

Reading Habit among Students in College of Health Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nnewi Campus, Library, and Anambra State

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Abstract: *This is an empirical study which dealt with reading habit among students in College of Health Sciences Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nnewi Campus Library, Anambra State. The hypotheses formulated to guide the study in examining how reading is a life-long skill used in any educational institutions and throughout life of an individual based on reading culture. An instrument was constructed to gather data in the study using t - test statistics for the data analysis. The design of the study was an ex - post factor and a total of 200 readers in the library of the College of Health Sciences Nnewi Campus and Library were sampled. With the data analyzed some findings were made that libraries help to introduce the use of reading for information, pleasure, passing examinations and personal growth through life - long learning. It was also recommended that they should be improve funding of education and libraries by extension and that functional library should be established not only in schools, but also in communities, organizations and religious bodies.*

Keywords: Habit, Reading, Positive, Library, University and Change

1. Introduction

Reading is a lifetime skill that may be utilized in school and in everyday life. Reading is a basic life skill, according to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Williamson (1985). The 21st century reading pattern is different from the 18th, 19th and 20th century pattern because the twenty - first century learning/ reading pattern means that students master content while producing, synthesizing and evaluating information from a wide variety of subjects and sources with an understanding of and respect for diverse cultures (Hall, 2012). Nigeria has been rated by the World Culture Score Index as one of the countries in the world with the lowest reading culture. Available statistics from National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non - Formal Education show that 38 per cent of Nigerians are non - literate as four in 10 primary school children cannot read for comprehension. Regrettably, this adverse development is an ominous challenge the country seems not to be paying the needed attention. There is generally a poor reading culture in the country. The rich literacy history the country is famous for is gradually being eroded. Once upon a time, the country paraded the best set of authors and publishers in Africa. Then, reading was an innate affection for both young and old. This reading inclination reflected so much on the quality of leadership and civil discipline that brought pride to Nigerians anywhere in the world.

Reading in the 21st century have several blueprints for ensuring our future in attaining educational standards. The more we read, the more we are exposed to issues and solutions to the common problems we face as a people. Reading is essential for those who seek to rise above the ordinary according to Jim Rohn (n. d). The libraries have always seen and fought towards a better reading culture in our society. They do this because they are knowledge managers, they preserve and organize information and believe so much on the strength of a reader in the development of a nation. This is the reason for the assertion

by Seuss (n. d) as cited by Ajumobi (2017) that leaders are readers. He further explained that there is no doubt about it that people who read more are more likely to be seen as leaders to their peers due to their expert knowledge. The exotic places around the globe are known through reading, he added. Reading a book really is your magical portal to another universe. You are never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read. According to Ailakliu and Unegbu (2017) reading involves thinking process with attention focused on comprehension. Reading is not only for children or the extremely intelligent. Anyone who wants to read can read. Pay a visit to your library or book shops and find the right book for you! There are no excuses for not reading a book. Once you can read, the power is in your hands to do whatever you want with the knowledge.

It is the basis for a child's academic performance, as well as their overall success in life. Opportunities for personal fulfillment and professional success will eventually be missed if you can't read proficiently. Okebukola (2004) asserts that humans have the ability to transfer information to subsequent generations through reading; it allows one to listen to the wisdom of individuals of all eras. This is also stressed by different religious beliefs. Adenole (2001) noted that there is critical reading skill, which students need to be able to read, explore and appreciate a literary text effectively. Dike (2006) also maintained that the ability to read is critical skill for information retrieval. According to Nzeako (1982), the ability to read is a skill that a person can develop or acquire. This has become more necessary now than before, because in order to live well and succeed in our modern and complex world, which has become a reading world, one requires an effective reading skill. Consequently, the reading skill of the average Nigeria is full of such faults that emanate from:

- Moving of the lips and or vocalizing what he reads
- Reading all material at the same rate

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- Being frequently stopped by an unfamiliar word. Reading each word one by one which is a sign of short word - span and
- Back - tracking and re - reading words and/or lines.

The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy “study to show yourself approved unto God” (II Timothy 2: 15). Also, Islam holds acquisition of knowledge (literacy, reading etc) in high esteem. Even the Qur’an reveals that first communication (injunction) between Allah and Prophet Mohammed was knowledge - based, Iqara, meaning “read” or “recite” (Qu’ar 96: 1 - 5). Reading, according to Wikipedia (2018), is a complicated cognitive activity that involves decoding symbols in order to create or deduce meaning. Reading is the process of gathering information from printed or written sources. Reading, according to Oyeyemi (2005), is a method of accessing knowledge from better minds. Reading, according to Okwilagwe (1998), is "reasoning including the meaningful interpretation of words, phrases, and sentences, and it necessitates all sorts of thinking, including critical, analytical, creative, imaginative, evaluative, judgemental, and problem - solving."

Nduka in Osakwe et al! Reading, according to Wikipedia (2018), is a complicated cognitive activity that involves decoding symbols in order to create or deduce meaning. Reading is the process of gathering information from printed or written sources. Reading, according to Oyeyemi (2005), is a method of accessing knowledge from better minds. Reading, according to Okwilagwe (1998), is "reasoning including the meaningful interpretation of words, phrases, and sentences, and it necessitates all sorts of thinking, including critical, analytical, creative, imaginative, evaluative, judgemental, and problem - solving. " Reading requires you to think, feel and imagine. From the above, we can therefore infer that reading is a skill which is developed through continuous practice.

Hypothesis

- 1) There is no significant difference between reading skills exhibited by students in College of Health Sciences Nnewi Campus Library, Anambra State.
- 2) There is no significant difference between reading culture exhibited by students when age is considered as independent variable in College of Health Sciences Nnewi Campus Library, Anambra State.
- 3) There is no significant difference between students' reading habits when sex is considered as the independence variable.

2. Review of Literature

Reading Culture in Nigeria

Reading is a means for language acquisition, communication, and sharing information and ideas. The reading process requires continuous practice, development, and refinement. It also requires creativity and critical analysis. Reading culture is a foundation skill for learning and academic achievement, and in the wake of worldwide concerns with literacy rates, many nations have turned their attention towards reading instruction and strategies.

Reading culture is the long - term practice of instilling a positive reading attitude in students and youngsters. (2010, Akabuike) A person is considered to have a good reading culture if he reads books and other materials on a regular basis that are not necessarily related to his job or career (Gbadamosi, 2007). As a result, reading culture is a culture that promotes reading and studying as a means of growth and development. It is the type that sees continuous and dedicated reading of the information resources by pupils, children, students and adults for knowledge acquisition, which will be applied practically for development (Akabuike 2010). Reading is a talent that must be cultivated from an early age in a child's life. Children who have learned to read still require assistance in order to attain their full potential as readers. Ama et al (2011) observed that poor reading culture occurs among children and young people because reading is not considered a relevant leisure activity as it does not form part of their social interaction; reading, on the other hand, is seen as a lonely pastime that pales in comparison to interactive Internet engagement. Young people also have a strong desire to spend more time with their friends rather than reading. Adults and children alike, may enjoy television and films as a way of enjoying their leisure time instead of reading. Today, this has worsened with the advent of social media sites such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Flickers, Twitter Instagram Youtube etc.

In Nigeria, a study carried out by Henry (2004) reveals that 40 percent of Nigerian adults never read a non - fiction book from cover to cover after they finished school. Only 1% of successful men and women in Nigeria read one fiction or nonfiction book each month, while the typical Nigerian reads fewer than one book per year. According to the same survey, 30 million Nigerians graduated from high school with a low reading culture.

Ama et al (2011) stated that the way of life of a nation is influenced by the percentage of its citizen who are literate. They claim that Cuba, for example, is close to the United States and has the world's highest literacy rate. This is one of the reasons why, despite decades of diplomatic tensions with the world's most powerful nation, Cuba maintains a thriving economy. As a former British colony, Nigeria's literacy culture, according to Okusaga (2008), should be as standardized as Britain's. Almost everyone in the United Kingdom can read and write. Nigeria, on the other hand, cannot be claimed to be in the same boat.

According to Henry (2004), emerging nations, particularly in Africa, account for a large share of the world's 814 million illiterate people. However, Latin American, Asia and others are making frantic effort to drastically reduce the illiteracy rate but owing to the following reasons, the same cannot be said of Africa.

Today, the interest of most Nigerians has drastically diminished as the people are now more interested in watching television and films, browsing the Internet/web, among other forms of entertainment (Akabuike, 2010). This is to say that there is serious decline in reading culture among Nigerians. Malam Adamu Adamu, the past Minister of Education, during the 2017 Nigeria Annual Education Conference entitled “Achieving Inclusive Education through Innovative Strategies noted that over 68 percent illiterate

population of the country was a source of concern to the government. The event was organized by the British Council in Nigeria in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education concluded that Nigeria must rededicate itself to war against illiteracy by focusing intensely on girls and women. The minister suggested that a minimum of 10 literacy centre should be established in each of the 9, 572 wards with each centers enrolling a maximum of 30 learners in two sessions per annum. With that arrangement, 5.7 million adults would be made literate at the end of each year under the national literacy campaign thus about 23 million people would be literate in a few years. He went further to say that the high population of out - of - school children was the strongest evidence that Nigeria had failed to achieve one of Education For All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goal of universalizing access to primary education for all school - age children.

3. Methodology

This is an experimental survey study based on the ex - post facto design. A total of 200 readers that using the library service from January to February 2023 were sampled. The researcher obtained a sample of 200 students randomly selected from Nauth and Okofia library sites. The constructed instrument was designed and designated as reading culture among students (RCS). The instrument was structured questionnaire based on the profile of the respondents. A checklist was also used to obtain data on reading culture trends in the sampled schools within the period under study. The Likert – type scale technique was adopted for the scoring of the instrument. Respondents were free to agree or disagree with any statement on the questionnaire on a continuous ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree as follows:

- Strongly agree - 4 points
- Agree - 3 points
- Disagree - 2 points
- Strongly disagree - 1 point

The responses for each item were counted and scored. The tested for reliability through tests re - test method and employing the Pearson ‘r’ statistics for the reliability coefficient of 0.85 which showed the consistency of the instrument.

4. Results and Discussion

In analyzing the data, the t - test statistical tool was used.

Hypothesis I: The table I shows that there is no significant difference between reading skills among students in College of Health Sciences Nnewi Library, Anambra State.

Table I: Difference between reading skills among students by Sites

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	T. cal	Sig.	P
NAUTHSite	200	6.67	1.16	1.98	- 754	452	(N. S)
Okofia Site	200	26.07	2.82				

P. at 0.05: 452 = 0.05

The result in table I is in line with the opinion of scholars that combination of reading skills among male and female students impact ideas and information (Borenave, 1997). Okuma (1995) also suggested that emphasis to be placed on traditional forms of reading skills through interpersonal channels, which should then be complemented with appropriate technological media. In another study, Nwachukwu (1997) noted that reading skills and communication planners have come to acknowledge that a marriage of the different reading skills are most effective in reading habit in the library.

Hypothesis 2: T - test analysis on difference between reading culture exhibited by age of students in tertiary institution.

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	T. cal	Sig.	P
Respondents below 30 years	128	36.08	3.41	154.106	561	561	(N. S)
Respondents 30 years and above	72	36.36	3.23				

P. at 0.05: 561 = 0.05

The table 2 reveals that there is no significant difference between the perception of adults and youths on reading culture exhibited by students. According to Ajala (1993) this has thrown the population especially the youths into a state of psychological and emotional instability.

Hypothesis 3: T - test analysis of no significant difference between students’ reading habits when sex is considered as the independent variable in College of Health sciences Nnewi Campus, Library, Anambra State.

Table 3: Difference between reading habits of students by sex

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	T. cal	Sig.	P
Male	140	32.63	3.12	104.727	733	465	(N. S)
Female	60	33.00	3.35				

P. at 0.05: 561 = 0.05

Table 3 reveals that there is no significant difference between reading habits of students when sex is considered as the independent variable. This results confirms the position of scholars on factors facilitating reading habits among students by sex. Given the particular nature of Nigerian society, there may be tertiary to come up with policies that may not consider female students, not minding the negative impacts on reading habits on the female students.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

A reading nation is an informed nation. A non - reading nation is a deformed nation. Someone said “we are not backward because we are black, but we are backward because we are blind”. Nigeria is so rich that one can pick money from the streets. The question is “what value do we place on education, libraries and reading. We as a nation must return to the drawing board. This is because all readers eventually become are leaders and world changers. Reading

is for living and not just for passing examinations. Against this background, this paper has examined, reading, reading culture among Nigerians, the role of the library and has suggested some solutions to curb the menace of the poor reading culture in Nigeria.

The following suggestions are put forward as solutions to enhance reading culture in Nigeria:

- 1) Improved funding of education and libraries by extension
- 2) Establishment of functional libraries in schools, communities, organizations, religious bodies etc
- 3) Establishment of family libraries;
- 4) Formulating of enabling policies by government in schools that would enhance reading culture e. g. introduction of library hour or period in the school timetable, read a book a day policy reading clubs etc
- 5) All stakeholders like radio, television and newspaper publishing firms are to use their platforms to promote reading among the citizenry.
- 6) Libraries must strengthen our marketing skills to re-awaken the dying state of reading culture among Nigerians
- 7) Federal establishments and parastatal should endeavour to establish libraries in various establishments.

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