



## Family Reading in Children Literacy Skills Formation

### Çocuk Okuryazarlığı Becerileri Formasyonunda Aile Okuma

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**Abstract.** The purpose of our research is to identify the reasons for the decline in reading's interest, as well as to determine the conditions ensuring a positive dynamics in this area. The article presents the results of the survey of 284 schoolchildren and students - future teachers (aged 16 to 23 years). It is revealed that 76.8% of respondents consider the preserving the family reading traditions in children's upbringing to be an actual problem which speaks about the need of activity among the youth to increase motivation for family reading. Only about half of the respondents were able to give concrete recommendations for literary works for joint reading by all members of the family. This suggests that universities need systematic educational work among students to increase motivation for reading in general, and to family reading in particular. On the other hand, this problem concerns the entire society as well.

**Keywords:** Children reading skills, transformation of reading, culture of reading, family reading traditions, elementary education

**Öz.** Araştırmamızın amacı, okumaya olan ilginin azalmasının nedenlerini ve bu alanda olumlu bir dinamiği sağlayan koşulları belirlemektir. Makale, 284 okul çocuğu ve eğitim fakültesi öğrencilerden (16 - 23 yaş arası öğretmen adayları) oluşan örneklemin sonuçlarını sunmaktadır. Katılımcıların %76,8'i, çocukların okumalarında aile okuma geleneklerinin korunmasının, aile okuma motivasyonunu arttırmak için gençlerin etkinlik ihtiyacından söz eden gerçek bir sorun olduğunu düşündükleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Katılımcıların sadece yarısı, ailenin tüm üyeleri tarafından ortak okumaya yönelik edebi eserler için somut öneriler sunabilmiştir. Bu, üniversitelerin genel olarak okumaya yönelik motivasyonu ve özellikle aile okumalarını arttırmak için öğrenciler arasında sistematik eğitim çalışmalarına ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermektedir. Öte yandan, bu sorun tüm toplumla da ilgilidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çocuk okuma becerileri, okuma dönüşümü, okuma kültürü, aile okuma gelenekleri, ilköğretim

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of digitization and globalization, the attitude of a society to reading has changed dramatically (Coiro, 2009). Reading today is a complex human act of a linguistic, physiological, psychological and social character (Smith, 2012), requiring serious research. To date, the problem under investigation is among the issues discussed. Specialists of different levels - from librarians to sociologists and culturologists take part in the conversation. For the time being, the range of issues related to the revealing of the potential of family reading for the development of the reader's literacy of the child is among the problems that are hot for discussion, both at the conceptual level and in the field of implementation in practice. The family as a social institution is undergoing changes, and therefore the status of family reading is changing.

The notion of "reading literacy" (Jentgens, 2016) is also treated unequivocally. The importance of reader literacy in the era of digitalization (the importance of digital reading literacy) is discussed in the document regulating the assessment of literacy in the international study PISA-2018. All points to the need for a systematic approach to the study of the problem of reading in modern society (İnce & Gözütok, 2018; Aydın, Selvitopu & Kaya, 2018). Most studies are devoted to preschool and junior school age, which is natural because it is at this stage of a personal development that functional reading skills are being introduced (Hadaway, 2009). In this case, a special role is given to family reading as a form of early sociologicalization of the younger generation.

In the logic of this study, the emphasis has been shifted to the student audience - to future teachers and parents, whose ability and readiness to form the reader's literacy in children will largely determine the level of the reader culture of modern Russian society. The importance of family reading remains a priority, as the continuity of the traditions of reading, getting into conflict with the transformational phenomena in the field of reading, should be minimized, which in its turn must be taken into account in the training of teaching staff.

At present, the bulk of research on reading-related problems is being conducted by librarians, which is surely not accidental, as the study of the reader is a significant part of their professional activity. Traditionally, emphasis is placed on pre-school and elementary school children (French, 2007; Wolsey, Lapp & Dow, 2010). In the researchers' field of view, family reading is a systematic, voluntary and purposeful joint cognitive-communicative and emotional and aesthetic activity of family members, who are at different stages of socialization, where the works of literature are transformed and used to meet and develop the diverse family needs (Barzillai, Thomson & Mangan, 2017). It is at this level that the reading skills contributing to the successful sociologization of the individual (Hadaway, 2009) are laid, which indicate the level of the reader literacy development. The situation in the field of reading is complicated by the fact that, in the modern society as a whole, mechanisms for the transfer of social experience, both in the family and in society as a whole, are reflected in the changes that are reflected in the loss of reading skills (Yang, 2017). Family reading as a form of leisure is transformed, as evidenced by studies conducted in various countries (Melentieva, 2011; Ehmig & Reuter, 2018).

Pragmatic-oriented young people rate reading as unpromising and uncompromising competencies in the intellectual labor market (Broeder & Stokmans, 2013). The highly skilled professionals' training for the school should be ahead of it and proceed from the assumption that the level and quality of reading are criteria for assessing the level and quality of education (Odom, 2013).

In general, there are some common trends in reading support for the younger generation that have emerged in different countries in the last decade, in particular (Morgan, 2015).

- raising the literacy level among the population through improving the education of schoolchildren and changing the role of teachers;
- development of reading motivation and reading encouragement for children and adolescents, youth;
- work with a family at early childhood. Increasing the reader's literacy of parents. Creating an atmosphere of reading support in the family;
- intensifying work with boys who do not like to read.

The main objective of training pedagogical personnel in modern conditions is the formation of professional competence, which is inconceivable without professional reading skills as a means of obtaining and storing information as a means of personal growth. It is obvious that the stage of formation of professional reading skills must precede the stage, the time frame of which may include preschool age, school and student years.

In our opinion, the special attention of the researchers should be directed towards the student readership, since this social group is called to play a key role in the future in solving the problems of the development of a society as a whole (Kamalova, & Koletvinova, 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of our study was to study the student youth's opinion on the problem of family reading and to develop recommendations to prevent the decline in reading interest. The research objectives were as follows:

- to examine the reading preferences of youth;
- to identify the motives of reading;
- to define students' preferences for leisure;
- to examine the role of family reading in literacy skills formation and development.

## METHODS

### *Participants and Sampling Technique*

A representative survey of studentship in the Internet was conducted within 2 months using the Google Forms web application to provide reliable information on students' readings and their readership preferences. 284 young people aged 16 to 23, living in different regions of Russia, participated in the survey. The number of respondents aged 16-17 was 124 (43.7%), 18-19 years old - 108 (38%), 20-21 years old - 30 (10.6%), 22-23 years old - 22 people (7.7%). According to the gender structure, the respondents distributed as follows: 49 men (17.3%) and 235 women 82.7%).

### *Data Collection Tools*

The number of the respondents allows us to speak about the representativeness of the survey, since the group of subjects is homogeneous. In addition to questions, students were asked to give recommendations for children and family reading. The collection of questionnaires was carried out within the period beginning with January until February 2018. The results of the survey were generalized automatically using the Google Forms Web application tools. The program produced both tabular data and diagrams.

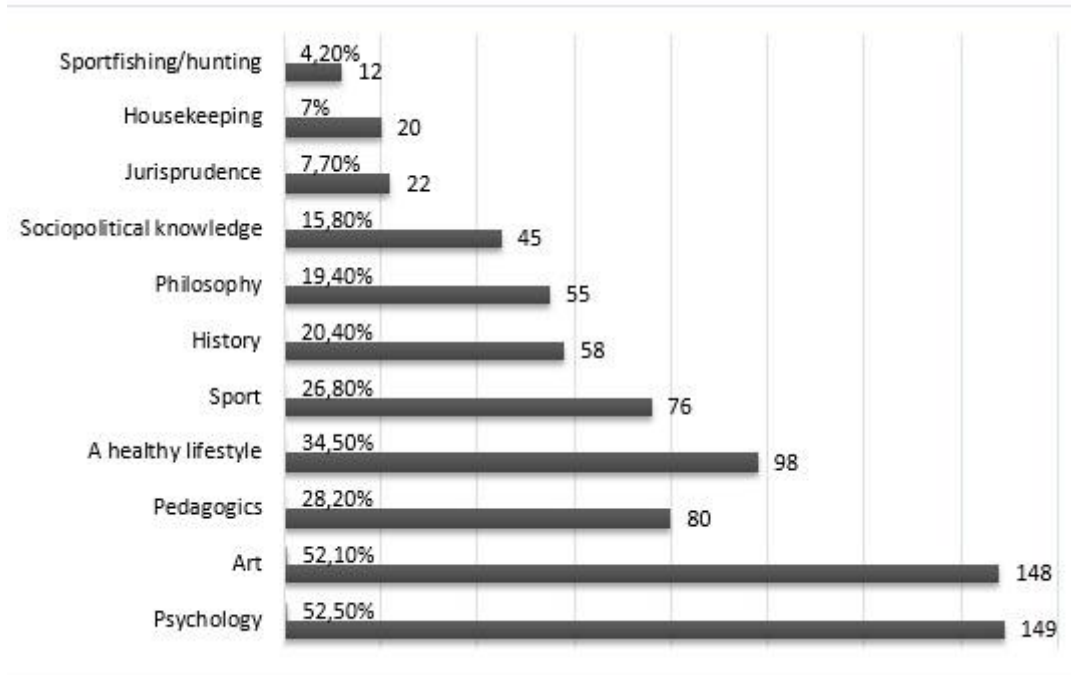
Students were asked 9 questions (see Table 1), to which all respondents were given answers. The questions were both closed and open. Some questions could obtain several answers.

**Table 1.** *Content of the questionnaire*

№	Questions
1	What kind of literature do you prefer to read?
2	What are your motives for reading?
3	How often do you read?
4	What do you like to read more?
5	What are your preferences for leisure?
6	How do you learn about literary novelties?
7	What kind of fiction do you read more?
8	Who reads in your family?
9	Is it important today to preserve the traditions of family reading in the children education?

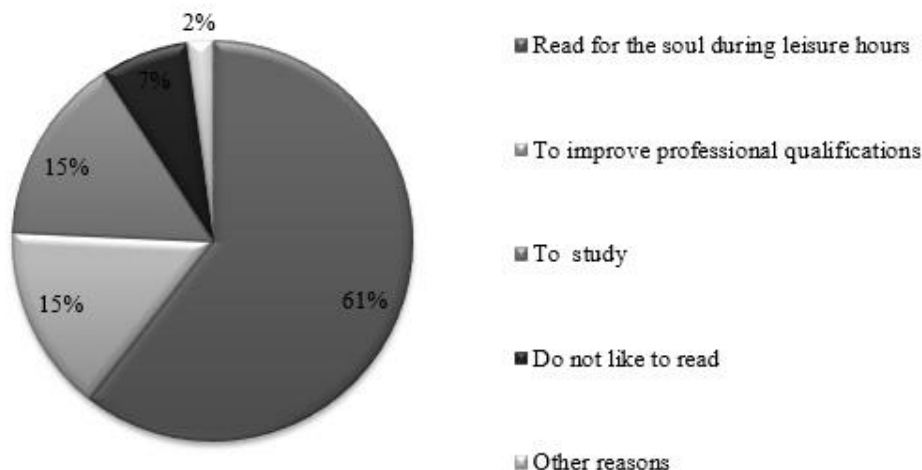
## RESULTS

The following answers were given to the question "What kind of literature do you prefer to read?": The artistic - 190 (66, 9%), special, that is, 53 people (18.7%) connected with the professional activity of the respondent, 41 people were unable to choose the answer (14.4%). The following most popular answers were received on the proposal to indicate the interesting area of knowledge (they could indicate up to three variants) (Figure 1).



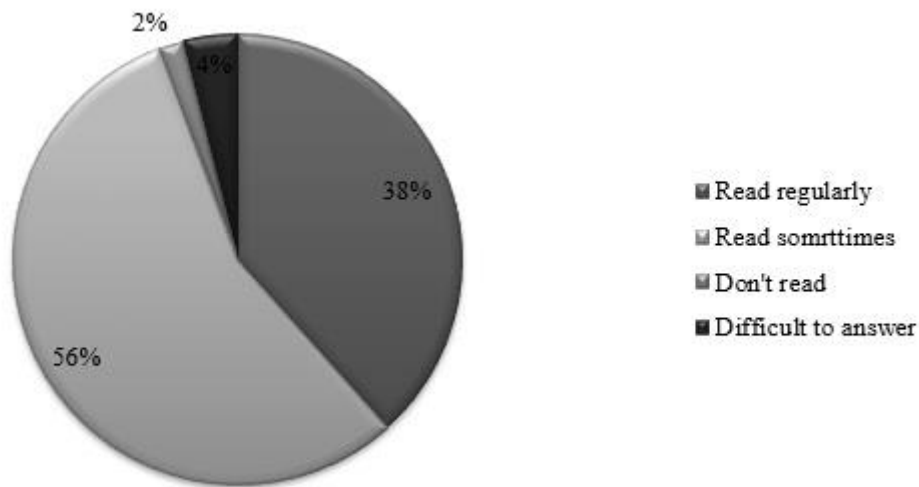
**FIGURE 1.** Respondents' interesting area of knowledge

The following answers were received to the question "What are your motives for reading?" (Figure 2).



**FIGURE 2.** Reading motives

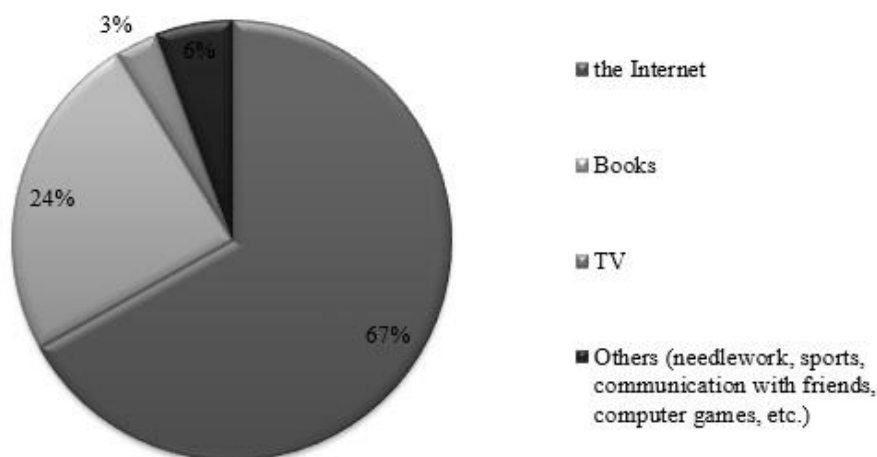
We rated such an indicator as the regularity of reading with the question "How often do you read?". The following results were obtained (Figure 3).



**FIGURE 3.** *Regularity of respondents' reading*

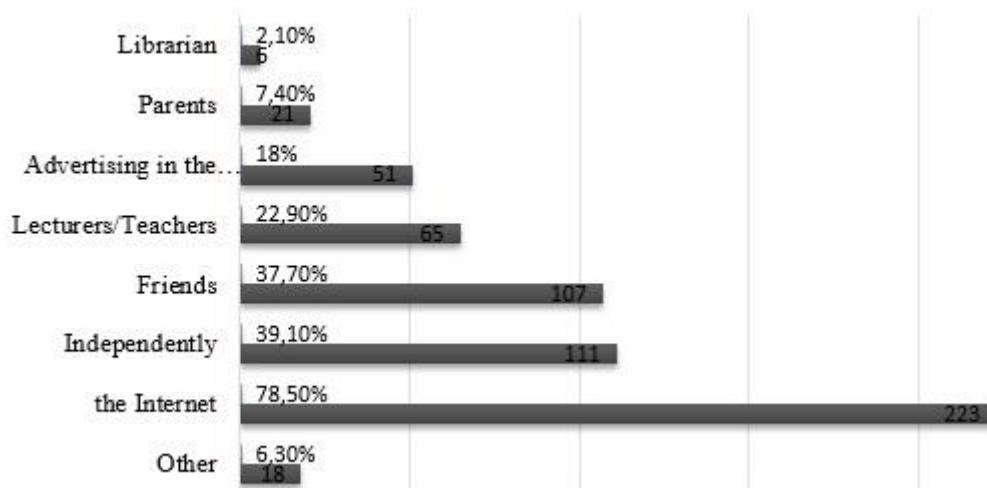
It can be assumed that those respondents who had difficulty answering this question belong to the group of "non-readers".

To the question "What do you like to read more?" We received the following answers: books - 214 (75,4%), periodicals (newspapers, magazines) - 29 (10,2%), popular science literature - 23 (8,1%), it was difficult to answer 18 people (6.3%). The following question, which reveals the preferred format of the book for reading, received the following answers: paper-based - 239 (84.2%), electronic - 38 (13.4%), audio - 7 (2.5%). The answers to the question "What are your preferences for leisure?" were distributed as follows (Figure 4).



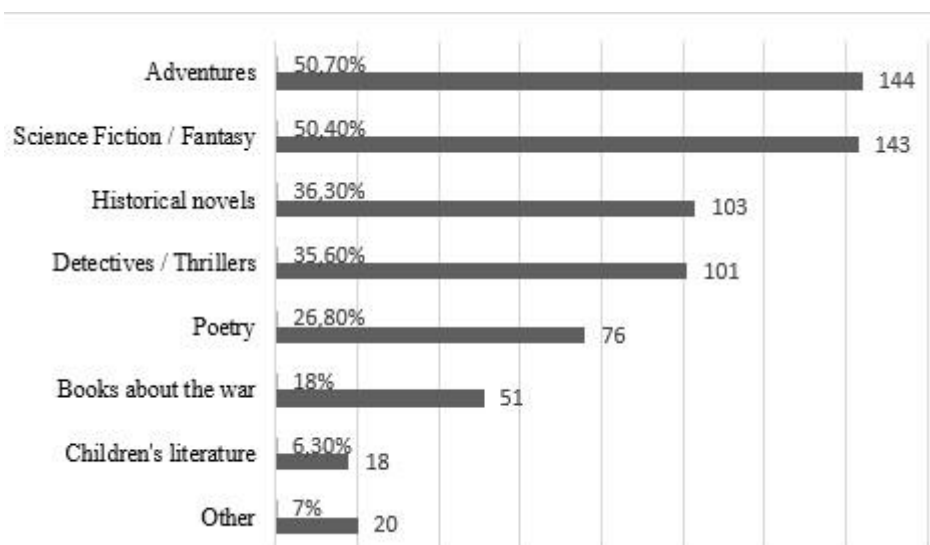
**FIGURE 4.** *Preferred leisure*

The Internet is, according to our respondents, the main source of information on the emergence of new books. The following answers were received to the question "How do you learn about literary novelties?" (Up to three variants could be indicated) (Figure 5).



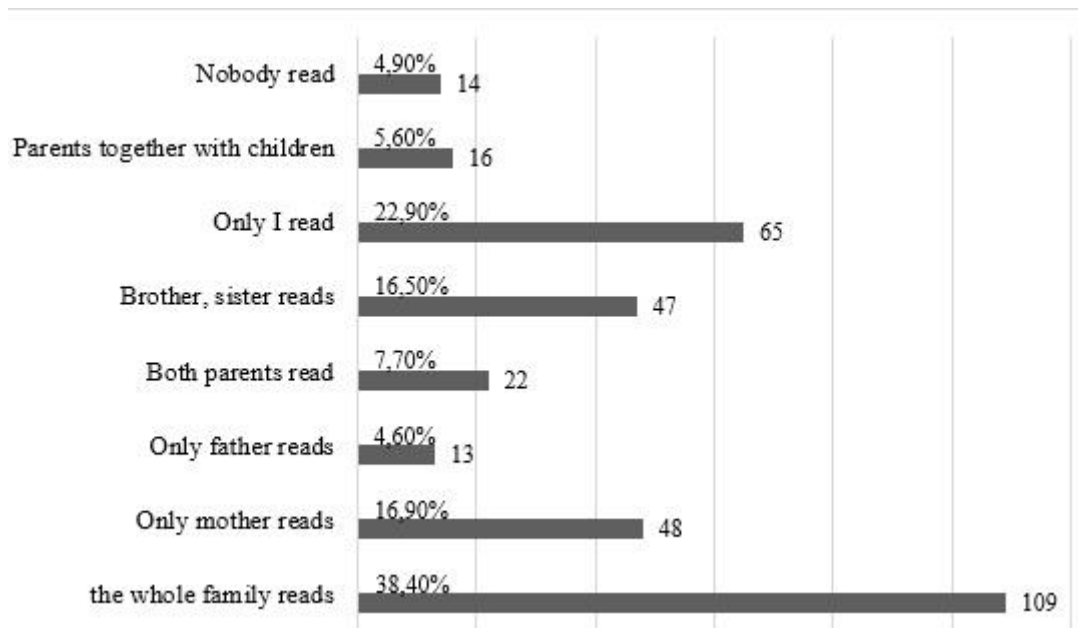
**FIGURE 5.** *The main source of information about literary novelties*

Answers to the question "What kind of fiction do you read more?", on which one could give no more than three options, allowed to determine the most popular among young people literary genres (Figure 6).



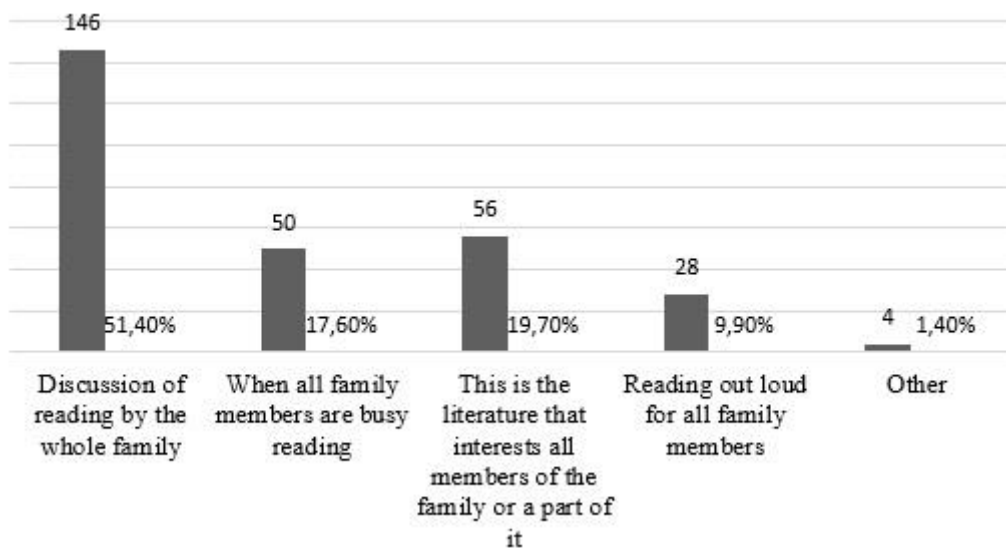
**FIGURE 6.** *Literary genres popular among student youth*

The following answers were received to the question "Who reads in your family?" (Figure 7).



**FIGURE 7.** *Reading family members*

Respondents were asked to select the definition of family reading from the proposed list. The answers were distributed as follows (Figure 8).



**FIGURE 8.** *"Family reading" in the understanding of youth*

218 people (76.8%) responded positively to the question "Is it important today to preserve the traditions of family reading in the children education?", 40 (14.1%) responded negatively, 26 (9.1%) gave no answers.

The importance of family reading traditions in the person's education is confirmed by 235 respondents (82.7%), 27 people (9.5%) deny, 22 people (7.8%) have difficulty answering.

Our survey made it possible to reveal that the problem of reading in the student environment is relevant to Russia. The survey data showed that the vast majority of young people prefer to spend their free time on the Internet (66.9%), and read books - only a quarter of the respondents (24, 3%). It is alarming that only 38.4% of respondents read regularly, the rest read from case to case, or not read at all.

It is interesting to note that, despite the active process of digitizing various aspects of social life, a paper-based book remains the most preferable format for young people (84.2% of respondents). According to experts, a paper book in comparison with electronic ones has a

number of advantages that allow it to remain the most preferable: the aesthetic enjoyment of the book itself as a work of art, the possibility of deeper penetration into the essence of the text being read, less fatigue from the reading process, better memorization of information (Mangen & Weel, 2016). According to research findings (Mangen, Walgermo & Bronnick, 2013), the mechanism of text memorizing is associated with the creation of a "mental card of the work." To reproduce, recall the necessary information, the brain needs "tips". The tactile sensations from contact with the book, the texture of the page, the cover, and the layout serve as tokens.

Based on the analysis of our respondents' literary preferences, it follows that the first places occupy such genres as adventures (50.7% of respondents) and science fiction / fantasy (50.4%). They are slightly inferior to historical novels (36.3% of respondents) and detectives / thrillers (35.6%). These genres are most likely related to "entertaining" literature, which agrees with the leading motive for reading by our respondents - "I read for the soul at leisure" (60.6%). Other motives for reading were also the following: 15,5% for professional development, 14,8% for study aid.

82.7% of respondents admit the importance of family reading in the upbringing of children, which is understood by more than half of the respondents as "the discussion of the reading by the whole family". Unfortunately, 9.5% of the respondents do not consider the important tradition of family reading, although many studies have proven that it is a significant factor in the rapprochement of different generations, the spiritual development and socialization of the child (Smith, 2012).

In addition, research results show that reading in childhood and adolescence increases academic performance, social activity and personal development (Howard, 2011).

Modern Russian students recommend for domestic reading both domestic and foreign literature. 49 people (17.3% of the total number of respondents) are convinced that Russian literature will be more interesting for family reading, of which 23 people (8.1%) recommend classical works of the nineteenth century (L.N. Tolstoy, "War and Peace"(16 respondents), "Anna Karenina" (3 respondents), I.S. Turgenev, "Fathers and Sons "(4 respondents), M.A. Bulgakov, "Master and Margarita" (4 respondents), and 67 people (23.6%) offer to read foreign works: A. Exupery "The Little Prince" (14 respondents), J. Rowling "Harry Potter" (8 respondents), D. Defoe "Life and Amazing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe »(3 respondents). 132 persons (46.5% of the respondents) did not want to give advice, or they did not want to give recommendations, which speaks either of the lack of books that are significant in their lives, or of the difficulty in choosing specific works from the readings.

For children's reading 29.9% of all respondents recommend foreign literature. Often, among the replies are books such as A. Exupery "Little Prince" - 30 people, D. Rowling "Harry Potter" - 12 people, L. Carroll "Alice in Wonderland" - 6 people, D. Defoe, "Robinson Crusoe " - 4 people. Books of Russian authors recommend 16.2% of the total number of respondents. Most often books such as L.N. Tolstoy "War and Peace" - 13 people, V.Yu. Dragoonskij "Deniskini Stories" - 4 people, I.S. Turgenev "Mumu" - 4 people, A.M. Volkov "The Wizard of the Emerald City" - 3 people. In our opinion, those works of children's literature that have been screened are of a great popularity. Therefore, the qualitative adaptation of the work is an effective way to raise interest in the book. 128 respondents did not give recommendations for children reading.

## DISCUSSION

In many countries, reading problems are solved at the state level, institutions are created to support and develop reading. A positive example could be called the Stiftung Lesen, which was created in Germany, to coordinate work with young people in order to overcome the total reading-related crisis. The foundations for improving the reading status of British citizens are Public libraries. Designed by them in 2000 Thousands of participants gathered large-scale programs called Call of Summer Reading, Book Start, Joint Reading in the Family, and others addressed to children and parents (İnce & Gözütok, 2018; Library Services, 2011). In addition, the Reading Agency has a website in the UK offering various approaches and resources to support children's reading, targeted both for target audiences and for professionals: educators



and librarians. In 2001, a special law on the support of children's reading activity was adopted in Japan; A large-scale national policy to support libraries is being implemented (Chudinova, 2011). Much attention is paid to the formation of reading culture today in African countries (Ruterana, 2012; Oyemike, 2012).

In Russia, in addition to numerous projects implemented at various levels, the National Program for Support and Development of Reading (2006), initiated by the Interregional Center for Library Cooperation, was developed and adopted. According to researchers, student years are "another critical point of development of reader literacy," characterized by a division into "strong" and "weak readers", obvious gender differences, imitating the formation of a circle of reading, etc. (Belina, 2014).

Interest in reading in some countries is being sought through video games and comic books whose heroes are literary characters (Krashen, 2005). Especially it is effective for reading in foreign languages (Horowitz, 2011).

Booktrailers are popular, which are not only promotional videos, but also become a means of popularizing reading in children, adolescents and youth (Han, Choi & Oh, 2016).

There is an opinion confirmed by studies that if the children of preschool and early school age instill the habit of reading for pleasure, one can achieve a culture of literacy (Wolsey, Lapp & Fisher, 2010) through the expansion of the vocabulary, improving memory and speech (Cho & Krashen, 2016; Cho, 2017). Reading for pleasure (or for the soul) also has therapeutic benefits; it allows a stressed person to get out of this state, switch to another emotional state (Harrison, 2017). This is the motive behind the answers of our respondents in the first place (about 61%).

Using the Open Syllabus Explorer high school text aggregator, we got the idea what students from five countries are studying at universities: the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. ([https://mel.fm/issledovaniye/4530812-students\\_book](https://mel.fm/issledovaniye/4530812-students_book)). According to the site, U. Stranck (Element of Style) occupies the first place in inclusion in the program, Plato (State) on the second, and Karl Marx (Manifesto of the Communist Party) on the third. Artistic texts occupy the ninth and tenth position of the list: Sophocles ("King Oedipus"), W. Shakespeare ("Hamlet"). The Russian authors in the list occupy the following places: 334 position - V. Nabokov ("Lolita"); 604 - A.P. Chekhov, "Cherry garden"; 678 - L.N. Tolstoy, "Anna Karenina"; 880 - I.S. Turgenev "Fathers and Sons"; 886 - L.N. Tolstoy "War and Peace". Nabokov becomes the favorite reader's interest; it is not by chance: the writer is considered not only Russian but also an American prose writer; a large number of his works is written in English. Foreign students, based on the survey, are interested in the work of classical Russian writers of the nineteenth century: I.S. Turgenev, A.P. Chekhov, and L.N. Tolstoy and here their preferences coincided with the interests of Russian students.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research confirmed our assumption about the importance of studying the problem of family reading. 82.7% of respondents acknowledge the importance of family reading and preservation of its traditions in the upbringing of children, which is understood by more than half of the respondents (51.40%) as a "discussion of the reading by the whole family".

Unfortunately, about one in ten does not consider this problem significant. Only about half of the respondents were able to give concrete recommendations for literary works for joint reading by all members of the family. On the one hand, this suggests that universities need systematic educational work among students to increase motivation for reading in general, and to family reading in particular. On the other hand, this problem concerns the entire society as well.

Therefore, it is necessary to implement program activities aimed at increasing the role of family reading among the population of all countries in order to preserve and develop the traditions of family reading with the involvement of libraries, museums, and various public organizations.

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