

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AND READING HABITS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of socio-economic factors of senior secondary school students in Ogun State on their reading habits. The correlational design method was adopted while questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. The study revealed that socio-economic factors of the students have no significant influence on the reading habit of the students. The study further revealed that senior secondary school students in Ogun State read mainly for personal development, information and knowledge acquisition. Also, family income and fathers' occupation were found to be the major determinants of reading habit of students.

Keywords: *Socio-economic factors, Reading habits, Senior secondary school students, Ogun State, Nigeria*

Introduction

Reading is an important learning tool at every level of education. When students are equipped with necessary library resources and encouraged to make reading part and parcel of their daily lives, it is likely to make learning more effective and reduce some of the problems in our school system. Reading is the major key to making progress in learning, inability to read well may be as a result of poor reading habit which makes a student fall progressively behind other members of the class. If a learner possesses poor reading habits, he/she suffers serious handicaps not only in school but also later in the world of work (Keles, 2006). This is true when one considers the fact that education is now learner-centred with more effective techniques placing a far greater emphasis on the learner's ability to read.

Reading habits refers to the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading. It is a pattern with which an individual organises his or her reading. It explains the purpose and preference for reading as well as frequency of reading. Therefore, students' reading habit revolves around the purpose of reading which may be for passing examinations, getting information, improve general knowledge and entertainment. In corroborating this assertion, Kumar, Ansari and Shukia (2010) reported that the major purposes of reading among senior secondary school students in India are for getting information and to improve general knowledge.

Good reading habit is a good asset to students because it enables students to achieve excellent academic performance in their studies while bad reading habit constitutes constraints to learning and achievement leading to failure. Observations have revealed that students with poor reading skills end up receiving poor grades at school, get easily

distracted and frustrated, have behavior problems, seem to dislike school and often fail to develop to their full potential. Dorothy (2002) corroborated this assertion by emphasizing that student with poor reading habits have higher chances of anti-social behavior such as school violence, bullying, incidence of hacking computers and even incidence of examination malpractices which have a higher correlation with poor reading habits.

The acquisition of good reading habit does not only affect or improve confidence in language arts, but also in other subjects such as social studies, art subjects, science, and mathematics. The advantages of good reading habits as outlined by Aina, Okusaga, Adebowale and Ogundipe (2011) include; development of active mental process, development of fundamental skills, vocabulary improvement, insight into other cultures and places, concentration and memory improvement, self-esteem building and development of independent learning ability. The quality of reading habits and interests of students has vital importance in the development of students' mind and this has made analyzing students' reading habits very necessary.

On the other hand, Yani (2003) posited that the reading habits of Nigerian students are a matter of concern in our educational and national development, stating further that in a developing country like Nigeria, the concept of reading habits should not be relegated to the background. Today, students have much to read because of the great demand inherent in core curriculum. This is more obvious at the junior secondary school level in which the students are expected to study about fourteen different subjects or more in some cases.

One of the reasons for the decline of the reading habit and interest has been attributed to the failure of educational instruction in schools to cultivate permanent interest in students to read and make use of the school library to enhance their reading habit positively. In Ogun State there seem to be so much drift from the reading culture of the past to what is obtainable presently. Great men like chief Obafemi Awolowo and others who have made Ogun State and Nigeria proud made proper use of good reading habit for personal development and knowledge acquisition and were better for it (Awolowo, 2012). Reading is a habit, which is not a one-time experience. The more the student-reads the more background knowledge he/she acquires of other ways of life, behaviour and thought. The reading habit, therefore, plays a very crucial role in enabling secondary school students achieve practical efficiency. It also has an interface with the socio-economic background of the students.

Scholars have identified many factors influencing the ability of students to cultivate favourable reading habits. One of these is the socio-economic factors of the students. Socioeconomic status described the combination of economic and sociological status of an individual relative to others, based on income, education and occupation (Marmot, 2004). Socioeconomic status is typically broken into three categories, high, middle, and low to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables, income, education, and occupation can be assessed.

Researchers in developed countries such as Bass (2010) have repeatedly established that socio-economic status affects students reading habits. According to them the economic hardships that are caused by low socio-economic status lead to disruptions in parenting and increased amount of family conflicts, and an increased likelihood of depression in parenting households. Studies have also revealed that the attitudes of high school students towards reading differed significantly in relation to father's and mother's educational level in favour of students whose fathers and mother had high school and/or graduate level of education in the study. These results obtained in the research were for the disadvantage of students whose father and mothers were illiterates and/or had elementary school level of education.

On the other hand, However, Suna (2006) found out a significant difference between reading attitudes of students and their mother's educational level, but not their father's educational level. So, it can be said that in the light of these finding, the finding in relation to father's and mother's educational level variable of this research are paralleled to the studies in the literature. These findings can be explained from two perspectives. The first reason can be explained by Bandura's (1977) social learning theory which states that students do observe their parents and when students have parents who are poorly educated; they will not have enough academic, emotional and social support from their parents as well as not see their parents reading. This specifically established the fact that socioeconomic factors of parents such as educational level does affect the habits that students exhibits towards reading.

The second reason can be explained with financial income level since parents who are poorly educated do jobs for low socio-economic status and they reserve less money for their children's education. The level of financial income of families differs significantly in terms of attitudes of students towards reading. While parents whose financial income level is high can meet their children's needs, parents whose financial income level is low cannot meet their children's needs. So, financial income level of parents can cause them not to make their children have good reading habits.

Socio-economic status of parents does not only affect the reading habits of students but also make it impossible for children from low socio-economic background to compete well with their counterpart from high socio-economic background under the same academic environment. For instance, secondary school students from poor and average income families are often likely to face some financial problems causing emotional and psychological disturbance which will negatively influence their reading habits. It is not out of place to imagine that socio-economic background of students could constitute a hindrance or a benefitting factor to the development of reading habit among students since a person's education is closely linked to his/her life chances, income and well being. Therefore, socio-economic factors can be established as one of the major factors that can predict reading habits formation among the students and it is closely followed by the availability of library and information resources.

Socio-economic status comprises several elements such as family income, parent's educational attainment and parent occupation. Studies focusing on the socio-economic status related gaps in literacy have identified several explanations for the poorer early

literacy of disadvantaged children. Family socioeconomic status is strongly correlated both with early literacy (and other academic outcomes) and literacy later in the school years. Although the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individuals life during school periods, yet parents and individuals experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what she is (Uwaifo, 2008) thus the environment from which a student comes from can greatly influence their performance at school.

In the same vein some of the factors identified by researchers for poor academic performance of students in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) include among others poor reading habits, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self concept and low socio-economic status of the family and poor family structure. Regardless of where students live and go to school, their ability to learn and grow academically is influenced not just by their school environment and teachers, but by a myriad of factors, which might include their family structure, the educational level of their parents, family income level, occupation, where they live, gender and motivation to learn.

According to Omehia, Obi and Okon (2008) the socioeconomic level of parents is a crucial factor in student's knowledge of and utilisation of library facilities. In their studies on students characteristic and the use of library services, found out that students socio economic status (high, middle and low) significantly affects the use library services at the University of Uyo Nigeria, as student with low socio economic status made more use of the library than those with middle or high income level.

Eyo (2007) revealed that 70 % of the problem associated with the poor reading culture of our children is traceable to many social and environmental factors, including parent's socio-economic status. Parents should establish private libraries at home in order to encourage the reading habit of their children. A large room in the house can be set-aside for this provided with shelves and reading desks. Then purchase of books for the library should be done gradually as the information needs of the children grow. A parent can buy at least five books in a week, and in one year, the family will have a sizeable library that will cater for the information needs of the family.

Several studies had been done on reading habits, library resources availability, adequacy, utilisation and socioeconomic factors such as Fosudo (2010), who observed that, the acquisition of good reading habit has a beneficial effect on all subjects. Poor reading habit can make a child develop a poor attitude towards libraries and schools, and can create self-esteem problems later in life. Antwi (1985), in his studies showed a relationship between reading or early literacy and a child's emotional, mental health, and social behaviour. Students who have a low socio-economic status have negative attitude to reading and are more likely to have poor reading habits. Eamon (2005) emphasised that studies in developed countries have repeatedly established that socio-economic status affects students reading habits. According to him, the economic hardships that are caused by low socio-economic status lead to disruptions in parenting and increased amount of family conflicts, and an increased likelihood of depression in parenting households.

Socio-economical conditions are significant for reading habit formation. It is not out of place to imagine that students' socio-economic background can have possible effects on their reading habits formation (Geske & Ozola 2008). Other researchers have reiterated that continuous and regular progress in education among secondary school students is dependent on their reading habits and that several personal, environmental, and institutional factors predict the reading habit formation among secondary school students. However, available research has shown that no such work has been known that have focused on the contribution of the combination of socio-economic factors, availability and adequacy of library resources, and library and information resources utilization to reading habits of secondary school students. Therefore, the focus of this study is to investigate the extent to which socio-economic factors, availability of library and information resources, adequacy and utilisation of library and information resources can predict reading habits of Senior Secondary School Students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objective of the study

1. determine the pattern of reading habit among senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria;
2. determine the purpose for which senior secondary school students in Ogun State read?
3. find out if socio-economic factors predict reading habit of senior secondary school students in Ogun State
4. ascertain the relative contribution of socio-economic background factors to reading habit of senior secondary school students in Ogun State

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study

1. What is the pattern of senior secondary school students reading habit in Ogun State?
2. For what purposes do senior secondary school students in Ogun State read?
3. What is the relationship between socio-economic factors and reading habit?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H_{01} : There is no significant joint contribution of socio-economic factors to reading habits of senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.
- H_{02} : There is no significant relative contribution of socio-economic factors to reading habits of senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. This design is used to systematically describe the qualities and characteristic of a given population and events. The design was adopted because it was considered the appropriate design in obtaining reliable information about the variables of study. The population of the study comprised all the senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. There are two hundred and ninety-seven (297) senior secondary

schools spread across the twenty Local Government Areas in Ogun State (Ogun State Education yearbook. 2013).

The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. At the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select five local government areas from the twenty local government areas in Ogun State. Thus, the five (5) local government areas selected were Ewekoro, Ijebu North East, Ipokia, Ogun Waterside, and Yewa South local government areas. There are sixty (60) senior secondary schools spread across these selected local government areas with distribution as follows: Yewa South 16, Ogun Water Side 13, Ipokia 13, Ijebu North East 9 and Ewekoro 9 senior secondary schools.

At the second stage of the sampling, the simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 4 schools out of the total number of senior secondary schools in Ijebu Waterside and Ipokia local government areas, while 3 were selected out of the total number of senior secondary schools in Ijebu North East and Ewekoro local government areas and 5 schools selected out of the total number of senior secondary schools in Yewa South local government area. Therefore, nineteen senior secondary schools were selected across the five local government areas selected for the study.

At the third stage of the sampling procedure, the simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting one arm of the Senior Secondary School 2 students in each of the selected schools. Thus, 595 Senior Secondary School two (SSS2) students were selected for this study as follows: Yewa South 177, Ogun Water Side 62, Ipokia 158, Ijebu North East 75 (See Table 3.1).

The research instruments adopted for this study were questionnaire and checklist. The questionnaire designed for this study was named "Socioeconomic factors and Reading Habits Questionnaire (SERHAQ)" which comprised two sections aimed at measuring the variables in the study. The first section, of the questionnaire named Socio Economic Factor Questionnaire (SEFQ) gathered data on the socio-economic factors of respondents such as: family type, family income, and parents' occupation and educational level while the second section focussed on the reading habits of the respondents and it was measured on a modified 4 point likert scale of 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'.

The drafts of the questionnaire and checklist were given to experts in the fields of library and information studies, school media, English Language, test and measurement for their inputs on the adequacy and appropriateness of the items included in the main instruments. Also, the questionnaire was trial-tested on 40 senior secondary school students of one Senior Secondary School in Odeda Local Government Area that was not part of the main study. This was to ensure the reliability of the instruments. The reliability coefficient of the variables were 0.69 and 0.85 for socioeconomic factors and reading habits respectively.

Method of data analysis

The descriptive methods of analysis such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation; and inferential statistics such as multiple regression analysis were used in analysing the data collected for the study. The Research questions were analysed using the descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and pearson product moment correlation. In testing the hypotheses, multiple regression was used at 0.05 level of significance.

A total of 595 copies of questionnaire were administered on the senior secondary school students out of which only 537 were returned with useful responses giving a response rate of 90.2%. This response rate was considered adequate for this study.

Background Information

Background information of the senior secondary school students revealed that there were more female students (229, 59.6%) than male students (155, 40.4%) among senior secondary school students in Ogun State. The distribution of the students on level of study revealed that there were more students at the SS2 level (313, 81.55) than at the SS1 and SS3 levels among the respondents. The result on the location of school of respondents revealed that there were more students from schools in rural areas (268, 69.5%) than students from schools in urban areas (117, 30.5%) just as majority of the students were from monogamous family (195, 50.8%). Furthermore, the background information of the students based on the family income, father's occupation revealed that majority of the students were from high income family (211, 54.9%) that work in the formal sectors, that is civil servants, corporate workers and business men, (233, 61.2%). Information on the designation and occupation of respondents' father revealed that majority of the respondents' father were senior staff (202, 52.6%) with qualifications higher than SSCE viz: Diploma, NCE, HND/Bachelor's degree, Master degree and PhD (213, 54.5%). Information gathered on the occupation and educational qualification of respondents' mother revealed that majority of respondents' mothers were formal sector workers (237, 61.7%) with qualifications higher than SSCE (214, 55.7%). Information on the designation of respondents' mother revealed that majority of the respondents' mothers were senior staff in their respective jobs (202, 52.6%). The implication to be drawn from the above finding is that majority of the senior secondary school students in Ogun State were female with more students at the SS2 level. There were more students from schools in rural areas and most of the students were from monogamous family. Furthermore, most students were from high income family working in the formal sector. Also majority of the respondents' parent were senior staff with qualifications higher than SSCE and were senior staff in their respective jobs.

Research Question 1: What pattern of reading habits do senior secondary school students in Ogun State use library and Information resources?

Table 1: Reading habit of Senior Secondary School Students in Ogun State

A=Agree (1),D=Disagree(2).

READING HABIT	Agree	Disagree	\bar{X}	SD
I am keen at reading information materials of benefit to me	339(45.0%)	45 (11.7%)	3.22	.803
I read always to pass an examination	326(84.9%)	58 (15.1%)	3.20	.857
I read to get information	319(83.1%)	65 (16.9%)	3.19	.888
I always take reading as a serious task	323(83.3%)	61(15.9%)	3.17	.854
I often use my spare time to read books	328(84.3%)	56 (14.5%)	3.10	.728
Most often times, I read for personal Development	317 (82.6%)	67 (17.8%)	3.09	.855
My usual daily reading period is more than an hour	295 (76.8%)	89 (23.2%)	3.02	.862
I take pleasure in reading at my leisure period	300 (78.1%)	84 (21.8%)	2.97	.798
I am usually motivated to read to gain knowledge	288 (75.0%)	96 (25.0%)	2.96	.977
I prefer reading in Isolation	305 (79.4%)	79 (20.6%)	2.94	.774
I most often squeeze in time to read everyday	384 (74.8%)	97 (25.3%)	2.94	.826
I don't feel fulfilled until I have a read in a day	286 (74.5%)	98 (25.5%)	2.92	.904
I read to derive pleasure	282 (73.4%)	102 (26.6%)	2.89	.996
I do not read because I consider reading as a waste of time	244 (63.6%)	140 (36.5%)	2.75	.993
I often read to while away time	134 (61.0%)	150 (39.1%)	2.68	1.041

Table 1 presents information on the pattern of reading among the senior secondary school students surveyed. It revealed that most of the respondents affirmed their keenness in reading information material that was of benefit to them (339, 88.3%; $\chi = 3.22$). Also, most of these students affirmed that they read information materials to pass examination (326, 84.9; $\chi = 3.20$), get information (319, 83.1; $\chi = 3.19$), for personal development (317, 82.6%; $\chi = 3.09$), and to gain knowledge (288, 75.0; $\chi = 2.96$) which implies that materials that are useful for examination, information purposes, personal development, and knowledge acquisition attract the interest of the students. Furthermore, information gathered from the analysis revealed that most of the students use their leisure/spare period to read (328, 85.4%; $\chi = 3.10$) and read in

isolation (305, 79.4%; $\chi = 2.94$) just as most of the students affirmed that they are not fulfilled until they have read in a day (286, 74.5%; $\chi = 2.96$). The implication to be drawn from this is that the senior secondary school students have a favourable reading pattern and consider reading as very important to their personal development, information and knowledge acquisition.

Research Question 2: For what purpose do Senior Secondary School Students in Ogun State read?

Table 2: Purpose of reading among senior secondary school students

A=Agree (1), D=Disagree (2)

Purpose of Reading	Agree	Disagree	Mean	SD
I read to pass an examination	301(78.4%)	83 (21.6%)	3.04	.948
I read to while away time	270 (70.2%)	114 (29.7%)	2.98	1.000
I read for personal development	283 (73.7%)	101(26.3%)	2.96	.962
I read to catch fun	292 (73.7%)	192 (24.0%)	2.95	.942
I read to derive pleasure	283 (73.7%)	101(26.3%)	2.94	.924
I read because I get bored and have nothing else to do	280 (72.9%)	104 (27.1%)	2.92	.967
Knowledge acquisition is a major drive for reading by me	278 (72.4%)	106 (27.6%)	2.92	.982
I read to get information	276 (71.9%)	108 (28.1%)	2.91	1.005
I read because I have to read for school	289 (75.3%)	95 (24.8%)	2.90	.899
I see reading as an hobby	273 (71.1%)	111(28.9%)	2.90	1.012
I read to learn things on my own	247 (64.3%)	137 (35.7%)	2.77	1.026
I really do not read much	233 (60.7%)	151(39.3%)	2.76	1.057
I read because my teacher recommend materials to me	235 (61.2%)	129 (38.8%)	2.67	.992
I read because my parents encouraged me to do so	232 (58.8%)	152 (39.6%)	2.66	1.002
I read because my friends read	222 (57.8%)	162 (42.2%)	2.62	.996

Information gathered from Table 2 on the purpose for which the respondents read revealed reading to pass examinations (301, 78.4%; $\chi = 3.04$), reading to while away time (270, 70.3%; $\chi = 2.98$), reading for personal development (283, 73.7%; $\chi = 2.96$), reading to catch fun (292, 76.1%; $\chi = 2.95$), and reading to derive pleasure (238, 73.7%; $\chi = 2.94$), as topping the list of purposes for which senior secondary schools in Ogun State read. Other reasons that prompted the students read include: to get out of boredom (280, 72.9%; $\chi = 2.92$), for knowledge acquisition (278, 72.4%; $\chi = 2.92$), to get information (276, 71.9%; $\chi = 2.91$), for school purposes ($\chi = 2.90$), to learn new things ($\chi = 2.77$), to

satisfy teacher's recommendation ($\chi = 2.67$), to satisfy parent's encouragement ($\chi = 2.66$) and also to be in tune with what friends were doing ($\chi = 2.62$). This implies that senior secondary school students in Ogun State read mainly for the purposes of academic, information and knowledge acquisition.

Test of Hypotheses

H_{01} : There is no significant joint contribution of socio economic factors of students to the reading habit of senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis of the Socio-economic Factors Prediction of Reading Habit of Students

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.017	0.000	-0.002	7.441

SUMMARY REGRESSION ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Remark
Regression	8.451	1	8.451	.153	0.696	Not Sig.
Residual	29521.136	535	55.367			
Total	29629.587	536				

From Table 3, it can be inferred that socio-economic factors do not individually significantly predict reading habit of senior secondary school students ($F_{(1, 535)} = 0.153$; $p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables (Test of significance of the regression coefficients)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	P.	Remark
	(B)	Std.	Beta			
Reading habit	10.303	2.185	-	4.716	.000	-
Family type	.104	.030	.190	3.451	.001	Sig.
Family income	.286	.111	.183	2.584	.010	Sig.
Fathers' occupation	.549	.078	.482	7.075	.000	Sig.
Mothers' occupation	.141	.014	.395	10.041	.000	Sig
Fathers' educational level	.115	.012	.385	9.533	.000	Sig
Mothers' educational level	.028	.013	.083	2.106	.036	Sig
Fathers' occupational designation.	-.137	.207	-.029	-.661	.509	Not Sig
Mothers' occupational designation.	-.140	.208	-.030	-.674	.501	Not Sig

Discussion of findings

On the pattern of reading among the students, finding from the study revealed that students in secondary schools in Ogun State were favourably disposed to reading information material that was of benefit in terms of being useful for examination, information, personal development, and knowledge acquisition purposes. Furthermore, information gathered from the analysis revealed that the students use their leisure/spare period to read, and read in isolation and were not fulfilled until they have read in a day. The implication to be drawn from this is that the senior secondary school students have a favourable reading pattern and consider reading as very important to their personal development, information and knowledge acquisition.

Furthermore, findings from the study on whether socio-economic factors of students do significantly predict reading habit of students or not revealed that socio-economic factors of students do not significantly predict reading habit of senior secondary school students which is at variance with findings from Smith, Fagan and Ulvund (2002) study which reported that socio-economic background of students was a significant predictor of reading habits formation among students. Furthermore, the study revealed that availability of library and information resources does not significantly predict reading habit of senior secondary school students which is at variance with Oji and Habibu (2011) findings which revealed that availability of library and information resources significantly predict reading habit of students in owerri, Nigeria.

Summary and Conclusion

Senior secondary school students in Ogun State have favourable reading pattern. Senior secondary school students in Ogun State read mainly for personal development, information and knowledge acquisition. Also, socio-economic factors do not significantly predict reading habit of senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that family income and fathers' occupation are major determinants of reading habit of students.

Moreover, it can be inferred from the findings of the study that inadequate provision of relevant library and information resources within the schools where students can have easy access may hinder the utilisation of such library and information resources. Therefore, provision of library and information resources in school library media centres would facilitate effective utilisation. Furthermore, it may be necessary to also conclude that libraries within the schools are not adequately stocked with library and information resources to support the development of favourable reading habit among the students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Provision should be made for relevant library and information resources within the secondary schools in Ogun State.
2. Government and school authority should ensure that library and information resources provided within the schools are adequate in quantity and quality.

3. The school library media centre needed to be stocked with relevant and adequate library and information resources for students' use. The availability of these resources would attract the students to the SLMC.
4. Students' should be encouraged towards the use of library and information resources to develop their reading habits.
5. Teachers' should as part of teaching and learning activities give students assignments that would geared them towards reading.
6. School library media centres in schools should develop programmes such as story hours, debates, quiz, spelling bee competitions to encourage development of reading habit among students.

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