

Factor Affecting Reading Habit of Secondary School Students in Osogbo Metropolis

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Abstract: Extensive reading has been found to be the most effective way of developing reading skill among youth and eventually improving their academic performances. This study was conducted among 120 secondary school students in Osogbo metropolis using simple random sampling as the sampling technique. The data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that most of the students were male day students and were within the age range of 10-15 years of age (65%). the student were in the lower class,. most of their parent were either into business or civil service. Most of the students in the study area had access to electronic facilities and they used it very often. They further claimed that watching home video had negative influence on their academic performance in that they performed poorly. Association with brilliant students, reading of novel to improve spoken and written English Language, spending more time reading instead of watching video firms are some of the suggestion that could improve the student reading habit and academic performance.

Key words: Reading, secondary school, student, electronic facilities, academic performance

INTRODUCTION

Reading as been described 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^[1].

However reading activity requires strong and efficient skill if learning will be successful because students require cognitive skill to process information properly. Academic activity such as school work, home work become frustrating if special attention is not given to factor affecting the reading habit of the student. Adams *et al.*^[2] stated this and I quote;

“To argue that in the era of information technology, learning to read is preparing children for the nineteenth rather than the twenty-first is to miss-understand the nature of human thought and its development”.

The significance of teaching student to read in order to develop their potentials cannot be over-emphasized even in the era of information communication technology. Okoro^[3] 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 the enterprise of developing reading behavior has to start at

an early part of ones life and that there should be a conducive reading environment to stimulate lifelong reading^[4,5].

Secondary school student most 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.

Sanacore^[6] emphasized that the reader interest and behavior is determined by a number of factors such as social values of their society, school, family and environment, each factor has its own function and promotes the development of reader personalities

Ambigapathy^[4] mentioned that the cultivation of reading behavior is also influenced by a range of other factor like exposure to media and computer. Also the fact that we are currently living in an area where public discussion take place on television, video, multi-channel satellite broadcasting, interactive cable system, e-mail and the internet stimulate reading activity. It could 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.

Extensive reading has been found to be the most effective way of developing reading skill 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^[7].

Aaronson and Ferres^[8] said that student who read large quantities of easy and interesting materials will become better readers and will enjoy the experience; in other words student learn how to read by reading. In addition many researchers have found reading to have a positive effect on listening, writing and other area of language competence.

In America, approximately 75% of student find reading in third grade difficult, also 9th grade education in south African study show that one in five schools has a library, although western cape school have an average of one library for two evening school. Statistics reported that in 2003 that grade 3 pupils in South Africa scored an average of 54% in literacy test and 39% in reading test the reason for this shocking result was promoted by poor reading culture in South Africa^[9].

Therefore the objectives of the study are to:

- Describe the personal characteristics of the respondents.
- Examine factors affecting the reading habit of secondary students in Osogbo metropolis.
- Make appropriate recommendation and suggestion to improve the reading habit of the respondents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study focus extensively on data obtained from questionnaire distributed among 20 secondary schools in Osogbo metropolis. A total number of 120 questionnaires were administered using multi stage random sampling, the data were analyze using simple descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency count and ranking. Among many of the information collected were personal characteristics of the students, accessibility to electronic facilities and the influence of home video on student reading habit.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Personal characteristics of the students: Table 1 revealed that 48.0% of the students were male while 52.0% were female. Majority of them were day students (95.5%), only 4.5% were in the boarding. Concerning their age distribution, most of the students were within the age range of 10-15 years of age (65%). Larger percentage of the student (50.0%) were in the lower class, therefore they

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the students by their personal characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Sex		
Male	58	48.3
Female	62	51.7
Age		
<10	6	5.0
11-15	78	65.0
16-19	36	30.0
Type of school		
Day	114	95.0
Boarding	6	5.0
Type of student		
Science	30	25.0
Art	18	15.0
Commercial	12	10.0
All	60	50.0
Fathers' occupation		
Business	72	60.0
Civil service	40	33.3
Both	8	6.7
Mothers' occupation		
Business	66	55.0
Civil service	18	15.0
Both	36	30.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field survey 2006

did all the subjects, 25.0% were science based students, followed by art students (15%) only about 10% of the students studied commercial. About 60% of the students mentioned that their fathers' occupation was civil service, 33% revealed that their fathers' occupation was business while 7% combined civil service and business. Table 1 also showed that most of the student mothers were into business (55%). It implied that their parents are busy and occupied with their jobs.

Accessibility to electronic facilities: Most of the students (38%) in the study area had access to television, video and compact disk player, this were closely followed by students with television and video (25%), television and compact disk player (14%) and television only (10%). Few of the students (8%) listened to radio and worked on computer (5%).

The students further explained they watched television, video and CD-ROM more often and their percentages are 65%, 78% and 82% respectively. About 64% of the student rarely listen to radio. Going by the number of video or/and CD firms watched per week, 20% of the students watched an average of 3 cassettes per week, 27% watched about 9 cassettes per week while 44% watched above 15 cassettes per week, only 9% of the student did not watched any cassette for the week. All these information is clearly shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of the students by their accessibility to electronic facilities

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Electronic facilities		
a Television	12	10.0
b Video	-	-
c Compact disk player	-	-
d Computer	6	5.0
e Radio	10	8.3
a, b and c	39	32.5
a and b	24	20.0
a and c	17	14.2
No response	12	10.0
Total	120	100.0
Number of firms or play watched/ week		
0	5	4.2
1-5	18	15.0
6-10	24	20.0
11-15	33	27.5
>15	40	33.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field survey 2006

Table 3: Use of electronic facilities

How frequent	Very often		Regularly		Rarely	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Watch television	78	65.0	30	25.0	12	10.0
Watch video	72	60.0	18	15.0	30	25.0
Watch CD	86	71.7	24	20.0	10	8.3
Listen to radio	10	8.3	20	16.7	90	75.0

Source: Field survey 2006

Table 4: Influence on academic performance

Influence	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	18	15.0
Negative	48	40.0
No influence	30	25.0
I don't know	18	15.0
No response	6	5.0
Total	120	100.0
Academic performance		
Excellent	10	8.3
Above average	18	15.0
Average	24	20.0
Below average	30	25.0
Very poor	38	31.7
Total	120	100.0
Recommendation to improve the students' reading habits		
Watch less firms/play	86	71.7
Use school library	85	70.8
Play less	64	53.3
Associate with excellent students	78	65.0
Read Novel to improve their spoken and written english language	56	46.7

Source: Field survey 2006, * Multiple responses

Influence of the use of electronic facilities on the reading habit of the students: As indicated in Table 3, 40% of the students claimed that watching home video had negative influence on their academic performance, 25% of them said there were no influence, 15% claimed positive influence, 15% were not sure and 5% did not respond.

The students' academic performance was rated for a period of twelve months and it was revealed that most of the students (32%) performed poorly, 26% of them were below average, 25% were average, 15% were above average in their performance and only 2% were excellent as shown in Table 4.

Students' recommendation and solution: The student suggested that in order to improve their reading habit, they have to watch less play/firms, associate with brilliant students, read novel to improve their spoken and written English Language, play less and made good use of their time by using the school library.

CONCLUSION

The indiscriminate use of electronic facilities in home will continue to worsen the reading interest of secondary school students in Osogbo metropolis and this situation always affect the academic performance of the students. It is therefore recommended that;

- Parent should monitor their wards at home by reducing their exposure to the use of electronic facilities.
- Students should be encouraged to spend more time to read by including reading hour into school curriculum.
- School library should be well located and functional so that students can make good use of it.
- Procedure for borrowing books should be flexible to stimulate student reading interest.
- Teacher should organize reading competition among students

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