

A STUDY OF THE READING HABITS OF STUDENTS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OYO TOWN

By

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Abstract

This paper focused on the reading habits of students in four selected secondary schools in Oyo town. The study was designed to find out the difference in the reading habits of the students in selected secondary schools in Oyo town. It is also aimed at finding solutions to poor reading habits, among the students. A survey questionnaire was used to gather information from 800 students that were randomly selected from four secondary schools in Oyo town. The data collected were analysed using Frequency, Mean, Standard deviation and t-test statistics. Findings showed that the respondents were not encouraged to develop positive reading habits by their parents, school as well as the community. The study recommended that government makes provision for well equipped and functional libraries in all schools to enable students to imbibe good reading habits and skills. Parents, librarians, teachers and government should work together to inculcate positive reading habits in children at various stages of their lives.

Introduction

Reading is an important skill in everyday life. Through it, we acquire new ideas, obtain needed information, seek support for our ideas, add to our personal pleasure and broaden our interest, (Dale 2004). Many authors have described reading in different ways at different times. From the *World book encyclopedia*, reading has been described as an act of

interpreting printed and written words. To some authors, reading is saying all of the words correctly. Reading is understanding, (Children Encyclopedia, 1970).

Agbo (1999) in his own contribution described reading as the ability of the brain to perceive, recognize, interpret and express orally, codified images shapes and symbols. Many studies have been carried out on the issue of reading habits of Nigerians: Ademuwagun (1970), Fayose (1989) and Umo (1978). From these studies it was discovered that Nigerians are not a reading people because the majority of the populace are still illiterates hence so much efforts have to be made to inculcate reading values in the society. Major causes of poor reading habits among Nigerian children have been attributed to poor linguistic background, poor school environment, poor teaching and poor social environment. (Agbo 1999). However, reading is one of the four basic skills in language learning which ought to have been acquired during the early age. So the home, school and the society need to make remarkable efforts to encourage good habits among their subjects. This study was carried out to study the reading habits of students in selected secondary schools in Oyo-town.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To identify the reading habits of secondary school students in Oyo town.
2. To find out the differences in the reading habits of students in selected secondary schools.
3. To find out if there are differences in the reading habits of male and female students in the selected secondary schools.
4. To find out if there is a difference between the reading habits of private school students and public school students.

Methodology

A questionnaire was used in collecting data for this study. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, part one solicits for demographic data of the respondents, while part two contained ten (10) questions, soliciting data on the status of parents; presence of library at home and in the school, library periods included on the time-table, frequency of library use and purpose of using the library. The population of the study was drawn from four selected secondary schools namely: Oranyan Grammar School, Comprehensive High School Koso, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education. Model High School and Ladigbolu Grammar School, Oyo. The random sampling technique was used in selecting the study population. A total of 800 copies of the questionnaire were randomly administered to JS I, II, III and SS I and II students. The SS III students were not included because they were writing their final year examination as at the time of this research.

The study tested the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between reading habits of male and female students.
2. There is no significant difference between reading habits of students in private schools and public schools.
3. There is no significant difference between the reading habits of students from high economic and low economic background.
4. There is no significant difference between the reading habits of students whose parents are literates and whose parents are illiterates.

Methods of Data Analysis

The frequency, means, standard deviation, T-test statistics were used to analyse the data collected.

RESULTS

Table 1: Reading Habits of Male and Female Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	T _{cal}	T _{obs}	Sig (0.05)
Male	370	13.26	9.51	798	0.38	1.96	NS
Female	430	13.24	6.66				

In table 1, the $t_{\text{calculated}}$ is 0.38 while t_{observed} is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. Meaning that $t_{\text{calculated}}$ is less than t_{observed} at 0.05 level. Hence, the result is not significant. This implies that the reading habit of the male students is not different from that of the female students. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between reading habit of male and female students is accepted.

Table 2: Reading Habits of Private and Public Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	T _{cal}	T _{obs}	Sig (0.05)
Private	400	15.38	10.53	789	2.383	1.96	Significant
Public	400	14.05	6.09				

In table 2, the $t_{\text{calculated}} = 2.383$ while $t_{\text{observed}} = 1.96$ and $df = 798$. Meaning that $t_{\text{calculated}}$ is more than t_{observed} at 0.05 level. Hence, the result is significant. That is there is a significant difference between the reading habit of students of private schools and public schools. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between reading habits of students of private schools and public schools is rejected.

Table 3: Reading Habits of Students from High and Low Economic Background

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	T _{cal}	T _{obs}	Sig (0.05)
High Economic Background	380	15.17	10.41	798	1.977	1.96	Significant
Low Economic Background	420	14.06	6.24				

In table 3, the $t_{\text{calculated}} = 1.977$ while the $t_{\text{observed}} = 1.96$. Meaning that $t_{\text{calculated}}$ is greater than t_{observed} at 0.05 level. Hence, the result is significant. That is there is significant difference in the reading habit of students from high economic background and those from low economic background. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between reading habit of students from high economic background and that of low economic background is rejected.

Table 4: Reading Habits of Students from Whose Parent were Literate and Non Literate

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	T _{cal}	T _{obs}	Sig (0.05)
Literate	300	15.38	9.29	798	2.357	1.96	Significant
Illiterate	500	14.01	6.93				

In table 4, the $t_{\text{calculated}} = 2.357$ while $t_{\text{observed}} = 1.96$. Meaning that $t_{\text{calculated}}$ is greater than t_{observed} at 0.05 level. Hence, the result is significant. That is the reading habit of students whose parents are literate is higher than those whose parents are illiterate. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between reading habits of students whose parents are literate and those whose parents are illiterate is rejected.

Table 5: Frequency of Library Use

School	Everyday	%	Twice A week	%	Once A month	%	Exam	%
Public	168	55.26	176	41.50	08	33.33	40	83.30
Private	136	44.74	248	58.50	16	66.66	08	16.70
Total	304	100.0	424	100.0	24	100.0	48	100.0

Table 1 reveals the rates at which the students in both private and public schools make use of the library. It is observed in table 1 that the number of students using the library everyday in public school is 168 (55.26%) while in private school is 136 (44.74%). Those who came to the library twice a week in public schools are 176 (41.50%), and those who visited the library twice a week in private schools are 248 (58.50%). In the public schools, 8 (33.33%), students did come to the library once a month while in the private schools it was 16 (66.66%) students. During examination period 40 students (83.30%) visited the library in public schools but in the case of private schools only 8 (16.70%) of the students came to the library. The rate at which the private school students were making use of the library was higher compared to public school students. This may be due to existence of boarding facilities in private school so they could afford to stay in the library for so long.

Table 6: Reasons for Using the Library

Schools	Reading		Studying		Assignment		Recreation	
	AG	DA	AG	DA	AG	DA	AG	M
Public	392 98%	08 2%	376 94%	24 6%	204 56%	176 44%	48 12%	352 88%
Private	344 86%	56 14%	368 925	32 85	120 30%	280 70%	56 14%	344 86%

AG - Agreed

DA - Disagreed

Table 2 reveals the major reasons for using the library by the students. The table shows that 98 percent and 86 percent of the students in both public and private schools respectively agreed that the purpose of coming to the library was to read while 2 percent and 14 percent in both schools disagreed with it. Also 94 percent and 92 percent of the students agreed that the main reasons for coming to the library was to study, only 6 percent and 8 percent in the two schools disagreed with the notion. In addition, 12 percent and 14 percent of the students agreed that they used the library for recreation while those who disagreed in public and private schools were 88 percent and 86 percent respectively. Lastly the percentage of those who come to the library for assignment mainly in both schools is 56 percent and 30 percent while those who disagreed were 44 percent and 70 percent respectively. The purpose of coming to the library was established by Aina (1981) in his definition of library. He described library as a collection of books and non-book media kept for reading, studying and consultation. This is the main reason why majority of the students in both private and public schools use the library for reading and studying.

Table 7: Library Facilities

School	Well Ventilated		Lighted		Table & Chairs		Book Shelves		Library Catalogue	
	AG	DA	AG	DA	AG	DA	AG	DA	AG	DA
PUBLIC	256 64%	144 36%	368 92%	32 8%	384 96%	16 4%	280 70%	120 30%	18 45%	382 95%
PRIVATE	352 88%	48 12%	336 84%	64 16%	384 96%	16 4%	184 46%	216 54%	16 4%	384 96%

AG - Agreed

DA - Disagreed

In Table 7, the facilities present in both private and public schools were highlighted. It must be observed that percentages of respondents who agreed that public schools were endowed

with light, tables and chairs, book shelves, library catalogue were stated as follows: 64 percent, 92 percent, 96 percent, 70 percent and 45 percent respectively, while the percentages of those who disagreed were summarized as follows: 36 percent, 8 percent, 4 percent, 40 percent, 95:5 percent respectively. In private schools the percentages of those who agreed that their libraries have resources needed are 88 percent, 84 percent, 96 percent, 46 percent, 4 percent respectively. Those who disagreed were summarized as follows: 12 percent, 16 percent, 4 percent, 54 percent, 96 percent respectively. Generally, greater percentage of the students agreed that they have libraries with adequate facilities. The only resources which is considered as inadequate is library catalogue.

Almost all the schools were not endowed with library catalogue because they could not avoid it. Also another reason was that majority of the schools did organize the library materials in alphabetical order so they could afford not to use library catalogue. The findings however revealed that all the school libraries under review are well ventilated, and equipped with good tables and chairs with book shelves which can encourage the development of reading culture among the students.

Table 8: Library Materials

	Books		Fiction		Non Fiction		Non Books	
	AG	DA	AG	DA	AG	DA	AG	DA
PUBLIC	368 92%	32 8%	24 6%	376 94%	104 26%	296 74%	128 32%	272 68%
PRIVATE	328 82%	72 18%	16 4%	384 96%	304 76%	240 96%	260 65%	140 35%

Table 8 reveals the types of library materials the school were endowed with: books and non-book media resources covering both fiction and non friction. From the table it can be observed that both the public and private schools were endowed with books but not with non-book resources. For instance, in public

schools 92 percent agreed that they have books while in private schools, 82 percent agreed while those who disagreed in both schools were 8 percent and 18 percent respectively.

In case of non-book resources 6 percent and 4 percent agreed while 94 percent and 96 percent disagreed, that their libraries have non-book materials. This shows that public and private schools were not endowed with non books because they could not afford it and it was expensive. Also it was observed from the table above that the schools were endowed with fiction and non-fiction resources. About 26 percent and 76 percent agreed that in the of schools that they had books on fiction while 74 percent and 24 percent disagreed. In addition, 32 percent and 65 percent of the students agreed that they had non fiction materials while 68 percent and 35 percent disagreed and desired that they did not have such materials in both the private and public schools.

Since greater percentage of students agreed that their school libraries were endowed with books this implies that one basic requirement for developing good reading habits is the availability of books in their schools. However, majority of the books that were available in these libraries were worn out and obsolete.

Conclusion & Recommendation

From the results analyzed it could be concluded that the four selected secondary schools in Oyo-town were endowed with library resources but the students have not developed a positive reading habit. This shows that it is not enough for a school to have good library only, the students should also be encouraged to make use of library by allowing them to have easy access to the library books creating library period on the school time-table, giving them assignment that will encourage them to visit the library. Forming book club in the school and encouraging them to buy and exchange books on their own is encouraged.

In addition to developing good reading habits and

sustaining interest in reading at various stages of child's life the co-operation of parents, teachers, librarian as well as that of the government is highly necessary.

Lastly, the librarians and teachers with the help of the government must embark on mass media campaign to create awareness on the use of the library. All these put together will improve the reading habit of that of the general populace especially that of secondary school students.

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