
**FACTORS AFFECTING GOOD READING HABIT OF STUDENTS IN
NSUKKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ENUGU STATE**

Tochukwu, Maryjane Chiemezie¹; Onimisi, Agnes Ozohu²;
Enekwechi, Olisaemeka Miracle³ & Ojua, Eugene Obashi^{3*}

¹Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical
Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

²Department of Biology, Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State

³Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology, Faculty of Biological Sciences,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

*Corresponding author: eugene.ojua.pg78127@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

The study explored the factors affecting good reading habit of students' in Nsukka Local Government Area (LGA), Enugu State. Five research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey design was employed in the study. The population of the study comprised junior secondary school students (JSS 2) in Nsukka LGA. Nsukka has a total of 15 secondary schools, of which the population of JSS 2 students across the 15 schools was 1,300 students. The non-proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the study sample size. A structured questionnaire on "Reading Habits Among Secondary School" (RHSS) was administered to 360 respondents across secondary schools in Nsukka LGA. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies, mean scores and their corresponding standard deviation with the aid of Microsoft excel software. The findings revealed that non-availability of reading materials prevents students from reading in Nsukka local government area. Teachers' attitude affects the reading habit of students negatively. Due to lack of motivation from the school authorities, there is negligence on the students' reading ability. Good reading habit affects students' academic achievement positively despite there is hindrance, such as no time to reading, lack of recommended textbooks. Students also encounter problem in the course of reading in Nsukka LGA, because a lot of factors that contribute to poor reading habits like not valuing the importance of group reading, household work takes more of their time. In conclusion, this study noted that there has been little or no improvement based on the laments over poor reading habits in Nigerians. Several factors, such as non-availability of reading tools, teachers' attitude, and lack of motivation still would contribute to the poor reading habits among students.

Keywords: Motivation; Nigeria; Reading; Teachers; Textbooks

Introduction

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 habits have been singled out to immensely affect the scholarly output of the students (Hangu, Capps, Blacklock, & Garza, 2014; Levine, Waite, & Bowman, 2007). It is an indispensable method of acquiring knowledge, and is essential for higher academic performance (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012), and determines the success of students around the globe (Balan, Katenga, & Simon, 2019). Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences, and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last throughout one's life time (Yaji et al., 2017). Reading habits form a pattern of study which tends to be consistent on the part of students in order to understand the school subjects and pass examinations. Reading and academic achievement are interconnected, and they influence each other. Because students usually come from different environments, they differ in their patterns of reading habits (Taha, 2021). For example, there are students who have good reading habits, while others have poor reading habits (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012).

The problem most students have that contributes to their poor performance in tests and examinations is lack of proper reading habits. For an excellent performance, there is the need for the student to form good reading and study habits. At present, due to the influence of the mass media, people do not show much interest in reading books; magazines, and journals among others (Palani, 2012). Even the cankerworm 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 and other shows on the television, listening to audio-CDs, watching video-CDs among others (Issa, 2012). Many parents and teachers complain about students of this generation, who have not developed reading habits among themselves. Officials of the West African Examinations Council and teachers of English language complain of the kind of English words' choice written by today's generation of students. 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. From the assertion above, the study was conducted to examine the factors affecting reading habits among students within secondary schools in Nsukka LGA.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the research paper is to evaluate the factors that affect the reading habits of students. The specific objectives are to determine if:

- i. Non-availability of reading materials prevents students from reading

- ii. Teacher's attitude to reading affects students good reading habit
- iii. The disposition of the students will affect good reading habit

Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. Does non-availability of reading materials prevent students from reading?
- ii. How does the teacher's attitude to reading affects students good reading habit depth?
- iii. Does disposition of students affect their reading habit?

Research Methods

Research design: This study adopts the descriptive survey research design to investigate the factors that affects of good reading habit on students' academic performance within Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. The choice of the adoption of this design was fueled by the fact that it allows for the use of a questionnaire.

Population and sample of the study: The population of the study comprised junior secondary school students (JSS 2) in Nsukka LGA. Nsukka has a total of 15 secondary schools, of which the population of JSS 2 students across the 15 schools was 1,300 students. The non-proportional stratified random sampling technique was used in the sample selection for the study. A total of 10 schools were drawn out of the 15 schools (3 from Nsukka town, 2 from Eha-Alumona, 2 from Ede-Oballa, 1 from Leja, and 2 from Opi) for the sample selection. A total of 360 respondents were used for the study. Based on the JSS2 student's population in each school, the following number of samples were collected each: 27, 33 and 47 samples were collected from each of the three school in Nsukka, 22 and 25 from each school in Eha-Alumona, 38 and 48 from each school in Ede-Oballa, 46 from Leja, 38 and 36 each from Opi.

Material and method of data collection: This study adopted the use of Reading Habits Among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (RHASSSQ) as an instrument of data collection. The questionnaire contained a total of 20 questions. The questions were divided into two sections. The first segment raised questions about the respondent's demographic data, such as place of school, gender, age and class, while the second segment of the questionnaire asked questions about the objectives of the study using a 4-point likert-type scale questions (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). The instrument of data collection was validated by four experts in measurement and evaluation, while the reliability was tested by the test retest method on students in Enugu North, which resulted to reliability co-efficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.75.

A direct delivery method was adopted in the administration and retrieval of the questionnaire from the respondents after seeking permission from the school principals.

Method analysis: Microsoft excel was used to analyze the questionnaire. The questionnaires were analyzed using frequency and mean to interpret the data collected in the field. The means were obtained by multiplying the frequency of each item by its weight, followed by adding all the products and divide by the total number of respondents using the formula below:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{(SA \times 4) + (A \times 3) + (D \times 2) + (SD \times 1)}{N}$$

Where: SA is strongly agree, A is agree, D is disagree, SD is strongly disagree and N is number of respondents.

Items with a mean of 2.5 and above from the 4- point Likert scale were termed agreed while items with mean score below 2.5 were termed disagree.

Results

Research question one: Does non-availability of reading materials prevent students from reading?

The findings as presented on Table 1 showed that there was non-availability of reading materials to the students therefore preventing the students from reading. This is because in each of the four items, the response had a mean score lower than the cut-off point 2.5 and also the grand mean score is below 2.25. The findings indicated that there were inadequate number of textbooks in the school libraries, unavailable recommended textbooks in the rural markets, expensive textbooks, and lack of books for teachers use.

Table 1: Non-availability of reading materials

S/ N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Remark
1.	We have adequate number of textbooks in my school library	150	95	65	50	360	805	2.23	1.07	Rejected
2.	Recommended textbook is sold in rural markets	43	98	73	146	360	758	2.10	1.07	Rejected
3.	Textbooks are not expensive to buy	79	27	157	100	360	805	2.23	1.06	Rejected
4.	The book that teachers use for teaching and reading are available	77	30	160	93	360	811	2.25	1.06	Rejected

Grand Mean Score = 2.25

Research question two: How does the teacher's attitude to reading affects students good reading habit depth?

The findings for research question two were presented in Table 2. It was observed that teachers attitude affects the students negatively because two of the item respondents were below 2.5 and also the grand mean score was below 2.5 which is the cut-off point.

Table 2: Teacher's attitude to reading

S/ N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	REMARK
5.	Most of our teachers do give enough written work in the class	79	29	160	95	360	818	2.22	1.06	Rejected
6.	We are not given enough written work in	68	174	31	87	360	943	2.61	1.05	Accepted

	the class.									
	Our teachers teach all the topics in the scheme of work	47	59	51	203	360	670	1.8	1.11	Rejected
7.										
Grand Mean Score = 2.23										

Research question three: What is the disposition of students to the depth of good reading habit?

The findings as presented in Table 3 showed that the disposition of students to the dept of good reading habit in Nsukka local government area has an effect on their reading habit. From the findings 6 item respondents were below the cut-off point 2.5, it shows that library and incentives were not there to motivate good reading habit. Two items response were within 2.5, which is the cut-off point, it implies that reading and understanding was limited and the students lacked retentive memory to read and understand.

The result as presented on Table 3 also showed the findings on what extent does good reading habit affect student's academic achievement in Nsukka local government area. It was observed that the students don't have the recommended text for reading and they don't have time to read regularly. This is because the mean scores were below the cutoff point set which is 2.5. However, it was confirmed by the respondents that there is high performance in examinations if they prepare well (read well) for the exams. The grand mean score was below 2.5, which also signifies that environmental factors affect good reading habit of the students (Table 3).

Table 3: *Disposition of students to the reading habit*

S/ N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Remark
8.	School authorities and individuals give incentives like prices to the best student	90	87	77	106	360	881	2.44	1.16	Rejected
9.	We have adequate number of the required textbook in our library	79	89	84	99	360	877	2.43	1.17	Rejected
10.	Our school environment encourages good reading habit.	44	97	69	150	360	755	2.09	1.08	Rejected
11.	Reading and understanding by ourselves is limited	83	98	84	93	360	95	2.5	1.12	Accepted
12.	I don't have a retentive memory to read and understand.	124	99	88	49	360	1018	2.82	1.05	Accepted

13.	The importance of group reading is valued.	70	35	97	158	360	737	2.04	1.15	Rejected
14.	Household activities do not affect your reading habit	43	97	89	131	360	779	2.16	1.04	Rejected
15.	I am motivated to read in any way.	39	93	72	156	360	732	2.03	1.06	Rejected
16.	I have the recommended text for reading	75	45	160	80	360	835	2.32	1.04	Rejected
17.	I find it difficult to understand what you read	193	28	101	38	360	1096	3.04	1.11	Accepted
18.	I read only during examinations	215	115	14	16	360	1249	3.47	0.77	Accepted
19.	I have to read regularly	29	31	105	195	360	614	1.71	0.93	Rejected
20.	You performed well when you read and prepare for your exams	188	102	36	44	360	1174	3.26	0.89	Accepted

Grand Mean Score = 2.5

Discussion

The research findings were based on the factors that affects good reading habit among students' in Nsukka local government area of Enugu state at junior secondary school level. The study observed that non-availability of reading tools was one of the factors that prevents students from reading in Nsukka local government area. This finding corroborates the reports of Lyon (2000) who explains that pupils may have reading difficulties because of experience with limited reading books. And the findings of Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006), Adebayo (2008) and Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) in that the lack of text books and the lack of adequate and useful reader books are the reasons for pupils' low reading ability and performance in schools. The findings also showed that another factor was teachers attitude affected the reading habit of Nsukka local government area students negatively. To concur with these findings, Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) both believe the lack of exposure to reading strategies in class and the use of poor teaching methodologies by language teachers are some of the reasons why pupils have poor reading skills. To further corroborate with these findings, Botha et al. (2008) claim the problem of pupils' poor reading abilities is as the result of teachers not been trained to teach basic reading in class. Due to lack of motivation from school authority's, the study observed that there was negligence on the students reading ability. Fengning et al. (2000) found that there is a highly significant positive correlation between the level of secondary school students' reading motivation and reading performance. Retelsdorf et al. (2011) divided reading motivation into intrinsic (e.g., reading enjoyment, reading interest) and extrinsic (e.g., competition) and found that reading enjoyment had a positive effect on initial reading performance but did not affect its further improvement, whereas interest in reading was not related to initial reading level but significantly affected the improvement

of reading level, whereas competition has a negative effect on reading performance but does not affect its improvement, which is consistent with the findings in the research of Unrau and Schlackman (2006). It was also observed that good reading habit affects their academic achievement positively despite there is hindrance like no time to reading, lack of recommended textbooks. Finally, students also encounter problem in the course of reading in Nsukka L.G.A, because a lot of factors that contribute to poor reading habits like not valuing the importance of group reading, household work takes more of their time.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study sets out to investigate the interplay between reading habits and academic achievements by junior secondary school students in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. The researchers noted there has been little or no improvement based on the laments over poor reading habits in Nigerians. Several factors like non-availability of reading tools, teachers' attitude, and lack of motivation contributes to the poor reading habits among students.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are drawn:

- ✓ Government should establish a special fund for the provision of reading materials in secondary schools. And the utilization of these funds should follow strict procedure to ensure accurate spending based on the needed materials by the teachers and students.
- ✓ Teachers should encourage and teach the student how to read
- ✓ The school management should motivate and encouraged the students to read by the provision of reading materials, setting up of reading clubs in school and reading competitions regularly for the students.
- ✓ Increased reading time is required by the students at home.

References

- Adebayo, O. (2008). The impact of mother tongue on students' achievement in English language in junior secondary certificate examination in western Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 17(1): 41-49.
- Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, S. E. & Iyamu, E. O. S. (2006). Factors affecting quality of English language teaching and learning in secondary schools in Nigeria. *College Student Journal*, 40(3): 495-504.
- Balan, S., Katenga, J. & Simon, A. (2019). Reading habits and their influence on academic achievement among students at Asia Pacific International University. *Proceedings International Scholars Conference*, 7 (1): 1490-1516.
- Bashir, I., & Mattoo, N. H. (2012). A Study on habits and academic among adolescents (14-19) years. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 1(5). 1-5.
- Fengning, S., Ge, S., Xianjun, S., and Biyin, Z. (2000). Relationship between middle school students' reading motivation and the amount and achievement of their reading. *Journal of Psychology*, 23, 84-87

- Huang, S., Capps, M., Blacklock, J., & Garza, M. (2014). Reading habits of college students in the United States. *Reading Psychology*, 35, 437-467.
- Issa, A. O., Aliyu, M. B., Akangbe, R. B. & Adedeji, A. F. (2012) Reading interest and habits of the federal polytechnic students. *International Journal of Learning & Development*, 2 (1): 470 - 486.
- Levine, L. E., Waite, B. M., & Bowman, L. L. (2007). Electronic media use, reading and academic distractibility in college youth. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 10(14), 560-566.
- Mohammed, I. & Amponsah, O. (2018). Predominant factors contributing to low reading abilities of pupils at Elsie Lund Basic School in the Tamale Metropolis, Ghana. *African Educational Research Journal*, 6(4): 273-278. 10.30918/AERJ.64.18.071.
- Palani, K. K. (2012) Promising reading habits and creating literate social. *International Reference Research Journal*, 2(1): 91 - 98.
- Retelsdorf, J., Schwartz, K., & Asbrock, F. (2015). Michael can't read!" Teachers' gender stereotypes and boys' reading self-concept. *J. Educ. Psychol.* 107, 186–194. doi: 10.1037/a0037107
- Taha, A. M. (2021). Reading habits among students and their effect on their academic performance: A study of students of a public school in Al Ain City in the UAE. *GSI*, 9 (6): 402 – 422.
- Unrau, N., & Schlackman, J. (2006). Motivation and its relationship with reading achievement in an urban middle school. *J. Educ. Res.* 100, 81–101. doi: 10.3200/JOER.100.2.81-101
- Yaji, G., Dala, H. S. & Danburam, E. (2017). Inculcating reading habits among Nigerian secondary schools students: the role of libraries. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management* . 8 (1) 30 – 37.