

ASSESSMENT OF READING HABITS AMONG STUDENTS OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, KADUNA POLYTECHNIC, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper discusses the assessment of reading habits among the students of Library and Information Science Department, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna. The population consisted of 68 ND1 students from the Library and Information Science Department of Kaduna Polytechnic. A survey research design was adopted, employing total enumeration to include all members of the population. Three research questions guided the study. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents read primarily to pass their examinations. Most respondents reported that they allocate time to reading mainly during examination periods, with some reading as infrequently as once a week. Finally, the major challenges hindering their reading include distractions from technology and other activities. The study concludes that students tend to concentrate their reading efforts primarily close to examination periods. It is recommended that lecturers and management of Kaduna Polytechnic strive to create positive learning environment with clear academic goals. They should also implement enlightenment and educational programmes, furthermore incorporating interactive reading activities-such as discussions, debates, and role-playing that could make reading more engaging and dynamic for students.

Keywords: *Assessment, Reading, Habit, Students, Library*

Introduction

Reading is an activity that leads to success in every aspect of human development and growth because it is basis for acquiring knowledge. For any society or individual to be successful in any field of study, reading as a habit is very important. Of all the learning skills, the reading skill is very relevant in comprehension and success for students. Reading is a total integrative process that starts with the reader and includes the affective, perceptual and cognitive domains. Obada (2011) asserts

that reading habit is the cultivation of an attitude and the possession of skills that makes reading pleasurable, regular and a consistent activity. It is a positive attitude and regular skill developed towards reading. Through reading, an individual gets developed in the three domains of education. Reading can therefore develop the individual affectively, cognitively as well as his psychomotor skills. To succeed in school, and invariably in life, means to be competent in reading. Reading is the meaningful interpretation of visual or

graphical symbols. Reading is a medium through which knowledge can be sought for and it is also a means where one can relieve stress. In doing this, one's horizon is broadened and the written words inscribed on a page helps in entertainment. As it is rightly stated, "Readers are Leaders". It can be deduced that when a student doesn't engage in reading, such student cannot perform well academically because such student will not have the adequate knowledge to achieve academic feat as what is require to do so is embedded in a recorded knowledge. In the same way, it will impact negatively on the academic performance of students who don't take reading serious in the course of their academic programmes. Therefore, no meaningful reading can be achieved if a habit of reading is not formed by the students or individuals in order to achieve academic excellence. In reading habit, we get two words 'reading and 'habit', reading is the process of decoding written symbols (like letters and words) to understand their meaning and construct an understanding of the text. It's a fundamental language skill that involves word recognition, comprehension, and fluency. Reading is an action of a person who reads and habit is a product of this action or learning. Like all other habits, the habit of reading in an individual, develops during the course of time

Reading habits are well-planned and deliberate pattern of study, which has attained a form of consistency on the part of students toward understanding academic subjects and passing examinations. Reading habits determine the academic achievements of students to a great extent. Both reading and academic achievements are interrelated and dependent on each other. Students often come from different environments and localities with different levels of academic

achievement. Therefore, they differ in the pattern of reading habits. While some students have good reading habits, others tend to exhibit poor reading habits. Academic achievement means how much knowledge the individual has acquired from the school (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012).

A creative and pragmatic education involves the habit of personal investigation. The act of personal investigation requires self-study to be followed by self-thinking and analysis. Self-study, otherwise referred to as reading at one's own accord, requires a habit, which is known as reading habit. Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. It is the reading habits which help the learner in obtaining meaningful and desirable knowledge. Good reading habits act as a strong weapon for the students to excel in life (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012).

According to Palani (2012), reading habit is an essential and important aspect for creating a literate society in this world. It shapes the personality of individuals and it helps them to develop proper thinking methods, and creates new ideas. However, the developments in the Mass Media had continued to influence interest in reading (hard copy of literatures such as books, magazines and journals, among others). Palani (2012) is of the opinion that, effective reading is an important avenue for effective learning and reading is interrelated with the total educational process and hence, educational success requires successful reading habit. He believes reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context. Before the

advent of the television, both the young and the old have enough time to read. Apart from teachers, other professionals used to spend their leisure time in reading both English and vernacular literature. Most schools usually demand extra reading from their students. But all these have become a thing of the past. Palani (2012) further added that, nowadays, reading habit has lost its importance as both the young and the old are glued to the television.

The importance of inculcating reading habit in students to enhance their academic activities cannot be over-emphasised. This is because there can be any meaningful achievement in a society that is educationally backward, students therefore need to form the habit of reading to be well-educated and informed so as to perform well in their academic and social activities as well as taking vital decisions for individual growth and national development. As a result, the need to assess the level of students reading habit and to suggest better measures to encourage and inculcate reading habit in students to enhance their academic performance is the purpose of this study.

Statement of the Problem

For an excellent performance in every field of study, most especially in academic environment, there is need for the students to form a good reading and study habits. This is because it is the basic for enhancing academic activities and performance of students. Reading has a powerful impact on a student's academic journey. According to (Samuel, 2022) Reading is not only about gaining knowledge, but aids in academic, social, and personal development as well. In spite of the importance of reading habit in students, it was observed that so many students do not take reading seriously during their academic programs, which impacts

negatively on the academic performance of such students. Presently, due to the influence of the mass media, people do not show much interest in reading books; magazines and journals, among others (Palani, 2012). The root causes of examination malpractices may be traceable to the prevalent poor reading interests and habits among the wide spectrum of students. In addition, the by-products of scientific and technological inventions and innovations have also contributed greatly to the dwindling fortunes of the good practice of reading among majority of the students. Today, many students prefer to watch movies on electronic media and entertainment platforms (Issa, 2012). Many parents and teachers complain about students of our generation who have not developed reading habits among themselves. In addition, officials of the West African Examinations Council and teachers of English complain of the kind of English written by today's generation of students (WAEC, 2008). The net result is the poor performance of many students in final examinations. One of the many issues confronting students nowadays is perhaps, not their inability to read but their lack of interest.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the reading habits of students, explore the factors contributing to poor reading engagement, and propose effective strategies for cultivating a robust reading culture to enhance academic performance and reduce examination malpractice.

Objectives of the Study

The study examined the Assessment of Reading Habit among the Students of Library and Information Science Department, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the purposes for which students engage in reading
2. Determine the average amount of time students dedicate to reading activities
3. Examine the factors that hinder the development of effective reading habits among the students

Review of Related Literature

Reading is key in the university context, an important element in academic and scientific activities, as a means of access to information and knowledge, and as an essential element for the acquisition of professional skills". Pérez, Baute and Espinoza, (2018) because several are the classroom activities, which are executed with readings; they can be readings of a poster, a flipchart, a slide, a PDF file, texts of some technological application, or other digital resources. The importance of reading, as a cardinal element of the learning process, is vindicated in the intervention of Federico García Lorca, distinguished Spanish poet of the Generation of 27, who when inaugurating a library in Fuente Vaqueros, Granada, his hometown expressed: "Many times a people sleeps like the water of a pond on a windless day, and a book or books can shake it and disturb it and teach it new horizons of improvement and harmony" (1931) quoted by Marquina (2019) an act that took place 92 years ago, and that in a very subtle way, determines the hierarchy of reading in the development of the peoples, because its pages take us to other planetary contexts under the author's keen optics, which allow us to creatively visualize the new scenarios for today's society. According to Owusu-Acheaw and Larson, (2014) Reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer and the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases skills in reading strategies.

Therefore, cultivating reading habits is tantamount to student's academic performance, According to Akabiuke and Asika, (2012) academic success at tertiary level is likely a multidimensional phenomenon that includes .languages proficiency, learning, study strategies and certain personal characteristics. These could be achieved only when students imbibe a good reading habit which will make such students a lifelong learner. Students who do the most voluntary reading are also usually the best students, Krashen (2013). Fromm (2020) argued that with the help of reading, individuals can critically evaluate and confirm their own thoughts and beliefs about right and wrong in society. The major factors militating against students reading habits nowadays is the social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, 2go etc. Students reading habits changed from paper based to internet based reading, students online information often everyday such as checking and sending of e-mails, chatting with friends, whatsApp, Twitter, listening to music, viewing online photo album, using Yahoo messenger, shopping online, fashion news, watching movie online, etc. These activities contribute significantly to the decline in reading habit. However, there are some factors that impede the reading habits of students. Saka (2012) stated that major problems affecting reading culture include lack of library period in school time table and lack of library in homes.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research method. The population comprised 71 ND 1 students 2024/2025 academic session in the Department Library and Information Science, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna. The study adopted survey research method. Nworgu (2015) views that descriptive

survey research is concerned with systematic description of events as they are, because it is aimed at collecting data on specific phenomena and describing the characteristics about the population of a given study. Total enumeration method for

the study was used because the population was manageable. 71 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 58 were returned, found usable and analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages, and means)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: What are the reasons why you read?

S/N	Reasons for reading	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Mean	Decision	
1.	I read to reduce stress and relax	-	15 (25.9%)	34 (58.6)	9 (15.5%)	2.10	Low	
2.	I read for the purpose of passing my examinations	23 (39.7%)	25 (43.1%)	9 (15.6%)	1 (1.7%)	3.21	High	
3.	I read for personal growth and development	1 (1.7%)	21 (36.2%)	28 (48.3%)	8 (13.8%)	2.26	Low	
4.	I read to know the current happenings both locally and globally	6 (10.3%)	34 (58.6%)	17 (29.3%)	1 (1.7%)	2.78	High	
5.	To develop my vocabulary level	2 (3.4%)	11 (19.0%)	37 (63.8%)	8 (13.8%)	2.12	Low	
6.	To enhance critical thinking	27 (46.6%)	28 (48.3%)	-	3 (5.2%)	2.41	Low	
7.	For acquiring new knowledge	12 (20.7%)	24 (41.4%)	20 (34.5%)	2 (3.4%)	2.79	High	
8.	To enhance my academic activities	21 (36.2%)	30 (51.7%)	3 (5.2%)	4 (6.9%)	3.17	High	

Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 2.50 = High; 2.00–2.49 = Low; < 2.00 = Very Low

Table 1: Table 1 presents responses from participants on the reasons why they engage in reading 4 items recorded high mean scores between 2.50-3.49. They include: Students most commonly for the purpose of passing my examinations (X=3.21), to enhance my academic activities (X=3.17), For acquiring new knowledge (X=2.79) and Students most read to know the current happenings both locally and globally (X=2.78). While 4 items recorded low mean scores, which are; to enhance critical

thinking (2.41), Students read for personal growth and development (2.26), Students most commonly read to reduce stress and relax (2.10) and to develop my vocabulary level (2.12).

The findings suggest that students prioritize reading for immediate academic benefits, such as examinations and coursework enhancement, over long-term developmental goals such as vocabulary building or critical thinking.

Table 2: How much time do spare for different reading purposes?

S/N	Period of reading	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Mean	Decision
1.	Everyday	5 (8.6%)	6 (10.3%)	21 (36.2%)	26 (44.8%)	1.83	Low
2.	Once / twice in a week	4 (6.9%)	25 (43.1%)	22 (37.9%)	7 (12.1%)	2.45	Low
3.	Once a week	4 (6.9%)	28 (48.3%)	22 (37.9%)	4 (6.9%)	2.55	High
4.	Two weeks	-	24 (41.4%)	30 (51.7%)	4 (6.9%)	2.34	Low
5.	Once in a Month	1 (1.7%)	9 (15.5%)	31 (52.4%)	17 (29.3%)	1.90	Low
6.	Only during the examination periods	15 (25.9%)	21 (36.2%)	19 (32.8%)	3 (5.2%)	2.83	High
7.	Never	-		21 (36.2%)	37 (63.8%)	1.36	Very Low

Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 2.50 = High; 2.00–2.49 = Low; < 2.00 = Very Low

Table 2: Shows that only two out of seven items recorded high mean scores, indicating limited time students dedicate to regular reading. The 2 items are; Only during the examination periods ($X=2.83$) and once a week ($X=2.55$). 5 items recorded low mean scores; Once or twice in a week ($X=2.45$), once in two weeks ($X=2.34$) Once in a Month ($X=1.90$), Everyday ($X=1.83$) and Never ($X=1.38$).

These findings suggest that students tend to read more out of necessity—particularly during examinations—than as part of a continuous learning habit. The low engagement with daily or weekly reading may impact long-term academic development and critical thinking.

Table 3: What are the factors hindering the effectiveness of your reading?

S/N	Problems	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Mean	Decision
1.	Lack of encouragement and support	5 (8.6%)	10 (17.2%)	21 (36.2%)	22 (37.9%)	1.97	Low
2.	Obsolete information resources and limited access to reading materials	6 (10.3%)	18 (31.0%)	23 (39.7%)	11 (19.0%)	2.33	Low
3.	Distractions from technology and other activities: mobile phones and social media	13 (22.4%)	28 (48.3%)	14 (24.1%)	3 (5.2%)	2.88	High
4.	Poor reading comprehension skills	3 (5.2%)	17 (29.3%)	24 (41.4%)	14 (24.1%)	2.16	Low
5.	Peer group influence (bad friends)	3 (5.2%)	22 (37.9%)	31 (53.4%)	2 (3.4%)	2.45	Low
6.	Home Environment	10 (17.2%)	21 (36.2%)	18 (31.0%)	9 (15.5%)	2.55	High
7.	Physical and mental defects	2 (3.4%)	10 (17.2%)	27 (46.6%)	19 (32.8%)	1.91	Low
8.	Bad teaching methods from lecturers	3 (5.2%)	8 (13.8%)	29 (50.0%)	18 (31.0%)	1.93	Low

Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 2.50 = High; 2.00–2.49 = Low; < 2.00 = Very Low

Table 3; Shows that 2 items indicated high mean scores while 6 indicated low mean scores on the level of agreement and disagreement on the problems affecting the students on reading. They are; Distractions from technology and other activities: mobile phones and social media ($X=2.88$) and Home environment ($X=2.55$). The 5 items with low mean scores are; Peer group influence (bad friends ($X=2.45$), Obsolete information resources and limited access to reading materials ($X=2.33$), Poor reading comprehension skills ($X=2.16$), Lack of encouragement and support ($X=1.97$), Bad teaching methods from lecturers ($X=1.93$) and Physical and mental defects ($X=1.91$).

These findings suggest that the students are more distracted from technology devices against allocating more time for their reading purposes.

Discussion of Findings

The findings have shown that the majority of the respondents indicated that the reason why they read is for the purpose of passing their examinations while to reduce stress and relax is the least among other reasons for reading. This is in line with the study of Saka (2012) who stated that major problems affecting reading culture include lack of library period in school time table and lack of library in homes.

The findings revealed that most respondents engage in reading primarily during examination periods and occasionally once a week among others and very few of the respondents indicated never. This report corroborates with the findings of Baron and Mangan (2021). That the college-level reading assignments have changed based on reports that faculty assign less reading and more multimedia resources currently than in the past. Moreover, there are concerns that current college students are reading less overall than previous generations of students (Schnee, 2018).

Lastly, the major challenges faced by the respondents for their various reading purposes are distractions from technology and other activities: Distractions from mobile phones and social media were major issues, while physical and mental impairments were the least reported. The finding corresponds with the report of Palani (2012) who posited that due to the influence of the mass media, people do not show much interest in reading books; magazines and journals, among others.

Conclusion

Based on the study, it is pertinent to state that inculcating reading habit and consistency in studying is a vital force that exposes students to organized knowledge in their various field of study and other areas of life, thus enhancing their academic performance. The paper concludes that respondents mostly read only during examination periods while distractions from social media and some digital devices consume much of their potential study time.

Recommendations

1. Lecturers and management of Kaduna Polytechnic should endeavour to create positive environment, clear goal-

achievements when the students form a habit of reading, address misconceptions about the value of education through targeted awareness and literacy campaigns. Also incorporate interactive reading activities, such as discussions, debates, and role-playing to make reading more dynamic and interesting. If this is done many students are more likely to develop sustained reading habits and not only for passing their examination as well as using the information resources in the library that are meant for them and eventually become lifelong learners.

2. Lecturers and school management should come up with a policy document that will inculcate reading habit in students by making use of the library atleast once a week just like what is obtainable in Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), Kaduna. This will increase the amount of time students spare for various reading purposes.

3. Lecturers should teach students (especially the students who are Internet Savvy) about digital literacy and the importance of minimizing distractions while using mobile technology. For example, the use of website blockers that limit access to distracting websites and also encourage students to reduce home-based distractions by utilizing the library for focused study sessions and make use of the library for their reading purposes.

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