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DEVELOPMENT OF READING CULTURE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN: RESULTS OF THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH[1]

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Abstract

The article examines theoretical and practical aspects of the issue of developing school children's reading culture. The definition of the concept of "reading culture" is generalized, and the factors influencing formation of this type of culture are outlined. Reading is considered to be a creative act, a process of interpersonal communication, a form of cultural participation, acquisition of knowledge, a tool of intellectual and spiritual development of the individual. The structure of reading culture is substantiated, the components of which are: reading competence, literacy, reading interests, reading independence and activity. It has been proved that reading literacy indicates understanding, using, evaluating, comprehending written texts and showing interest in them in order to achieve certain goals, expand knowledge, develop reading potential, readiness for active participation in social life is the core of students' reading culture. Based on the results of the international assessment of the quality of education PISA-2018, the levels of reading literacy of school children from different countries are compared. Importance of online reading and reading a variety of texts is emphasized. The criteria of reading culture are offered and the level of development of this phenomenon in school children is monitored. It was discovered that the majority of the surveyed secondary school students (74.11%) read freely and effortlessly, however, only 22.35% can analyze the work and express critical views on what was read. Search for necessary information becomes motivation to reading for 30.56% of students, whereas 35, 3% of respondents enjoy reading, and 12.9% do it under coercion. Individual motivational aspects of reading activity are determined; the best practices of promoting children's reading in different countries of the world are analyzed.

Keywords

Reading culture – Pedagogical Activity – Reading Literacy – Literary Projects – Interactive Reading

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Introduction

Reading culture of the individual is a strategically significant factor of spiritual culture, a tool of intellectual development and social activity of a person and a nation in general. Increasing reading culture in schools can have a positive impact on students' learning outcomes[2]. The issue of development of reading culture, inspiring reading activity, searching for effective methods and ways of motivation of school children to read is a subject of scientific and applied research in many world countries. The study of reading as a process of personal activity in the context of literacy development and investigation of various cultural and educational practices is covered by the authors of the edition "Handbook of Reading Research"[3]. The analysis of the works by David Treuer, Stephen D. Krashen, Nancy J. Keane, Merga Margaret Kristin, Mason Shannon, S. Nyam, Frank Serafini, Meena Singhal, Maja Wojciechowska, Olena Isayeva, Tetiana Kachak makes it possible to formulate theoretical foundation of this article. The conducted empirical study of children's reading and data of determining the level of students' reading literacy in the International Student Assessment Program PISA enables summarizing practical experience and presenting the results of monitoring students' reading culture with the prospect of generating ideas for a new system of reader formation as well as forms, techniques, and methods of reading culture development.

The purpose of the article is to analyze theoretical aspects of the issue of development of reading culture of children and youth, based on world experience, as well as the results of own empirical research, to present the current status of students' reading activity.

Methodology of Research

In this regard, it was necessary to use the *method of theoretical and comparative analysis* for a comprehensive evaluation of literary, psychological, pedagogical, cultural and sociological studies; clarifying the essence of key research concepts and determinating the status of reading culture of children and youth in different countries. *The empirical methods* (surveys, questionnaires) were used to identify the level of development of students' reading culture while the *methods of mathematical statistics* facilitated quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results of the empirical research.

Results

The theory of the reading culture of the individual

Reading culture as a concept arises at the intersection of ideas about reading and culture. We consider reading as "the interaction of the subject with a special form of sign-symbolic systems, as a kind of high-rank semiotic function, a particular way of linguistic communication between people, which is carried out through manuscripts, printed books and other text carriers; a specific type of communication activity, which is a means of solving problems beyond reading, within the life activity of the individual"[4].

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[2] M. K. Merga and S. Mason, "Building a school reading culture: Teacher librarians' perceptions of enabling and constraining factors", Australian Journal of Education, Vol: 63 num 2 (2019), 14. https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944119844544.
[3] Handbook of Reading Research. Editor P. David Pearson, Section Editor Barr, Michael L. Kamil, Peter B. Mosenthal, Rebecca Barr (Routledge, 2016). https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944119844544.
[4] T. Kachak, The literature for childrens and youth in context of the contemporary literary education: a collection of articles (Ivano-Frankivsk: Tipovit, 2013), 13.

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This is a complex cognitive process of decoding characters to output a meaning. Singhal defines reading as a meaning making process including an interaction between the reader and the text[5]. L. Siencyn also interprets reading as a creative act [6]. "Reading is a process of interpersonal communication allowing contact between individuals and collectivities, regardless of the media content and the type of data. Reading is also a form of cultural participation, knowledge acquiring, source of inspiration and tool of building the intellectual capital. Reading shapes values, attitudes, ethical and emotional enrichment"[7]. Reading is the basis of reading culture of the individual while, on the other hand, reading culture is an integral part of general culture. At the same time, if to take understanding of culture as a basis, as a set of material and spiritual values, as "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time"[8], to outline it as education, a specific way of organizing the development of human life, presented in the products of material and spiritual labor, in the system of social norms and attitudes, in spiritual values, in the totality of human relations to nature, among themselves and to themselves, then the reading culture is its component, which expresses one of the aspects of human existence and activity. In this regard it is reflected in the structuring of the holistic system of the culture of the individual. Considering the axiological, activity and personal approaches to defining the concept of culture, as well as its functions (production and delivery of new knowledge, values, meanings; communicative, socialization, self-identification, etc.), the components of the culture of the individual are: spiritual and moral values; knowledge, skills, abilities, activities; personal qualities, and attitude of a man to nature, itself, and others.

S. Nyam considers reading culture as the use of reading as a regular activity, and thus the cultivation of an attitude and the possession of skills that make reading a pleasurable, regular and constant activity[9]. Summarizing different view points, we state that the reading culture is a set of knowledge, skills and abilities, which involves conscious choice of books, systematic reading in order to fully and deeply perceive and assimilate, comprehend and critically evaluate a literary work. The essence of the development of the reading culture of the individual is not to encourage the child to read only for the sake of learning, but to make it the inner need, value, reading for the sake of reading.

The concept of "reading culture" lies in the same semantic field with the concepts of "reading competence", "reading literacy", "reading activity", "reading interests", and "reading independence". Besides, there are tight links and hierarchical relationships between them. This is well illustrated by the structure of reading culture. It is more preferable to discuss its components as a set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as the kind and nature of activity, in the context of distinguishing readers by age. A certain level of formation of reading culture of primary and secondary school students, for example, is evidenced by:

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[5] M. A. Singhal, Comparison of L1 and L2: Reading Cultural Differences and Schemata. 1998, http://iteslj.org/Articles/Singhal-ReadingL1L2.html (10-10-2020).
[6] Reading as a creative act, 2015, https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2015/09/reading-as-a-creative-act/ (10-10-2020).
[7] M. Wojciechowska, "The readership indicators in Poland and programs promoting the reading", Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries (QQML), Vol: 5 (2016): 39.
[8] "Meaning of "culture", Cambridge English Dictionary, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture (10-10-2020).
[9] S. S. Nyam, "The School Library and Promotion of Reading Culture", Delta Library Journal. Vol: 9 num 1-2 (2015): 4-45.

- reading skills / abilities, and age-appropriate reading range, i.e. *reading competence*;
- *reading activity*, which defines the reading process; applying different skills and strategies for finding and understanding information before, during and after reading;
- "understanding, use, evaluation, comprehension of written texts and expressing interest in them in order to achieve certain goals, expand personal knowledge and develop reading potential, willingness to actively participate in society" - *reading literacy*;[10]
- *reading preferences* - reading interest;
- the ability to independently choose and read books - *reading independence*;
- *reading activity*, which is manifested in a steady and constant need for reading; systematic reading, when reading books becomes a habit of daily activities throughout life. After all, the essence of reading culture is to encourage students to read as part of daily life and to establish reading of books as a habit that would always be needed and enjoyed throughout one's life[11].

Above and beyond, a variable component of reading culture is the ability and need to communicate with other readers, to present one's own reading experience, to form and implement creative ideas based on what is read (*reading creativity*). Thus, these aspects generate the structure of the students' reading culture, the model of which is represented graphically (Fig. 1).

The core of reading culture is reading literacy, which is formed at a school age. However, it is impossible to form reading literacy without reading skills and abilities being formed, i.e. reading competence, a sufficient number of books read at a certain stage, and constant reading activity. Within International Education Quality Survey, PISA 2018 (launched almost 20 years ago by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and one of the world's most authoritative sources of information on secondary education) the major focus was directed to literacy.
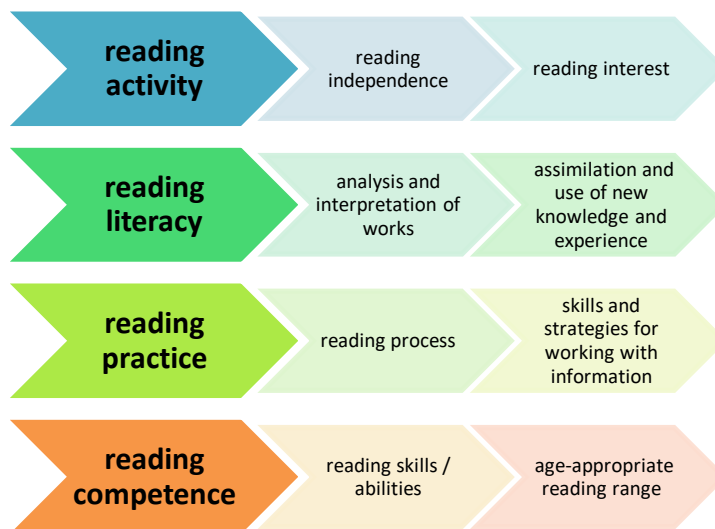
Figure 1
Reading culture of the individual

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[10] PISA: reading literacy: edited by T. S. Vakulenko, S. V. Lomakovych, V. M. Tereshchenko (Kyiv: UCEQA, 2017), 5.
[11] U. V. Ailakhu and V. E. Unegbu, "Librarians' promotion of reading culture and student's responsiveness in selected secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria", Ebonyi Journal of Library and Information Science, Vol: 4 num (2017): 30-42.

School literary education at the initial (primary) stage focuses on the formation of reading competence, and at further on reading literacy of students. In terms of reading activities and the impact of the read work on students, it is built taking into account three aspects: educational and semantic, practical, value-oriented. The factors that contribute to the formation of students' reading culture are motivation and interest of children in reading; the level of intelligence, communicative competence and cognitive activity of the individual; ability to think analytically, critically and creatively and use different interpretive strategies to decode the text, its emotional "living" (empathy); orientation in the circle of children's reading. The high frequency of reading, reading for pleasure, online reading of any materials has a positive effect on the formation of students' reading culture.

Criteria and determination of the level of reading culture of school children

Analysis of national reports of different countries based on the results of the international assessment of the quality of education PISA-2018 shows the perspective of the level of reading literacy of 15-year-old school children from around the world. Over the past two decades, PISA has become the world's premier yardstick for comparing quality, equity and efficiency in learning outcomes across countries, and an influential force for education reform[12]. The monitoring found out what exactly the respondents read, if they do it for pleasure or other needs, how much time they spend on reading and whether they discuss what they read; what they use for reading paper texts or electronic media. Besides mentioned, the level of readers' incompetence was determined as well, ie formation of reading skills, reading competence; reading activity in general and online reading using digital media. Although PISA aims to assess the ability of 15-year-olds to read, understand and interpret various texts they deal with in their daily lives, the indicators and indices used to assess reading literacy are in fact are the criteria by which the level of formation of reading culture of students is determined. The reading framework document for PISA-2018 is based on the purposeful, critical and intertextual nature of reading literacy[13].

As a result of the assessment, students demonstrated a certain level of literacy:

- basic level 1 of literacy formation (1a, 1b, 1c – the minimum level of academic achievement expected at the end of the first stage of secondary education; minimum subject awareness and ability to think independently; lower score limit is 335 – 1a, 226 – 1b, 189 – 1c);
- basic level of reading literacy, level 2, "at which students cannot only read simple and familiar texts and understand them in a straightforward manner, but also demonstrate (even in the absence of clear instructions) a certain ability to connect several pieces of information, make conclusions that go beyond the information clearly stated in the text, and link the information from the text with own experience"[14], lower score limit is 407;

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[12]PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations, https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf (10-10-2020).
[13] M. T. McCrudden and G. Schraw, "Relevance and goal-focusing in text processing", EducationalPsychology Review, Vol: 19 num 2 (2007): 113-139.
[14] National report on the results of the international research on the quality of education PISA-2018: edited by M. Mazorchuk (main author), T. Vakulenko, V. Tereshchenko, G. Bichko, K. Shumova, S. Rakov, V. Peas and others: Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment. (Kyiv: UCEQA, 2019), 428.

- level 3 of reading literacy demonstrates that students are able to analyze texts, compare and contrast the author's views on the problem, independently deduce the meaning, if the subject of the text is known; lower score limit is 480;

- levels 4, 5, 6 of reading literacy are evidenced in students when they are able to understand long integral or multiple tests, interpret, compare, contrast, reflect on authorial strategies and draw their own conclusions of varying complexity using structured plans (on 6 levels), make hypotheses and evaluate what is read; lower score limit is 553 for level 4, 626 for level 5, and 698 for level 6 respectively.

As learned from the final reports, "over ten million students represented by PISA in 2018 were not able to complete even the most basic reading tasks – and these were 15-year-olds living in the 79 high- and middle-income countries that participated in the test"[15]. Comparing the results of reading literacy monitoring of school children in different countries, it was noted that, for example, the results of Ukrainian students were lower than the average in the countries of OECD. The difference in the students' performance in reading is 23 points, which is close to the equivalent of an academic year of study, as according to the OECD (30 points corresponds to one year of study in a general secondary education institution). If considering Ukraine's reading indicators, they are lower than in such reference countries as Estonia, Poland, Belarus, however, higher than in Georgia or Moldova. According to PISA, only 74.1% of Ukrainian 15-year-olds have overcome the barrier to the basic level of reading literacy, but 46.4% of 15-year-olds in Ukraine reach level 3 and higher in mastering literacy. Unfortunately, it should be noted that 9.2% of 15-year-old students reached level 1 of reading on the PISA scale. The level of formation of reading literacy in students of individual countries is presented in Table 1.

Country	Standard deviation	Average score	Level
Hong Kong (China)	99	524	Level 4
Estonia	93	523	Level 5
Canada	100	520	
Finland	100	520	
Poland	97	512	
Sweden	108	506	
United States	108	505	
United Kingdom	100	504	
Japan	97	504	
Australia	109	503	
Germany	106	498	
France	101	493	
Latvia	90	479	Level 2
Italy	97	476	
Belarus	89	474	
Ukraine	93	466	
Turkey	88	466	
Greece	97	457	
Chile	92	452	
Romania	98	428	
Brazil	100	413	
Columbia	89	412	

[15] PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf, (10-11-2020): 5

Albania	80	405	
Argentina	98	402	
Peru	92	401	Level 1
Thailand	79	393	

Table 1
The level of reading literacy of students[16]

In this regard, it is worth mentioning that most countries where students read regularly and often for their own enjoyment have better reading results than other countries. Ukrainian teenagers read more fiction, while teenagers from the United States, Germany, and China prefer periodicals or comics. Many respondents admitted that they read little text with hyperlinks, diagrams, charts, maps or tables. Instead, students in many countries stated that they often communicate online, search for information on the Internet, read news online, and use online resources to find practical information. As the results of previous PISA cycles prove, such students are more skilled readers than others. Besides, most Ukrainian students reported that they read equally often in paper and digital forms, and even some read more often in digital than in paper format. Statistics of strong economically countries (USA, Finland, Canada, Sweden, Great Britain) is somewhat different. With the conducted experimental study, we aimed at investigating the level of reading culture of students in Ukraine. The survey held in April-May 2020, covered 85 students who were offered an authors' questionnaire. According to the survey it was found out that the majority (74.11%) were fluent in reading and comprehension, however, only 22.35% could evaluate the text and make critical remarks; not many could apply the experience and conclusions from reading books in own life; only 30.59% of students showed high reading activity, while 56.82% – sufficient, and 12.59% – low.

The positive fact is that 61.17% of the surveyed students enjoyed reading, but 60% would choose listening to the text instead of reading it if they were given a choice (Fig 2).
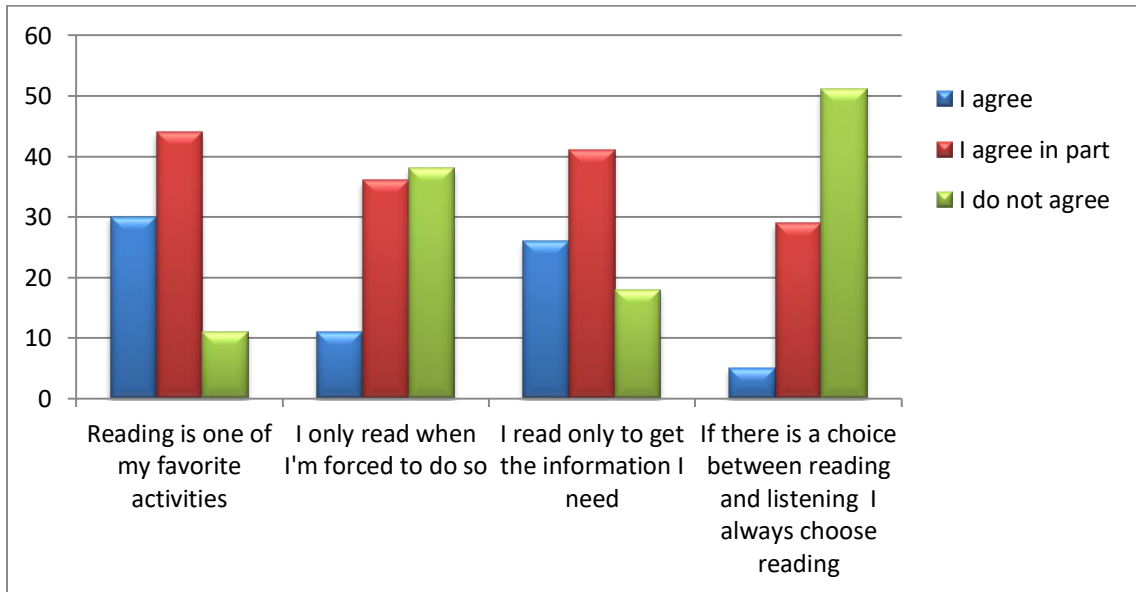
Figure 2
Reading motivation of modern students

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[16] PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf (10-10-2020): 6.

It should be mentioned that 50.59% of students surveyed practiced online reading, 11.76% of the respondents had no motivation to read at all, and 12.94% of students did not like to read. 48.2% of respondents proved their desire to discuss books with others, share impressions, 45.9% – sometimes practiced it and 5.9% – never discussed the content of what they have read. At the same time 57.6% of students declared about already formed reading interests and ability to choose books for personal reading; 37.6% – partially proved such readiness, while 4.8% – had no favorite topics and genres in literature.

The majority of respondents (61.2%) admit that they enjoy reading, 35.3% are partially satisfied when reading an interesting book, and 3.6% do not receive positive emotions while reading. Figure 2 shows the reading motives guiding students. As it turned out, the priority motives are pleasure of reading and definition of reading as favorite, as indicated by 35.29% of respondents. In addition, 30.59% of learners read for information, 12.94% do it entirely and 42.35% partly under coercion.

From the research, 70.59% of middle school respondents choose to read mostly fiction, 27.06% prefer popular science books, and 31.76% – reference (Fig. 3).
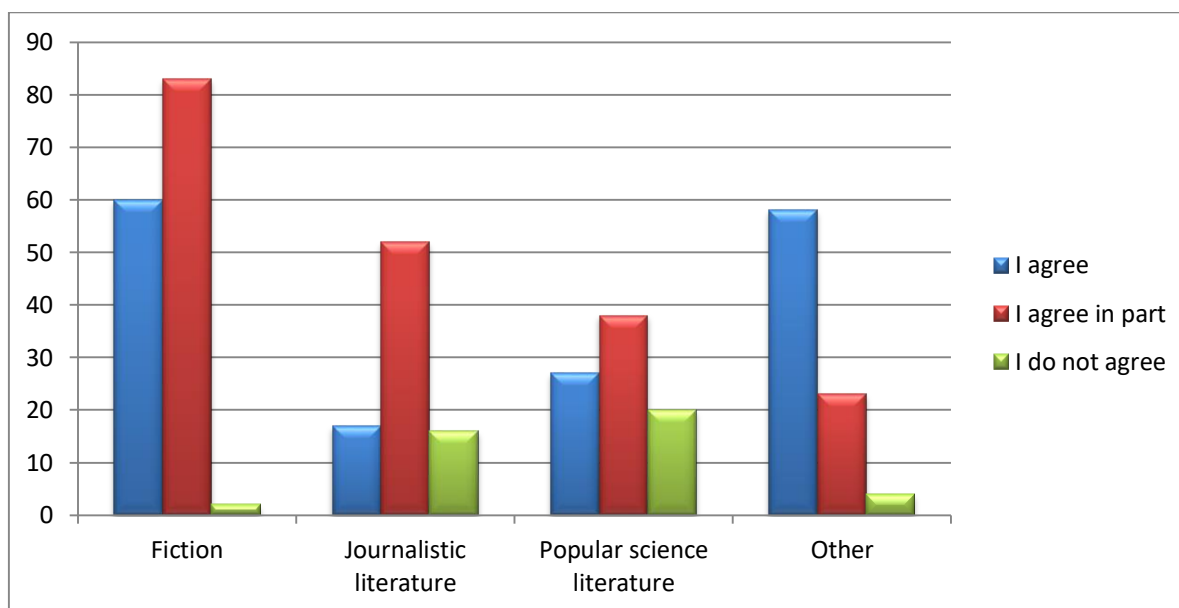
Figure 3
Reading circle of modern school children

The issue under investigation also provides some significant facts, for instance, to the questionnaire "Do you practice reading online?" 31.8% of respondents answered positively. The majority of respondents (50.6%) indicated that they sometimes read online resources, and 17.6% said that they did not support online reading. As learned, modern students spend a lot of time in a networked environment, because they are interested in e-books, online resources to satisfy their reading interests.

Reading culture appears to be much higher among students who study in those schools where educators pay attention to reading, hold events aimed at promoting children's books systematically, popularizing reading activities. Thus, most of the surveyed students showed a sufficient level of formation of reading culture.

Advanced experience in the development of students' reading culture

It is remarkable that today the relevance of the studied issue is undoubted. Many countries around the world have gained interesting experience in promoting the book by teachers, librarians and reading promoters. Analysis of the practices of school libraries in Australia, Japan, Poland, Ukraine, China, USA, Germany, Sweden shows that there are many methods, forms and tools for the development of children's reading. Summarizing the various data, we can derive a universal system of formation of the reader, based on the following postulates: active involvement of children in reading at all stages of their development; motivation to reading; correct selection of books for reading taking into account the age and needs of the child and constant reading activities; regular work on the promotion of children's reading in order to increase the level of reading activity and the development of readers' interests.

The main stages of the reader formation system are related to age and psycho-physiological features, as well as to the subjects of children's reading organization and the environment the child is currantly in: stage 1 – family reading; stage 2 – literary education (preschools and schools); promotion of reading by libraries, publishing houses, public organizations, etc.; stage 3 – cultural environment, self-education.

The undeniable and promising way to promote reading at the first stage is family reading, where parents set an example and read their children from birth until the child begins to read independently and can be included in the active children's reading audience. "Modern parents must strive to ensure that high-quality children's book has to take a special place in each house."[17] "Only the creation of reading environment in the family can promote the education in preschool children love to books and reading".

The main difference between family reading and other types of reading (for example, the school one) is that parents, using the book, begin to really engage in mental, speech and spiritual development of their child, the formation of its personality. In this rgard, the project "All Poland reads to children" is worth mentioning. Its key goal is the idea of daily reading to a child for 20 minutes a day since the age of six months[18]. Experts from European countries suggest involving parents in the formation of students' reading culture, reading itself and discussing, literary events and family celebrations. School literature education is associated with classroom, extracurricular, home, and library reading. The method of formation of reading culture of school children is gradual, step-by-step assimilation of knowledge, formation of abilities and skills which act as components of reading culture: reading skills; orientation in the reading circle; analytical and critical comprehension of the read text; evaluation; development of readers' interests and daily need for reading. This is the formation of students' reading literacy. Accordingly, we build a methodological model of reading culture development as an algorithm of step-by-step actions: motivation; formation of reading techniques and expansion of the reading circle; reading activities and mastering different strategies for working with texts, information in and out of class activities; development of readers' interests and independent reading activity; formation of students' ability to critically comprehend the text, to reflect; to creatively present the read books.

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[17] O. Budnyk, "Problem of the formation of reading culture of children and youth in Ukraine", Scientific Bulletin of Chełm, Vol: 2 (2017): 119-128.
[18] Fundacja ABCXXI – Cała Polska czyta dzieciom, https://calapolskaczytadzieciom.pl/o-fundacji/ (10-10-2020).

Reading is a creative process in which the reader is not a passive spectator, but interprets the written text in own way according to personal worldview, knowledge, and experience. "The reader is an active constructor of meaning, not a passive recipient of ready-made truths"[19].

When promoting reading, it is urgent to choose the right books for the child reader taking into account the functional aspect, i.e. the purpose and outcome of reading. One more very important point to be mentioned in this regard is the current transformation of the model of reading behavior and motives, which leads to the differentiation of types of reading and change of priorities. This classification is based on both the functional aspects of children's literature and the purpose the child picks up the book for and reads: reading-learning, reading-communication, reading-entertainment, reading-relaxation, reading-experience, reading-escape from reality, or reading-pleasure. The fact that people read for various reasons - for the sake of education, self-improvement, pleasure and relaxation, is strongly emphasized by Dr. Juliet C. Alex-Nmecha та Millie Nne Horsfall[20]. The formation of school reading culture is mostly the responsibility of school librarians and teachers. Programs to promote reading among school children have become a good tradition in schools in Europe and other developed countries. These are purposefully developed documents, which provide goals, strategies, a system of measures to organize the reading activities of students during a certain period of time (week, month, year). The reading promotion program can be designed for a particular grade, a certain level of education (primary, secondary, high school), students of the whole school and cover classroom and extracurricular activities.

M. Kristin highlights the issue of developing reading culture in Australian schools, focusing on the role of school libraries. Within the framework of the project "The Teacher Librarians as Australian Literature Advocates in Schools" (TLALAS) the researcher identifies the factors that contribute to solving the problem. She is convinced that students can enjoy reading when they have access to relevant and interesting literature. "For students to be able to enjoy reading, they need access to enjoyable literature"[21]. In the schools where reading culture is supported by the principal efficient development is obvious – the headteachers are a role model for the students – "leaders who read". It is important to develop reading culture through the common practice, the approach to maintain reading literacy as a general priority of the school. Students start forming a positive attitude towards reading at home. Besides, homework helps students establish a regular daily reading regime, which contents implies reading books. L. Barrett lists 25 ways of forming reading culture in school environment[22]. The most engaging are worth mentioning: leaving reminders about books everywhere (on the bulletin board or in the hallway, etc.); making the classroom library a sacred and accessible space; staying up to date on the best books; giving lots of book talks; applying up the fun factor by adding amusing reading-themed elements to the school to spark excitement about books; reading aloud to all ages; making reading a social activity; connecting kids with authors; taking on a challenge and much more.

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[19] F. Serafini, Informing Our Practice: Modernist, Transactional, and Critical Perspectives on Children's Literature and Reading Instruction, 2009, http://frankserafini.com/publications/serafini---informing-practi.pdf (10-10-2020).
[20] Dr. Juliet C. Alex-Nmecha and Millie Nne Horsfall, "Reading Culture, Benefits, and the Role of libraries in the 21stcentury".Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal), 2019. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2836 (10-10-2020).
[21] M. K. Merga and S. Mason, "Building a school reading culture: Teacher librarians' perceptions of enabling and constraining factors", Australian Journal of Education, Vol: 63 num 2 (2019): 6.
[22] L. Barrett, 25 Ways to Build Your School's Reading Culture, 2019. https://www.weareteachers.com/build-reading-culture/ (10-10-2020).

One more upright direction in the organization of children's reading is to involve students in various projects aimed at promoting modern children's literature. These are workshops, weeks of children's reading, competitions, flash mobs, programs, projects, events of the network of libraries for children and youth and public organizations. In Ukraine, the Center for the Study of Literature for Children and Youth implements projects: "All Ukraine reads to children", "Creative interactive reading", "Multilingual reading", "Book Circle". In recent years, the all-Ukrainian children's reading competition "Knygomania" (for readers aged 12-14), held within the "Publishers' Forum" has gained considerable popularity as well as various authors' projects "Silver Reader's Book" by Eugeniia Pirog, "Literary Kavalierka" by Tetiana Kachak, "Winter and Literary Readings" by Oksana Proselkova, the case "New Names on the Program of the New Ukrainian School" by Iryna Sribna and others.

The countries of the world provide advanced practices and initiatives to promote children's reading in various forms and contents. In most European countries, World Book Day is celebrated annually, involving children, parents, teachers, writers and others in reading. By choosing a topic, such as "Share a Story," the campaign organizers encourage everyone to read each other. This practice emphasizes the possibility to improve reading culture, even if you only spend 10 minutes a day reading and sharing stories[23].

Another perfect example in this regard comes from the UK, where the project "Premier League Reading Stars" happened to be a true success helping involve children and young people in reading[24]. One more example of the UK experience is the successfully implemented project "Book on Buses" aimed at encouraging more people to read on a bus, where the bus company Arrival North East distributed free children's books to passengers on 27 of its buses driving two routes through the least prosperous areas. Whereas in Sweden, the Basel Library Foundation organized a "Literary bus for children – a great joy to read"[25]. The bus, filled with books and toys, visits local libraries and centers, playgrounds, and public places. There, professional reading animators organize interesting events with books for children under 12.

At the same time in Poland the foundation ABCXXI implements the project "The first book for my baby" encouraging young parents to read their children since birth, and in addition, since 2002 it organizes the National Reading Week for children (as part of a national social action called "All of Poland Reads to Kids"). Another project "WWW CAMPAIGN" ("Come. Take. Rest") is aimed at developing the reading culture of adolescents initiated by Wroclaw City Community (Poland). Literary and reading events for teenagers, recordings of audio books, seminars on literary criticism, preparation of a musical installation are held within its framework. In this context M. Wojciechowska provides an overview of selected national and regional events held in Poland to support children's reading programs: "5 minutes for the book", "Read! And see more!", "Reading epidemic", "What for are you using the books?"[26].

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[23] Dr. Juliet C. Alex-Nmecha and Millie Nne Horsfall, "Reading Culture, Benefits, and the Role of libraries in the 21stcentury", Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal), 2019. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2836 (10-10-2020).
[24] Premier League Reading Stars, https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/sport-and-literacy/premier-league-primary-stars/ (10-10-2020).
[25] Children's literature bus with an impressive enjoyment for books. http://www.spendenfondslesen.ch/index.php?id=18&L=1 (10-10-2020).
[26] M. Wojciechowska, "The readership indicators in Poland and programs promoting the reading", Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries (QQML), Vol: 5 (2016): 39-48.

Particularly interesting for our research is a German practice, where in 2012, McDonald's, together with the German Stiftung Lesen Reading Foundation, replaced the toys included in the famous Happy Mill menu with books promoting improvement of children's literacy. During the campaign, four million books went to families with children aged five to ten.

As A. T. Kamei-Dyche states about reading culture in Japan: "Contemporary Japanese society retains a strong emphasis on the social values of reading, understanding reading not primarily as an individual engagement with one's interests but rather as a means to acquire a consciousness of one's group and nation"[27]. Although the spread of new media has provided a diversified reading experience, public libraries are popular with all population groups.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, similar practices are spreading in different countries. Virtual online library projects aimed at the development of children's reading have become of particular relevance. N. J. Keane[28] demonstrates a set of effective digital tools and their opportunities for the promotion of children's reading, development of students' independent reading through work in the online environment. Simultaneously, Ukrainian librarians present own experience in using various digital tools and organizing children's reading online: "Psychological storytelling", "#stay home, "Reading under the blanket", interactive project "Immersion in a fairy tale", "Birthdays of writers, books, heroes", contest of the best readers and book experts and others.

Conclusions

Summing up, it should be emphasized that analysis of theoretical aspects of development of reading culture of children and youth shows understanding of reading as a creative process of text decoding, interpersonal communication and interaction, forms of cultural participation, knowledge acquisition as a source of inspiration and a tool of intellectual and spiritual development. Reading culture expresses one of the aspects of human existence and activity and is a component of the general culture of the individual. The structure of the reading culture consists of reading competence, reading activity, reading literacy, reading interest, reading independence, and reading activity. The core of reading culture is reading literacy, which is formed at school age.

The results of the international study of the quality of education PISA-2018 demonstrate the level of reading literacy of 15-year-old students in different countries. The level of understanding, use, evaluation, comprehension of written texts and expression of interest in them in order to achieve certain goals, expand their knowledge and develop reading potential, readiness for active participation in society of the survey participants did not always reach the basic one. The experiment allowed to find out the level of reading competence, literacy, formation of reading interests, motivation to reading of modern Ukrainian school children.

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[27] A. T. Kamei-Dyche, "Reading Culture in Japan". Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature, 2017, https://oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-287 (10-10-2020).

[28] N. J. Keane, Tech-Savvy Reading Promotion: A Toolbox for Librarians and Other Educators Kindle Edition (Libraries Unlimited, 2019).

The practical experience of developing reading culture and promoting children's reading in different countries proved useful. Having analyzed advanced and widespread programs, strategies, projects, virtual events implemented by libraries, schools and organizations in Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Sweden, Australia we state that reader formation systems are similar and related to age and psycho-physiological features of children, as well as to the subjects who organize children's reading and the environment children are in. Accordingly, three main stages in the development of reading culture of the individual were singled out, related to family reading, literary education, self-education, and influence of cultural environment.

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