

The State of Reading in Faculty Libraries: A Socio-Economic Analysis

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Abstract: *Descriptive survey design and simple balloting method is employed in selecting four(4) faculty libraries in University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect necessary information from the students. Two hundred and fifty copies of questionnaire were administered with returned rate of 95.6%. Analysis of data collected with regard to the effects of the socio-economic factors on the state of reading in faculty libraries reveals that autobiography was ranked first out of areas of reading interest, having 2.22 ± 1.13 as the mean and standard deviation (SD) respectively while the text book took the lowest share with 1.43 ± 0.52 as the mean and standard deviation (SD) respectively. Also, the social factors affecting reading habits of students are as follows; frequent use of library followed by the parents level of education, while least of the factors was specific selected area of interest and then the economic factors are: parents not skilled followed by the parents very poor while the least of the factors was parents being considered very rich. Lastly in terms of use of library, borrowing most books from the library and use the library for online reading materials top the use of library while the least of the use were consulting the librarian for information and consulting reference section for any information. The study recommends that more information technology devices should be procured in the faculty libraries of universities in Nigeria and improvement on economic and social factors by the government.*

Key words: *Reading habit, Faculty libraries, Socio-economic factors, ICT.*

I. Introduction

Reading is a precise process. It involves exact, detailed, sequential perception and identification of letters, words, spelling patterns and large language units. More simply stated, reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. It involves an interaction between thoughts and language. Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. The ability to anticipate that which has not been seen, is vital in reading, just as the ability to anticipate, what has not yet been heard is vital in listening. Today, the reading has social, academic, economical and survival significance, because democracy of a country can survive when people at large have reading competence. Reading is always a means to an end and not an end in itself. Further, reading is the process of using our 'eyes', our 'mind', to understand the literal as well as the hidden meaning of what the writer was attempting to convey. Therefore, reading gives both power, and pleasure with understanding, by reading the material as a unified whole, by which one can expand the frontiers of knowledge and scholarship

It is an undeniable fact that reading is important. Academic success at the tertiary level is likely a multidimensional phenomenon that includes languages proficiency, learning, study strategies and certain personal characteristics. The study of this very important language skill: reading, for some time now met many obstacles. In the university, students are expected to read many books so as to succeed academically. In order to get their degree, all students must read and pass their courses. Success in the university demands knowledge of facts and grasp of idea, much of it through the written word, knowledge we know is power and we acquire knowledge through reading, (Odusanya and Amusa, 2004).

Reading, which Orasamu (1982) defined as the art of interpreting printed and written words, is one of the most effective processes of conscious learning and sometimes, it influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgment and action of readers. A creative and pragmatic education involves the habit of personal investigation. The art 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, according to Smith (1982), is known as reading habit. Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. "The reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one's life" (Greene, 2001). To know about the world and its environment, a child helps himself through reading books, newspapers and other magazines (Deavers, 2000). Once the child has been taught to read and develop a love for books, he can explore for himself the wealth of human experience and knowledge. Children, missing the opportunity of getting in touch with books at this stage, find it hard to acquire reading habit in their later years. According to Fisher (2004) "... reading is an intellectual action which is possible only if a man has formed a habit of reading and practicing it since childhood". The reading habit, therefore, plays a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency. "Laws die but books never." Indeed, books are the most suitable medium through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation. Gallo (2007) enthused, "books, yield their best to you, if you read them at the age at which each particular masterpiece can ideally be chewed and digested".

There is little knowledge about the everyday reading practices of tertiary education students and how these practices affect their academic achievement. Everyday reading consists of individuals' reading activities for a variety of purposes, such as for relaxation or information. Previous research has documented that, from middle childhood through adulthood, reading becomes a major component of studying, and much information learned through studying is initially acquired through reading. The everyday reading activities in which students engage may, therefore, considerably influence their studying skills and subsequent academic performance. There is a general sense in which one appreciates the link between good habits of reading and the academic performance of students generally. Nigeria, like other African countries, adopts the English Language as its official language of communication or Lingua Franca. This has a great implication for the formation of good reading habits among Nigerians.

Eyisi (2005) recognized three abilities involved in reading comprehension as recognition, retention and recall. We should read a thing once to find out what it contains. A second time to understand it, and a third time to imprint it on our memory and the fourth time, we should report it silently to test ourselves whether we have finally mastered it.

Reading, whether for pleasure or for academic purpose, is an essential habit that forms the bedrock of greatness in everyone, regardless of age, gender, income, level of education, and other socio-economic status is hardly disputed. However, imbibing it has not always been as widespread as accepting its importance.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the state of reading in relation to socio-economic variables and other related factors among University of Ibadan students in four selected faculty libraries. The specific objectives are to:

- i. find out how parents' income affects the reading habits of students
- ii. examine the relationship between parents' level of education and reading habit of students
- iii. determine the effect of parents' occupation on the reading habits of students in the four selected faculty libraries of the University of Ibadan
- iv. Determine the reading interest of University of Ibadan students in the library.

II. Review Of Literature

• Concept of Reading and Reading Habit

The term "habit" has been defined as "something that you do often or regularly" (Grellet, 1987). On its own part, "reading" is the act of getting meaning from printed or written words, which is the basis for learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life (Guthrie et al, 2007). This explains why reading is usually associated with books as only the written words provide a complete picture of the act of reading. Central to the concept of reading is its dependence on the readers' memory and experience in order to understand what is read. It also involves how well a reader remembers, uses and reacts to the materials read; stressing such skills as word recognition, vocabulary development and comprehension. It follows then that if you are in the practice of reading regularly without thinking about it because of the permanence of its continuity, one can conclude that good reading habits have been formed. This is because a habit has been formed when an individual does something many times unconsciously having become a part and parcel of such a person's life.

Components of Reading

Reading requires a neuro-muscular activity (which involves using brain and maximum concentration). During reading, man's active participation in coordinating his neuromuscular components takes place. As a psychomotor skill, it influences the cognitive and affective domains of man's behaviour. Following are some of the important components of reading skills:

Decoding the word and analyzing the concept.

1. Grasping the meaning of the concept.
2. Grasping the logic of sentence construction.
3. Anticipating the meaning of the next sentence.
4. Moving very easily to the next sentence with a clear understanding.

- **Library Usage and Reading Habits**

Libraries provide access to reading materials through which school children and youths can gain and improve their skills. According to Moruf (2015), the school librarian must be accessible, approachable, and responsive; must establish a climate conducive to maximum reading a happily invitation place where the student may taste comfortability and develop a good reading habit. She further added that a librarian teaches reading skills required to use the learning resources in the library.

- **Socio-economic Factors**

Socio-economic background is measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment as index of social, cultural and economic status, which is based on information, provided by students, about their parents' education and occupations and their home possessions, such as a desk to use for studying and the number of books in the home's library. These factors are briefly discussed below:

Income and Reading Habits

Moffit and Wartella (1992) examined the influence of income status on reading behaviour. The results showed that both lower class and upper class students read more than middle class children. This finding is not consistent with the outcomes of studies conducted by Devarajan (1989), both of which revealed no significant difference between students of varying socio-economic status. Additional, more sophisticated studies must be conducted before any valid generalizations can be made regarding students parents' education or students' socio-economic status. It has been asserted that income generation and the way of life of a nation are influenced by the percentage of its citizen who embrace reading habit and be literate. Cuba, for example, is adjacent to the US and has the highest rate of literacy in the world. This is among the reasons why Cuba has a vibrant economy despite decades of diplomatic conflicts with the strongest nation in the world. Tracy and Robin(2008) asserts that being a former British colony, Nigeria's reading and literacy culture ought to be as standardized as that of the Britain. About 99% of British citizens can read and write. The same cannot be said of Nigeria.

According to Gbadamosiand Omotayo, (2007), the low level of reading habits and culture among Nigerians is caused by multi-varied factors which include:

- Change in Nigeria's value system. The quest for material wealth has eroded the interest for the search of knowledge.
- Economic hardship that is prevalent in many homes. Most parents manage to pay their wards school fees and forget about buying book for them.
- Astronomical prices of books and other information materials have put them out of the reach of the masses. Coupled with high cost of books is poor availability of indigenous books owing to the fact that local authors are not encouraged to write books.
- Also cost of publishing books is very high. Indigenous writers are not motivated as they may not be able to finance the high cost of book publishing.
- Advent of home videos, film houses and other electronic gadgets.

Parent's Level of Education and Reading Habit

Reading culture refers to the process and the contexts in which young people develop reading habits and reading engagement (Kraaykamp, 2003). Amongst the contexts or institutions for reading habits are the family, the school and the public library. Although the school is in charge of formal reading culture, it is the family that is labelled the 'fundamental institution' of reading socialization. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), has initiated an ongoing discussion on how to improve students' reading literacy, reading motivation and reading engagement, not only in school settings, but also in informal settings like in the family.

Gender and Reading Habits

Millard (1997) argues that gender 'is a significant issue to consider when thinking about young people's reading and the potential impact of their parent's reading'. A large amount of national and international studies show that girls read more frequently compared to boys (e.g. Clark & Forster, 2005) and that they score higher on reading literacy (e.g. Mackey, 2007) and reading motivation (e.g; Wigfield& Guthrie, 1997),

particularly in terms of fictional literature (Mullis et al. 2003). Time-diary studies have consistently shown that girls (on average) spent more time reading than boys (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). Although these studies clearly reveal gender differences in reading literacy, reading motivation and reading habits, however, theoretical explanations of these differences remain inconsistent (Logan & Johnston, 2010).

Addressing parent's gender, many studies indicate that mothers more than fathers play a crucial role for young people's reading habits (Goldman, 2005), as the former on average spend more time on care-giving and less time on paid work.

III. Statement Of The Problem

Literature reveals that about 30 million Nigerians have graduated from high school with poor reading skills. Majority of students are spending less time in reading, even during their examinations. Also, reading comprehension and proficiency skills are eroding among youth generally. More worrisome is the fact that these problems are caused by certain factors and the consequences have serious civic, social, cultural, and economic implications.

However, this situation made the researchers to embark on this study, with the hope of finding why these students are not developing positive reading habit? Do they really understand consequences of reading different materials? Is there any correlation between reading skills and the use of library? And majorly what are the impacts of social characteristics on reading culture of students?

It is based on this background that this study is carried out to investigate the effect of socio economics variables on state of reading among students in university of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria.

IV. Significance Of The Study

Based on the importance of reading in the field of library and information science and education, the concept of library use and the need to produce graduates with sound knowledge resulting from good reading habits and culture in the various field of learning, this study will unravel some of the reasons why students have negative attitudes towards developing good reading habits.

The parents and guardians will also find the outcome of this study useful in determining how their occupations, level of education, income, awareness and exposure are capable of assisting their wards in tertiary institutions

The result of this study will be of significance to lecturers, as it will create awareness of the social characteristics conditions that can influence reading habits of students during their course of studies. The findings of the study will also sensitize the librarians of different faculty libraries about different factors affecting the reading culture of their students and devise strategies to assisting them.

V. Scope Of The Study

The study covers four faculties in university of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, namely: Faculty of Law, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, Faculty of Social Science and Faculty of Education. Also, the study focuses on the use of library and socio- economic factors such as income, level of education, occupation and level of information awareness. However, this study does not include all faculties in the university of Ibadan, but the result of one randomly selected from this finding will be generalized to other faculties in the University.

VI. Methodology

In this study, survey method (Karasar, 2005) was used to capture relationship among socio-economic variables and state of reading among students in four selected faculty libraries in university of Ibadan. Ibadan, Nigeria. To get samples for the study, all the ten faculties in the university were written in pieces of papers which were picked at each interval to determine the successful ones. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 40% of the total population. The followings are the selected libraries: faculty of law library, faculty of education library, faculty of social science library, faculty of agriculture library. The measuring instrument used in this study was a self-designed questionnaire. The copies of questionnaires were administered directly to the respondents aided by the librarian-in-charge of the libraries. The data were analyzed using Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS).

VII. Findings

• Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	123	51.5
Female	113	37.3
No response	3	1.2
Total	239	100.0

Table 1 revealed that the majority 123(51.5%) of the respondents were male while the remaining 113 respondents (37.3%) were female. These respondents cut across the four selected faculty libraries. The table showed that there are more male students in University of Ibadan than female.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age (In years)	Frequency	Percentage
Under 18	8	3.3
18 – 22	208	87.0
23 and above	23	9.6
Total	239	100.0

Table 2 revealed that the majority 208 respondents (44.2%) were within 18 to 22 years of age, while 23 respondents (9.6%) were in age range of 23years and above and theremaining 8 respondents (3.3%) were in age range under 18 years. These respondents cut across the four selected faculty libraries of the University of Ibadan. The major reason for the ranges among the respondents is that under 18years, few respondents are gaining admission to schools like Colleges, Polytechnics, Universities, while some are likely to still be in secondary schools. Those between the ranges of 18-22 years are the ones that dominate the undergraduate classes. These are the people trying to establish and build careers. By 23 years and above, the percentage is diminishing. The reasons are that those in that category might have just passed out of the university to pursue their masters as postgraduate students while the few remaining might have been PhD students.

- **Research Statements: Analysis**

Table 3: Analysis of the areas of reading interest of students

Area of reading interest	Agreed (%)	Strongly Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)	Strongly Disagreed (%)	Mean	SD	Ranking
Textbooks	141(59.0)	91(38.1)	7(2.9)	-	1.43	0.52	14 th
Journals	100(41.8)	19(7.9)	107(44.8)	-	2.11	1.01	3 rd
Magazine/ newspaper	174(72.8)	28(11.7)	37(15.5)	-	1.42	0.74	12 th
Sport publication	103(43.1)	52(21.8)	65(27.2)	19(8.0)	1.93	0.92	6 th
Class notes	68(28.5)	160(66.9)	11(4.6)	-	1.72	0.54	11 th
Biography	112(46.9)	50(20.9)	49(20.5)	28(11.8)	1.90	1.12	9 th
Autobiography	95(39.7)	25(10.5)	84(35.1)	35(14.6)	2.22	1.13	1 st
Poetry	86(36.0)	45(18.8)	92(38.5)	16(6.7)	2.11	0.92	3 rd
Science fiction	109(45.6)	29(12.1)	74(31.0)	27(11.3)	1.93	1.01	6 th
Short stories	131(54.8)	108(45.2)	-	-	2.20	1.10	2 nd
Novels	67(28.0)	140(58.6)	23(9.6)	9(2.1)	1.84	0.51	10 th
Drama	134(56.1)	79(33.1)	17(7.1)	9(3.8)	1.62	0.72	13 th
Religious Books	107(44.8)	47(19.7)	69(28.9)	16(6.7)	1.92	1.01	8 th
Reference Materials	142(59.4)	43(18.0)	42(17.6)	12(5.0)	2.11	0.90	3 rd

Table 3 reveals the area of reading interest of the respondents as follows: autobiography 112 respondents (43.1%) agreed to be the areas of reading of most student with 2.22 ± 1.13 as mean and standard deviation(SD) respectively, followed by short stories 131(54.8%) agreed to be their area of reading interest with 2.20 ± 1.10 as the mean and standard deviation(SD) respectively and also agreed as area of reading interest are 100 respondents (41.8%) journals, 86(36.0%) poetry and 142(59.4%) reference materials follow with 2.11 ± 1.01 , 2.11 ± 0.92 and 2.11 ± 0.90 as their mean and standard deviation respectively. While the least of the area of reading interest of the respondents is text books 141(59.0%) agreed with 1.43 ± 0.52 as its mean and standard deviation respectively.

Table 4: Analysis of how social factors affect reading habit of students

Social factors	Agreed (%)	Strongly Agreed (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	SD	Ranking
My parents level of education contribute to my positive reading habits	112(46.9)	50(20.9)	50(20.9)	27(11.3)	2.21	1.06	2 nd
My parents' type of occupation affect my reading habits	97(40.6)	40(16.7)	83(34.7)	19(8.0)	2.07	1.02	4 th
Seeking general information affect my reading habits	55(23.0)	125(52.3)	42(17.6)	17(7.1)	2.09	0.83	3 rd
Specific/ selected area of interest affect my reading habits	109(45.6)	70(29.3)	48(20.1)	12(5.0)	1.85	0.92	5 th
Frequent use of library affect my reading habits as an undergraduate	85(35.60)	46(19.2)	78(32.6)	30(12.6)	2.22	1.06	1 st

Table 4 revealed the effect of social factors on reading habit of the students. The ranking was done as follows; 35.6% and 46.9% agreed with 2.22 ± 1.06 and 2.21 ± 1.06 as their mean and standard deviation(SD), most of the respondents agreed that frequent use of library affect their reading habits and followed by my parents level of education contribute to my positive reading habits as the effect respectively. While 125(52.3%) of the respondents were strongly agreed that seeking general information affect their reading habits with 2.09 ± 0.83 as the mean and standard deviation respectively. Also 97 respondents (40.6%) agreed that parents' type of occupation affect their reading habits with the mean and standard deviation of 2.07 ± 1.02 respectively, while the least 109(35.6%) agreed that the specific/ selected area of interest affect their reading habits with the mean and standard deviation as 1.85 ± 0.92 respectively.

Table 5: Analysis of how economic factors affect reading habit of undergraduate students

Economic factors	Agreed (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	SD	Ranking
My parent income affects my reading habits in the university	90(37.7)	35(14.6)	88(36.8)	26(10.0)	2.21	1.06	3 rd
The type of my parents' employment affect my reading habits	86(36.0)	89(37.2)	47(19.7)	17(7.1)	2.07	1.02	4 th
My parents are very poor	88(36.8)	38(15.0)	65(27.2)	48(20.0)	2.26	1.13	2 nd
My parents fall between higher income level and middle income level status	112(46.9)	44(18.4)	64(26.8)	19(7.9)	1.94	1.02	5 th
My parent are considered very rich	111(46.4)	61(25.6)	54(2.6)	13(5.4)	1.85	0.92	6 th
My parents are not skilled workers	58(24.3)	49(20.5)	71(29.7)	61(25.5)	2.53	1.12	1 st

Table 5 revealed the economic factors as they affect reading habit of undergraduate students. 71 respondents (29.7%) disagreed with mean and standard deviation(SD) of with 2.53 ± 1.12 respectively that parents not skilled is an economic factor that affect reading habits of undergraduate, follows by 88(36.8%) agreed with 2.26 ± 1.13 as the mean and standard deviation respectively that a poor parents is an economic factor that can affect the reading habits of an undergraduate students, 90(37.7%) of the respondents agreed that the parent income affects reading habits in the university with 2.21 ± 1.06 mean and standard deviation. While 111(46.4%) with 2.26 ± 1.13 as the mean and standard deviation respectively of the respondents agreed that considering parents being rich is the least of the economic factors that affect reading habits of students.

Table 6: Analysis of how the use of library affects reading habits of students

Use of library	Agreed (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	SD	Ranking
I do all my reading in the library	97(40.6)	61(25.5)	55(23.0)	26(10.9)	2.04	1.04	3 rd
I borrow most of my books from the library	80(33.5)	42(17.6)	85(35.6)	30(12.6)	2.27	1.06	1 st
I do consult the reference section for any information	93(38.9)	104(43.5)	26(10.9)	16(6.7)	1.81	0.81	4 th
I use library for my online reading materials	42(17.6)	138(57.7)	39(16.3)	20(8.3)	2.15	0.80	2 nd
I consult the librarian for information	85(35.6)	55(23.0)	66(27.6)	33(13.8)	1.81	0.81	4 th
Does the use of library affect reading habits as an undergraduate	134(56.1)	33(13.8)	50(20.9)	22(9.2)	2.09	0.94	3 rd

Table 6 revealed how the use of library affects reading habits of students as follows the majority 85(35.6%) with 2.27 ± 1.06 as the mean and standard deviation(SD) respectively disagreed that borrowing most of the books from the library affects reading habits, while above average 138(57.7%) with 2.15 ± 0.80 as the mean and standard deviation respectively of the respondents strongly agreed that using library for online materials affects reading habits of undergraduate students. Also above average 134 (56.1%) with 2.09 ± 0.94 as the mean and standard deviation respectively of the respondents agreed that using of library affect reading habits. 93 (38.9%) and 85(35.6%) with 1.81 ± 0.81 as the mean and standard deviation respectively of the respondents agreed that consulting the librarian for information and consulting the reference section for any information is the least of how us of library affects reading habits of the students.

VIII. Discussion Of Findings

Findings in this study were able to establish the reading area of interest of the students in this order; autobiography with the highest mean and standard deviation was agreed to be the first and followed by short stories. Also agreed next as area of reading interest are journals, poetry and reference materials. While the least of the area of reading interest of the respondents is text books which has the lowest mean value and standard deviation respectively.

Also revealed is the effect of social factors on reading habit of the students. The ranking was as follows; most of the respondents agreed that frequent use of library affect their reading habits as an undergraduate, followed by parents' level of education that have contributed to positive reading habits respectively. While appreciable number of the respondents strongly agreed that seeking general information affect their reading habits. Also some agreed that parents' type of occupation affect reading habits respectively, while the least of the social factors is that the specific / selected areas of interest affect their reading habits of students.

While the economic factors as they affect reading habit of students were revealed as follows most respondents disagreed that parents not skilled is an economic factor that affect reading habits of undergraduate this carried the highest mean, followed by the majority of respondents agreed that poor parents is an economic factor that can affect the reading habits of students, some of the respondents agreed that the parent income affects reading habits in the university. While the respondents agreed that considering parents being rich is the least of the economic factors that can affect reading habits of students.

The findings further revealed how the use of library affects reading habits of students as follows the majority of the respondents disagreed that borrowing most of the books from the library can affect reading habits, while above average of the respondents strongly agreed that using library for online materials affects reading habits of students. Also above average of the respondents agreed that using of library can affect reading habits. The findings also revealed that some of the respondents agreed that consulting the librarian for information and consulting the reference section for any information are the least of how use of library van affects reading habits of the students.

IX. Conclusion

Based on above findings, it is safe to conclude that the reading habits of students can be improved/ make better in terms of the social and economic factors. However, the non-availability of some of the necessary technologies for the libraries should be improved upon for more effective book reading habits in University students.

X. Recommendation

1. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that there is urgent need to procure more information technologies devices in the faculty libraries in the universities in Nigeria and improvement in economic and social factors mentioned by the government. These will surely enhance and improve the reading habit that is falling drastically in students. The results will help enlighten a wider audience on the economic, social effects and usability of faculty libraries in the university.
2. The research equally recommends that the libraries at different level of education, public and National libraries should be funded and fortified with modern electronic learning facilities that will make accessibility of online reading materials easy and thereby attract library users. This will equally improve fading reading habits among the youths.

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