

Research Article

Exploration of Reading Culture Among Special Needs Primary School Pupils

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Abstract

The study was carried out to explore reading culture among primary school pupils in Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State. A descriptive survey research was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the primary school pupils in Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti state, Nigeria. Due to financial constraint, the researcher selected a from the population a sample of 100 pupils randomly across the 10 primary school that constituted Ado-Ekiti Local Government Arrear, Ekiti State. Two research questions were raised and answered. The data collected through the administered questionnaire was descriptive answered using frequency counts, means and standard deviation. Findings from the analysed data revealed that, encouraging Story telling and children/pupil, making reading materials locally, timetabling reading and library lessons, readers club are among the reading culture practiced by the pupils; and pupils exposure to a variety of reading materials, parents, teachers and the community should create an environment that is conducive for reading among pupils. Based on the findings, it was recommended that establishment of national school library policy by the Nigerian government through the ministry of education and sports in conjunction with national library of Nigeria; Setting up of reading clubs in schools by the school authorities.

Keywords

Reading, Culture, Special Need Pupils

1. Introduction

The social cultural theory suggests that reading is best practiced socially, as students extract meaning from texts based on their cultural and social background. This model caters to students from diverse cultural backgrounds, but does not address the cultural and social aspects of reading in Nigeria's education system. The constructivism model, which involves students building schema based on psychological and social experiences, does not create interaction between the reader and

the background text. The interactive model, which adds new information to existing schemata, promotes interaction between the background and texts. The Reader Response Theory emphasizes the importance of connecting readers to their reading by keying into associations, feelings, attitudes, and ideas.

Culture is a complex phenomenon that impacts every aspect of human life, including language, attitudes, philosophies, skills, values, and knowledge. It is a common way of living

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for certain people, influencing their behaviour, expressions, beliefs, values, backgrounds, and knowledge. Education and culture are inseparable components of human life, with culture influencing behaviour and attitudes and education equipping learners with values, skills, and knowledge to reshape society and eliminate inequalities. Education and culture must positively correlate with addressing society's needs, ensuring learners can confidently grasp the necessary knowledge and skills.

Reading is perceived to be an indispensable tool for academic success forming an integral part of any learning situation, and is as well the bedrock of education. One of the major sources of acquiring information is reading. Reading is the base by which other academic skills are built. It offers a productive avenue to improving vocabulary, word power, and language skills. Majid and Tan 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 [8]. Ulu posited that reading culture of Nigerians are what has become a matter of concern in our educational and national development [17]. He stated further that in a developing country like Nigeria, the concept of reading culture 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.

Itsekor and Nwokeoma was of the opinion that 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 always performs better than his colleagues at school because he gains more knowledge than them and understands better than his colleagues what they are being taught in class [5]. It is saddening to note nowadays that in Nigeria reading culture is deficient. This is because the general orientation has placed priority on other less important things. For instance, majority of the youth believe that reading does not bring quick money. People believe that education and reading is a long term project which does not yield immediate dividend but, if at all, future money [4].

There is a general feeling that many Nigerian pupils do not like reading. Many teachers often complain about the poor reading culture of their pupils which could have an implication on their personal and intellectual development. Edegbe-Efosa and Ugiagbe held tenaciously to the view that if pupils who were preparing for both internal and external examination avail themselves of facilities in the various Libraries, read their notes and text books diligently, the incidence of cheating, impersonation and examination malpractice and cultism will be greatly reduced [3]. In 2017, according to Omo-Ojugo, the World Bank in conjunction with the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ibadan produced a grim report on the Nigerian graduate which has confirmed the fears of educators, parents, employers and the general public about the degeneration of the country's education [11].

Reading culture have been singled out to immensely affect the scholarly output of the pupils [1, 13, 19]. It is an indispen-

sable method of acquiring knowledge and is essential for better academic performance [16], and it determines the success of university pupils around the globe. Pupils who are interested in reading including non-academic literature, increase their emotional and academic intelligence [6]. If pupils possess good reading culture, they can increase their critical reasoning skills and ultimately have better academic outcomes. In addition, even the reading of non-academic books enhances pupils 'language skills.

According to Mulak et al., primary education is the form of education that a child receives when he/she is below the normal school age i.e when the child is between three to five years and. The researchers explain that the institution provides valuable introduction to the more regular and formal work of the primary school by introducing young children to a wide range of different activities in a way, which gives them a saves of purpose. The researchers stress further that the children at pre-primary institutions are helped in their wake of building a concept of themselves as a person who is worthy and competent [10].

National Policy on Education has it that primary education is given in an institution for children aged between 3 to 5 years of age prior to their entering the primary school [14]. Therefore the primary institution is a school for children below normal school age. Onuora-Oguno and Silas explains that such institution is usually by itself, unattached to already exiting school, a nursery class usually attached to already established primary school. Tracing the history of nursery schools in Nigeria [12]. Majebi, et al. explained that the emergence of primary education could be associate with Sunday school classes organised in the same way as nursery school in the public sectors aim at preparing the pupils for first pace secondary school education [7].

There had bean a decline or reduction in the level of academic performance in most of our primary schools. The could be a result of inadequate teaching facilities, teaching aids, poor reading culture and study habit among primary school pupils in must of our public schools, lack of text books, lack of incentives for teachers and at this level, attitudes of parent to towards education in must areas, especially, the rural areas, however children who had gone through the per-primary school (nursery) experience has been abet to adjust to school system easily, thereby they can speak little English, can read basic letters and identify the letters, identify numbers and identify and reading of pictures. It is assumed that those kinds of children are better prepared for subsequent levels of education those that did not have pre-primary experience. The focus of this research therefore is to confirm whether this assertion is true or not.

However, Cekiso indicates that weak reading culture negatively affect pupils' comprehension, thus affecting their performance and advancement [2]. Even capable pupils who reduce their reading underperform academically [18]. Nevertheless, some pupils who have under-developed reading skills have shown marked progress after participating in extensive

reading projects [15]. The need for improvement of reading culture and effective use of school libraries has long been recognised. It is in line with this that the current study intends to find out the relevance school libraries and reading culture among primary school pupils in selected schools in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

In Nigeria, there is a general feeling that pupils have a poor reading culture and today, it is getting very terrifying. From the past to the present day, there have been distinctive reasons for poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Nigeria. The preliminary observation by the researchers revealed that pupils in the secondary school have low enthusiasm towards reading and the majority of these pupils do not know how to read, and thus, they are faced with reading challenges amid examination periods. There is an immense increase in the failure rate in examinations and assessments, high level of exam malpractice, there is an increase in school dropout, there is also the production of unprofessional and poorly trained graduates everywhere, some who cannot even defend the certificates they have, and so on.

From the above, it may be the case that one of the key issues standing up to the pupils these days is not just their failure to read but their total absence of enthusiasm for reading. This study is therefore dedicated to the examination of the present status of the reading culture among primary school pupils, specifically in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The study sought to explore the reading culture among primary school pupils in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

Specifically, the study aims at;

To assess the kind of reading culture among pupils in primary schools.

To access appropriate strategies to improve reading culture among pupils in primary schools.

1.2. Research Questions

What kinds of reading culture are used in primary schools?

2. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. The descriptive survey is a scientific tool used when one is interested in opinion and attitude of people [9]. It is a research design which deals with description of scientific characteristic of a particular point using questionnaire in order to ascertain the opinion of subject. It is in this view that this study examines reading culture of primary school pupils towards academic performance in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The population for this study cut across all primary schools in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State. A sample is a fraction of the whole population specially selected or drawn for research purpose. A simple randomly sampling technique was employed to select pupils across primary 5 and 6 classes in ten (10) randomly selected primary schools in Ado Ekiti LGA. Also ten (10) pupils were randomly selected in each of the sampled schools. The main research instrument that used for this study is structured questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using s, frequency and mean. Mean score was used to determine the effectiveness of item and research questions. The mean for the various items were calculated by multiplying the frequency of each response alternatives divided by the number of respondents. Based on the mean derived, items or research questions having a mean of 2.50 and above were effective while items or research question having a mean below 2.50 were ineffective and these serve as the researcher's decision rule.

3. Result

3.1. Answering of Research Question One

Two research questions guided the study. The questions were descriptively answered using mean scores and standard deviation with the mean score between 2.50 and above considered as agree while any score below the 2.50 was disagree on the criterion mean score of 2.50 (Benchmark) was used to make decision based on the outcome of the analysed data.

RQ1: What kinds of reading literacy are used in primary schools?

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation showing Responses on kinds of reading culture used in primary schools (N=100).

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std deviation	Remark
1	Encouraging Story telling and Children/Pupil	3.27	1.14	Agree
2	Making Reading Materials Locally	3.14	1.18	Agree
3	Timetabling Reading and Library Lessons	2.66	1.32	Agree
4	Readers club	2.55	1.34	Agree
5	Early Morning Reading Sessions	2.25	1.38	Disagree
6	'Talking' Offices, Compounds and Classrooms	2.67	1.38	Agree

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std deviation	Remark
7	Group reading, individual reading, peer-to-peer reading and teacher-to-pupil reading. Story-telling	3.54	0.98	Agree
8	Educative and Interesting NTBRM	2.16	1.42	Disagree
	Weighted Mean Score	2.86		

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

The table shows the analysis of respondent on the kind of reading literacy used among primary school pupils. From the analysis depicted in Table 1 above, item 1 which state that Encouraging Story telling and Children/Pupil with mean score of 3.27 was accepted which implies that respondents (Primary School Pupils) agreed on the item, item state that "Making Reading Materials Locally" also with mean score 3.14 and item 3 which state that Timetabling Reading and Library Lessons has a mean score of 2.66 was also accepted as the mean score is above the criterion 2.50 mean score. Similarly, item 4, 6 and 7 with corresponding mean score of 2.55, 2.67 and 3.54 respectively was also agreed and in line with the research question while only item 5 and 8 with corresponding mean score of 2.25 and 2.16 were disregarded and not accepted and the statement read Educative and interesting NTBRM' which is less than the criterion 2.50 mean scores. From the table, it can be deduced that majority of respondents were of positive view that they have good knowledge of the kind of reading literacy used among primary school pupils.

RQ2: What are the strategies to improve the reading culture among pupils in primary schools?

3.2. Answering of Research Question Two

From the analysis depicted in Table 2 below, it shows clearly that the respondent (Primary School Pupils) agreed on the most of the strategies highlighted to enhance reading culture among the primary school pupils as the average mean score of the entire items (2.78) is above the 2.50 criterion. From the table, each of the items (i.e items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) had a mean score above the criterion 2.50 mean (Benchmark) which implies that large percentage of the pupils sampled were of positive view that formation of readers clubs in schools will motivate pupils to read because they will be able to share their different experiences basing on the information materials they have read. Also, making available interesting stories can make reading enjoyable, which is important to children as they learn to read as well as for the development of the reading culture, in the same vain, it was revealed from the analysed data that pupils exposure to a variety of reading materials, parents, teachers and the community should create an environment that is conducive for reading among pupils.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation Showing responses on strategies to improve the reading culture among pupils in primary schools (N=100).

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std deviation	Remark
1	Pupils exposure to a variety of reading materials	2.88	1.38	Agree
2	Encouragement in reading by pupils and parents.	3.12	0.98	Agree
3	Library hour lessons should be regularly conducted in order to improve on pupils reading culture.	2.72	1.42	Agree
4	Libraries with enough text books should be set up in schools because reading prepares children for better academic work	2.59	1.48	Disagree
5	Teachers should be given enough practice reading	2.63	1.48	Disagree
6	Teachers to adopt better methods of teaching, in order to create sustained interest among pupils to read non-text-book reading materials at home, school as well as within the community.	2.75	1.38	Agree
7	Parents, Teachers and the community should create an environment that is conducive to reading	3.24	0.98	Agree
8	Teachers must display a positive attitude towards reading and even make a public show of their interest in reading	2.89	1.42	Agree

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std deviation	Remark
9	Interesting stories can make reading enjoyable, which is important to children as they learn to read as well as for the development of the reading culture.	2.65	1.48	Disagree
10	Formation of readers clubs in schools will motivate pupils to read because they will be able to share their different experiences basing on the information materials they have read.	2.05	1.48	Disagree
	Weighted Mean Score	2.78		

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was carried out on an examination reading culture of primary school pupils towards academic performance in Ado Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The findings from research question one, it shows that, encouraging story telling and children/pupil, making reading materials locally, timetabling reading and library lessons. This implies that all these items were the kind of reading literacy that encouraged reading culture among primary school pupils which could have positive influence on their academic performance. This findings is supported by the view of earlier researchers [16] who perceived cooperative study habit as one of the best reading literacy which promote reading among primary school pupils.

The findings from research question three, shows that, pupils exposure to a variety of reading materials, encouragement in reading by pupils and parents, library hour lessons should be regularly conducted, parents, teachers and the community should create an environment that is conducive to reading, teachers must display a positive attitude towards reading and even make a public show of their interest in reading, interesting stories can make reading enjoyable, which is important to children as they learn to read as well as for the development of the reading culture. These among others were some of the strategies to enhance reading culture among primary schools pupils with the aim of promoting their academic performance.

Research finding called for curriculum this is done and this explains why the new thematic curriculum has introduced. This involves the use of mother tongue as a means of instruction in the teaching-learning process. It also follows the publication of books in local languages. This is in consonance with national curriculum development center [1]. The researcher is in support with this. Salary increment teachers was identifies as one way of improving the reading culture of pupils as findings. This help to raise commitment and motivation while executing their duties. This contradicts with Gür and Halabi as he emphasised teachers to develop self-motivation and positive attitude towards other than money. Instead the researchers called for the general improvement of teachers working conditions [20].

The researcher disagrees with Cekiso as everything rotates around money. Establishment of well stocked libraries would be one other way in which better culture could be achieved [2]. This would expose pupils to variety of reading material. This concurs with Jiménez et al.. The researcher is in line with their suggestion but his concern is that establishing a library is too expensive [6]. This explains why very few or no schools have libraries. Inculcation of positive attitude on pupils by both parents and teachers toward reading was singled out by the research findings. For example teachers need to encourage pupils to come up with the techniques for reading independently such as how to pick the book that is not too hard. This offers a similar view to that of Hicks [4].

5. Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the findings obtained from the field were; Poor reading culture is being caused by a combination of various factors including; lack of well-equipped libraries in schools. Lack of or limited parental involvement for example in availing their children with relevant reading literature, negative attitude among the pupils towards reading, lack of commitment by teachers in helping their pupils on how to read and at Poor reading culture affects pupils' academic performance only negatively for instance through the acquisition of low knowledge content, school drop out by pupils after failing and repeating a class for several times and causing difficulty in a learner to interpret the questions correctly and understand them.

Better reading culture among pupils in schools can be developed through various ways such as curriculum review, salary increment of teachers, establishment of well stocked libraries and inculcation of positive attitude on pupils by both parents and teachers towards reading.

6. Recommendations

The study has the following recommendations and once properly implemented would lead to better reading culture among pupils.

- 1) Establishment of national school library policy by the Nigerian government through the ministry of education

and sports in conjunction with national library of Nigeria.

- 2) Setting up of reading clubs in schools by the school authorities. This in turn would lead to reading completions.
- 3) Further strengthening and implementation of the thematic curriculum so as to make the use of the local languages more effectively.

Abbreviations

RQ1	Research Question One
RQ2	Research Question Two
NTBRM	Not Too Big, Not Too Remote Materials/Model

Author Contributions

Ibrahim Yakub Karatu: Writing – original draft
Folusade Margaret Akinnaso-olowo: Funding acquisition
Mosunmade Oriloye Ajibola: Funding acquisition

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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