

Reading and associated competences of information and documentation professionals. The reading behavior of future librarians

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Abstract

Numerous studies have analyzed the reading habits of university students, demonstrating the benefits of voluntary reading for academic performance. It is thus paradoxical that a large fraction of university students only read instrumentally and are far from adopting stable reading habits. This general situation is repeated among future professionals in the education field, whose personal reading experiences have been proven to have a decisive influence on their training and professional practice. Students on information and documentation degree courses are among the group of future professionals who are strongly linked to reading and who must attain competence in reading and comprehension. The main aim of this study is to use a sample of 214 students on information and documentation degree courses at six Spanish universities to analyze the professional profiles of most interest to them and their relationship with reading, both at a global level and depending on their chosen profile. The results reveal that many students have not identified a clearly defined professional profile. We also confirm findings from other studies on reading habits and behaviors, where it is evident that voluntary reading is not part of their lifestyle, albeit with some differences here between students depending on the professional profile selected. These results support the idea that, although some of these competences do not seem to have a strictly information or documentation nature, given the importance given to them in professional opportunities related to these studies, their reinforcement should be considered in future revisions of such degrees.

Keywords

Reading habits; Reading; Reading motivation; Reading competence; Skills; University students; Higher education; Information and documentation degrees; Information scientists; Information professionals; Librarians; Documentalists; Reading promoters.

1. Introduction

Achieving good reading comprehension and competence is one of the main objectives of education and an increasingly essential prerequisite for success in today's society (Clark; Rumbold, 2006). As stated in the report of the *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Unesco)* coordinated by Delors (1997), books and reading constitute one of the basic pillars of education and the spread of knowledge. The same idea underlies the *Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)* of the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, which defines reading as a fundamental skill both within and outside the school environment that helps develop critical thinking and active participation in society. As stated in the latest PISA report from 2018, reading is directly related to the acquisition of knowledge, the development of critical thinking, and the expression of well-founded judgments (OECD, 2019).

Reading becomes one of the daily activities of people during their education, being considered a basic and transversal competence that enables access to other aspects of learning. Various studies have shown that reading ability is linked to success in education from school to university (Clerici; Monteverde; Fernández, 2015; Lotti-de-Santos et al., 2008; Fiz-Poveda et al., 2000; García-Martín; García-Sánchez, 2020; Noursi, 2014; Pascual-Gómez; Carril-Martínez, 2017; Whitten; Labby; Sullivan, 2016).

Beyond this instrumental reading that brings students closer to information and provides new knowledge, numerous studies have related reading habits and voluntary reading with academic performance (Mol; Jolles, 2014; Dezcallar-Sáez et al., 2014; Cunningham; Stanovich, 1991; Ritchie; Bates, 2013). As pointed out by Gil-Flores (2011), reading habits promote an improvement in reading competence and other cognitive skills that form the basis and foundation for continuous learning throughout life. The PISA 2018 report concludes that young people who read daily for pleasure achieve better performance on the evaluation. Thus,

“enjoying reading is a precondition for achieving effective reading, which, in turn, leads to an improvement in reading skills through practice” (INEE, 2020).

2. Reading and university

Reading is also an essential tool for the education of any professional. Young university students in education apply reading in their daily learning activities, being an important part of the core of academic life, as a means to access information, and as an essential element for the acquisition of competences (Hjortshoj, 2001; Carlino, 2013; Cassany, 2008). Reading professional and specialized texts thus facilitates incorporation into the intellectual community of the discipline in which they are being educated.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of reading during the education of university students. In general terms, it has been shown that students who declare to be readers achieve better insertion into their academic activity (Moyano, 2004) and greater participation in discussion sessions during classes (Lei et al., 2010), and participate in a more stimulating manner (Ruscio, 2001). It has also been found that they are more motivated in class and plan learning activities better (Hoeft, 2012). On the contrary, university students who do not read appear to be passive receivers of content, with little participation in class discussions, a less active attitude in the classroom, and little disposition towards research, also exhibiting, in general, poorer performance (Torres-de-Márquez, 2003).

The reading habit is, therefore, one of the factors most closely related to obtaining better grades in higher education as well. It has been confirmed that it is voluntary and recreational reading that exhibits a direct correlation with the development of stable reading habits and higher academic performance in the university context (Elche; Sánchez-García; Yubero, 2019; Fraguela-Vale; Pose-Porto; Varela-Garrote, 2016; Lee, 2014). One should not forget that what defines habitual readers is dedicating part of their free time to reading by including this practice in their lifestyle and among their leisure activities. Reading becomes for them

“a voluntary personal option that does not depend on the availability of free time” (Elche; Sánchez-García; Yubero, 2019, p. 229).

In conclusion, the potentialities of the university student could include reading habits and recreational reading as a springboard towards better understanding of professional reading material and better academic results.

However, we find that work on the reading rate of university students often refers only to instrumental reading (Larrañaga; Yubero; Cerrillo, 2008; Yubero; Larrañaga, 2015). Data from national surveys indicate that students in general, and university students in particular, present a higher frequency of reading behavior than the rest of the population. However, if we consider readers to be only those students who practice voluntary and noninstrumental reading on a daily basis, almost 16% of Spanish university students never or hardly ever read, and almost 8% have not read a book in the last year, while 25% read a book only occasionally (Yubero; Larrañaga, 2015). Focusing on data on voluntary reading, Fraguela-Vale, Pose-Porto, and Varela-Garrote (2016) point out that 87.8% of young people state that they never read as a leisure activity, indicating that many university students do not include reading in their lifestyle.

“That what defines habitual readers is dedicating part of their free time to reading by including this practice in their lifestyle and among their leisure activities”

This finding, which has been confirmed in various studies, becomes even more worrying when the data refer to professionals linked to certain educational areas that include teaching and promoting reading as professional skills (Elche; Sánchez-García; Yubero, 2019; Elche; Yubero, 2019).

3. Information professionals as reading mediators

The term “information professionals” currently includes a wide range of occupational profiles that range from traditional librarians, archivists, and specialized documentalists to more recent categories such as digital content managers, content curators, information architects, or community managers, among others (Abadal; Rubió, 2017; Martínez-Comeche *et al.*, 2015). All these denominations as well as others are frequently used to denote some of the professional opportunities currently open to students on information and documentation degree courses, which have undergone substantial changes in recent years because of the integration of the previous diploma in library science and documentation and the degree in documentation.

The current professional profile of information and documentation graduates is described in the *Libro Blanco* of the Spanish *Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (Aneca, 2004)*, which adapts such studies to the European Higher Education Area by establishing the transversal and specific skills that must form part of the curriculum. This document, based on both the teaching experience of Spanish centers in which the degree has been taught and similar degrees from various European universities, guides the professional profiles towards four types of center:

- General libraries, whether national or public, in universities or primary and secondary schools, parliamentary, etc.
- Special libraries and documentation centers of the public administration, companies, the media, publishers and bookstores, consultancies and legal advisors, IT and technology, bibliographic and documentary services, etc.
- National archives, archives of institutions and organizations in the public administration, and private archives (ecclesiastical, company, and other organizations).
- Companies focused on the creation and dissemination of databases, for the creation of information storage and retrieval systems, information systems, internet portals, editorial content creation companies, etc.

Despite the upheavals suffered by the profession and thereby related university studies, it can be considered that libraries have been and continue to be an important job niche for such graduates, as reflected in various studies on job placements published in recent years (Artaza, 2011; Borrego; Comalat; Estivill, 2004; Moreiro-González *et al.*, 2008; Moreiro-González, 2015; 2020; Tejada-Artigas; Chacón-Jarén; Moreiro-González, 2014).

Among the functions carried out by these professionals, as collected in the catalog of *Perfiles profesionales del Sistema Bibliotecario Español (CCB, 2013)*, we observe how the organization of plans, programs, activities, and resources for the promotion of reading are specifically included as activities of library technicians, auxiliary library technicians, library network directors, librarians specializing in sociocultural renewal, and school librarians. However, these profiles do not include reading skills or a taste for reading among their personal and professional competences.

Reading clearly becomes an essential skill for such professionals who are more oriented toward the promotion and mediation of reading, but it should also be understood as a basic skill for other profiles in the Spanish library system because of its high degree of correlation with the level of achievement of other generic skills and specific knowledge (Sánchez-García, 2019).

In addition, one must consider the increasing clamor for a return to a profile for information professionals that is closer to the socializing dimension currently demanded by libraries, in which the prescription of reading lists, the selection of relevant information, and the more educational function become priority functions for library staff (Martínez-Cañadas, 2017; 2021). In a society characterized by information overload, myriad communication channels, and rapid access to content, which is sometimes biased or manipulated for ideological purposes, the need to educate critical citizens becomes a key objective of social transformation. Against this scenario suffering from a crisis of confidence in conventional information and communication systems, information and documentation professionals become active agents for training critical citizens (López-Borrull; Vives-Gràcia; Badell, 2018) and helping users read critically (Anderson, 2017). Traditional literacy programs must adapt to current needs by supporting users in their search for information

“and to assist them to develop their reading skills and information literacy...” (IFLA, 2012).

Finally, one must not forget the demands placed on the political and social agenda to achieve the objectives of the *UN 2030 Agenda*, and the role that information professionals can and must play, considering the natural function of libraries in democratizing access to information. The Spanish *Estrategia nacional de información y bibliotecas (CCB, 2019)* recognizes and promotes access to information and universal literacy as fundamental axes of library services, being considering one of the pillars for the transformation of society. This new paradigm demands professionals who can select, manage, organize, and preserve documentation and information so that it can be used by third parties depending on their needs and characteristics. Profiles oriented toward content curation, defined as

“a continuous activity of searching, selecting, treating, and disseminating the most relevant information on a certain field for a specific audience” (Martínez-Cañadas, 2017, p. 23),

in which the subsequent treatment of information is based on different characterization strategies (extraction, renaming, summarizing, citation, storyboarding, and parallelization) (Guallar; Leiva-Aguilera, 2013), again highlight the importance of solid reading competence among such professionals.

In this context of a reorientation of library profiles, information and documentation degrees will have to implement a set of attitudes and skills during not only university education but also future professional practice, which Olivia-Marañón summarize as

“an involvement in learning (and in lifelong learning), intellectual curiosity, a capacity for teamwork, a sense of responsibility, reading comprehension, and a critical attitude” (Olivia-Marañón, 2012, p. 17).

Among the generic transversal skills that information and documentation degree students must develop, Aneca (2014) includes the following skills:

- Instrumental: analysis and synthesis skills, organization and planning skills, oral and written communication in one's mother tongue, knowledge of a foreign language, computer skills related to the field of study, information management skills, problem solving, and decision-making.
- Personal: teamwork, working in an interdisciplinary team, working in an international context, skills in interpersonal relationships, recognition of diversity and multiculturalism, critical reasoning, and ethical commitment.
- Systematic: autonomous learning, adaptation to new situations, creativity, leadership, knowledge of other cultures and customs, initiative and an entrepreneurial spirit, motivation to improve quality, and sensitivity toward environmental issues.

Many of these competencies are repeated in the list of records of the *Perfiles profesionales del Sistema Bibliotecario Español* (CCB, 2013), where the professional and personal competences that these professionals must possess are collected based on the activities defined by their profile.

The reading habit and the taste for reading should be personal attitudes of these professionals, and reading competence and understanding are instrumental skills that should not be neglected throughout their education and professional development, considering that data on reading habits show a clear contradiction between what is desirable and the reality of university students. Therefore, in relation to the role of information professionals, the main objective of this study is to analyze the behavior and commitment to reading of information and documentation degree students, considering its importance for both their education and their further professional development. The aim is to evaluate their possible competences as both reading mediators and active agents in the selection and evaluation of information, for which reading is a basic generic skill that correlates significantly with the level of achievement of other generic and specific competences (Yubero; Larrañaga, 2015).

4. Methods

4.1. Participants

According to data provided by the Spanish *Ministerio de Universidades*, between the 2015/2016 and 2018/2019 academic years, 7,470 students enrolled in the Information and Documentation degree. The sample size was calculated using the formula of Daniel (1999), considering a z value of 1.96 (95% confidence level). The analyzes determined that 366 students were required for the study. Of all the questionnaires collected, those who had completed all the items were selected. The study included 214 students on information and documentation degree courses at five Spanish universities:

- *Universidad Carlos III de Madrid* (8.5%)
- *Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (10.7%)
- *Universidad de Extremadura* (34.1%)
- *Universidad de León* (9.8%)
- *Universidad de Salamanca* (26.2%)
- *Universitat de Barcelona* (10.7%)

As not all the items were completed, the sample was reduced, which has led to an increase in the margin of error to 7%.

Regarding the characteristics of the students, the sample was made up of 68.2% women and 31.8% of men, aged between 18 and 57 years, with 70.7% between 18 and 22 years old ($M= 24.8$ years, $SD= 9.5$ years) and distributed in the different years of the degree, with 40.6% in the first year, 27.2% in the second, 17.2% in the third, and 15% in the fourth.

4.2. Instrument

For this study, we applied an adaptation of the *Reading habits questionnaire* (Larrañaga, 2004; Larrañaga; Yubero, 2005) which has already been applied to university students (Larrañaga; Yubero; Cerrillo, 2008; Yubero; Larrañaga, 2015). The questionnaire included questions on the frequency of voluntary reading, the number of books read in the last year, the type of materials and reading formats, motivation and taste for reading, and the importance given to reading by the future professional.

The questionnaires (see Annex) also requested data on the study options chosen by the students on their information and documentation degree course, as well as their professional expectations in terms of the centers where their profes-

sional practice is typically carried out (Aneca, 2004) and adaptation to the professional profiles most demanded today (Abadal; Rubió, 2017).

4.3. Procedures

The selection of the participating universities was carried out through conglomerates, 50% of the universities that teach the Information and Documentation degree were chosen at random. The selection of students in each university was carried out using the convenience sampling method. The students participated voluntarily and anonymously in the research through a questionnaire distributed on paper at the *Universidades de Extremadura* and *Salamanca* and online through *Google Forms* at the other universities. In both cases, the help of collaborating professors at each center was key to motivating student participation. The questionnaire was applied during the second semester of the 2018/2019 academic year.

4.4. Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using the *SPSS* (version 23) statistical package. First, descriptive statistics for the variables related to reading in the total sample were calculated. Subsequently, the sample was segmented according to the professional profiles of future interest, viz. reading, documentation, or mixed for those who do not have a clearly defined professional profile. Sample homogeneity analysis was performed using the non-parametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and homoscedasticity of the sample groups using Levene's test. Later, the differences were analyzed using Anovas and chi-squared tests in the variables of interest for this study, according to the clustering carried out previously. Finally, a multinomial logistic regression was applied to determine the relationship between the study variables and the professional profiles.

5. Results

The questionnaire applied to the subjects of the sample asked, among other questions, about professional expectations. In the first place, the students indicated their order of preference for the professional contexts defined in the White book for the degree subject (Aneca, 2004), exhibiting a similar interest at the different centers (Table 1).

Table 1. Order of preference of future professional contexts

Order of the options by which the studies were selected	General libraries	Special libraries and documentation centers	Archives	Companies
1 st	25.7%	22.9%	18.7%	26.6%
2 nd	15.9%	32.2%	20.6%	15.9%
3 rd	23.0%	25.7%	22.9%	14.5%
4 th	21.5%	6.5%	24.3%	29.9%

Note: Common jobs in companies are: content management, creation of databases and editorial content, intranets, Internet portals, etc.

Next, one should highlight the professional profiles that they would be interested in developing in the future after finishing their degree. The 13 options available largely corresponded to the profiles collected in the *Servei d'Informació d'Ofertes de Feina (SIOF)* of the *Facultat de Biblioteconomia i Documentació* of the *Universitat de Barcelona* (Abadal; Rubió, 2017), but expanding those linked to reading mediation. The profiles were grouped into two general areas:

- the first, called "professions with a reading profile," combines those professions directly linked to reading mediation (librarian, reading promoter, and cultural manager),
- while the second, called "professions with a documentation profile," includes the community manager, information architecture specialist, archivist, data recorder, digitizer, documentalists, web content manager, marketing manager, SEM/SEO specialist, and editor.

Finally, a "mixed profile" category was established to describe those students who selected professions from both profiles. We thus tried to categorize all the students in the sample into three general categories, based on the content prevalent in the professional profiles chosen.

The distribution of the sample subjects based on these profiles was

- 6.1% "professions with a reading profile,"
- 42.1% "professions with a documentation profile," and
- 46.7% with the "mixed profile."
- 5.1% did not select any professional profile.

Table 2. Preference regarding professional profiles

Librarian	Reading promoter	Cultural projects	Community manager	Information architecture	Archivist	Data recorder	Digitizer	Documentalist	Web manager	Online marketing	SEO specialist	Editor
37.4%	18.7%	26.2%	35.0%	12.1%	26.6%	3.3%	14.5%	43.0%	28.0%	26.2%	7.9%	14.5%
Reading profile (6.1%)			Documentation profile (42.1%)									
Mixed profile (46.7%)												

Note: 5.1% did not select any professional profile

Based on these data, the first part of the study related the career option chosen by the students with these professional profiles. It seemed interesting to study the motivation of the students to pursue the career selected with regard to the professional profile that they identified for future employment, as this profession has a high vocational index (Martín-González *et al.*, 2014). The results revealed that 74.3% of the sample chose to pursue these studies as their first or second option. In the analysis of the options chosen according to the professional profile, significant differences were found ($\chi^2=30.79$, $p<0.001$) between the different profiles. It was confirmed that these studies were chosen as the first or second option by 100% of the students with the “professions with reading profile” and by 88% of those with the “mixed profile,” while almost 40% of the students of the “professionals with documentation profile” had chosen the degree they were studying as their third or fourth option.

Next, we aimed to determine the relationship that students had with reading and how various variables were related to the professional profiles with which they showed greater interest.

The participants scored how much they liked reading on a scale from 1 to 10, with a mean of 7.92 ($SD=2.17$). Regarding their relationship with reading, 76.1% admitted to having a good or very good relationship, while 12.6% reported a poor or moderate relationship, while 11.2% were indifferent. When defining their status as readers, 15.4% considered themselves as avid readers, 43.9% as moderate readers, 33.7% as occasional readers, and 15% as holiday readers, while 7% do not like to read. Considering the importance of reading for their development as future information professionals, we asked them to assess various statements that linked reading with their education and professional development (Table 3).

Table 3. Importance for the future information and documentation professional

	M	SD
The absence of reading habits affects academic performance	6.47	2.10
To be a good information and documentation professional, it is essential to have good reading habits	6.04	2.26
Good reading competence is decisive for better self-management when searching for information and documentation	6.64	2.15
I will need good reading skills in my future professional work	6.51	2.19
Only through reading printed/digital material will I be able to continue training as a professional	5.75	2.37
It is very important that reading be encouraged while training information and documentation professionals	6.46	2.19
The information and documentation professional is responsible for promoting a taste for reading	6.15	2.26
I have sufficient training to exercise the promotion of reading within my work as a professional	5.59	2.20

Note: Measurement scale from 1 to 9, with 1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest

These data, which describe how the students define themselves as readers, are subject to a high degree of subjectivity and contradict to a certain extent some of the results related to their reading practices. Regarding the time they spend reading, 47.7% said they never or almost never read, while only 16.4% do so every day. Regarding the number of books read in the last year, 4.7% had not read any and 43.5% had read a maximum of five books, while 14.4% had read more than 20 books in the last year.

To evaluate how the professional profile may influence their relationship with reading, an analysis of variance was carried out, in which the taste for reading and the importance they gave to reading were analyzed, applying the three categories of professional profiles into which the participants were grouped. First, the distribution of the data was checked with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results showed normal distribution in the three study samples (Reading profile: z of K-S= 0.83, $p>0.05$; Information profile: z of K-S= 0.42, $p>0.05$; Mixed profile: z of K-S= 0.85, $p>0.05$). Levene's test showed that the variance is the same in the groups for the Importance of reading ($L=1.94$, $p>0.05$). The analysis of the

results (Table 4) revealed no significant differences regarding the importance they give to reading ($F= 0.86, p= 0.423$), whereas differences were found between the three professional profiles in relation to their taste for reading ($F= 7.46, p< 0.001$). These results indicate that students who showed interest in the “professions with a documentation profile” reported less taste for reading.

Table 4. Importance and taste for reading according to professional profile

	Reading		Documentation		Mixed	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Taste for reading ¹	9.00	1.22	7.38	2.36	8.42	1.92
Importance of reading ²	6.55	1.31	6.13	1.92	6.42	1.44

Notes: 1. Scale from 1 to 10; 2. Scale from 1 to 9

Regarding the reading behavior of the information and documentation degree students, a chi-squared test revealed a difference depending on the professional profile selected, in terms of both the time they dedicate to voluntary reading ($\chi^2= 21.45, p< 0.01$) as well as the number of books read in the last year ($\chi^2= 28.17, p< 0.05$).

The data indicate that students with the “professional documentation profile” (37.8%) or “mixed profile” (36%) spend more time reading (twice a week or every day), although 23.1% of the students in the “professional reading profile” compared with 9% of the “professional documentation profile” and 18% in the “mixed profile” had read more than 20 books.

The apparent contradiction observed in these data can be explained in terms of the reading medium chosen. All the study groups read digital media with a similar frequency ($\chi^2= 12.34, p= 0.137$), but the students with the “professional documentation profile” read printed media every day less frequently (24.4%). These results confirm that the percentage of the “professional reading profile” (53.8%) and “mixed profile” (54%) who read every day was almost twice that of the students of the “professional documentation profile” ($\chi^2= 26.52, p< 0.001$). Differences in reading fiction were also confirmed ($\chi^2= 32.74, p< 0.001$), being observed in 61% of the “mixed profile” and 69.2% of the “professional reading profile” but only 26.7% of the students with the “professional documentation profile.”

Finally, a multinomial regression was performed to analyze the weight of the reading variables in the professional profiles, including the preference order for the degree subject. The model was significant ($\chi^2= 56.13, p< 0.001$) and explained 26.4% of the variance. The results obtained (Table 5) indicate that,

- among the students with the “professional reading profile,” there was a significant positive relationship with the taste for reading and dedicating free time to reading;
- in the group of students with the “professional documentation profile,” it was found that, as the order of their career selection moved away from the first option, they became closer to the field of documentation, although still attaching importance to reading;
- for the students with the “mixed profile,” the significant variables were spending free time reading and considering reading to be important.

Table 5. Regression of study variables on professional profile

	Reading				Documentation				Mixed			
	B	Wald	p	OR	B	Wald	p	OR	B	Wald	p	OR
Option	0.50	1.00	0.316	1.65	0.87	5.59	0.018	2.39	0.37	0.99	0.323	1.45
Taste for reading	0.62	4.15	0.042	1.86	0.23	1.33	0.249	1.26	0.36	3.18	0.074	1.44
Reading time	0.55	4.71	0.030	1.57	-0.22	1.25	0.263	0.80	0.40	4.15	0.041	1.67
Books read	-0.26	0.77	0.378	0.77	-0.37	2.26	0.133	0.69	-0.20	0.65	0.420	0.82
Importance of reading	0.26	3.36	0.067	1.75	0.32	4.40	0.036	1.38	0.45	7.66	0.006	1.57

6. Discussion and conclusions

The results obtained herein, which first define the profile of the students, confirm the trend established by previous works in which the female profile of this profession is evident (Moreiro-González *et al.* 2008; Martín-González *et al.*, 2014), as well as the tendency to look for jobs oriented toward the documentation profile (Moreiro-González *et al.*, 2008). In addition, the choice of the information and documentation degree by students is not fortuitous, revealing the continuation of a high vocational index within the profession (Martín-González *et al.*, 2014), even more so (if possible) in those professional profiles oriented toward reading and library services.

It is evident that voluntary reading is not part of the lifestyle of university students

even more so (if possible) in those professional profiles oriented toward reading and library services.

Regarding the professional profiles selected, the results show that many students do not have a clearly defined professional profile, which undoubtedly characterizes the information profession itself, in which the mixed profile is prevalent. As pointed out by **García-Marco** (2015, p. 499),

“in school library and information literacy, skills from pedagogy and librarianship are combined; in university and specialized libraries, the best citation experts are also subject specialists; in the historical archive, skills in paleography and diplomacy are necessary.”

The results obtained in this work also confirm findings of other studies on reading habits and behavior, where it is evident that voluntary reading is not part of the lifestyle of university students (**Larrañaga; Yubero; Cerrillo**, 2008; **Yubero; Larrañaga**, 2015), even among those who, considering their educational profiles, should show a greater interest in reading (**Elche; Sánchez-García; Yubero**, 2019; **Elche; Yubero**, 2019). Although many declare themselves to be readers, the results indicate that some do not include reading in their lifestyle. A high frequency of reading behavior, dedicating part of one's free time to reading, and intrinsic motivations are the variables that consolidate reading habits. It is worrying that 47.7% confirm that they never or almost never read in their free time. In addition, although 76.1% affirm that they have a good relationship with reading, their reading frequency and the number of books read in the last year show that the majority do not even reach the level of occasional readers. The contradictions reported in most such studies are thus confirmed herein, corresponding, on the one hand, to a situation of social desirability, in which the student tries to present a favorable attitude and behavior toward reading to avoid feeling belittled, while on the other, they use a self-deception strategy of lowering the criteria corresponding to a desired level of reading in order to maintain healthy self-esteem.

It is often wrongly believed that university students already have a reading habit and the reading skills necessary to carry out their studies effectively (**Yubero; Larrañaga**, 2015; **Sánchez-García**, 2019). This is at least paradoxical when analyzing the data on reading habits of these students, which reveal levels that, although higher than in the general population, are far below what is desirable. In addition, young people in education face new disciplines that use specific, sometimes highly specialized discourses and for which the development of adequate academic literacy is important (**Carlino**, 2006; **Moreno; Cassany**, 2008; **Sánchez-García; Yubero**, 2015).

There is increasing evidence of the influence exerted by the reading habits of reading mediators in their professional practice. In the field of education, the personal reading experiences of future teachers exert a decisive influence on training in this field (**Boggs; Golden**, 2009; **Trent**, 2011). **Applegate and Applegate** (2004) state that a teacher who has a weak relationship with reading themselves will hardly contribute to motivating reading among their students. Along the same lines, **Granado and Puig** (2014; 2015) point out that, among students on the master's degree in education, those with the strongest reading habit give the greatest importance to training content related to the promotion of reading.

These needs are also present in the education of information and documentation degree students. Indeed, as pointed out by **Martínez-Comeche et al.** (2015), the importance of developing adequate written expression, in both the mother tongue and the language required for the job, has already been demonstrated. **García-Marco** (2013), defending the need not to blur the essence of the professional profile of information and documentation, advocates professionals capable of personally and socially managing information and memory, considering that the essence lies in the content rather than its format, which requires professionals who are competent in reading and comprehension. As part of the role that many are going to develop as future librarians, reading promoters, or content curators, the taste for reading, a consolidated reading habit, and high levels of reading comprehension should be some of its main hallmarks.

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Although these competences do not seem to have a strictly information or documental nature, given their importance for the personal and professional development of information and documentation degree students, they should be reinforced throughout their education. Considering these results and the professional orientation of these professionals, it seems necessary to promote reading, beyond its instrumental nature, based on actions that promote a taste for reading and a consolidation of reading habits.

As demanded by the knowledge society, the information and documentation degree was able to adapt to the skills and abilities required by the new technological environment. However, such professionals may now require a further renewal of these skills and specific knowledge, considering that it is assumed that reading and associated skills are consolidated while the data seem to indicate a different reality. These essential competencies for these professionals are not included among their personal competencies, and neither do they seem to be explicitly integrated into their curriculum.

At this time of change and deep reflection on the profession and, therefore, on the education of these professionals, reading is understood to be an important part not only of the curriculum of these students but also a fundamental acti-

vity both outside and inside the classroom, which will ensure the education of critical readers capable of training critical citizens and thereby allow the development of a more sustainable and democratic society.

This study has some limitations to take into account in future work. On the one hand, a cross-sectional design has been used that limits the conclusions of causality, being necessary to confirm the relationships found through longitudinal studies that can specify the directionality between the study variables. To the same extent, we must also be cautious with the problems of social desirability and subjectivity that the application of questionnaires entails; therefore, it would be convenient to have other complementary sources of information. On the other hand, a limitation of the study is the small size of the sample, which has led to an increase in the margin of error of the results. In any case, despite the limitations, this work provides exploratory results of great interest, although it would be interesting to replicate the research with a larger sample that would allow more subjects to be available in each study profile.

7. References

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8. Anexo

Age _____ Sex: Male Female

University _____

Degree/Master you are studying _____

Course _____

How do you rate your performance?

Very bad Bad Normal Okay Very good

Do you like the studies you are studying?

Very little Little Something Quite A lot

In which option did you select the Degree in Information and Documentation?

1st choice 2nd choice 3rd choice 4th choice or more

In what context would you like to develop your professional activity? Order from 1 to 4 in order of preference

- General libraries, whether national, public, university, primary and secondary schools, parliamentary, etc.
- Special libraries and documentation centers of the Public Administration, companies, the media, publishers and bookstores, legal advice and consultancies, ICT, bibliographic and documentary services, etc.
- National archives, archives of institutions and organizations of the Public Administration and private archives (ecclesiastical, company and other organizations...).
- Companies for the creation and dissemination of databases, for the creation of information storage and retrieval systems, information systems, internet portals, editorial content creation companies, etc.

What professional profiles would you be interested in developing in the future? Please select 3.

- Librarian Archivist Documentalist *Community manager*
 Data recorder Web content manager Reading promoter Digitizer
 Online marketing manager Information architecture specialist
 SEM/SEO specialist Manager of cultural projects
 Editor – *copywriter* Other _____

How much do you like to read?

1 Nothing	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 A lot
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How do you think your relationship with reading is?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bad	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good
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Aside from your reading for study, how much do you read *voluntarily* in your spare time?

- Every day or almost every day Once a quarter
 Once or twice a week Rarely
 Once a month Never

How many *volunteer reading* books have you read in the last year?

- None from 3 to 5 from 11 to 15 from 21 to 50
 1 or 2 6 to 10 16 to 20 more than 50

In what period do you read *voluntarily* during your free time?

- On weekends On vacation Always

How often do you read this type of material *voluntarily*?

	Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Almost forever
Journals				
Comics				
Fiction (novels, narrative, short stories)				
Non-fiction books				
Press				

What medium do you read?

	Never	Once a month	Once a week	Every or almost every day
Digital				
Printed				

From 1 to 10, what is your interest in the following readings?

- Professional (linked to the content of your studies/profession) _____
 Current affairs (press, news, ...) _____
 Literary (novel, essay...) _____

