



A Survey of Reading Habits among Selected Secondary School Teachers in Nasarawa Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Reading plays a crucial role in the development of any individual. The literate can revert to an illiterate if constant reading is not done. This study seeks to examine the reading habits of secondary school teachers in Nasarawa State. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. 150 copies of a questionnaire were sent out to Government day secondary Nasarawa, Government junior secondary school Nasarawa, King's science secondary school Loko, Government secondary school Mararaba, Government secondary school Ugya and Government secondary school Toto. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages. The result shows that majority of the teachers read for preparing lesson notes. It was recommended that school and public libraries should provide current and relevant textbooks to simulate reading. It was also recommended that the National Library annual reading campaign should be strengthened to encourage teachers and students to improve their reading habits.

Keywords: Reading Habit, Secondary School, Teachers, Local Government,

Introduction

They must form the habit of reading to perform well in all subjects. A good reader has a better opportunity for greater achievement. Information, as emphasized by Nneji (2002) and Yusuf (2007) is a tool that bridges the gap between knowledge and ignorance. One major avenue for acquiring knowledge is through reading. Reading offers productive approach to improving one's vocabulary, and language skills (Simissouje and Quadire, 2010). Inomiesa (2010) stated that teachers should constantly read to keep abreast with new methods and skills for effective teaching. Karim and Hassan (2006) argued that the fact that reading is a crucial form of communication for effective information, teachers required in teaching and learning can only be stimulated through reading to improve situation life. It is on this note that Onhwakpor (2006) that in order to sustain functional literacy, teacher needs to constantly update their knowledge through reading. Reading sustains literacy because teacher has broad knowledge of the subject area that list of reading resources can be recommended to students to support the class work.



Trelease (2006) observes that teachers are seldom seen reading. Stressing the importance of reading by teachers, Adebayo (2010) stated that teachers must be ready so as to have broad information base and should not depend on a given topic. They need to read wide in order to update the content of the lesson note. Yani (2003) posits that the reading habit of Nigerians is a matter of concern in educational and national development.

The objective of this study is to examine the reading habits of secondary school teachers in selected secondary schools in Nasarawa Zone that is under Nasarawa State Ministry of Education. Specially, the study intends:

1. To find out how often teachers read available reading materials to get needed information.
2. To find out the available convenient places where the teachers do their reading when the need arises.
3. To examine the purpose for which the secondary school teachers read.
4. To find out how frequent do teachers read to get their information need.
5. This is to examine the duration of which teachers read to get their information need.
6. To highlight some of those factors that can cause hindrance to their reading interest.

Since education involves interactions between learners, learning materials and teachers, teachers must be avid readers in order to inculcate a lifelong reading habit in their students. Oyeronke, (2009) and Krushen (2006) maintain that reading by teachers, remarked that, children need more when they see other people reading; Stressing also on the importance of reading teachers, (Olajide, 2008). Teachers as chief drivers of engine education and as designers of the curriculum are expected to develop reading habit. Mahajan (2010) stated that with adequate and current text books in the government owned schools in India, teachers will make use of library and that will enhance their reading habits of their students. Reading is a lifelong activity. Those who enjoy reading derive pleasure and satisfaction from it. Adigum and Oyelude, (2003) Observe that skill in reading will not only assist pupils in organizing their thoughts and jotting down important facts while reading but also equip them to comprehend entire texts. Aderole, (2001) asserts that the aim of any reading programme is to lay strong foundation that can benefit pupils throughout their lives in academic pursuits. Adewole, (2001) describe “critical reading skills which students need to read, explore, and appreciate a literary text effectively. The ability to read is a crucial skill for information retrieval Dike, (2006). But Falarami, (2007) believes that the government should involve teachers in working out effective ways of making the teaching profession viable for serving teachers and attractive to incoming ones in order to address the problem of students’ poor reading culture. Chiahemen (2007) states that government has an interest in this matter, and put in place a training programme called “The special Teacher Upgrading programme (STUP)” to address the deficiency among pupils.

Information is crucial to individuals advancement and development educationally, social, economically and otherwise. One of the major avenues for acquiring knowledge is through reading. Reading is the act of deciphering the written code. It is done at two levels, physical process of movement of eyes on the letters, signs or symbols and the interpretation of what the eyes see. According to Gadsby (2005) reading is the act of looking at written words and understanding what they mean. Obah (2006) sees reading as operating on two levels: the level of symbols and the level of concepts. Obah continues that:

On the first level, words are recognized, grouped interpreted. On the second level of reading the words have been recognized all from the reader’s storehouse of meanings and experiences certain shared ideas. We, the readers follow the writer’s line of thought,



recreating in our minds the mental images of ideas transmitted by the writer (p.25).

Reading is not just looking at words and then automatically understanding what they mean. During the reading process the reader makes use of certain factors: the text, the reader's previous knowledge and the author's intention. According to Mcknight (2000), reading is a complex and dynamic process in which the reader decodes the writer's words and draws his own background knowledge to construct an understanding of the text is similar to the writer's intent yet unique to the reader. Oyeronke (2009) stated that reading is the foundation upon which other academic skill is built. Stressing the importance of reading, Igun and Adegbeji (2007) states that reading is an attempt to absorb the thought of the author and know what the author is conveying. Reading improves one's vocabulary, word power, language skills and spelling. In related development, Nneji (2002) also stated that reading habit are learning tendencies that enable students work privately. Simmons (2002) noted that reading leads to close understanding of text and good writing. Simiseye and Qaudri (2010) stressing the importance of reading, noted that it is better to inculcate reading habit right from tender age so that children can imbibe it and grow in them as they grow up. They also noted that, the importance of reading is quite incalculable. It is one of the life's greatest pleasures that open the door to culture, knowledge and independence.

Consenting to this, Nikko and Yusuf (2006) stated that through reading individual knowledge base is enhanced, intellect sharpened and misconception eroded. The literature reviewed dealt extensively on the importance of reading and why it is necessary for the individual to develop good reading habits.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design is adopted for this study. The population was made up of 150 teachers in selected secondary schools in Nasarawa state Ministry of Education Zonal Inspectorate office in Nasarawa local government area. The Zonal Inspectorate office classified the one into three (3) areas inspectorate offices namely: Nasarawa area inspectorate office, Mararaba Udege area inspectorate office and Toto area inspectorate office. Based on these areas two secondary schools were purposively selected from each area. The selected schools are Government Day Secondary School Nasarawa, Government Junior Secondary School Nasarawa central, King's Science Secondary school Loko, Government Secondary school Mararaba, Government Secondary School Ugya and Government Secondary School Toto. Twenty-five (25) of questionnaires were sent to each school. The entire population of 150 would be used for the study. The instrument for this study will be a researcher-developed questionnaire. Simple percentages were used to analyze the data collected.

Results

Response Rate of Distributed Questionnaires

Name of school	No. of questionnaires	No. Returned	
		No.	%
Gov't Day sec. sch. Nas.	25	23	92
Gov't Junior sec. sch. Nas.	25	19	76
King's sci.sec. sch. Loko	25	21	84



Gov,t sec. sch. Mararaba	25	20	80
Gov't sec. sch. Ugya	25	18	72
Gov't sec.sch. Toto	25	17	68
Total	150	118	78.66%

Table 1: Response by Gender

Gender	SCHOOLS												Mean
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S.C. Nasarawa		King's Sec.Sch.Loko		Sci. Mararaba		G.S.S. Ugya		G.S.S. Toto		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
M	13	57	11	58	17	81	12	60	16	89	11	65	68
F	10	44	8	42	4	19	8	40	2	11	6	35	32
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100	100

Table 1 shows the gender rate of response in each of the secondary schools. The highest numbers of respondents in each of the schools are males. This an indication that males are more in the teaching profession than the females in the secondary schools studied

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age	SCHOOLS												Mean
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S. Nasarawa		King's Sec. Loko		Sci. Mararaba		G.S.S. Ugya		G.S.S. Toto		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
22-25 years	3	13	10	52.6	11	52	5	25	5	28	5	29	33
26-35 years	13	57	6	31.5	7	33	8	40	8	44	4	24	38
36-40 years	6	26	2	10.5	2	10	5	25	3	17	3	18	18
45 & above	1	4	1	5.2	1	5	2	10	2	11	5	29	11
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100	100

The table revealed most of the teachers in secondary school studied were between the ages 26-35 years.

Table 3: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Level of Qualification	No.	%
Grade ll	14	12
NCE	69	58
Associate Teachers' certificate	7	6
B.ED/B.A/BSC	23	19
M.ED/MSC	5	4
Total	118	99



The table revealed that teachers in the secondary school had the minimum qualification of the secondary school teaching qualification and they were also improving academically for some are in university for their degree programmed.

Table 4: Working Experience of Respondents

Working Experience	No.	%
2-5 years	65	55
6-10 years	20	17
11-15 years	16	7
16-20 years	8	7
21-25 years	7	6
26 and above	2	1
Total	118	100

Those with highest years of working experience fall between 2-5 years rated 65(55%) followed by those with working experience of 6-10 years which rated 20(17%). Those with working experience of 11-15 years were 16(14%). 16-20 years rated 8(7%) and 21-25 years were rated 7(6%).

Table 5: Materials Used For Reading.

Materials	SCHOOLS											
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S.C. Nasarawa		King's Sci. Sec.sch.Loko		G.S.S. Mararaba		G.S.S. Ugya		G.S.S. Toto	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
News paper	5	22	11	58	4	19	5	25	9	50	5	29
Textbook	9	39	1	5	3	14	10	50	3	17	7	41
Religious literatures	1	4	1	5	2	10	2	10	1	5	1	6
Magazine	4	17	2	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Posters	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	3	13	4	21	12	57	3	15	5	28	4	24
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100

The data table 5 revealed that majority of the teachers read newspapers. Reading newspapers, will keep them abreast of the current developments in the society, politically, economically, socially, and academically. They also read textbooks.

Table 6: Place of Reading

Place	SCHOOLS												Mean
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S.C. Nasarawa		King's Sci. Sec.sch.Loko		G.S.S. Mararaba		G.S.S. Ugya		G.S.S. Toto		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
At home	14	61	5	26	4	19	10	50	9	50	7	41	41
School	2	9	4	21	3	14	2	10	3	17	3	18	15
Library													
Public Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Classroom	2	9	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	3	18	5



In church	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
In mosque	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Any quite place	4	17	10	53	13	62	8	40	5	28	4	23	37
When travelling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	1
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100	100

The result of the survey revealed that most the teachers read at home because there were no school libraries and public libraries in the school and in the entire local government area.

Table 7: Purpose of Reading.

Purpose	SCHOOLS											
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S.C. Nasarawa		King's Sci. Sec.sch. Loko		G.S.S. Mararaba		G.S.S. Ugya		G.S.S. Toto	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
To prepare lesson note	6	26	1	5	12	57	9	45	7	39	10	58
To pass examination	-	-	1	5	1	4	1	5	1	6	1	6
To be current	7	30	4	21	1	5	1	5	6	33	1	6
To attend interview	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
For self-development	6	26	11	58	6	29	7	35	4	22	4	24
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100

Majority of the teachers which rated 45(38%) read for preparing lesson note. This is encouraging because preparation of lesson note is core activity in teaching. This was followed by teachers who read to be self-development which ranked 38(32%). 20(17%) of teachers read to be current with new societal development.

Table 8: Reading Frequency of Reading.

Frequency	SCHOOLS												Mean
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S.C. Nasarawa		King's Sci. Sec.sch. Loko		G.S.S. Mararaba		G.S.S. Ugya		G.S.S. Toto		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Daily	11	48	14	74	15	71	14	70	14	78	10	59	67
Once to twice Week	1	4	-	-	-	-	2	10	-	-	1	6	3
Weekly	3	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	3
Once a month	2	9	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	2	12	4
At convenience	6	26	5	26	6	29	3	15	4	22	3	17	23
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100	100

Reading daily plays an important role in developing an individual. For majority of the teachers to be reading daily, it is encouraging.

Table 9: Duration of Reading Respondents.

Duration	SCHOOLS											
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S.C. Nasarawa		King's Sci. Sec.sch. Loko		G.S.S. Mararaba		G.S.S. Ugya		G.S.S. Toto	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Not more than an hour	7	30	7	37	3	14	3	15	5	27	1	6
2 hours	11	48	10	53	9	43	10	50	10	56	7	41
3-5 hours	4	17	2	10	9	43	6	30	3	17	8	47
6 hours and above	1	4	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	1	6
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100



Majority of the teachers which ranked 57(49%) indicated that they do read more than 2 hours at a time. This followed by those who read for three to five hours which rated 32(27.3%). Twenty six (22%) of respondents indicated that they do not read more than one hour at a time.

Table 10: Factors Affecting Reading Ability

Factors	SCHOOLS											
	G.D.S.S. Nasarawa		G.J.S.S.C. Nasarawa		King's Sci. Sec.sch.Loko		G.S.S. Mararaba		G.S.S Ugya		G.S.S Toto	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Excess teaching work load	2	9	4	21	1	5	1	5	4	22	-	-
Home chores	-	-	1	5	-	-	3	15	4	22	2	11
No reading materials	10	43	5	26	3	14	10	50	4	22	11	65
Lack of concentration	5	22	8	42	16	76	6	30	2	11	4	24
No quiet place	5	22	1	5	1	5	-	-	2	11	-	-
Lack of good health	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	11	-	-
Total	23	100	19	100	21	100	20	100	18	100	17	100

The table indicates that majority of the teachers which accounted to 43(37%) do not read because they do not have materials to read. This was followed by those who do not have concentration while reading which ranked 41(34.1%) of the respondents. Those who's excess teaching work load factors restraining them from reading accounted for 12(10.3%)

Conclusion

The finding of this study states clearly that most of the secondary school teachers sampled read daily and majority read at home. This is due to the fact that there are no school libraries and public libraries in the locality where these schools are situated. The study also revealed that most of the teachers read for preparing lesson note. This is can be ascertained from the study, where majority of the teachers read newspapers. Reading of newspaper will only keep them abreast of the current developments in the society.

Recommendations

It is recommended that school and public libraries should be established with current and relevant textbooks, if there are public libraries, there will be enough and current books for the teachers to read. Those will help them in not spending their money to buy textbooks. These libraries will also serve as quiet place for reading. It is also recommended that the National Library annual reading campaign should be strengthened to encourage teachers and students to improve their reading habits. Although, there is high response of daily reading the time spent on reading is low.

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