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## THE PROBLEM OF FORMATION OF READING CULTURE OF CHILDREN AND THE YOUTH IN UKRAINE

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**ABSTRACT:** *The article shows a printed or electronic book as the basic component of information society development on condition of integration to the world education space. The researcher reveals the problem of formation of reading culture of children and the youth in Ukraine. The author shows the tendency of the decrease of reading activity of modern students on the example of experimental research. The paper presented defines reading interests of children and the youth in Ukraine. Relevant tasks of pedagogical community concerning the popularization of the book and the formation of personality reading competence are also described.*

**KEY WORDS:** *reading culture, reading competence, pupils of school of general education, Ukrainian youth, reading interests, promoting children's reading*

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*“Learning to read a book, to think about read  
material is a significant and noble purpose“  
(J. Goethe)*

The problem of formation of reading culture of children and the youth, the place of book in the system of educational influence on the personality arose in Ukraine in the XXI century.

Today we can see the progress of computer technologies spread in the media. This factor led to the creation of global networks with the instant access to any data. The Internet provides access for young people to the third of the world's information resources. Periodicals take the last place among information resources. However, the book still remains an important information source for children and young people.

In 2014, 56 % of children in Ukraine under the age of 15 have not read any book during the year. According to the researches, 53% out of 1000 respondents among pupils (aged up to 16) are looking up for the news on the Internet, 15% of them admitted that they would rather find a book in the network than go to bookstores or library. At the same time, almost 90% of orders at the library deal with the school program only. This problem is relevant not only for Ukraine but also Poland, Slovakia, Germany and other countries.

“Reading, which is the practice of transferring knowledge through printed word, has never been very popular in Poland. A large amount of modern readers in Poland use new carriers of language culture. They use the digital record. This helps to extend understanding of content and ideas, created on the basis of literature. At the same time, this situation causes the alarming diagnosis and visions of readership should be judged with greater serenity and distance” (Stepnik, Mazur, 2016, p. 9).

Due to the rapid development of the Internet, reading fiction books has been abruptly reduced, resulting in the low level of students' literary development, and consequently, their low level of vocational development as the reading culture is considered as an integral part of the teacher's job (Bilavych, Rozman, 2016, p. 104). This fact causes big concern.

*The aim of the article* is to investigate reading interests and level of reading culture of children and the youth, and to enumerate the forms of popularization of a book and reading in Ukraine.

### **Why today's children do not want to read books?**

- Internet interest;
- eBooks;
- rising cost of quality books;
- modern children's libraries for children are almost not replenished with new books;
- library book funds do not meet the growing demands of users;
- libraries in rural areas are closed (Ukraine since independence in 1990 closed 5 libraries);
- family environment (often parents do not read books).

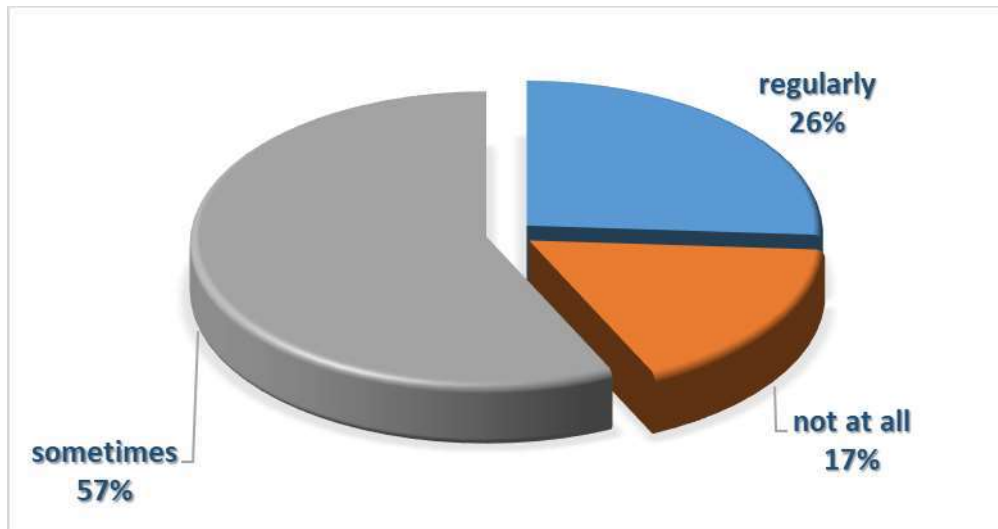
Family reading has always been and remains the integral part of creating the reading culture. Unfortunately, today's parents do not show initiative to read books with their children.

### **Acquaintance with books at preschool age**

Elementary school children normally get acquainted with books with their parents' help. "Only where the parents read, a child's reading increases" (Janusz Korczak).

"The family is the first and basic educational environment, where the basic standards and moral principles are passed, and it also defines habits and attitudes to people and things, finally, here is the beginning of human interests. Family environment also plays an important role in shaping the relationship of a young man to a book since, from the earliest years of a child's life, it has a chance to create positive experiences about the contact with the book. Such situations can arise in a family where parents find reading enjoyable and pass it on spontaneously to their children" (Łobacz, 2016, p. 41).

How often do modern Ukrainian parents read books to their children? According to our research, a book is regularly read to a child at home only by 26% of the respondents among parents. More than 17% indicate that they have no time for this activity (Drawing 1).



Graph 1. Reading books to children by parents

“The home where there is no book is like a body without a soul”, said Ciceron. Therefore, modern parents must strive to ensure that high-quality children's books take a special place in each house. Only the creation of reading environment in the family can promote love for books and reading.

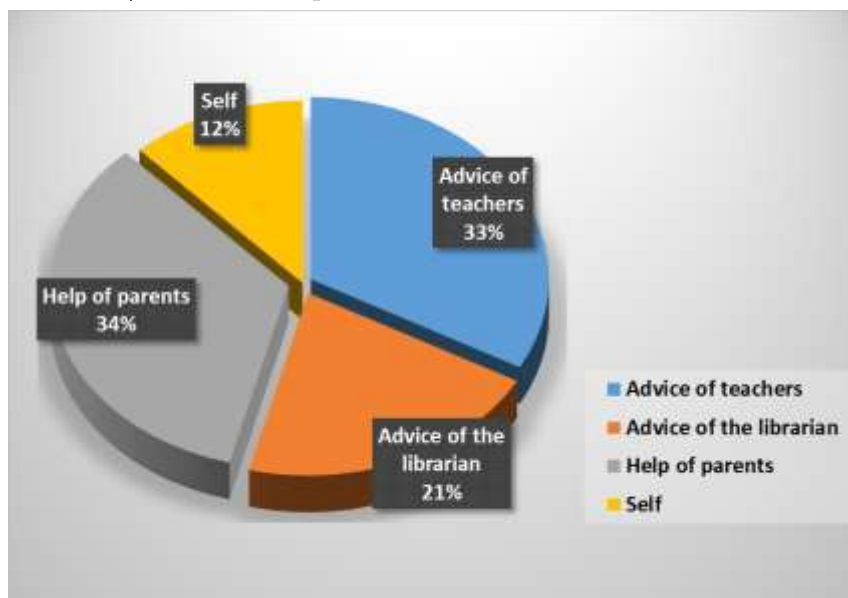
Ukrainian teacher and humanist V. Sukhomlynskyi believed that “priceless spiritual wealth of each family is family library”. “The older the book in the family library, the more valuable it is...” that is why working with parents, the pedagogue affirmed the idea that the books should be handed over from grandparents, parents to children and grandchildren as a special treasure (Sukhomlynskyi, 1978, p. 169-170).

The sources of promoting children's reading are family, school, library, public organizations, extracurricular institutions, publishing centres, bookstores etc.

### **Primary school age**

Students’ reading competence is revealed in reading culture and is associated with his/her pleasant or unpleasant feelings, positive or negative emotions from reading, personal acceptance or rejection. Actually, children’s reading culture is reflected in the ability to choose the right book according to one’s interest. However, only some of the children (38%) read a lot and consider reading books as their hobby. At the same time 23% of students do not have

elementary literacy. According to the investigation, they mostly choose the book followed by the teachers' advice – 33%, the librarian's advice – 21%, parents' help – 34% and only 12% of the respondents can choose a book of their interest.



Graph 2. Book choice of younger students

V. Sukhomlinsky has been the principal at Pavlyshska Secondary School in Kirovohrad region for more than a quarter of the century. He focused on directing all educational work at school to the image of a book. For this reason, Reading Room, Children's Tales Room, Book Fests and meetings at the library were systematically held (Sukhomlynskyi, 1978, p. 171).

Modern scholars advocate the creation of information learning environment as a set of “information and educational means that combine printed and electronic publications, works of different genres, facilities, visual materials aimed at forming reader's interest of primary school children” (Kompanii, 2013, p. 13).

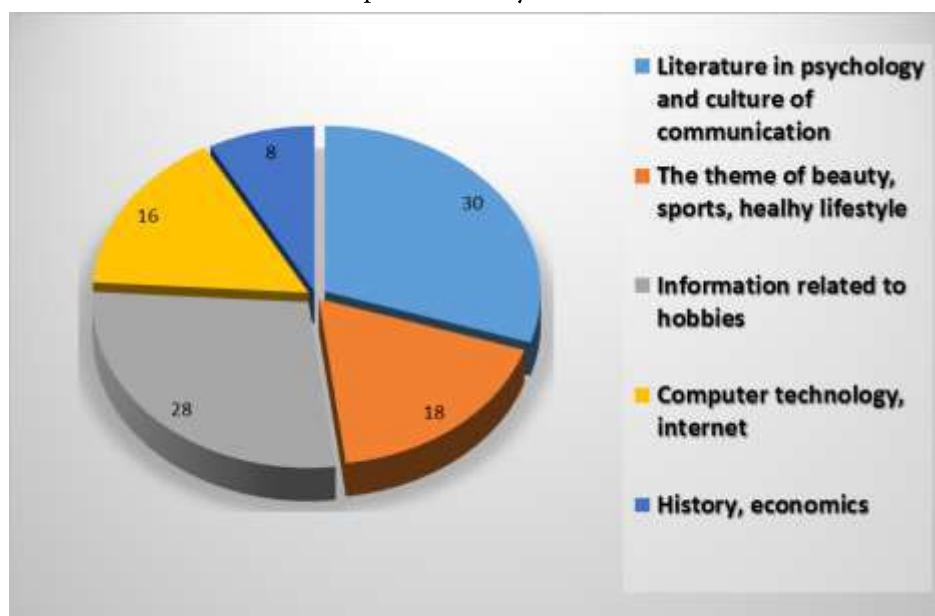
### **Reading interests of teenagers**

The process of reading is deeply personal as everyone perceives and understands the information individually and draws his/her own conclusions about the characters of a particular work. Reading interest of a child is subjective and depends on the age and psychological characteristics together with socio-cultural environment. The interest in reading stimulates personal activity, so

the desire to read may vary with age. We consider reading interest as a form of identification of cognitive needs of a personality.

In today's information society, rich world classical (qualitative) literature is gradually losing its position. This has negative effects on the formation of moral, spiritual and aesthetic values of the teenagers.

The interests of modern teenagers vary significantly. However, according to the study, one third of Ukrainian respondents admitted that they are interested in literature, psychology and culture. Approximately the same number of teenagers (28 %) choose a book according to their hobbies; 16 % of readers – a book about computer technology or Internet resources. Only less than 8% of users are interested in the topics of history and economics.



Graph 3. Reading interests of Ukrainian teenagers

Family and close friends who are authoritative for young people have a significant impact on reading culture development among adolescents. Pupils mostly read detective stories, adventure books, fiction, novels about love, life of famous people or historical events. Less are they interested in poetry (about 25 % of young people are interested in love poems), periodicals, war books and folklore. Ethnographic works are practically not popular among today's young people (Budnyk, Blyznyuk, 2014, p. 14-19).

The most comfortable for adolescents is to read books according to one's interests at home (about 82 % of respondents) and in the library (11 %). A small proportion of young people like to read in public transport - more than 7 % of the respondents.



Graph 4. Forms of popularizing books and reading in Ukraine

Nowadays the project “All Ukraine Reads to Children” initiated by the Foundation ABCXXI – “All Poland Reads to Children” in the program “All Europe Reads to Children” is realized in Ukraine.

The purpose of the project is to increase awareness of the importance of reading to children from an early age, educate parents and baby-sitters on children's early intellectual development namely, their reading and communication skills; dissemination and implementation the idea of early reading to children.

The experience of Polish colleagues shows:

- you have to read to a child;
- every day reading, preferably at the same time, at least 20 minutes;
- reading must be interesting for the child, that is using the proper voice (quiet, fast, slow, high and low voice, with pauses, etc.), facial expressions and gestures, game situations, and so on.

Promotion of reading in Germany, as stated by Dr. John Mikoto, deals with 4 main aspects:

- development of motivation to read;

- promotion of free reading;
- focus on reading comprehension;
- reading culture.

Popularization of a book is an important task of pedagogical community in Ukraine.

*Children Readings International Festival “Knyhomaniya” (Bookmania).* Reading interests of children and young people are diverse – from Ukrainian and foreign classical literature, works of contemporary authors, scientific publications to fiction to detective stories and romance novels. However, the key problem is popularization of contemporary Ukrainian authors. To solve it, since 2002 regional libraries in Ukraine have been arranging the contest for children reading “Knyhomaniya”, which acquired a national status. The winners of such competitions take part in the international festival of children’s book “Forum of publishers – to children”.

The Festival “Knyhomaniya” is a massive celebration for which participants prepare costumes of their favorite literary characters, dancing children and theater groups march along the streets of cities, accompanied by brass bands. The festival also includes meetings with famous Ukrainian and foreign authors of children's books, poetry reading, team literary quests, etc.

*The first bus-library – “Knyzhkobus”* appeared in the streets of Kyiv in Ukraine. Inside the bus there were more than 100 best books and even gadgets (smartphones, laptops and tablets) with educational applications, games, sound system, and plasma. Moreover, “Knyzhkobus” carries an interesting exhibition “Famous people” which contains 20 posters of portraits of famous Ukrainians.

*Literary Art Café* offers possibility to check out new interesting books and magazines. In the literary cafe one can often meet writers and poets; authors organize literary events, public readings of famous works or book presentations. Especially useful are children's book cafes where parents can spend meaningful time with their kids.

*Children's Book Forums* are reading contests, quests, scientific experiments, games, workshops, interactive lessons in Biology, History, Language, Literature and Creative writing, activities for parents and children dealing with new books by Ukrainian publishers. The Book Forum is always visited by famous children’s



writers, translators and illustrators who communicate with the guests, hold book presentations and autograph sessions.

*Street Poetry readings.* It is also called “open air” poetry reading and became an interesting event for today's youth. Such poetry readings contests are dedicated to anniversaries of famous Ukrainian and foreign poets. Participants usually take part in them on voluntary basis. Children are able to develop their skills in public speaking freely.

### **Conclusions**

In modern conditions of educational world books and e-book are the main components of the information society. They are the integral part of culture-making process in general and personality education in particular (Bilychenko, 2015, p. 4).

Encouraging reading competence is aimed at providing spiritual development and self-development to the children and the youth. The main directions of the activity of pedagogical community are to popularize qualitative books, promote reading culture, educate the ability to choose one's own books to read, use the library and references and to develop educational and cognitive interests.

“Science fiction, displaying school life, relations between parents and children, antisocial events, the inner world of a child may lead to the formation of Christian, moral and ethical, as well as artistic and aesthetic values” (Bilavych, Rozman, 2016, p. 104). The success of formation of children's reading needs depends on the joined efforts of the family, educational institutions and libraries. Only consolidation of such efforts in public, state and private educational institutions and organizations, mass media, will help to solve the problem of children's reading. It will also contribute to creating favorable conditions for equal access to literature on various media (including electronic), regardless of the level of children individual development, their physical and intellectual abilities.

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