

## Research

# Reading culture among students in selected secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria

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The paper investigated the reading culture among students in selected secondary schools in Lagos State. The paper is a survey research and questionnaire. Eight schools were purposively selected from Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. The population of the study is 939 secondary schools students from the study. Sample size for the study was 10% which has earlier been used in a similar study. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the students patronize the library to enhance knowledge and examination preparation. The study recommended that the school authorities should employ qualified school librarians to be in charge of the school libraries. Government should equip the existing school libraries with good, up-to-date, and sufficient library resources that are rich in quality, quantity and that can be varied to reflect the school curriculum at every point in time. Also, ministry of Education should introduce library study or period into the school curriculum. Local governments should promote reading through youth-based organisations such as: Press and Reading clubs.

**Keyword:** Reading culture, school library, students, secondary schools, Lagos State

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is an indispensable life skill and a foundation for a child's achievement in school. The roles of reading in the education of a child cannot be over-emphasized. Reading plays vital role in the education of a child. It is so significant that it cannot be removed from the learning process. Haliru, Abdulkarim, Mohammed and Dangani (2015) noted that reading is an essential component that constitutes central part of any learning condition.

Reading can also be considered as a process of creating meaning via vigorous communication among the reader's existing knowledge, the information proposed by the text being read, and the setting of the reading

situation. Oladunjoye, Oladunjoye and Olufemi (2016) affirmed that reading is indispensable for students' success and academic accomplishment, and the feat of any student for his or her capability to involve in personal study and learning.

Reading is a major skill in the learning and personal development of an individual which everybody must cultivate in order to thrive in school and to discharge tasks as citizens in a democratic society. Reading is one of the greatest essential skills for learning and for professional success. It strengthens the students' language skills; this is because students who read more have larger vocabularies, do better in test of grammar and write better (Yusuf, 2014). Reading is associated

with basic literacy, the ability to read, write and speak a particular language. The basic literacy may lead to essential elements in information literacy skills. (Arumobi, and Ukwoma 2016).

A child begins learning by associating objects and thoughts with verbal words. This indicates that reading is an art dependent on optical letter appreciation. Reading is important to learning as it exposes students to extensive information and knowledge. Aina, Adigun and Ogundipe (2011) considered reading as a practice that entails the use of comprehensive thought processes to read printed symbols as meaningful components and understand them as a thought component in order to recognize a printed message. Reading is a skill that must be nurtured from a child's initial stage of life. Majority of students with learning disabilities have difficulties with reading and associated vocabulary skills and without reading, no student can make any meaningful headway in his or her academic quest.

Reading culture has at all times and in all ages been a great source of knowledge. The value of reading culture to students is enormous; it includes profound, precise, clear and complete understanding and appropriation of the content of the text. Arumobi, and Ukwoma (2016) noted that reading should be in agreement with the interests and capabilities of the reader. To sustain students for good reading culture, it is required that students have access to books and other related materials. Oriogu (2015) opined that school libraries are libraries located in pre-school, primary and secondary schools to augment and assist teaching and learning with the principal purpose of meeting the information needs of pupils, students, and staff of the schools.

Obaitan (2004) termed school library as a collection of books and other forms of information resources, housed, organized and interpreted to meet the wide and changing information needs of students, which include recreation and aesthetic enjoyment. According to Adeniji (2006), the school library is the heart and soul of a school, as it influences all kinds of learners: from the slowest learners in the kindergarten to the most intelligent in the high school, by providing print and non-print materials to support learning. School libraries offer access to reading materials through which students can increase their skills. Libraries provide materials that give more wide-ranging and diverse information than classroom study (Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun, and Ogundipe, 2011).

Nabuyanda (2011) posited that school libraries play vital roles in supporting students to gain, maintain and cultivate their literacy skills. The library also offers information and educational services to both students and staff, with services towards augmenting the school syllabus and inspiring students to read story books and other entertaining books that can improve their reading skills. Stricevic (2008) opined that school libraries encourage students to make maximum use of available

information. Kumar, Ansari and Shukla (2010) asserted that one of the main objectives of a school library is to stimulate the love for reading, in order to promote a reading culture among users. Nabuyanda (2011) opined that school libraries are established to eliminate illiteracy, inspire creative thinking in school children, stimulate the reading habit of the young generation, ensure logical and social principles in the community, and improve the economic conditions of the societies.

On the other hand, Jato, Oguniyi and Olubiyo (2014) stressed that the objectives of a school library are: to instill literacy appreciation in readers, embed the development of reading skills, to be a clinic for intellectual growth, to be subjects' information centers, and to support the school syllabus. Ogbonna and Obiozor (2009) posited that a school library enhances students' academic performance and increases their knowledge beyond the walls of a classroom. Funmilayo (2013) opined that the school library provides reading strategy for both large and small groups, as well as students, with an emphasis on intellectual content, information literacy and the learner. Anyanwu, Obichere, Ossai-Onah and Oyemike (2012) buttressed other scholars' points that school libraries are expected to promote the reading culture of Nigerian children. For effective educational services to be achieved, and for learners to imbibe good reading culture, the library has a great role to play. School library services, operations and staff are prearranged in such a way that they support learning objectives and promote reading culture through various reading programmes.

The need for improvement of reading culture and effective use of school libraries has long been recognized. It is in line with this that the current study intends to find out the relevance school libraries and reading culture among secondary school students in selected schools in Lagos.

- I. To examine the purpose of using library resources by secondary School students in Nigeria
- II. To examine the pattern of reading culture of students in selected secondary Schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State.
- III. To identify the reading programmes established to promote reading culture in selected secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State .
- IV. To identify the challenges faced by students in the use of library resources in selected secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading culture is a lifelong non-stop and steady routine. It denotes the student's behavior which articulates the likeness for reading and clarifies the

essence and fondness for reading as well as rate of reading. Consequently, students' reading cultures hinge on the essence of reading which must not necessarily be for passing examinations alone but for acquisition of information, self-development, improvement of general knowledge, leisure, aesthetic need and entertainment (Aramide 2015). Bas (2012) stressed positive reading culture as a requirement for a vigorous intellectual development that plays a very critical role in facilitating student's accomplishment of practical competence.

Reading culture defines a consistent commitment in the act of reading incessantly. It is an obsession to read with attestable, beneficial outcomes on addicts. It encompasses the gaining of positive attitude among students and this is vital to students' academic achievement. Ilogho (2015) describes reading culture as a scholarly practice of pursuing knowledge, information and or entertainment via the written word. The reading culture can be attained through reading books, journals, newspapers, and magazines. Reading culture is vital for the growth and development of the citizenry

Shabi and Udofia (2009) opined that the culture of consistent reading enhances the reader; it provokes something inside students who take their career more seriously. Reading culture of Nigerian students is disastrously lacking in contrast to those of the Western nations. The previous generation of Nigerians had an extraordinary desire for knowledge through education despite the scarce resources that they contended with. Oji and Habibu (2011) opined reading as a culture, has declined over the past few years and Nigerians are found wanting in the area of reading daily newspapers, magazines, let alone novels or literature books and this has resulted in poor acquisition of reading skills and good reading culture (Ukoha, 2015). Ilogho (2010) posited that the growing populace of unwilling bibliophiles in this era of information explosion is worrisome. The sad aspect is that the Nigerian reading culture is not just dying but has died (Ukoha, 2015). The poor reading culture currently is a general concern in Nigeria that has spawned several concerns from diverse stakeholders with perceptions from authors, editors, publishers, teachers, marketers, booksellers, librarians, parents and the readers (Ajibola and Oluyide, 2008 cited in Igwe and Uzuegbu, 2013).

Adesulu, Adebuseyo, and Amos (2017) posited that 40 percent of Nigerian adults never finished reading a fiction book from cover to cover after leaving school, let alone of young ones that are still in secondary schools. There are other studies which revealed that about 30 million Nigerians have graduated from secondary schools with poor reading skills, ascribing it to the poor reading culture developed during their stay at school. Reading culture among students is actually falling everyday as students now devote extra time on irrelevant ventures than reading books.

It is undeniable that an enormous amount of students have totally lost interest in reading. That is why the concerned stakeholders are worried about the high level of decline in the reading culture among secondary school students in Nigeria. The study of Dulle (2014) has revealed that students only read textbooks for assignments and examinations. Oyeronke and Oladimeji (2009) posited that reading culture among secondary school students in Nigeria is currently worrisome as it has been lowered. Students now lack reading skill as a result of technological advancement which made reading culture to be eroded. As technology is gradually taking control over the lives of students, reading culture is fast vanishing and students are now spending more time on electronic media. Dulle (2014) showed that just half of the respondents surveyed have cultivated the culture of reading more than ten minutes a day in their free period. He opined that the diminishing interest of reading by Nigerian students nowadays is a cause for alarm and a challenge to all.

Popoola, et al (2010) recounted that a lot of Nigerian youth never loved to read, and preferred to acquire knowledge and information via movies, television, websites and chats. Fabunmi and Folorunso (2010) investigated poor reading culture among students in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria and the study revealed that the rate of reading culture is at an alarming rate among secondary school students. The study of Kolawole (2009) reported that most school heads affirmed the poor reading culture by their approach to matters that concern reading. Reading culture among secondary school students is dying as students have been found wasting their precious time discussing football clubs and the stars in the class instead of reading (Babikkoi, and Razak 2012). Nwokocha (2014) investigated reading culture of day and boarding secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The study revealed that majority of the boarding students possessed relatively positive reading culture as opposed to day students who read irregularly, particularly during examinations as the later were more engaged in non-academic social/house chores.

The study of Diyorhak and Soko (2018) indicated poor reading culture among secondary schools students. In the same vein, Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014) concurred that reading is an intellectual action which is possible only if a man forms a culture of reading from childhood. Reading culture is a well-planned and deliberate form of study which has reached a form of stability on the part of students toward understanding educational subjects. Lungwangwa (2007) established that several Nigerians desire listening to stories compared to reading, an act which accounts for the popularity of home videos among Nigerians.

The absence of reading culture threatens national

development because no country can develop if its citizens lack information. There is general uproar in the Nigerian society of the maleficent reading culture, particularly among children and young people. Promoting reading culture is tantamount to their growth in the society. However, school libraries play active roles in the intellectual ability, emotions, development and psychological horizon through projecting the library as valuable source of teaching and learning.

Another means of promoting reading culture among students is the selection of relevant information resources that meet the school's curriculum and creating easy access. In addition, strong emphasis is placed on the procurement of relevant and stimulating information materials for students with low vocabulary and poor reading (Oriogu, 2015).

Students with poor reading culture are encouraged by school librarians to use the library in order to develop right and effectual study habits that will be useful throughout the university level and further proved that free reading of library materials can have a positive impact on reading culture, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling ability, grammar usage and writing style. Also, children who read more have a higher literacy development and have an increased interest in studying, have better study habits, and better skills for researching needed information (Subair, 2015).

Gbadamosi (2017) opines that good reading culture encourages active use of library resources that promotes good reading culture. School libraries stimulate interest of students and inspire reading activity as a result of early exposure with reading information materials. Reading culture, like other cultures, has connection with the kind of acquaintance and experience the children get in the early years. If a child is brought up in an environment of books, it is likely to develop love for reading books.

Tella, Owolabi and Attama, (2009), highlighted various ways by which libraries can be used as a platform for promoting reading culture in Nigeria. The first strong argument is the fact that the library has diverse information and learning resources like books, periodicals, digital resources and facilities, among others.

Secondly, the library offers a much more serene atmosphere which makes it favorable for reading. The third feature is that library offers reading space for great number of students which is more as a result of the fact that it is cheaper to access library information than what the home can offer the reader. The fourth feature is that library offers more favorable and serene environment needed for nurturing a reading culture. Information can be retrieved swiftly in libraries due to its orderliness with the help of cataloguing and classification. In a bid to instill reading culture in Nigerian students, libraries give them priority by providing materials that stimulate their interest; determine the kind of information services they will require and train school librarians on the basics of

providing information services to them. (Otiike, 2012).

Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun, and Ogundipe (2011) expressed their view on strategy adopted by school libraries to promote reading culture is by associating reading with pleasure, i.e. story-telling. This is a basic and lasting system of literacy expression in Nigerian cultures. Telling children interesting stories encourage their consciousness, devotion and concentration, improves their listening skills, and helps arouse voluntary reading.

Students are motivated to read and thus form good reading culture via storytelling, reading together (shared reading), development of reading/book clubs as well as provision of serene reading atmosphere devoid of needless noise and interruptions (Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun, and Ogundipe, 2011). Ronnas (2009) noted that one of the ways the school library promotes reading culture is by encouraging social interaction through storytelling, artwork and reading aloud. In the same vein, Briana (2017) asserted that school library book club encourage group reading. Engagement in reading enhances the enjoyment of recreational reading with the anticipation of increasing reading achievement which is the aim of school library book clubs. Book clubs impact students who are reluctant readers and or students who originally had the poorest attitudes about reading. Also when struggling students readers interact with confident peer role models in a book club environment, such students experience more success. Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun and Ogundipe (2011) posited that school libraries also explore book talks, story hours and exhibition as a means of promoting reading culture. Three areas where identified on how the school library assists in shaping students' habit as: reading for leisure, passing examinations and obtaining information on different aspects of life.

Otiike (2012) posited that responsibility designed to nurture and instill reading culture in Kenya is entrusted to language teachers. This is usually carried out through the use of library lessons. Library lessons are designed to allow students have a silent reading session in class or in the school library. Igwe (2011) expressed that the library can apply certain approaches to improve reading culture such as establishment of family libraries, giving education priority attention in National human capital development, creating library period on the school time table, formulation and implementation of a viable National Information Policy (NIP) and establishment of National Commission for Libraries (NCL)

Several scholars have addressed the problem facing students in using school libraries. For example, the study by Adeyemi (2009) in Nigeria found out that poor quality of school library resources, scarcity of current reading and research materials were the challenges facing students in using school libraries. In the same vein, Arua and Nwbiem (2014) observed that poor library

accommodation, poor library orientation and restricted library hours were problems militating against the use of school libraries.

Shonhe (2019) revealed that one of the problems facing school libraries include the lack of a national policy and school library information resources, the theft of computers as a result of the lack of security, as well as the lack of understanding by teachers concerning the role of library in teaching and learning. Furthermore, Arua and Nwaebiem (2014) quoting Ifedili asserted that reading restrictions, restrictions on numbers of books, reference materials, lack of computers and internet connectivity are the challenges that hinder students in the use of school libraries.

Furthermore, a study by World Bank (2010) observed the following problems as facing school libraries in Sub-Saharan African countries which includes inadequate funding, with little or no government financial support, lack of sufficient library premises, which are usually just converted classrooms with insufficient space, shelving, furniture, equipment or security, untrained school librarians and poor training and overloading of teacher librarians and poor library management systems.

Arua and Chinaka (2014) also identified lack of well-stocked libraries and power supply, poor enabling environment and infrastructural facilities as major challenges to reading culture in Nigeria. Anyanwu, Obichere, and Oyemike Victor Ossai-Onah (2012) identified the harsh economic environment as a main constraint influencing reading culture among Nigerian students. They further stressed poverty, starvation, inadequate funding, expensive books, and insufficient instructional facilities as major impediments of reading culture among students in Nigeria.

Fabunmi and Folorunso's (2010) study revealed that lack of organization, insufficient, irrelevant and inadequate library information resources, economic hardship, societal demand for materialism are reasons of poor reading culture among secondary school students in Nigeria. Shonhe (2019) opined that the poor reading culture among Nigerian students was as a result of harsh economy, reading was expensive and had become a leisure most people could not afford.

Study by Kolawole (2009) reported that majority of school heads contributed greatly to the poor reading culture of the students by their attitude to issues that trouble reading culture, as majority of the schools do not have serviceable libraries and other amenities that can

encourage effective reading culture. Oji and Habibu (2011) blamed empty school libraries for dying reading culture in Nigeria, as majority of students are increasingly abandoning reading to surfing the net.

Baro and Eze (2016) findings showed that majority of students had no library in their secondary schools. As a result of lack of finance, inadequate space for libraries inside school premises, and the Nigerian government's nonchalant attitude towards village schools. All these impede reading culture among secondary school students in Nigeria. Bamidele (2015) recognized lack of current information resources, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate staff, and inexperienced Librarians as major problems responsible for promotion of reading culture among students in Nigeria. Haliru, Abdulkarim and Dogara (2015) identified scanty library materials, lack of current books and incapability to acquire books as great challenges that threatened reading culture and effective learning at primary and secondary school levels.

Bamidele (2015) attributed lack of reading culture to the insufficient funding of educational institutions comprising funding of libraries, laboratories, workshops and computer units. Also pitiable economic situation and low standard of living, the growing cost of publishing making it tough for school pupils to have access to books, magazines, journals and newspapers.

Oji and Habibu (2011) attributed the poor reading culture among Nigerian students to poor funding of educational establishments, schools and community libraries. Igwe and Uzuegbu (2013) harmonized several issues ascribed to the poor state of reading culture in Nigeria. These comprise nonexistence and or poor state of libraries in primary and secondary schools, obsolete and insufficient information resources in the existing school libraries, absence of professional librarians in primary and secondary schools, dilapidated buildings in public primary and secondary schools, and many others. Baro and Eze (2016) ascribed dropping magnitude of reading culture to neglect in the school system.

In Nigeria, a lot of secondary schools, (public and private), are founded without consideration for including school libraries. Even education experts who know the significance of school libraries fail to embrace libraries in the course of establishing secondary schools. Ntui and Udah (2015) ascribed poor reading culture among students to Nigerian value and poverty that is prevalent in many homes, astronomical prices of books and other information materials as well as publishing books.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was a survey research anchored on positivism paradigm. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The purposive sampling method was used to select eight public secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria. The schools were selected based on the fact that they have necessary infrastructure, school libraries and manpower that could promote effective usage of school libraries by the students.

The population of the study is nine thousand three hundred and eighty-six (9,386). For the sample size of the study, the study used 10% of the total population of students from each secondary school, which cut across students from senior secondary schools 1 to 3. Based on this, 939 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the secondary school students in the eight selected secondary schools, out of which seven hundred and five (705) were returned; that is a 75% response rate.

**Table 1:** Sample size of the study

S/N	NAME OF SCHOOL	TOTAL NO OF STUDENTS			SAMPLING SIZE
		M	F	TOTAL	10/%
1	Government Senior College, Lagos	-	2195	2195	220
2	State Senior High School, Lagos	1468	138	1606	160.6
3	Girls' Senior High School, Agege	-	1454	1454	145.4
4	Lagos Baptist Senior Secondary School, Lagos	577	407	984	98.4
5	Abibat Mogaji Millennium Senior Secondary School, Lagos	595	376	971	97.1

### What are the purposes of using school library resources?

This multiple-response question was asked to identify the various purposes of using the library resources. The findings revealed that 630 (89.3%) use the library to enhance knowledge and skills, 629 (89.2%) agreed that they use the school library to consult reference materials (dictionary, encyclopedia), and to acquire knowledge and skills, while 621 (88.1%) respondents admitted that they use the library for educational purpose.

### What are the patterns of reading?

This finding revealed that 648 (91.9) respondents use the school library for assignment and read for examination, closely followed by 601 (85.2%) respondents who claimed that they read novels to improve their English language while 629 (81.2%) respondents claimed that they read in the school library.

### What are the reading programmes established to promote reading culture in selected secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state?

The question sought to identify various programmes employed to promote reading. It was revealed that 627 (88.9%) respondents admitted that library usage

encourages them to read, while 529 (75%) respondents claimed that compulsory reading hour encourages them to read.

### What are the challenges faced by students in the use of library resources in selected secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State

The question sought to identify the factors inhibiting the reading culture of the students in secondary schools in Lagos state. The result revealed that 621 (88%) respondents claimed that lack of professional Librarian to process the information materials is a challenge encountered when using the school library, 610 (86.5%) respondents claimed that paucity of funds to purchase current reading information materials is also a challenge to them while 574 (81.4%) respondents claimed that restricted library hour is the major factor inhibiting their reading culture.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

One of the findings of this study revealed that majority of the students use the library to enhance knowledge and skills. This study corroborates the findings by Daramola (2013) who studied the use of the library in secondary schools in Akure South Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the findings revealed that most of

the respondents agreed that they use the school library for assignments and examination. This finding supported Dulle (2014) who revealed that students only read textbooks for examinations.

In addition, another finding of the study revealed that most of the respondents agreed that Library usage encourages them to read in their school. This was supported Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun and Ogundipe (2011) who posited that school libraries usage promotes reading culture among students. They equally state that school libraries also explore book talks, story hours and exhibition as means of promoting reading culture among secondary school students. George (2011) identified that school library usage assists students in shaping reading habit and promotes reading culture.

In addition, the findings revealed that paucity of funds to purchase current information resources and lack of Librarian are challenges encountered when using the school library materials. This finding supported Oji and Habibu (2011) who blamed empty school libraries for dying reading culture in Nigeria as majority of students are increasingly abandoning reading for surfing the net. Similarly, Baro and Eze (2016) revealed that lack of finance is a major problem facing school libraries in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the students use the library resources to enhance knowledge and skills. Among other resources in the library, textbooks were frequently used. Most of the students used the school library for examination preparation and most students admitted that library usage encourages them to read in their schools. Lack of professional Librarian that will assist in processing library resources and paucity of funds to purchase current reading materials were the major challenges encountered when using the school library materials.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should establish more school libraries in secondary schools in Agege Local Government of Lagos State.

- The school authorities should employ qualified school Librarians to man the school library. Government should equip the existing school libraries with good and adequate library resources that are rich in quantity, quality and varied to reflect the school curriculum.
- Government should imbibe the culture of acquiring, stocking current books and other educational resource materials either by

purchase, donation, gift, exchange and bequeath, among others.

- The school authorities should include the reading hours in the school time-table.
- Ministry of Education and Local government should promote reading through youth-based organisations such as: Press and Reading clubs.

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