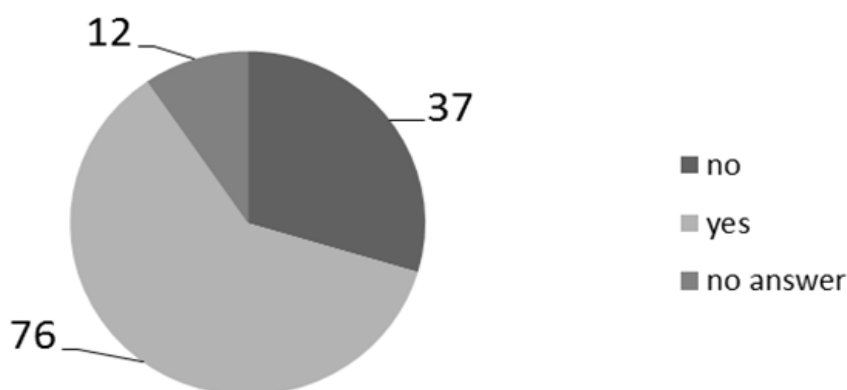


Figure-2. Respondents' Responses to the Preliminary Study.

Source: From respondents filled research questionnaire.

The 76 students selected, aged 18-22 years took part in a series of focus group interviews which took place over 3 weekends. Focus group interviews were conducted to retrieve information from the respondents. Focus group interviews were conducted to explore participants' perceptions on the importance of reading literary fiction, in particular in the context of self-awareness and personal development. The composition of these 76 respondents (focus group participants) by faculty and gender is shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Student respondent distribution by gender and faculty.

No	Students' faculty	Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
1	Social sciences	6	8	14
2	Law	8	7	15
3	Dentistry	15	3	18
4	Animal Husbandry	6	10	16
5	Agriculture	4	9	13
Total		39	37	76

Source: Demographic information of participants from research questionnaire.

6. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The focus group interviews explored students' perceptions on the importance of reading literary fiction, especially personal benefits. The results showed that the students perceived a wide range of benefit from the reading of fiction. In general, they opined that they were more likely to read fiction from electronic media compared to printed media because they can easily find it on the internet. They considered such reading to yield greater benefits than viewing filmed literature.

From these focus group interviews, the researchers were able to identify 10 broad types of advantages or benefits gained from reading literary fiction, according to the participants. These were: 1) development of language (written and verbal) skills; 2) improved focus and concentration; 3) appreciation and enjoyment of art; 4) expanding the reach of imagination; 5) development of intelligence; 6) formation of personality with character; 7) coping with and reducing stress; 8) reducing forgetfulness; 9) helping to find and define an identity; and 10) the enjoyment of entertainment.

7. READING HABIT AND NECESSITY

Reading is basically the ability to receive communication through the understanding of text in order to obtain information, increase knowledge, get entertainment, and promote self-development. Thus, reading text (including literary fiction) presented in any medium that encourages thinking activities to achieve the goals of the reader can be categorized as a reading activity.

A reading habit (culture) is a personal skill acquired since birth; it is not an innate skill or set of skills. Therefore, reading habits and a culture of reading can be nurtured and developed. For academic purposes, for example, reading is necessary to meet the demands in terms of specific expertise. In this context, books (in Print and Cyber Media) serve as a medium of transformation and enable the dissemination of science which can penetrate the geographical boundaries of countries; books are therefore frequently called windows on the world and gateways to the sciences.

A reading habit is a positive routine activity which trains the brain to better absorb information received by a person under certain conditions and at certain times. Reading sources can be books, newspapers, tabloids, internet-based text media, and so on. The reading of positive material is recommended as good information is deemed to bring better results to the reader.

In principle, today almost everyone realizes that reading is important, and to some extent at least reading is now a necessity for everyone for practical reasons. However, there is a great difference in the way reading activities become a need or habit in everyday life, in particular when reading is for pleasure or reading is to obtain information or knowledge. Some people like to read but only in certain fields, while others like to read whatever is needed or is available at a given time. Whether they realize it or not, everyone, especially those who have education, understands to some extent the benefits of reading. However there are many reasons why the reading habits of each person are different.

Reading is the basis for a lifelong education. Getting used to reading from an early age creates reading habits in later life, for example in young adults studying at a university. If reading activities become a habit, they can be perceived as a necessity in life. However, reading takes place at different levels of involvement and consciousness. Adler (2014) described four reading levels: 1) elementary reading, 2) inspectional reading, 3) analytical reading, and 4) syntopical reading.

Basic reading occurs in children who just learn to recognise letters, words, phrases, sentences and so on. Nowadays very few people fail to attain this basic competence. In inspectional reading (systemic skimming and superficial reading), the reader can read quickly and attempt to grasp the essentials of the reading material. Someone who has made a quick assessment to determine what book to read has attained skills in this phase, and reading comprehension abilities fall into this category. The third phase, analytical reading goes beyond simple

comprehension and involves internalisation, considering and extracting what is meaningful to them. At this stage, the reader is able to describe what he e has been reading, and what he has understood from it. The final level is syntopical reading, at this stage the reader is interested enough to read and compare several books on the same theme, and can sometimes synthesize the materials to produce something new.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

8.1. Findings

The 76 respondents who qualified for the study all stated that they read fiction in both printed and cyber format. Overall 62% of respondents preferred cyber literature, while 38% preferred printed books (Refer to Figure 3).

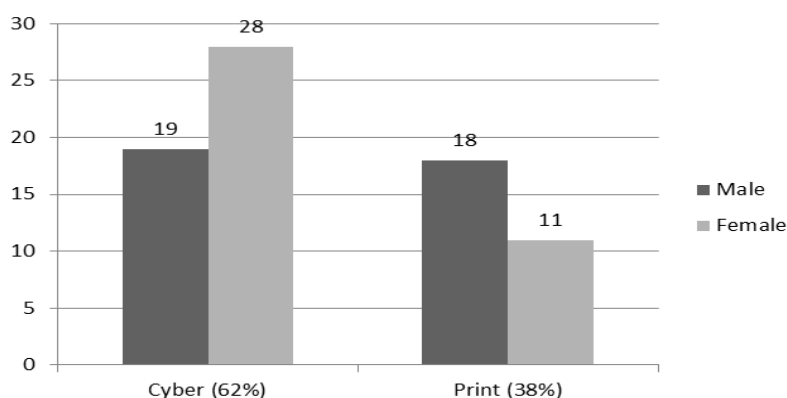


Figure-3. Respondent Preference for Cyber or Print Media by Gender.

Source: From the research questionnaire.

The primary reasons given by the respondents for reading literary fiction using electronic media (cyber literature) are shown in Table 2.

Table-2. Reasons for Reading Literary Fiction on Cyber Media.

No	Reason	Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
1	Relax and simple to understand	8	6	14
2	Attractive	7	6	13
3	Easy to carry	10	8	18
4	Accessible	8	9	17
5	Easy to move from tab to tab	6	8	14
Total		39	37	76

Source: From respondents filled research questionnaire.

The respondents were asked their opinion on ‘when is a good time for reading literary fiction online’, and at ‘what time is such reading mostly done’. Their responses are shown in Table 3.

Table-3. Most Common Time for Reading Literary Fiction On-Screen.

No	Situation	Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
1	While waiting	7	9	16
2	Staying alone	9	6	15
3	Before sleeping	9	10	19
4	Having leisure time	8	5	13
5	To kill time	6	7	13
Total		39	37	76

Source: From respondents filled research questionnaire.

Based on Table 3 above, the most common (good) times for reading cyber literature were before sleeping (25%), 'while waiting' (21%), and 'staying alone' (20%). Although there were some differences between the answers of female and male respondents, overall the difference was not significant. However, during the focus group interviews the students mentioned a number of weaknesses or concerns with respect to reading literary fiction on-line or on-screen. These concerns (Refer to Table 4) were based both on the personal experiences of the participants and on what they knew from other sources.

Everyone has a personal reason why he/she likes to read literary fiction. To explore these reasons, during one of the focus group interviews the participants were asked to talk about their personal reasons.

Table-4. Weakness in Reading Literary Fiction On-Screen.

No	Personal Concern	Gender		Total
		Female	male	
1	Disorders of the eyes if done excessively	9	4	13
2	Chance of being exposed to radiation	6	8	14
3	Internet access	10	9	19
4	Phubbing	8	11	19
5	Battery life/Charger availability	6	5	11
Total		39	37	76

Source: From respondents filled research questionnaire.

These personal reasons can be considered as reflecting the perceived benefits of reading literary fiction. Before the interviews began, the participants were divided into small groups for brainstorming. Personal reasons or benefits were noted and grouped based on the results of the small group discussions, and each respondent could choose more than one reason Table 5.

Table-5. Personal Reasons as Benefits of Reading Literary Fiction.

No	Personal reasons	Gender		Total
		woman	Man	
1	Honing social sensitivity by knowing an event presented in a literary work	37	34	71 (93.4%)
2	Enjoy the beauty of literary language	24	11	35 (46.1%)
3	Increase knowledge and develop imagination	31	38	69 (90.8%)
4	Inspiration to face life's challenges	21	29	50 (76.8%)
5	Learn to face challenges and overcome problems	19	29	48 (63.1%)
6	Foster a sense of empathy for others	35	32	67 (88.1%)
7	Foster motivation to achieve positive and productive outcome	29	30	59 (77.6%)
8	Understand one specific life as an important lesson (Meaning of statement is not clear)	34	34	68 (89.4%)
9	Compare complicated life situations with real life situations	39	31	70 (92.1%)
10	Get to know the culture of others	37	37	74 (97.3%)

Source: From respondents filled research questionnaire.

Table-6. Preferred Themes when Reading Literary Fiction.

No	Favourite Theme	Gender		Total
		Women	Men	
1	Adventure	6	8	14
2	Mystery	7	6	13
3	Romance/Love Story	3	7	10
4	Fantasy	6	3	9
5	Tragedy	7	3	10
6	Comedy	4	7	11
7	Dystopia	4	2	6
8	Others	2	1	3
Total		39	37	76

Source: From respondents filled research questionnaire.

Not all readers like to read fiction on the same theme, although there are often similarities or overlaps in their choices. Although some readers like many different themes, every reader has a preferred theme. This does not mean that other themes are not read or not enjoyed. During the focus group interviews, each respondent was asked to name just one favourite theme, as shown in Table 6.

Without questioning whether these themes are related to the literary genre, it is clear that the favourite themes of the respondents' choices are adventure, mystery, romance, tragedy, fantasy, and dystopia.

8.2. Discussion

One aspect that needs to be further clarified is the specific reasons for reading literary fiction as cyber literature rather than printed material. This is given in brief in Table 2. The first reason, "Relax and simple to understand", means that, by bringing an Android, the respondents have the feeling that they hold the world in their hands; it is much easier than carrying books and is a versatile tool for a variety of purposes. The "Attractive" reply corresponds to the respondent's perception of electronic devices as tools which are attractive, fashionable, and multi-functional. The "Easy to carry" is self-explanatory as modern electronic devices are increasingly easy to carry in almost all circumstances. The "Accessible" reason refers to the fact that, wherever there is some internet network, cyber-literature can be read on-screen or downloaded; e) The "Easy to move from tab to tab" is particularly related to on-line (internet) access, and includes the ability for non-native speakers of the language being read to use online dictionaries.

Based on Table 3, the preferred time for reading online literary fiction varies based on the respondents' habits. It can be seen that "before sleeping" is seen as a good time, and was the most frequent time for reading fiction for more participants (25%) than any other time, for example "while waiting" (21%) or when "staying alone" (20%). Although chosen by fewer participants as their prime reading time, all choices were selected by at least 17% of respondents. Like the figures in Table 3, the discussions also revealed no significant differences between the answers of female and male participants.

Although this research revealed a continued perception of weaknesses in online or cyber media for the reading of literary fiction, the participant's responses also confirm the assumption that reading fiction in print is in decline. During the discussions, this emerged as an indisputable reality. It was considered likely that some people still continue reading printed matter for reasons related to habit, and that previously acquired habits will likely contribute to the survival of reading literary fiction in printed books despite the rise of cyber text media.

Reading literary works will certainly provide benefits to the reader. Literature is not a vacuum created spontaneously; it emerges precisely to fill the empty space or needs within the reader. Literature can educate, entertain and express ideas that are useful for readers. However, there are of course differences in the personal reasons of each respondent (Benefits for Reading Literary Fiction) drawn from the questionnaire and focus group interviews. For example, the vast majority (over 90%) of respondents were of the opinion that reading literary fiction can help then in getting to know the culture of others; honing social sensitivity; comparing a complicated life

with real life; increasing knowledge and developing imagination. Most respondents (70-89%) are of the view reading can help them to: understand life's important lessons; foster a sense of empathy for others; foster motivation to achieve positive and productive results and provide inspiration to face life's challenges. Many (63%) believe that they gain benefits from learning to face challenges and overcome problems, while nearly half (46.1%) particularly enjoy the beauty of literary language.

It is a fact that in general readers have a favourite literary theme, even though they may have eclectic reading habits. Although adventure was a favourite theme for many students, the themes preferred by the respondents were varied, with all themes rating less than 20%. The most popular theme was adventure (18.4%), closely followed by mystery (17.1%). Comedy (14.5%), tragedy (13.2%) and romance/love stories (13.2%) scored nearly equally, followed by fantasy (11.8%) and dystopia (7.9%), with very small number of others (3 individuals or 3.9%).

One concern not discussed in this study is the problem of 'delusion'. This symptom is mostly caused by reading literature, and it would be interesting to study it on other occasions. Delusion is a type of mental disorder known in the field of psychology. People who experience delusions often have experiences that are far from real. People with delusional disorders believe things that are not real or not in accordance with the actual situation. However, literature tells us that good works are literary works that can make someone feel that they are in the same world as the world imagined by the writer.

Finally, the focus group interviews addressed respondent behaviour in reading literary fiction. This can be divided into three main categories: they read the work until the end, they read while moving to another tab (e.g. dictionary or other device function), and they read with a syntopical approach.

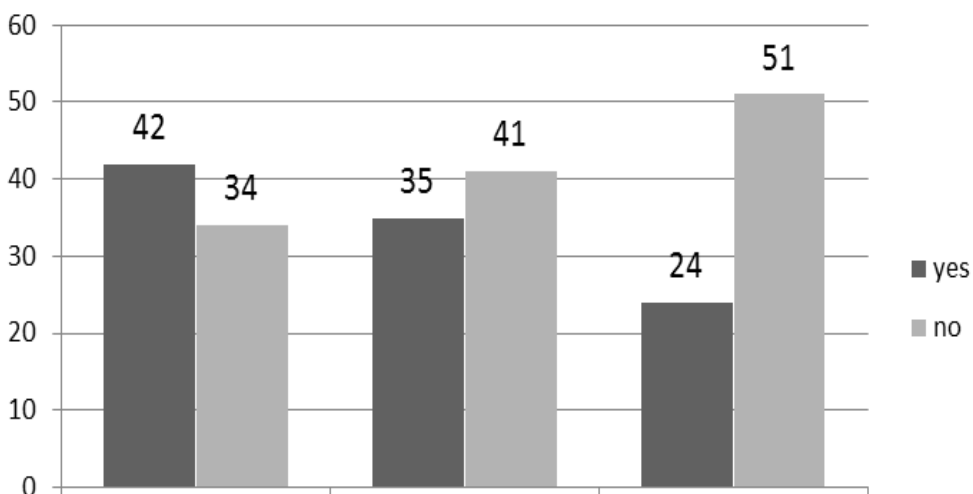
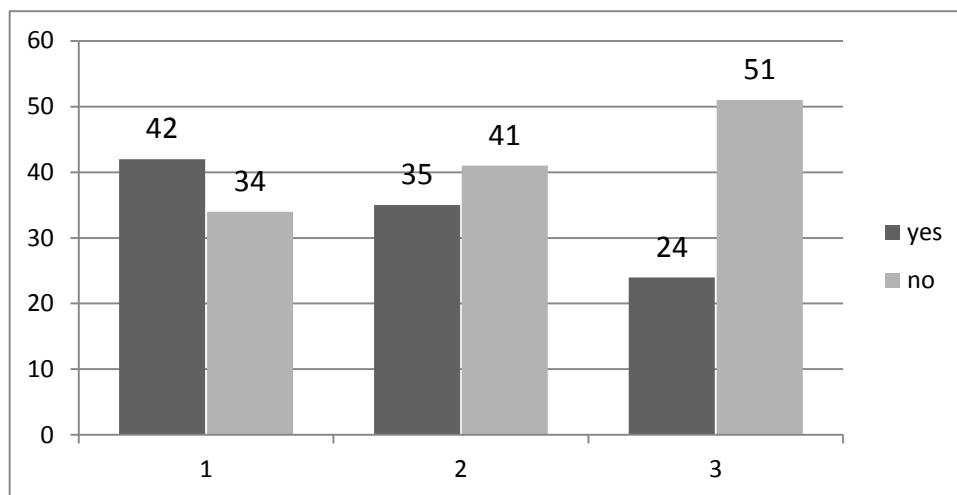


Figure-4. Respondents' Behaviour in Reading Literary Fiction.

Source: From the focus group interview

The tendency for literary fiction to be of interest can be gauged according to respondents' behaviour Figure 4. The three most common behaviours were, in succession: reading the work until the end (yes: 55.2%), reading while moving on to another tab (yes: 46.1 %), and reading with a syntopical approach (yes: 31.6%). These results are interesting, not least because they reveal that some readers use two or even all three approaches.

9. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Research on the reading tendencies of undergraduate students of Hasanuddin University provides some answers to questions on reading of fiction in print as opposed to the cyber text media experience of fiction on-screen. Reading literature on screens, besides reasons of novelty and new trends, is also a new alternative expanding the availability of reading matter through new media. It must be realized that the diversity of literary themes is in line with the diversity of favourite themes among the readership.

Even among students brought up in the electronic era, not all readers like e-text (cyber text) better than reading on paper. Although reading on traditional paper media is still widely considered superior to reading on-screen, technological advances not only can change but are changing this model. Based on qualitative data, electronic literary texts can be more profitable than paper texts, more easily accessed electronically, and many books or other reading media can be stored in or accessed through one easy to carry device. The students in this study recognised that these features provide electronic media with several advantages over paper in terms of the convenience of access and transport of reading materials.

One implication of this study is that the presence of cyber literary texts and cyber media is changing the perception of readers towards reading methods and influencing their reading behaviour. Reading fictional literature on-screens (cyber literature) is seen as more practical than printed matter. While adventure is a favourite theme for students, they enjoy a wide variety of fiction, and there are no significant differences in the responses between female and male respondents.

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