

Factors that Promote Reading Culture and Its Impact on Society

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Abstract. From time immemorial, books have had a very intimate relationship in human life. Books are considered a symbol of civilization because of their relationship to reading habits. This is because the habit is an effort to develop human potential through the addition of knowledge. Doing research on the book industry is an interesting thing, because its development in line with technology is amazing. For example, today, reading material in the form of audio-books is increasingly gaining the attention of the world community. Nevertheless, books in physical form still have sentimental value in the hearts of readers, and still dominate the world market. Using a library approach through data collection on the website, this study examines the development of the book industry and its relationship with reading culture in Malaysia. In addition, factors that promote reading culture were also identified. In conclusion, efforts to increase the publication of books and cultivate the community with book activities must be continued and support from all parties must be done so that books can be fully utilized by the community.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The book industry is considered a very important and large industry as it covers various fields such as paper production, ink, editing systems, designers, publishing systems, printing, marketing, and sales. Yet in the context of entity division, the book industry has two main entities; first, the book, and second, the reader. The two are complementary to each other because without a book, the reader does not exist; while without a reader, the book also does not exist. Both are in demand; and at the same time supply-oriented. Thus the relationship between the book and the reader is a symbiotic relationship that needs each other.

In Islam, reading is the basis for gaining knowledge. An active soul always needs knowledge so reading is a

responsibility to meet the needs of the soul. By reading, new knowledge will be built in the mind which is then realized in oral, written and action forms (Abduh, 1999: 249).

In the context of civilization, reading and books show the progress of a nation. Both of these entities play a major role in stimulating and developing human potential. So it is not surprising that once upon a time, the center that was the placement of books or libraries became the target of the enemy to be destroyed; so that all critical thoughts, ideas, and philosophies can be buried directly from the soul of a nation. For example, the grand library of the Baitul Hikmah in Baghdad was burned by the Mongol army in a massive attack on Muslims around the 13th century. For that reason, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 - 1821) stated

that he was more afraid of dealing with book writers than people holding guns (Faizli, 2016).

The above statement clearly shows that the book industry remains relevant till any time. The process of reading cannot be separated from human life because it not only enlivens the human soul but also the whole of human activity. What has changed is the medium for reading. This is because to some extent technological factors still influence human reading styles and habits.

The main impetus of this writing is to examine the development of the book industry and its relationship with reading culture in Malaysia and identify the efforts that need to be done to further develop this industry so that the community can engage with the culture consistently.

II. METHOD

This study uses a literature approach with a focus given to the collection of data and information from websites. This method is important to obtain up-to-date data that is believed to be accurate. The most important factor of using this approach is that data is quickly accessible and many sources can be referenced and compared (Mohtar & Anuar, 2020). In addition to websites, other sources used are documents in the form of articles, books and journals.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Book Market

It has been very exciting in the last five years when Asian countries have the most number of readers compared to other countries around the world. While

there is no denying that the United States is still considered a key reference in viewing and evaluating book market trends, the Asian community's enthusiasm for reading could provide some important clues in the book industry in the future.

The top three Asian countries in the category of most read countries worldwide; India, Thailand, and China each have their own uniqueness. Indians read at least 10 hours and 42 minutes a week. The reading material is casual in nature but tends to the medium of English. To encourage the reading community, especially among school students, reading festivals are often organized on a regular basis. The Annual Reading Festival held in Jaipur is considered to be the largest reading celebration in the world ever organized so far (Warwick, 2021).

Thai reading culture is more focused on their mother tongue medium. This is because they are more interested in interpreting the symbols found in their language because they are said to be able to give a more accurate meaning. On average, Thai people allocate 9 hours and 24 minutes a week to reading. Journals rank highest in the reading material category, while fiction ranks lowest (Warwick, 2021).

China, which has the largest population in the world, makes an average reading routine of 8 hours per week. Among the reasons Chinese people love to read is to develop their potential. Chinese people prefer to read books in physical form rather than reading online. Yet newspaper reading outperforms other reading materials where the Chinese community allocates at least 21 minutes to

peruse the contents of the newspaper (Warwick, 2021).

The trend of reading in the United States shows that the favorite reading categories of the people there are thriller, history and biography. The choice of reading material is usually influenced by genre factors, authors, and reviews of a book. Books in physical form remain the most popular reading medium compared to e-books (Warwick, What do Americans read the most ?, 2021).

As for e-book devices such as the Kindle, Nook and Kobo which were once a trend, are starting to show a sharp decline. E-books, however, still get the attention of readers where users make smartphones and tablets as a medium to read e-books (Haines, 2021).

Meanwhile, book market trends in 2022 include the following (Noblit, 2021);

1. Book authors sell their own work. With that, they no longer depend on royalties from book publishers. Authors utilize existing technological mediums to sell their books.

2. Indie writers are considered to be the pioneers of book technology in the future. This can be seen through the trend of applications based on artificial intelligence in audio-books and so on.

3. Book prices increase as paper and shipping costs increase.

4. Small companies in the field of publishing have the opportunity to grow because they can diversify book titles with the help of printing technology that can optimize costs. One of the newest methods to optimize costs is by using a book pre-order approach.

5. Audio-books become a reading medium that needs attention because

there is an increase in demand in the market.

Book Market Survey in Malaysia

Based on the current developments above, the three important elements that drive the book industry are culture, genre, and medium. Culture refers to society's acceptance and customs of a development. In the context of the book and reading industry, culture symbolizes the aspirations and desires of society. To develop public interest in reading, then the culture of reading needs to be expanded. In other words, the community needs to be made easier to access reading materials.

In cultivating the community's interest in reading, the most basic thing that needs to be done is to increase the number of books and reading centers. At the same time, the community needs to be given awareness so that it is not shy to spend money to buy books. In Malaysia, the book industry has not reached a comparable level like other industries. For example, online market trends show that consumers buy more groceries, personal care and beauty than buy books (Zainuddin, 2021).

If the community is reluctant to buy reading materials, then the community should be encouraged to set foot in reading centers. If we look at the library statistics in Malaysia; the number of libraries available is 3002. However, the libraries that can be visited by the public is only 1445 because other than that it is for the use of universities, agencies and government departments. Of the 1445 public libraries, 1099 libraries are located in the village. This means that only 346 libraries can be visited by the urban

community, while the highest population density is in urban areas (Malaysia, 2020: 3).

Therefore, the best way to nurture the interest in reading is to increase the number of libraries in the neighborhood. Libraries do not need to have a large area because what is more important is that users can make reference and borrow books easily.

Another approach that can be done is by organizing reading festivals as has become a tradition in India (Warwick, Which Countries Read the Most ?, 2021). Reading festivals should be held more frequently so that the community becomes accustomed to the culture of reading. Reading festivals are not necessarily large -scale because the most important goal is community involvement with it. Reading festivals must be community friendly where the community is easy to participate. In festivals, events related to reading culture can be varied with book sales and exhibitions, and competitions based on or related reading skills.

In terms of genre, it can be seen that non-fiction materials get the attention of readers. In developed countries like Japan, the reading content of interest is of the type that has intrinsic value, is closely related to achievement, and an impetus toward success in life. The reading experience among the Japanese community is quite unique. The culture of reading is hereditary and has been emphasized since childhood. The purpose of cultivating reading from an early age is not to gain absolute knowledge but more to the effort to discipline oneself to get used to the habit

(Judge, 2011).

While from the medium point of view, books in physical form still dominate the market. This is because the demand from readers is still high. The sales value of physical books in the United States, for example, far exceeds the sales value of books in digital format. This situation indicates that readers still appreciate books in printed format for obtaining data and information. In the United States, too, it was found that most book readers were among college students. A unique but very inspiring fact is that students who fail to graduate in the United States typically belong to the least read group, and people who read the most books have better economic power than those who read less (Errera, 2022). The statement clearly shows that reading habits have positive implications either in career or life routine.

Factors that encourage the Book Market

Books in physical form always have sentimental value on the part of the reader because their existence makes it easy for the reader to stare at them, repeat the reading, and most importantly it can be made into a collection. In addition, the book in physical form has its own aura that is capable of a person's interest to approach and touch it. This situation is similar to learning physically by learning online where learning physically is sweeter than learning online. Thus, the physical book market still has its own fans although it may have to compete with various technology-based reading materials such as the latest is like audio-books.

Perhaps on that basis, the physical

book market in the United States has continued to grow in the last five years where there has been a very significant increase in book publishing of 264%. The main factors influencing the increase came from groups of authors who had published their own books. The largest demand in the book industry in the United States comes from end users and institutions of higher learning which collectively show an increase of 8.9% for 2019-2020 compared to the previous year. Interestingly hardcover books dominated the book market by 49.15% compared to softcover books by 27.27% and digital books by 9.29% for 2019-2020 (Kolmar, 2022).

In Indonesia, the book industry which includes publishing and printing is included in the category of creative endeavor industry because it contains the values of creativity such as language style, layout, design, photographs, tables and graphics. Even the author of a book is called an artist. The position puts the importance of the book industry in line with other creative industries such as film, advertising, broadcasting, music, fashion and computer technology. On the other hand, the book industry is considered very important because it represents the character of a nation where a nation's civilization can be identified through its writings, stories, figures, and philosophy of knowledge. All this will not be achieved if it is not manifested in the form of documentation; in words easily translated in the form of publications (Al-Azis, 2021).

Therefore, to ensure the survival of the book industry in the market, a close network between government agencies,

institutions of higher learning, educational institutions, publishing companies, printing companies and corporate bodies must be established and maintained. Each needs to play a role in order for the industry to continue to grow and most importantly, be able to survive in an economic market that is still affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Government agencies such as the National Library of Malaysia and the National Archives can channel the expertise and resources needed for the establishment of mini libraries in neighborhoods to encourage reading activities. With the existence of high demand among consumers then more book publications are produced. Similarly, the high demand from higher education institutions, and educational institutions such as government schools and private schools are able to stimulate the production of books even more.

However, the culture of reading is unlikely to be nurtured if the intellectual discourse is not mobilized. This is because in that way, only then does the awareness of knowledge increase. This awareness will encourage the community to develop interest alongside reading activities because that is where the depth of knowledge lies. To nurture intellectual discourse, writings in scholarly forms such as journals and conference papers need to be multiplied.

Indonesia despite having a lower number of Scopus indexed journals than Malaysia where Indonesia is 69, while Malaysia is 101; however, the total number of journals registered with the Indonesian Board of Science is very large, namely 75,023 journals (Rulino, 2021)

(Tinggi, 2021). This number shows that the awareness of Indonesian society towards knowledge is very high. This situation is not surprising because journal writing has been introduced at the school level again compared to Malaysia where journal writing is only known in institutions of higher learning. Disclosure of scholarly writing to society is very important because it shows the sensitivity of society to knowledge in various fields whether literature, language, technology, thought, philosophy, psychology, education, health and so on.

The involvement of corporate bodies is very important in terms of contribution to research, infrastructure development and also the establishment of mini-libraries. From another angle, the involvement of corporate bodies in the development of the book industry can be seen as a social corporate responsibility. To encourage the involvement of corporate bodies in the development of the book industry then certain incentives may be considered such as tax exemptions, or recognition from government agencies such as participation ratings and so on.

IV. CONCLUSION

Proposal

The demand for books comes from the desire and need to read. Thus, reading needs to be cultivated so that demand exists and increases over time. For that purpose, some of the proposed measures are as follows;

Plans	Efforts	Benefits
Establish a library in the neighborhood.	Identify existing facilities and use infrastructure that is considered relevant to use.	Provide facilities for local residents to make references and obtain reading materials.
Encourage the community to create a mini library in their homes.	Offer a set or compilation of books for an affordable package or installment fee.	The community can have reading materials at affordable prices in addition to filling the bookshelves at home with useful reading materials.
Hold more frequent reading festivals in the neighborhood.	Establish good relationships with residential community committees.	Able to provide opportunities for publishers to introduce books to the public more often.
Provide facilities for the community to access reading materials.	Establish one-stop centers in focus areas such as recreation parks,	Able to provide opportunities for publishers to diversify reading

	bus/transit stops, and public transportation stations.	materials to the community because demand always exists from the community .
Encourage the younger generation/youth to coexist with the culture of reading.	Establish open reading centers in dormitory areas in boarding schools, community colleges, student campuses and student accommodation.	In addition to cultivating young people's interest in reading, the emphasis on manners, trust and responsibility to preserve reading material can be instilled.
Collaborate with school/college/university cooperatives to expand reading material resources.	Provide a special segment to sell selected reading materials to expand students' thinking so that they do not focus on academic reading	Rebranding the cooperative so that its goals are in line with the mission and vision of education.

	materials alone.	
Establish journal units in full boarding schools, high schools, vocational colleges, skills colleges, polytechnics, religious high schools, colleges and universities.	Foster the interest of adolescents/youth and educators to familiarize themselves with scientific activities and make many references for the purpose of writing/reporting.	With the existence of journal units in schools and institutions of higher learning, the reading material can be fully utilized because students/teachers/lecturers need to make references to write papers or reports.

Suggestions

Generally, books can be classified into 2 parts, namely fiction and non-fiction. In the fiction section, it can be divided into 2 parts, namely in the form of graphics and creative writing. While non-fiction is divided into 2 parts, namely scientific and non-scientific. In the

context of psychology, reading in the fiction category is important for developing affective and cognitive domains. This is because the reading material contains elements that can affect the heart and soul such as happy, sad, funny, inspiring, and dedication, and affect the mind such as thinking about the ending, problem solving and manifestation in reality. The reading material in the non-fiction category serves to channel information and knowledge to lead a life, build new knowledge, and be a reference or guide for a job. In conclusion, these two parts

have a very important role to the development of human potential.

To encourage the development of the book industry in both divisions, cooperation between government agencies as bodies with expertise in their respective fields and private companies should be done. Thus, the book produced coincides with the wants and needs of the local community, while being able to introduce the identity and character of the real race to the outside community. The intended cooperation and the expected results of such cooperation are as follows;

Section	Government Agencies and Authorities Bodies	Objective	Output	Medium
Religion	Persatuan Ulama Malaysia (PUM), Khazanah Fathaniyah	Collection and translation of books written by local scholars.	Translation books	Hard copy, digital
	Jabatan Mufti Negeri	Collection of writings, documentation, and information related to scholarly figures.	Biography, Novel	Hard copy, digital
	Persatuan Pengguna Islam Malaysia (PPIM), JAKIM, Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri	Collection of writings on the development of Islam, in terms of education, practice and religious life, Islamic law, and reading	Book, Life Notes	Hard copy, digital

		materials used as a guide to life.		
Arts and Language	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,	Collection of oral traditions and culture of the local community.	Report, Monograph	Hard copy, digital
History and Politics	Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia (PSM), Muzium Negara, Arkib Negara, Jabatan Warisan Negara	Gathering information on heritage, architecture, events, places, and landmarks.	Report, Monograph, adaptation to novel form	Hard copy, digital
Science and Technology	MIMOS Berhad (Teknologi Maklumat), SIRIM (Kejuruteraan), IMR (Perubatan), Perhilitan, Perhutanan, MOSTI	Documentation of philosophy, engineering, discoveries and field studies.	Periodic reports, scientific books, adaptations to novel form	Hard copy, digital
Finance and Economy	Bank Negara Malaysia (Kewangan), MIER (Ekonomi), FMM (Pembuatan)	Documentation of methods, summaries, procedures, management, transactions, analysis, and industry reviews.	Periodic reports, scientific books, adaptations to novel form	Hard copy, digital
Law and Enforcement	Malaysian BAR, PDRM, Tentera, KASTAM, JPJ, Imigresen, APMM	Documentation of legal affairs, enforcement whether at sea, air and land.	Non Periodic reports, scientific books, adaptations to novel form	Hard copy, digital

With the involvement of all parties, then various books from various fields can be varied. Society will more easily achieve awareness as the need and desire

for knowledge increases. When the intellectual power functions perfectly then society will appreciate life and value happiness as desired in religious life.

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