

Innovations

Reading habits and academic outcome of students in secondary schools in warri south local government area, Delta state, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The imperativeness of appropriate reading habit cannot be overrated in academic adventure. Underperformance is traced to ineffective reading habit. The review was therefore aimed at finding out the role reading habit play in the academic outcome of secondary schools students in Warri Local Government Area in Delta State. Specifically, the purpose was to discover causes of students' low reading habit, factors influencing their reading pattern, the time the students invest in studying, and the effects on the students' academic success. Descriptive survey design was used in this work. The population was 11,512 students out of which 230 students were sampled from five schools using simple random sampling. Questionnaire validated by experts was employed to elicit information from students. Also, to ensure the instrument's reliability, it was subjected to a pilot test which was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient that yielded correlation coefficient of 0.72. Mean statistics was employed in answering the posed research questions. The outcome affirmed that the prominent causes of dwindling reading habit exhibited by students of Warri Local Government Area in Delta State include inadequate support from parents from the home front with mean of 3.21 and std of 0.84, high prices of books and absence of book clubs in schools with a mean of 3.17, std of 0.96, and 3.48 std of 0.50 respectively. Furthermore, the desire for better grades, opportunity to read in class and improve communication skill, influenced their reading positively. It was also established that more than half of the students spend one hour and below to read resulting in low academic outcome. The study has shown that the academic outcome of students in Warri South Local Government Area is hampered by low reading habit associated by inadequate libraries in all secondary schools. Students must be allowed access to books in schools and public libraries. Also, government should establish measures to reduce watching habits of films, video games and provide reward system for those who can read certain number of books at the end of every session. Ability to write and read must be a prerequisite for admission into primary and secondary schools in Delta State.*

Keywords: *Reading, Reading Habit, Academic Outcome, School Library, Secondary school, Students, examination*

Introduction

Habit is an action that a person consistently and repeatedly perform which eventually becomes a way of life and a behavioural cycle. Habit is exhibited in what is done and how it is done on a regular basis. Marenga(2016) explained that habit is gradually created, and the fact that its emergence is not an overnight process, it will be difficult to break it once it is established. People can therefore develop various habits which include watching habit or viewing habit, study habit including reading habit. Reading is the art of interpreting and analysing printed symbols into an articulated, educative and informative sound or words. Erdem (2015) viewed reading as the capacity to interpret printed materials and symbols on pages into speech to establish their meanings. Ari(2017) posited that reading means voicing out of symbol and alphabets which leads to the understanding of thought. Furthermore, Ayoti (2015) viewed reading to be a cognitive procedure of interpreting and decoding arranged words. Reading involves looking at and comprehending the meaning of written symbols (Aina *et al* 2011; Ibrahim *et al* 2017). Reading improves ones writing skills, improves spoken language such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures. Reading skill should be consciously developed and nurtured because it serves as a fundamental tool necessary for education and most effective way of deliberate learning

Reading habit today has become a global skill that must not be underrated as it has become a tool required for comprehension and exceling in all academic strives. Reisz (2016) affirmed that some entrants admitted into the citadel of learning lacked required thinking skills and reading culture to excel.

Literature review

Reading Habit

Reading habit is a behaviour that indicate the urge to read. This is why students with such habit master content easily. To such students, reading is a hobby because such activity have been on going on regular basis. Reading habits are generally measured with the number of books read, frequency of reading along with average time spent on reading (Wagner, 2002). (Palani, 2012) posited that reading habit is an indispensable and crucial features of establishing a literate society. Reading habits are a well organized and systemic routine of study that has resulted in a level of consistency on the part of students leading to thorough understanding of academic subjects and excelling in internal and external examination. Good academic performance have been discovered to boast students self-esteem in school(Islam, 2021).

(Enamen, 2015) viewed reading habit as the act of reading regularly to seek information and knowledge which helps to develop reading culture as a way of life. Reading plays an important role at the various levels of educational environment. Habitual reading effectively foster in students' intellectual growth. To develop reading culture, (Ruterana, 2012) explained that it calls for everyday reading, spending quality time, with commitment and consistency in reading. Several factors have been observed to have influence students reading habit. These factors either plays a negative or positive role in the academic outcome of the students.(Julius, 2006)discovered that among the challenges affecting students reading habit are lack of parental support, lack of reading material both at home and in school and also absence of reading activities at schools. This is in agreement with (Ajila and Olutola, 2000) who observed that condition of the home, parental status, background and location play vital role in their children reading habit and eventual academic outcome either positively or negatively.

Students Reading Habit and Academic Outcome

Students' desire today is to excel in examinations. To achieve this they employ several methods and reading strategies. Saad el ta (2018) posited in their study on medical students study habit that study pattern, concentration and time managements constituted some of the strategies employed by the students. They therefore study to pass examination or complete assignment and not for pleasure or general knowledge/information alone. Reading for pleasure and relaxation also improve reading habit, academic

outcome and job prospects (Hurst, et al 2017). A well-developed reading habit enhances students study skills, boost retention, improve performance, broaden knowledge of information resources which leads to information healthy society.(Tella and Akande, 2007, and Uwaifo, 2011).Today, students' pleasure and relaxation has drastically moved from reading to watching television, playing video games, Face booking, instagram, tiktok, telegram, whatsapp, snapchart and others found in the internet, computers and the phones. So, they do more of watching, charting and viewing with short comments and less reading. The trend has moved from reading habit to watching habit, charting habit and viewing habit. Since reading habit has been relegated to the background, students no longer read, this has affected their success in school, Students academic outcome is determined by measurement index used in the subjects area, hence the outcome aligns with the knowledge acquired by the students over a set period of time(Abdullah, 2016)

Teachers Roles in Students Reading Habits

The role of teachers in students' successful outcome in school is very pivotal. This suggest that teachers technique in teaching, their attitude and behavior influences students desire to study and excel (David, 2016). The teachers' responsibility is therefore to galvanize students interest in reading by motivating them through teaching, reading, quiz, debate puzzles and other activities that will directly impact the students reading habits. Furthermore, studies have proved that instructors/teachers activities in ensuring students complete their assignment of face some consequences have increase their level of reading before the commencement of lectures (Starcher and Proffitt,2011). Islam, (2021) recommended that teachers should assist students to develop self esteem, improve their study habit, have a mapped out reading plan and create a relaxed and conducive learning atmosphere. Learning environment is an enforcer of students learning outcome. A conducive environment makes learning worthwhile and it comprises of a well equipped classroom, articulated programs such that will include essay writing, spelling bee and reading competition. It therefore implies at this juncture that classrooms must stimulate the urge to read. To make this realistic, every classroom should have a mini library section with relevant books, magazines, newspapers, novels across digital divide for students under the supervision of the teacher librarian.

Use of libraries and Students' Academic Outcome

Libraries are places were students source for materials both in prints and soft copies for information, leisure and academic purposes. The imperativeness of libraries in promoting reading habit and improving student academic outcome cannot be overemphasized. Sakirudeen and Sanni,(2017) posited that students that avail themselves of the opportunity of using the library achieve higher academic success than those who do not.Stone and Ramsden, (2013) lays credence to this when they opined that using the library is a pointer to students successful academic outcome. It is therefore suggestive that lack of libraries at schools and homes must have hampered students reading culture. Uwaifo, (2011) affirms this while citing Arko-Cobban, (2004)explained that one of the many objectives of school library is the promotion of reading habit and activation of studentscareer interest.

It is also sad to note that most schools time table do not have time allocated for reading. Most of the schools do not have libraries and those schools that have libraries do not have books in their libraries, while others have obsolete books on their shelves (Uwaifo 2011). Other schools do not have club/society that will help students develop the flair for reading.

Furthermore, time spent on reading is very paramount. (Onagu *etal*, 2017) observed that 47.2% respondents spent 2 – 4 hours in reading. The study also revealed that 8.3% of the respondents read above 6 hours. (Leilah, 2016) reported that 54% of the students read less than 15 minutes per day. While 18% read above 30% per day. (Franziska and Maximilian, 2019) observed that the college students used in their research spend 30 – 60 minutes on the average to read during their spare time. While secondary school students spend 1 to 2 hours to read each day in order to excel in their studies. All there glaring challenges are begging for solutions, hence the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to establish the causes and effect of poor reading habit among secondary school students in Warri Local Government area of Delta State. Specifically, the study will examine

- the causes of poor reading habit;
- the factors that influence students reading habit and their academic outcome;
- effect of reading habit on students’ academic outcome

- the time students invest in reading.

Research Questions

- What are the causes of poor reading habit of secondary school students?
- What are the factors that influence students reading habit and their academic outcome?
- What are the effects of poor reading habit on students’ academic outcome?
- How much time do the students invest in reading?

Methodology

Description survey design was adopted for this work and it is a quantitative study that explores questions pertaining to the reading habit of students. The population for this study was 11,512 students from Warri South local Government Area in Delta State Nigeria. The sample used was 230 students using random sampling selected from five schools. A self-designed questionnaire titled Reading Habit and Academic Outcome of Students Questionnaire (RHAOSQ) was used. The questionnaire had five sections , Section A obtained information on students Bio Data, Section B was Response on causes of poor reading habit, Section C was on Factors influencing students reading habit and their academic performance. Section D beams search light on Effect of reading habit on students’ academic outcome while Section E was Response on time students invest in reading. A four point rating scale was used in the order of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Disagreed (D).To establish the reliability, a pilot text was done in the school outside the study area and the result was analyzed using pearson product moment correlation coefficient which yielded correlation coefficient of 0.72. The data collected were analyzed using mean statistics in answering the research questions. All the questionnaires were retrieved because the researchers and five research assistants supervised the process and collected the questionnaires on the spot.

Research Question One: What are the causes of poor reading habit of secondary school students?

Table 1: Response on causes of poor reading habits of students

S/N	Items Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Scarcity of book to read in my school.	73 (31.7%)	102 (44.3%)	40 (17.4%)	15 (6.5%)	3.01	Agree
2.	Lack of home support for reading.	98 (42.6%)	96 (41.7%)	23 (10%)	13 (5.7%)	3.21	Agree
3.	Inadequate reading materials at home.	101 (43.9%)	57 (24.7%)	38 (16.5%)	34 (14.7%)	2.98	Agree
4.	Lack of book club in the school.	110 (47.8%)	120 (52.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.48	Agree
5.	Absence of reading culture.	101 (43.9%)	50 (21.7%)	38 (16.5%)	41 (17.8%)	2.98	Agree

6.	Inability to read.	34 (14.7%)	21 (9.1%)	87 (37.8%)	88 (38.3%)	2.00	Disagree
7.	Poor reading technique.	50 (21.7%)	80 (34.3%)	50 (21.7%)	50 (21.7%)	2.57	Agree
8.	Lack of functional library in the school.	21 (9.1%)	34 (14.7%)	75 (32.6%)	100 (43.5%)	1.90	Disagree
9.	Inability to comprehend after reading.	91 (39.6%)	88 (38.3%)	38 (16.5%)	13 (5.7%)	3.15	Agree
10.	Lack of trained librarian or teacher librarian to motivate students reading habits in my school.	75 (32.6%)	102 (44.3%)	15 (6.5%)	38 (16.5%)	2.93	Agree
11.	High price of books and other reading material due to lack of fund	110 (47.8%)	70 (30.4%)	30 (13.0%)	20 (8.7%)	3.17	Agree
Aggregate mean					2.84		
Agree Criterion mean					2.50		

Table 1 points out the causes of poor reading habits of students. Based on the mean scores of all the items, 1, 2, 4, 9 and 11 which is above 3.0 showing that the major causes of poor reading habits of students are scarcity of books, lack of home support for reading, lack of book club in the school, inability to comprehend after reading as well as high price of books and other reading materials. Other causes though less than 3.0 are absence of reading culture, poor reading techniques, lack of trained librarians to motivate students to read have also contributed to poor reading habit of the students. All these have mean score of over 2.50

Research Question Two: What are the factors influencing students reading habit and their academic outcome?

Table 2: Factors influencing students reading habit and students' academic outcome

S/N	Items Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	I have high interest in reading books generally and desire good performance.	91 (39.6%)	88 (38.3%)	38 (16.5%)	13 (5.7%)	3.12	Agree
2.	I have library at home.	12 (5.2%)	28 (12.2%)	99 (43.0%)	91 (39.6%)	1.83	Disagree
3.	Time is allocated for reading in the school time table.	17 (7.4%)	21 (9.1%)	91 (39.6%)	101 (43.9%)	1.80	Disagree
4.	My parents' guide me on what to read and how to read	50 (21.7%)	50 (21.7%)	80 (34.7%)	50 (21.7%)	2.43	Disagree
5.	My parents encourage me to develop the habit of reading from early age for good performance.	80 (34.7%)	91 (36.6%)	38 (16.5%)	21 (9.1%)	3.0	Agree
6.	My parents are literate and they have the necessary text and reading materials for me to read for my success in examination.	39 (12.6%)	16 (6.9%)	110 (47.8%)	75 (32.6%)	1.99	Disagree

7.	My teacher create opportunity for students to read books in class.	91 (36.6%)	80 (34.7%)	32 (13.9%)	27 (11.7%)	3.02	Agree
8.	My teacher encourage me to read novels, short stories and other materials which boast my reading habit.	99 (43.0%)	96 (41.7%)	13 (5.7%)	22 (9.6%)	3.18	Agree
9.	The desire for good performance push me to read always.	88 (38.3%)	80 (34.7%)	29 (12.6%)	33 (14.3%)	2.97	Agree
10.	My teacher's method of teaching and reading is interesting and motivating.	99 (43.0%)	91 (36.6%)	13 (5.7%)	27 (11.7%)	3.13	Agree
Aggregate mean						2.97	
Agree Criterion mean						2.50	

Table 2 shows the factors influencing the reading habit of students. Based on the mean score of items 1, 5, 7, 8 and 10 which is above 3.0, it is concluded that majority of the students strongly agreed and agreed that they have interest in reading generally and desire good performance, my parents encourage me to develop the habit of reading from an early age, for good performance, my teachers create opportunity for students to read books in the class as well as novels, short stories and other materials as well as my teachers encourage me to read novels, short stories and other materials which boast my reading habit and teachers' method of teaching and reading is interesting and motivating are factors that influenced them to read which resulted in the positive outcome in their examinations. However, it is important to note that items 2, 3, and 6 falls less than the criterion mean of 2.50 which revealed that having library at home, time allocate for reading in school time table and parent been literate do not influence students reading habit positively and could therefore hamper their academic outcome.

Research Question Three: What are the effect of reading habit on students' academic outcome?

Table 3: Effect of reading habit on students' academic outcome

S/N	Items Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	It helps me to express myself effectively in class	110 (47.8%)	88 (38.3%)	15 (6.5%)	10 (4.3%)	3.24	Agree
2.	It has helped to improve my grades in school	80 (34.7%)	101 (43.8%)	29 (12.6%)	20 (8.7%)	3.05	Agree
3.	It makes me feel proud of myself	91 (36.6%)	88 (38.3%)	38 (16.5%)	13 (5.7%)	3.12	Agree
4.	At times I feel bored and sleep off because I am not used to reading.	50 (21.7%)	80 (34.7%)	50 (21.7%)	50 (27.7%)	2.57	Agree
5.	Whenever I sleep off, I end up not reading and that affect my grade negatively.	91 (39.6%)	100 (43.5%)	10 (4.3%)	29 (12.6%)	3.10	Agree
6.	It makes me perform better academically.	110 (47.8%)	80 (34.7%)	27 (11.7%)	13 (5.7%)	3.25	Agree
7.	It enhances my communication skills.	99 (43.0%)	91 (38.7%)	28 (12.2%)	12 (5.2%)	3.25	Agree

8.	It broadens my knowledge.	96 (43.0%)	101 (43.9%)	12 (5.2%)	21 (9.1%)	3.18	Agree
9.	Reading always is the reason for my academic achievement.	50 (21.7%)	80 (34.7%)	50 (21.7%)	50 (21.7%)	2.57	Agree
10.	My reading habit is very poor so I am not able to perform well in school.	75 (32.6%)	57 (24.7%)	45 (19.6%)	53 (23%)	2.67	Agree
11.	I spend less than I hour every day to read, so my grades are weak.	80 (34.7%)	57 (24.7%)	55 (23.9%)	38 (16.5%)	2.78	Agree

Aggregate mean 2.97 Agree Criterion mean 2.50

Table 3 revealed the effects of students reading habits on their academic performance. Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 and mean rates above 3.0. This indicates that 198 (86.1%) strongly agreed/agreed that reading habit help them to express themselves well in class. 78.5% of students affirms that reading habit helped them to improve their grades, 82.5 confirmed that reading habits helped them to perform better academically. Furthermore, 82.6 students as well as 85.6 students strongly agreed/agreed that reading habit has enhanced their communication skills and broaden their knowledge. However, other item also rated above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that student reading habit have effect on their academic performance but in this case, it is a negative effect as show in the item 4, 5, 10 and 11 stating that, at times I feel bored and sleep off because I am not used to reading, whenever I sleep off, I end up not reading and that affects my grade negatively, my reading habit is very poor so I am not able to perform well in school and I spend less than an hour every day to read so my grades are weak.

Research Question 4:How much time do students invests in reading?

Table 4: Response on time students invest in reading

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	30 minutes- 1 Hour	121	52.6%
2.	1 – 2	76	33.0%
3.	2 – 3	20	8.7%
4.	4 Hour and above	13	5.7%
	Total	230	100%

Table 4 revealed that 121 (52.6%) students spent 30 minutes – 1 hour for reading, 76 (33.0%) of the students spend 1 – 2 hours while 20 (8.7%) students indicated that they spend 2 – 3 hours to read. However, only 13 representing (5.7%) of the students read 4 hours and above.

Discussions

The study found out that the major causes of poor teaching habit in students include scarcity of books, lack of home support from parents, lack of book club in the school, inability to comprehend after reading as well as high price of books. This is affirmed by the finding of (Julius , 2006) and (Ajila and Olutola , 2000) that lack of Parental supports, lack of reading materials both at home and schools, parental status and location are some of the causes of poor reading habit. It is also observed that high cost of books was not a problem to students of Ankara University and Erciyes University (Erdem, 2015) unlike this study. Also established is that these students lack reading culture and reading techniques. The absence of school librarians to motivate these students to read and build reading habit could be a contributing factor to their

poor reading culture and techniques. Reading becomes burdensome when there is no encouragement and enthusiasm from the home front or the school.

Furthermore, the study revealed that among the factors that influence the reading habit of students are their high interest in reading and desire for good performance at school. Encouragement from their parents to read at home early to enable them achieve good academic outcome. Another important factor influencing students reading habit include the opportunity created by teachers for students to read in class, read novels, short-stories as well as motivating teachers method of reading and teaching in the class. This affirmed that reading and teaching skills or habit benefits the practitioners such as students in schools (Nalusiba, 2010 and Aina, 2011).

The finding further established that there is a positive effects of students reading habit on students' academic outcome. This is reflected in students agreeing that reading habit help them to express themselves in class and improves their communication skills. Also, it has led to improved grades in school, leading to improved academic output, broaden their general knowledge and become proud of themselves. This is in consonance with (Owusu and Larson, 2014), (Uwaifo, 2011), (Akintola, 2007),(Tella and Akande, 2007) that reading frees the mind from ignorance, and becomes essential apparatus for transferring information and knowledge into effective use not for pleasure alone but for academic activities. Furthermore, this findings concur with (Islam, 2021)that good academic performance boast students self esteem. This study has established that the students are proud of themselves, boast their self worth and also, communicate intelligently. This means that they can discuss with people of any class, status or cadre with great confidence.

The study finally revealed that 52.6% (121) respondents spend 30 minutes to 1 hour for reading, 33.0% (76) respondents spend 1 – 2 hours reading while 8.7% (20) respondents indicated that they spend 2 – 3 hours reading. However, only 5.7% (13) respondents spend 4 hours and above reading. This finding contradicts (Oriagu *et al*, 2017) that 3.3% of his respondents of 180 spent less than 1 hour to read. This implies that 96.7% spend over 1 hour reading. This study revealed that students of Warri L.G.A in Delta State do not invest reasonable time for reading as majority of them do not read beyond 1 hour. This is a disadvantage position for these students in the attainment of success academically.

Conclusion

The study on reading habit and academic outcome of secondary school students established that the major causes of poor reading habit of students include scarcity of books, lack of support of parents, high cost of reading materials as well as unavailability of book clubs in schools and students inability to comprehend after reading. Moreover, it was also established that some factor influencing the reading habit of students positively include the desire for good grade which has spur up their interest in reading. Inclusive is the opportunity created by their teachers for them to read in class, read novels and short stories. It was also discovered that good reading habit led to improvement in students' communication skills, improved academic outcome and increased self-esteem. Finally, it was established that majority of the students spend 30 minutes to 1 hour for reading which is not encouraging at all. It can therefore be deduced that these students interest are in other things than reading. It is therefore assumed that these students could properly be spending more time in watching films, playing games, chatting, send text messages, tweeting and other social media activities.

Way forward

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that school libraries be provided in all secondary schools and should be well equipped. Also, every classroom should have a mini library attached to it for quick access to reading materials.

Time should be allocated for reading in the school timetable in all schools. Students should be encouraged to read and borrow books from the school libraries under the supervision of the school/ teacher librarian.

Parents should get their children books to read at early age and continue to encourage them to read for pleasure and for academics. They are to show good examples to these children by reading at home and make reading culture a norm.

Measures should be put in place by parents, teachers and government to regulate the use of video games, facebook, instagram, tiktok snapchat and other time consuming platforms by students in primary and secondary schools.

Expensive text books should be made available by government, publishers and NGOs for students in both schools and public libraries so that students can have access to them. There should be award for children/students at the end of every session for reading certain number of books, reading prowess and academic excellence.

Finally students reading and writing dexterity should be accessed, scored and also become yardstick for admission into secondary schools everywhere.

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