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A comparative study of student reading and book buying habits

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theoretical framework

- **Methodological issues**

- „*multi-methodological research results will be **more credible***” (Leburić, 1997)
- slow but constant use of qualitative research in social sciences, namely information science and marketing

- **Reading issues**

- effects of reading on the emergence of intellectuals (LeGoff, 1985)
- reading impacts development of personality and intellectual abilities (Clark and Rumbold, 2006)
- **a downward trend in voluntary reading** by youth (Alverman et al., 2007, as cited in Gordon and Lu, 2008)
- “What is the Internet doing to our brains?” (Carr 2010)

PREVIOUS RESEARCH RELEVANT TO THE TOPIC

- Flora, S.R., Flora, D.B. **(1999)**. Effects of extrinsic reinforcement for reading during childhood on reported reading habits of college students. // Psychological Record, vol. 49, pp. 3-14
- Datta, S.; Macdonal-Ross, M. **(2002)**. Reading skills and reading habits: A study of new Open University undergraduate reserves. // Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e- Learning, vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 69-88
- Liu, Z. **(2005)**. Reading behavior in the digital environment: changes in reading behavior over the past 10 years. // Journal of Documentation, Vol. 61 (6), pp. 700-12.
- Chen, S. **(2007)**. Extracurricular reading habits of college students in Taiwan: Findings from two national surveys, // Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, vol. 50, no. 8, pp. 642-653
- Karim, N.S., Hasan, A. **(2007)**. Reading habits and attitude in the digital age. Analysis of gender and academic program differences in Malaysia. // The Electronic Library, vol. 25 (3), pp.285-298.

RECENT RESEARCH/ 2010-2014

- Shafi,S.M.; Loan, F.A. **(2010)**. Reading habits among college students of Kashmir across genders. // TRIM, December, vol 6, (2), pp. 92-103
- Delgado, B.G.; **(2011)**. Estudio de los hábitos lectores de los estudiantes da la Universidad Europea de Madrid. // Ibersid., vol. 5, pp. 99-107.
- Mohini, M. et al. **(2012)**. Reading behaviors of students in Kolej Datin Seri Endon. // International Journal of Educational Management, vol. 26, No 4, pp. 381-390
- Tosun, N. **(2014)**. A study on reading printed books or e-books: reasons for student-teacher preferences. // TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Ducational Technology, January, vol.13, issue 1. pp.21-28
- Applegate, A.J. **(2014)**. The Peter effect revisited: Reading Habits and Attitudes of College Students. // Literacy Research and Instruction, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 188-204
- Huang, S. **(2014)**. Reading habits of college students in the United States. // Reading Psychology, vol. 35, no. 5, pp. 437-467
- Pinto, M., Pouliot C., Cordòn-Garcia **(2014)**. E-book reading among Spanish university students. // The Electronic Library, Vol, 32, No. 4, pp. 473-492.

Conclusions derived from recent literature

- Great differences in reading culture and culture in general
- Different methodologies applied in research
- Researchers from different fields of research: education, sociology, psychology
- Gender differences always analyzed
- Case studies methodology often applied
- Clear distinction between mandatory and voluntary reading
- No relation to publishing mentioned in any article here cited

Our research objectives

- to analyze the main aspects of
 - I. voluntary reading habits
 - II. and book purchasing behaviorof university students
comparatively in:
 - Pisa, Italy
 - Zadar, Croatia
 - Nanking, China.

Research questions

- What are the **books' main rivals** in occupying the leisure time of university students?
- Who influenced the **development of the students' reading habits**?
- How much **time** do students spend **reading online and on what devices**?
- **What influences** the students' selection and the ultimate **decision to purchase** a book?
- **How do students acquire books** for leisure reading?
- How do student reading and book buying habits **differ** between the **three universities** in Italy, Croatia and China?

Methodology

- combination of quantitative and qualitative methods:

1.) a) online questionnaires

sample of 561 students from Pisa (total 55.000 students)

sample of 193 students from Zadar (total 5.500 students)

b) written questionnaires

sample of 195 students from Pisa (total 55.000 students)

sample of 122 students from Zadar (total 5.500 students)

sample of 350 students from Nanking (total 26.000 students)

2.) 4 focus groups

20 students from Pisa

14 students from Zadar

A. Group A: students who consider themselves to be avid or strong readers (10 students in Pisa and 10 in Zadar)

B. Group B: students who do not like to read (10 students in Pisa and 4 in Zadar)

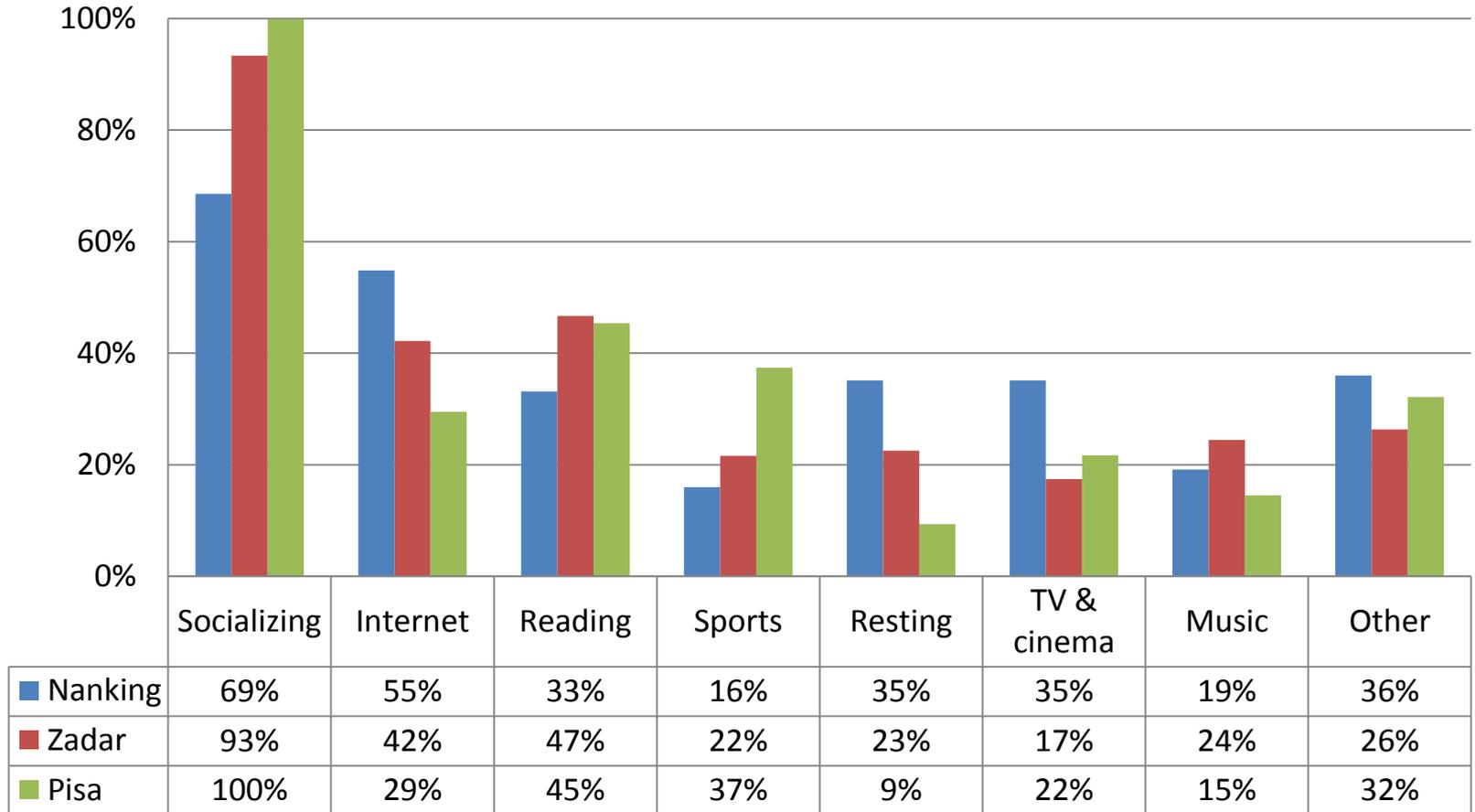
- poor response to the second focus group in Zadar (non-reading is socially unacceptable?)

Methodology

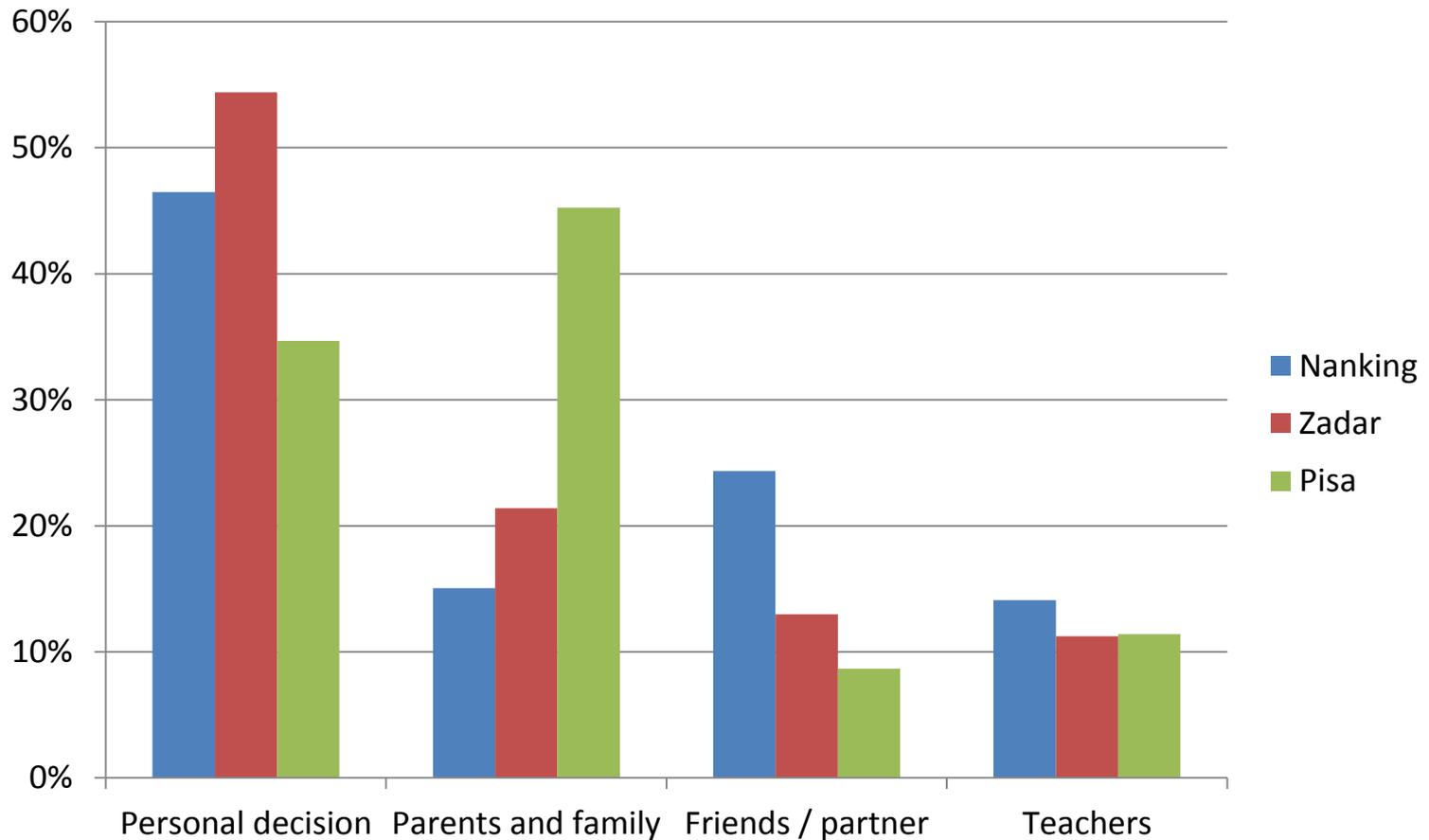
- In order to analyse reading habits it is useful to distinguish between two different situations.
- On one side reading is a compulsory activity, for example when related to studying or working. In this case, content is mainly technical and the aim is to acquire new knowledge. On the other side it can also be «spontaneous», a choice taken in total freedom and on a voluntary basis as a cultural activity or an hobby in people's free time.
- This work is based on a research on reading habits of the second kind, and a study of book purchasing patterns in a collective of university students from 3 different countries: Nanking (China), Pisa (Italy) and Zadar (Croatia).
- The aim is to study some aspects of «spontaneous» reading and the purchasing behaviour of university students. This segment has a strategic importance because their choices and behaviour will shape the book market in future.

Results and discussion

SURVEY Results: What are the books' main rivals in occupying the leisure time of university students?



Who influenced the development of the students' reading habits?



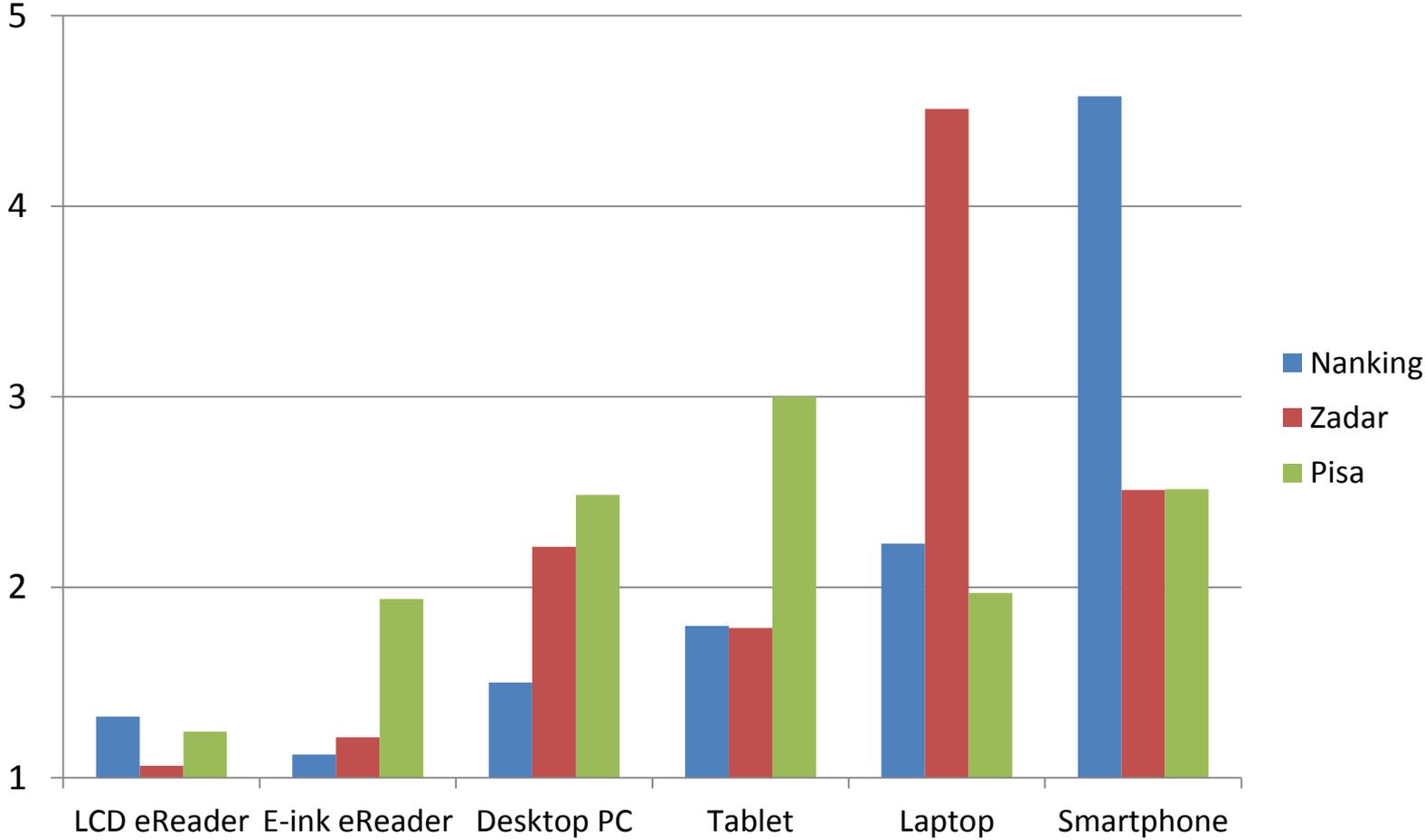
Comment Sandro (3)

Table 2 - Share of young people (from 16 to 24 years) living with their parents

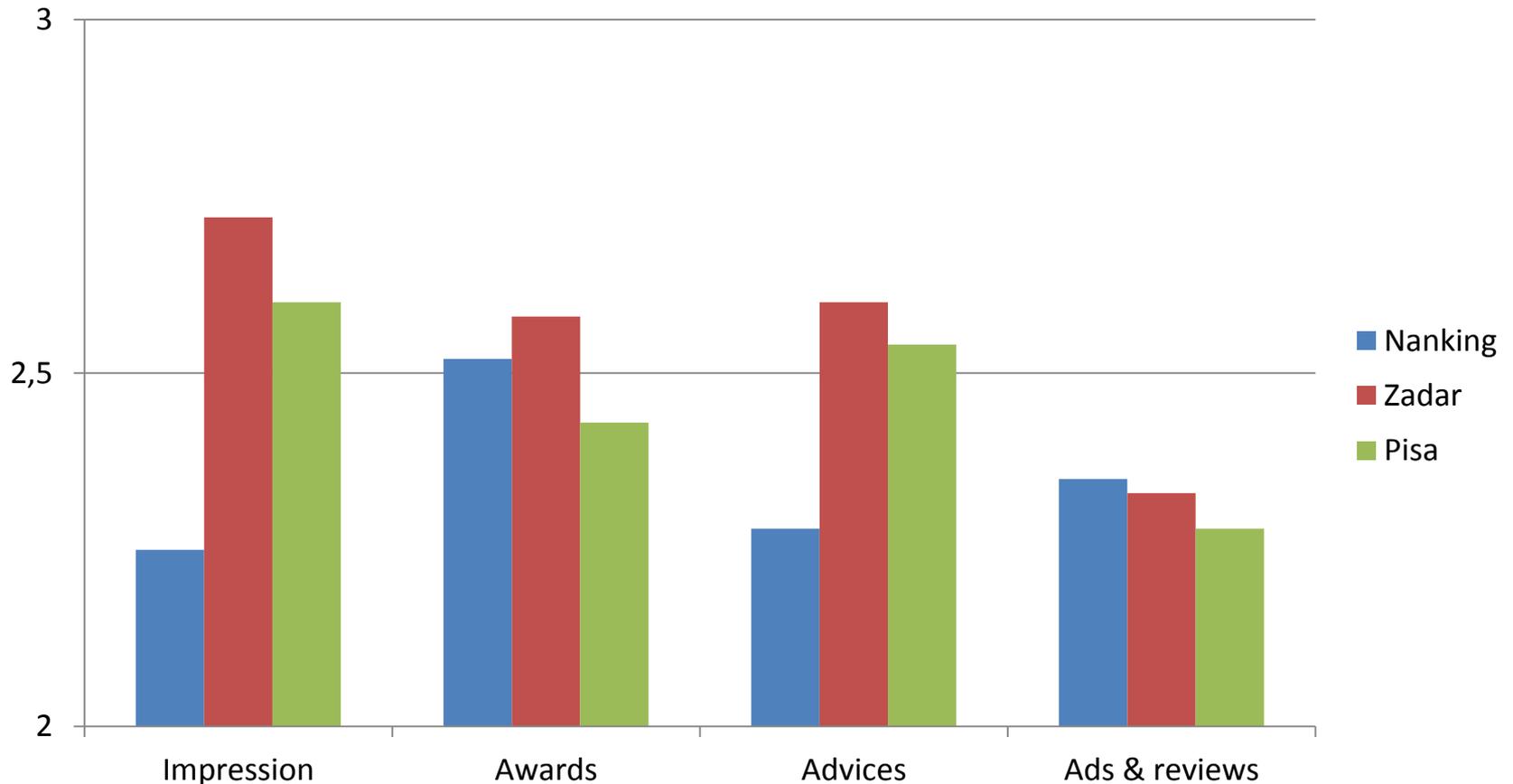
	2010	2011	2012	2013
Croatia	89,9	92,5	93,1	92,7
Italy	91,8	93,0	94,2	94,1
European Union (28 countries)	82,3	82,8	82,7	82,9

Source: Eurostat, last update 09-04-2015

On what devices do students read online?

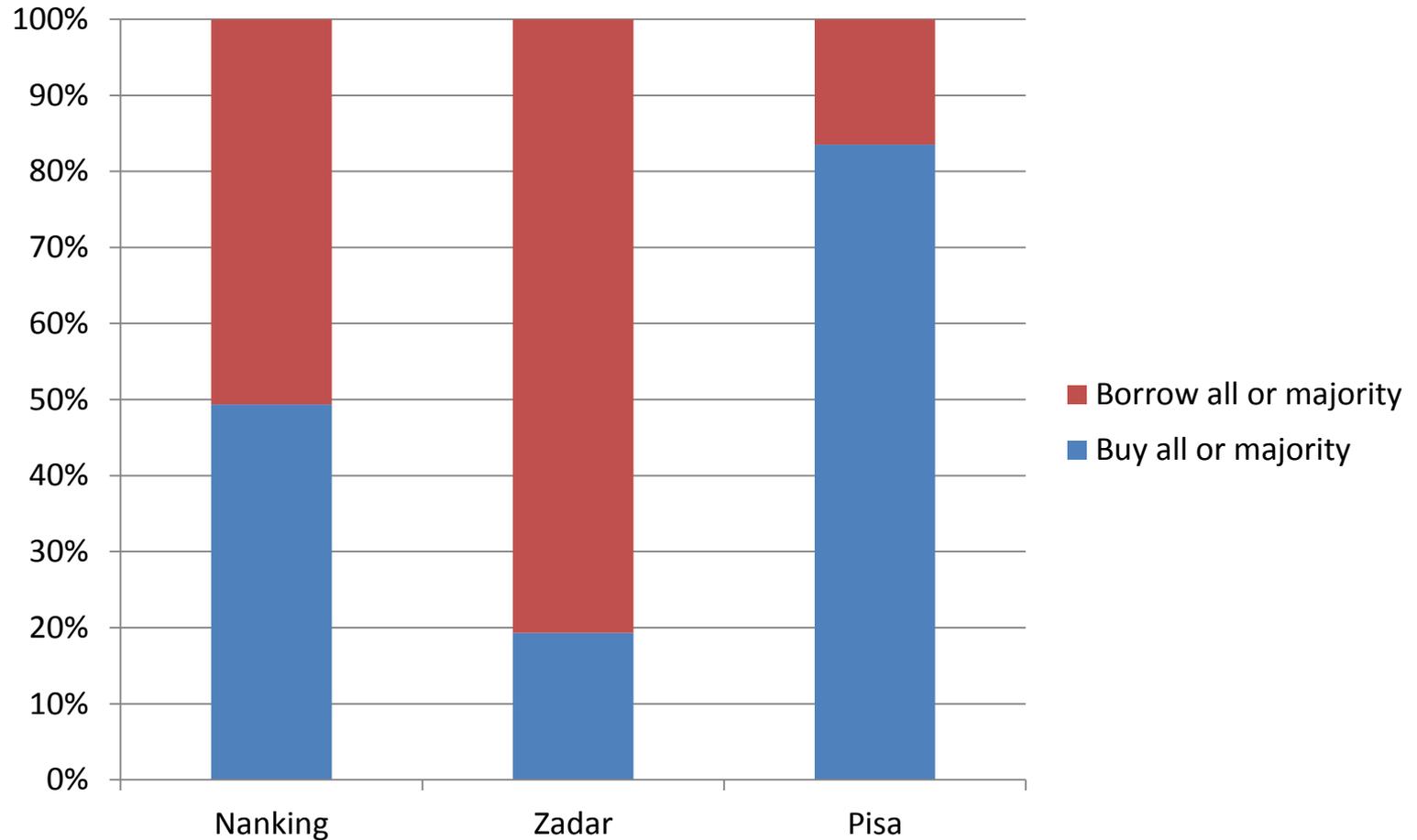


What influences the students' selection and the ultimate decision to purchase a book?

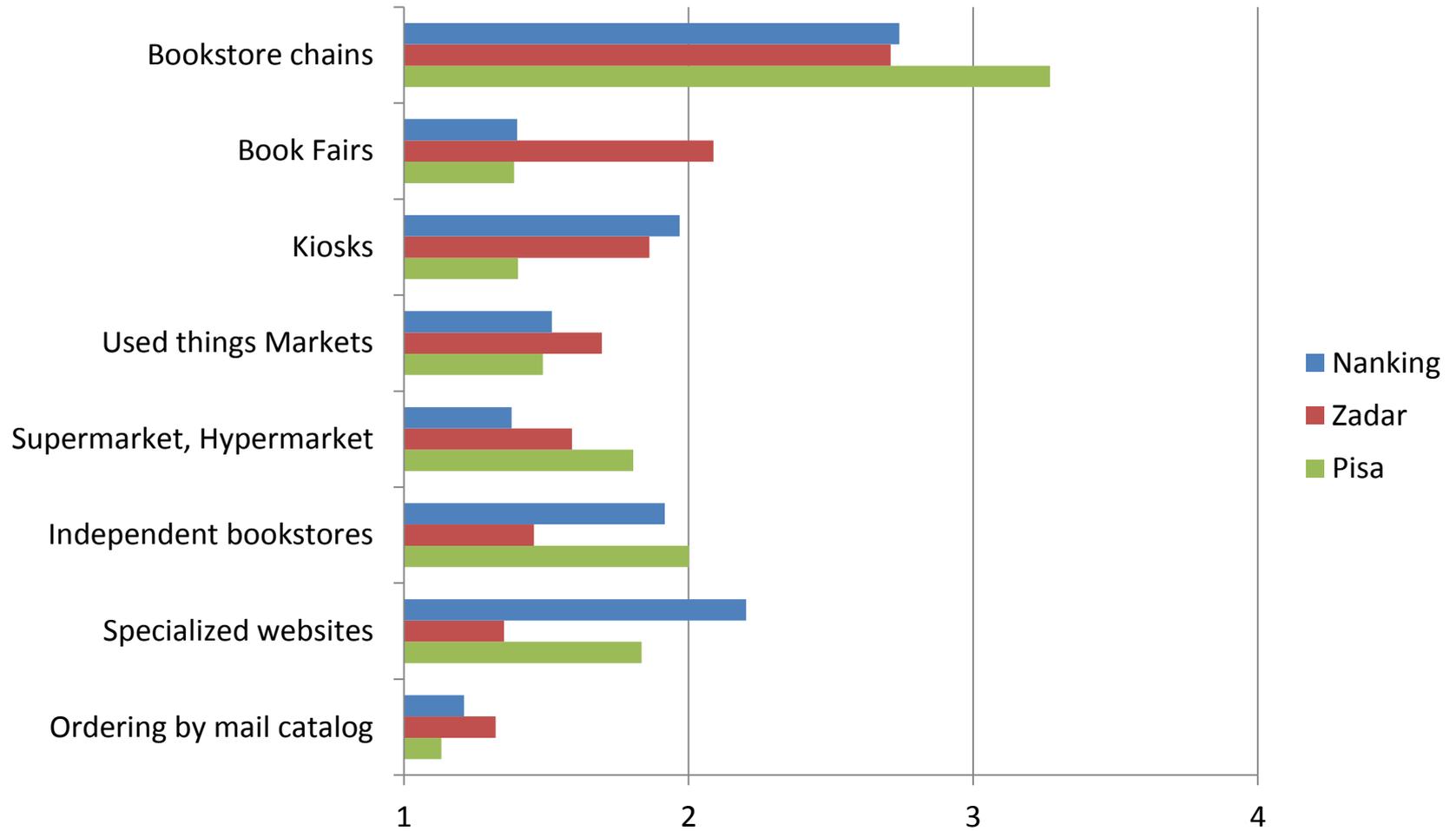


- 3 = quite important
- 2 = unimportant

How do students acquire books for leisure reading?



Frequency of book buying at certain places



Conclusions

- **This study was conducted in an attempt to enhance our understanding about reading habits and buying behaviour of a group of students. In this effort students from three universities were chosen as the respondents. The overall results indicates that:**

Conclusions 1

- for each collective “spontaneous” reading is one of the student’s favourite activities for spending their free time in. The main competitor to reading is socialising.
- Surprisingly surfing the web is preferred to reading only by the Nanking collective, while for the rest of interviewees from Pisa and Zadar it ranked at the second place, before other cultural activities (listening to music, watching a movie or a show) and sports.
- There are some differences in influencers if the passion for reading. Students from Zadar and Nanking read mainly as a personal free choice, while the collective from Pisa recognise a fundamental role in their family and friends.
However, all three collectives agree that their teachers and professors did not play a significant role in this context.

Conclusions 2

- **Croatian and Chinese students engage a lot more with digital reading compared to their Italian peers. The vast majority of students in Pisa, differently than their colleagues from Zadar and Nanking, claim not to read e-books but other types of digital content.**
- **While students from Nanking use mainly smartphones (usually less expensive devices than, for instance, tablets), students from Zadar prefer accessing digital content from their laptops, while the collective from Pisa use tablets. Within this last group, the few students who read e-books use specific tools such as E-ink and eReader.**

Conclusions 3

- **Students from Pisa and Zadar find the “physical” impression of books and stores (emotions given by the cover and by flipping thorough pages, quality of binding) and the advice of sales assistants important. The collective from Nanking (and also the one from Zadar) instead are also keen on literary awards. All interviewees groups agree on the low effectiness of advertisement on their purchasing behaviour and decision making.**
- **Finally, books for “spontaneos” reading are mainly purchased in traditional books shops. However there are specific aspects withing each collective: Croatians have a trend to buy books in dedicated fairs and festivals, Chinese like to buy from specialised online websites while Italians shop for books in Supermarkets and IPERMARKETS.**

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