

**Malaysians Are Picky Readers – Lecturer
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysians tend to be picky when it comes to choosing reading materials, according to a University of Malaya (UM) lecturer.

"This attitude has become a Malaysian culture, particularly among the younger generation," said UM Department of Language and Literacy Education, Faculty of Education lecturer Prof Dr Abdul Jalil Othman.

He said such culture would inhibit efforts to inculcate the reading habit which is inherent in the Japanese and French who regard reading as 'food for the soul'.

"There is nothing wrong if a person likes to read comics for example, but try to read other reading materials such as newspapers so that our ability to think widely and critically will not be retarded," he told Bernama when contacted Thursday.

According to a statistical report by the National Library in 2010, Malaysians only read an average of two to eight books per year.

Abdul Jalil said poor reading habit, irrelevant reading materials and an uncondusive environment were seen as the main contributors to the failure to create hard-core readers.

"The fundamental factors must be taken seriously to ensure any constraints, shortages and problems in creating a reading society can be addressed immediately," Abdul Jalil said.

On the bookworm perception or strange look that one gets when reading in public, he said it would change once the reading habit is entrenched.

"I hope that at some point we will be able to change this perception and the society will look up to people who read in public such as in trains and buses," he said.

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