

## **An Assessment of Reading Habit among Secondary School Students in Kaduna Metropolis**

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**Abstract:** *Reading habit is the most effective way of developing reading skill among youth and it can improve their academic performances and become better people in the society. The study title “An assessment of reading habit among secondary schools in Kaduna metropolis” this study was conducted among ten secondary schools using simple random sampling as the sampling technique. The data was analyzed using tables and simple statistics. The findings revealed that most students are female (56%). Most students always reads textbooks, they spend 1 – 2 hours reading. They further claimed that watching television, chatting through social networks had negative influence on their academic performance. Therefore, spending more time reading, library time should be provide in their school timetable these can improve the students reading habit and academic performance.*

**Keywords:** *Assessment, reading habit, secondary school, students, Kaduna.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Reading is an indispensable tool in learning that forms an integral part of any learning situation, and the bedrock of education. Therefore, Access to information is crucial to individual advancement as well as corporate educational development. Information is indispensable, and, according to Yusuf (2007), bridges the gap between knowledge and ignorance. One of the major avenues for acquiring information is reading. Reading is the foundation upon which other academic skills are built. It offers a productive approach to improving vocabulary, word power, and language skills. Tella and Akande (2007) assert that the ability to read is at the heart of self-education and lifelong learning and that it is an art capable of transforming life and society. Yani (2003) posits that reading habits of Nigerians 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. This is because through reading, human beings get better informed and understanding of the universe they live on. More so, reading makes a way for better understanding of one’s own experience and can be an exciting voyage of self discovery. A child that forms the habit of reading is always different from his peer group at school because he becomes more knowledgeable than them and understands better than his colleagues what they are being taught in class.

Adetunji (2007) described reading as the act of translating symbols or letters into word or sentences that have meaning to an individual. It is also the understanding of what is seen in a text, which is the ability of reader to take incoming visual information, process that information and obtain meaning from it.

Reading can also be perceived to be a process of constructing meaning through dynamic interaction among the reader’s existing knowledge, the information suggested by the text being read, and the context of the reading situation. The Wikipedia online dictionary defines reading as a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning. It is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader’s prior knowledge, experience, altitude and language community which is culturally and socially situated.

Both reading and reading habits seems to be almost the same, but nevertheless, Okoro 2004 emphasized the importance of introducing children to reading very early in life even before the child steps into school so that children can see reading as a means of enjoyment, self – development, love of literature and learning, it is widely believed that enterprise of developing reading habit has to start at the early part of one’s life and that these should be a conducive reading environment to stimulate lifelong reading. Therefore, Sanzkaeo (1999) sees reading habits to be the behavior which expresses the liking for reading of individual types and tastes for reading. Reading habit is a pattern in which individual organizes his reading. Having a reading habit in students is very necessary, because one of the most important factor of education is the ability to read, understand and critically apprehend the text.(Hetting and Knapp 2001). However to be able to inculcate reading habit, students must develop the habit of reading on daily basis. Beck and Mckeoun (2001) is of the view that

the capability of understanding text and reading habits should be developed from early childhood through the whole life. Green, (2001) explained that reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one's life.

## **II. Statement Of The Problem**

By and large, the importance of reading cannot be overemphasized, because no learning activity or situation can take place without reading. But one of the major problems facing the educational system in Nigeria is the abysmal failure of students in public examinations especially at the senior secondary level of education. (Ajayi 2012). This abysmal failure can be conceived to be linked with the absence of reading habit among students or non-challant attitude to reading to the use of internet. Although there are many reasons why people read, but observations and researches have shown that there is a low reading habit among students in recent times, especially in developing countries, because reading is not considered as a relevant leisure activity as it does not form part of children's social interaction and watching of television. Another major problem that leads to the absence of reading habits among students is on the advents of ICTs like internet, cell phone, video games and other viewing gadgets. Umar (2009) is of the view that students now have viewing culture instead of reading culture because of the advents of these ICTs gadgets. Also the lack of available information resources like texts books both in the school library and at homes also could lead to lack of students forming the habits of reading. The foregoing reasons prompted the researchers to investigate on the level of reading habits amongst secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis.

## **III. Objectives Of The Study**

1. To find out the level and frequency of reading amongst the secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis.
2. To find out the types of reading materials available to the students both at homes and in their libraries.
3. To find out the benefits they can derive from having a reading habit.
4. To find out the likely problems that hinders the secondary school students from forming the habits of reading and to proffer solutions to the likely problems hindering them from reading.

## **IV. Research Questions**

1. What is the frequency and time of reading among secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis?
2. What types of reading materials are available to the students both in school and at homes?
3. What purpose do they derive from reading and benefit they gain?
4. What are the likely problems hindering the lack of reading habits amongst the secondary school students?

## **V. Literature Review**

Reading can be defined as a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning. It is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experience, altitude and language community which is culturally and socially situated. (Wikipedia).

To Fisher (2001) reading is an intellectual action which is possible only if a child has formed the habit of reading and practicing it since childhood. Tella and Akande (2007) asserted that the ability to read is at the heart of self education and lifelong learning and that it is an art capable of transforming life and society.

Reading habit is a pattern in which individual organizes his reading Sanzkaeo (1999) sees reading habits to be the behaviors which expresses the liking for reading of individual types and tastes for reading. While Azikwe (1998) described reading habits as the way and manner a student plan his or her private study outside lecture hours in order to master a particular subject or topic fielden (2004) states that good reading habits help the student in critical reflection in skills outcomes such as selecting, analyzing, critiquing and synthesizing. Nneji (2002) also stated that reading habits are learning tendencies that enables students work privately.

The importance of reading cannot be overemphasized, that is why Isuigo-Abamike (2001) emphasized that reading has a direct influence on the performance of any student, be it for the purpose of passing exams or for leisure. To kolawole (2005) reading is basic to learning, and so the child's ability to read is the centre of his educational process. Nkiko and Yusuf (2006) asserted that reading is one of the life's greatest pleasures that open the door to culture, knowledge and independence.

Because of the role that reading plays in the learning situation, Deavers (2000) is of the view that once a child has been taught how to read and develop the love for books, he can explore for himself the wealth of human experience and knowledge. Also Maduekwe (2002) posits that once students gets accustomed to reading they become better students, they will be able to learn fast, understand better, and acquire new knowledge and skills more rapidly and are better equipped for their chosen careers. Thanuskodi (2012) when explaining the

benefit of reading says that a reader can learn new skills, become more knowledgeable about the whole world and can be stimulated to both thoughts and emotions.

As human beings there different reasons why we read and different kinds of materials we read. Oke (1996) gives reasons why students read to be include self improvement, pleasure, and relaxation and also feeling of pride and prestige. To Potter (2011) reading fires children's imagination and encourages quick learning as well as widens their views, expands their horizons and helps readers learn about present times. He further stressed that reading encourages imaginations, curiosity and the ability to handle complex ideas. Furthermore, Okebukola (2004) affirms that through reading humans have the tools to transmit knowledge to succeeding generation. A survey carried out by Book aid international (2003) in Sonaika (2004) revealed that children in developed country reads for relaxation, while majority of children in developing countries read only for passing exams. However, the inability of students not forming a habit of reading could be linked to some factors. Nssein (2008) highlighted some of the factors leading to low reading habit as; slow comprehensive rate, slow reading rate, difficulty in distinguishing main ideas from relevant details, inadequate vocabulary, inadequate reading interests, on availability of reading materials, distractions from Television, and other viewing gadgets.

Fosudo (2010) while trying to explain the negative effect of poor reading skill said that it can make a child develop a poor attitude toward school and can create self-esteem problems later in life. However, some problems attached to the poor reading habits includes; mass failure, poverty, loss of self esteem, and above all illiteracy. Also secondary school students must often associate reading with academic task and not for knowledge and pleasure: this does not enable the students who have the reading skill to maximize the activity for self and social development, in view of this, Sanacore (1990) emphasized that the reader interest and habit is determined by a number of factors such as social values of the society, school, family and environment, each factor has its own function and promotes the development of reader personality.

Ambigapthy (1997) mentioned that the cultivation of reading habit is influenced by a range of other factor like exposure to media and computer, also the fact that we are currently living in area where public discussion take place on television, video, multi – channel satellite broadcasting, interactive cable system, email and internet stimulate reading activity. It could be possibly be argue that visual representation has to be read more actively as it convey a range of ways accompany the print or verbal text.

Therefore, extensive reading has be found to be the most effective way of developing reading skill and habit among youth in the sense that each reader will have a choice of what to read and they have more scope following their own interest: this will definitely reduce the teachers control and encourages learning to occur outside the class.

Nweke (1990) states that it has a real role to play in development of the individual. Sangaeo (1999) observes that a reading habit must be promoted from an early age. This view is supported by Yusuf (2007), who says that those children imbibe good character during their formative years. The most important factor in student learning in schools is the quality of teaching. Teachers are the chief drivers of the education engine. They design the curriculum and the behavioral goals that are its products (Olajide, 2008). Since education involves interaction between learners, learning materials, and teachers, teachers must be avid readers themselves in order to ignite a lifelong reading habit in their students. Students should be motivated to read and know how to use reading materials to improve themselves and their social environment. Trelease (2006) observes that teachers are seldom seen reading. A good teacher must have a broad information base and should not depend on their lesson notes, which cannot contain all the information on a given topic. Teachers should provide reading lists to accompany what is done in class and give assignments that will prompt students to research in the school or public library.

## **VI. Methodology**

For the purpose of this research, the researchers adopted descriptive survey research methods. The instrument for collecting data was a questionnaire. The populations of the study are students in selected secondary schools Kaduna metropolis. Five hundred students were randomly selected from ten secondary schools under study. Descriptive statistic techniques like tables of frequency counts and percentages were used in the analysis. However, fifty copies were given to each secondary schools in Kaduna metropolis. Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used to select ten secondary schools out of forty secondary schools in the area used for this study. Out of five hundred (500) questionnaires distributed, four hundred and eighty (480) were found useful which constitute ninety six percent (96%) of the total copies administered.

## **VII. Research Findings**

### **Schools used for the study**

S/N	NAMES	No. of Questionnaires given	No. of Questionnaires receives
1.	All Saints international school, bye pass, Kaduna	50	50
2.	Government Girls sec. sch., Kabala constain kaduna	50	48
3.	Cleverland Academic, Tudun – wada, Kaduna	50	46

4.	Govt. sec. school, Kurmi Mashi Kaduna	50	48
5.	Aunty Nica's secondary school, tudun –wada Kaduna	50	50
6.	Nawair – u –deen High school, Kaduna	50	50
7.	Govt. Girls secondary school, Kawo	50	50
8.	Danbo international school, barnawa Kaduna	50	45
9.	Metropolitan's secondary school, Kawo	50	45
10.	Rimi college Kaduna	50	48
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>480</b>

**Table: 1 Gender**

Gender	No. of students	Percentage
Male	226	47%
Female	254	53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table2: secondary schools levels**

S/n	Level	No. of students	Percentage
1.	Senior level	310	65%
2.	Junior level	170	35%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table3: Frequency of Reading**

S/n	Frequency	No. of students	Percentage
1.	Always	309	64%
2.	Often	149	31%
3.	Rarely	13	3%
4.	Never	9	2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 revealed that 309 (64%) students claimed that they always read whenever they feel like reading while 149 (31%) agreed that they often read their books. This findings was supported by Prof Chinua Achebe in the 2009 'Ahiajokuta lecture' what makes illiteracy high in Nigeria is that most people often say they do not have time to read and they study when they feel like reading.

**Table4: Time spent on reading**

S/No.	Time spent on reading	No. Of students	%
1.	1 to 2 hours	250	52%
2.	2 -3 hours	150	31%
3.	3 – 4 hours	50	11%
4.	4 – 5 hours	20	4%
5.	5 hours and above	10	2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows that majority of the students 250 (52%) claimed that they spend between 1 to 2 hours daily reading, while 150 (31%) students stated that they spend between 2 to 3 hours reading their books.

**Table 5: reading materials**

S/No	Reading material	No. of students	Percentage
1.	Textbooks	258	54%
2.	Novel/fictions	97	20%
3.	Newspaper/magazines	0	0
4.	Reference books	23	5%
5.	All of the above	102	21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 revealed that majority of the students 258 (54%) read textbooks, while 97 (20%) students claimed they read novel/fictions. This indicates that the read to prepare for exams.

**Table 6: Reason/purpose of reading**

s/no	Reason/purpose	No. of students	Percentage
1.	For exams	73	15%
2.	For relaxation	27	6%
3.	For knowledge and skills	230	48%
4.	All of the above	150	31%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 shows that majority of the students 230(48%) read for the purpose of knowledge and skill, while 150 (31%) claimed they read for the purpose of exams, relaxation and knowledge and skill.

**Table 7: problems encounter while reading**

s/no	Problems	No. of students	Percentage
1.	Lack of interest	69	4%
2.	Inadequate reading materials	76	16%
3.	Distraction for television	146	31%
4.	Household errand	189	39%
	Total	480	100

Table 7 revealed that majority of the students 189(39%) stated that distraction from household errand while 146 (31%) claimed that distraction from television are their major problems.

**Table 8:Activities done which stop reading**

s/no	Activities	No. of students	Percentage
1.	Watching films	160	33%
2.	Chatting through social network	156	32%
3.	Playing video games	50	11%
4.	Sleeping, jest with friends	115	24%
	Total	480	100

Table 8 shows that majority of the students 160(33%) stated that watching films while 156 (32%) claimed that social network such as chatting through facebook, 2go etc stop them from reading.

### **VIII. Summary Of Findings**

Below is the summary of findings of this study:

- Students rarely read and whenever they feel like reading.
- Majority of the students spend between 1to 2hours daily on reading.
- Majority of the students read textbooks, novel/fiction.
- The students read for the purpose of exams, to gain knowledge and skill.
- The students complains that household errand, watching television distract them form reading.
- Majority of the students see chatting through social networking as distraction to their studies.

### **IX. Conclusion**

Through systematic implementation of the above mentioned strategies, the reading habit of students in secondary schools would be visible to all. By promoting reading for pleasure in every school we can empower our students to become lifelong learners and to have successful careers. Secondary schools where reading culture is instituted will be able to give their students the key to learning independently and this can make fulfil their potentials. However there are still barriers to creating a reading environment that will inculcate good reading habits in secondary schools. This notwithstanding, secondary students should be encouraged to study in library.

### **X. Recommendations**

The study recommends measures that need to be taken by the Government and stakeholders in order to improve reading habit. These include,

- The need to enact a policy that encourages construction of libraries in secondary schools, provision of relevant information resources and, qualified librarians to run such libraries.
- Radio and television media in the country should include in their schedules programmes that can promote reading culture; this can come up at least once or twice a week. They should as well make sure that interesting literary books are always read on air.
- Parents should encourage their children and wards to read at home, and watch children educational television programmes.
- There should be provision of more reading books to students to widen their scope in promotion of reading and development of a reading habit.
- The need to restructure the current secondary school curriculum to incorporate activities that can promote reading for leisure. A library period should be included in the school timetable.
- Teachers must acknowledge the importance of reading skills and must plan an effective programme of reading instruction with a focus on promoting reading habit among students in their schools.

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