FACTORS INFLUENCING READING HABITS ON PERCEIVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF FORESTRY, JOS

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FACTORS INFLUENCING READING HABITS ON PERCEIVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF FORESTRY, JOS

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Article Infor

Abstract
This study investigated the factors influencing reading habits on perceived academic performance of students in Federal College of Forestry Jos, Plateau State. The study used descriptive survey design. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting fifty-seven (57) students from five departments of the college as sample size for the study. Data were gathered using a researcher designed instrument tagged "Factors Influencing Reading Habits on Perceived Academic Performance of Students' in Federal College of Forestry Jos, Plateau State (FIRHPAPSFCFJP)". Data obtained from the field were presented using frequency tables and simple percentages. The findings of this study showed respondents mainly read for assignment and course work, examination, self-development, and improvement in spoken and written English. The type of materials mostly read, include newspapers/magazines, novels, and textbooks. While inadequate information in the library, lack of interesting reading materials, peer pressure and social media e.g., Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, are factors of personality that militate against students reading habit. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that students should be motivated and encouraged by their lecturers to read different information resources and academic libraries should endeavour to provide adequate information materials.

Introduction

Reading is the basis for learning, and it is the most influential skill in individuals' everyday life (Issa *et al.*, 2012). Reading is defined as the practice of comprehending and acquiring knowledge for personal growth and development. In addition, it is the process of understanding and making sense of a language, either written or printed (Toker *et al.,* 2019). It is an essential process that aids the conception of thoughts and knowledge in ones chosen field of study or specialization (Oriogu *et al.,* 2017). It involves the interpretation and making sense of a language, either written or printed (Toker *et al.,* 2019). People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which involve reading for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information, and knowledge. Reading can also be deemed as an instrumental tool for

knowledge or information transfer, and the reading habit can be seen as an academic activity that develops the cognitive skills in reading strategies. Children, who happen to miss the chance of establishing a unique bond with books in their early stages of life, will find it challenging and difficult to cultivate good reading habits in the later stages of their lives (Toker *et al.,* 2019). Aina, (2011) asserts that reading is a skill that must be nurtured from a child's earliest years and the habit of reading should begin at an early stage and should be imbibed throughout one's lifetime. However, reading is a persistent activity of day-to-day training that evolves into a habit and eventually a culture

Reading is not just about printed matter, but about the ability to interpret anything that is intended to convey a message or that which is to enable communication. The advent of the Internet has revolutionized the reading habits of students and its dominance is quite prevailing among the young people. With the growing amount of digital information available, people particularly young adults are found spending more time reading electronic materials. It is a means of interpreting words, phrases, and sentences requiring all types of thinking and reasoning (Oriogu *et al.,* 2017). The characters used in the reading process are distinctive and visual (written or printed), but in some instances, they can be decoded in a particular format like the Braille. The importance of reading to humans cannot be overemphasized, primarily as information and messages are now being circulated via the printed media (Toker *et al.,* 2019). In a similar vein, Oriogu *et al.,* (2017) 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. The reader aims at understanding the meaning of a written text, assesses its importance, and uses what he or she has read to enhance his or her knowledge effectively or derive pleasure.

Reading habits enables students to have effective study skills, knowledge of different information resources, and effective retention capacity (Toker *et al.,* 2019). As posited by Oriogu *et al.,* (2017), it is the hallmark of success, not just in the academic environments but a means to lifelong learning. According to Orakpor, (2012), Owusu-Acheaw *et al.,* (2014) and Toker *et al.,* (2019) nurturing good reading habits proves to be helpful in ensuring the child's future not only in terms of academic performance but also in terms of individual accomplishment. The activity of reading is deemed as a habit when it is undeviatingly and methodically implemented by an individual. In simplest terms, reading practice is often measured with respect to the number of materials being read, the repetition of reading activity as well as the adequate time spent on reading activity. Good reading habits are an essential tool that aid intellectual and academic performances in individuals.

Additionally, a person's interests are measured by the amount of reading material he/she will read and the intensity with which he/she will carry on with his/her reading activity. Through books, one gets the chance to evaluate another person's ideas and allows him/her to accept or reject these ideas and, eventually, the person ends up engaging in an in-depth critical thinking process. According to Toker *et al.,* (2019) reading culture is the process of building up a positive reading attitude among students and children over a period. When an individual habitually and regularly read books and other information materials that are not necessarily required for him to advance in his profession or career, he is said to have a reading culture. Therefore, in a sense, reading culture is a form of practice that considers reading and studying as a means of progressive growth and development (Oyewunmi,2009) Therefore, in a sense, reading culture is a form of practice that considers reading and studying as a means of progressive growth and development.

Statement of the Problem

The problem that most students have is the lack of good reading habits, and this contributes significantly to their poor performance in examinations. For an outstanding performance, students need to form good reading and study habits. Equally, parents and teachers complain that the new generation of students does not exert any effort to develop any good reading habits. Their reading is bad, and their writing is even worse (Palani, 2012). In addition, the new technological gadgets such as smart phones, tablets and many other innovations have contributed to the decline of the reading habit among students. Nowadays, many students prefer to watch movies on TV, listening to audio-CDs, watching video-CDs, among others (Issa *et al.*, 2012).

Authors such as Henry (2007), Nssien (2007) and Ifedili (2009) concur that Nigerian students exhibit poor reading skills emanating from inadequate reading interests and habits, lack of relevant reading materials, slow comprehension rate, difficulty in distinguishing main ideas from irrelevant details and inadequate vocabulary or word power. It is against this background that this study aims to discover the factors influencing reading habits on perceived students' academic performance in Federal College of Forestry, Jos

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence reading habits on perceived academic performance of students in Federal College of Forestry, Jos. The specific objectives are;
1. To determine the type of materials students mostly read

2. To determine the factors influencing students reading habits

3. To determine factors of personality militating against reading habits of students

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:
1. What type of materials do students mostly read?
2. What are the factors influencing the reading habits of students?
3. To what extent do factors of personality militate against students reading habit?

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. Bolu-Steve *et al.,* (2017) described descriptive survey as a systematic description of an event in a very factual and precise manner.This method provides accurate description of a particular phenomenon at one or more points.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of this study involves all the final year students of Federal College of Forestry, Jos comprising of one hundred and twenty seven (127) students of Higher National Diploma (HND) and National Diploma admitted for the 2019/2020 academic year (Registry FCF, Jos 2019). In this study, stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting fifty-seven (57) students from five departments based on the Yamane, Taro (1967) formula for sample size. The formula given as:

$$N = \frac{N}{1+N\,(e)^2}$$

Where: N = sample size sought

e = Level of error $(0.10)^2$

N = Population size under study

$$N = \frac{127}{1+127(0.01)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{127}{2.25}$$

N=57

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this investigation was a 4-point modified likert scale which is an interval scale-ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with a numerical value ranging from 4 points to 1 point respectively. The instruments that were used for this study were the questionnaire titled: "Factors Influencing Reading Habits on Perceived Academic Performance of Students' in Federal College of Forestry Jos, Plateau State (FIRHPAPSFCFJP)". The instrument has at least 5 (five) items. A weighted average of 2.5 was accepted for research questions.

Validation and Reliability of Instrument

The instrument was validated by Experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the faculty of Education, who ascertained the face and content validity. To determine the reliability of the instrument a pilot test was conducted at Plateau State Polytechnic Jos, which is outside the study area to ensure that the instrument was consistent. A test method was employed in line with Tuckman (1975) recommendation. The result of the test was correlated, using person product

movement correlation coefficient (PPMC), the reliability coefficient (r) was found to be 0.78 which shows that the instrument is reliable and was used for data collection in the study.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researchers made use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software version 25.0 to analyze data collected. Data obtained from the field were presented using frequency tables, simple percentages, and descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation).

Results

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that most of the respondents that participated in this exercise, (54.39%) were males while 45.61% of the students were females. It was also observed that35.08% of the students who took part in the study were between 15-18 and 19-21 years. 31.58% were between 22-24 years while 33.33% were 25years and above. This result suggests that HND students of the Federal College of Forestry, Jos who took part in the study are slightly above 25 years of age.

Table 1: Distribution by gender and age group

N=57	No. of responses	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Males	31	54.39
Females	26	45.61
Age groups		
15-18	4	7.01
19-21	16	28.07
22-24	18	31.58
25 above	19	33.33

Source: Field survey, 2022

Distribution of respondents by level and departments

The data presented in Table 2 shows that 50.88% of the students who took part in the study were in HND while 49.12 % were in ND. The results of the distribution based on department shows that the department of CPT had the highest number of respondents at 17(26.62%), followed by the department of PMT 14(23.00%), HLT 11(23.91%), FOT 10(17.54%) and the department of AEM had the least number of respondents 5(8.93 %).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by level and department

N=57	No. of responses	percentage
Level		
HND	29	50.88
ND	28	49.12
Departments		
AEM	5	8.93
PMT	14	23.00
CPT	17	26.62
FOT	10	17.54
HLT	11	23.91

Source: Field survey, 2022

Research Question 1: What type of materials do students mostly read?

The results of Table 3 revealed that newspapers/magazines and novels ranked high with mean scores and standard deviation of (M = 3.21, SD = 2.79) and (2.77, 2.34) are adjudged type of materials mostly read by students. Also, the results revealed that textbooks, E-resources and notebooks ranked low with mean scores and standard deviation of (M = 2.68, SD = 2.27),(2.47, 2.06) and (2.21, 1.93).

Table 3: Type of material that influence students reading habit

Types of materials mostly read	SA (%)	A %	D %	SD %	Mean	SD
Notebooks	12(21.05)	1(1.75)	31(54.39)	13(22.81)	2.21	1.93
Textbooks	10(17.54)	22(38.59)	22(38.59)	3(5.26)	2.68	2.27
Novels	12(21.05)	20(35.08)	25(43.86)	0(0.00)	2.77	2.34
Newspapers and Magazines	26(45.61)	18(31.58)	12(21.05)	1(1.75)	3.21	2.79
E-resources	6(10.52)	19(33.33)	28(49.12)	4(7.02)	2.47	2.06

Source: Field survey, 2022

Research Question 2: What are the factors influencing the reading habits of students?

Table 4 reveals the factors influencing reading habits of students. Assignment and course work, Improvement in spoken and written English, Pleasure and relaxation, Examination purposes and Self-development were ranked high specific purpose of reading with mean score and standard deviation of (M = 3.35, SD = 2.89), (3.22, 2.77), (3.18, 2.73), (3.04, 2.65), and (3.02, 2.63) respectively. It is observed from the table that assignment and course work ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.35. This corroborates a similar finding by Eremie *et al.,* (2018) of Nigeria who affirmed that students had a strong influence on specific factors. However, impressing parents and free time were ranked least available with mean score and standard deviation of (M = 2.21, SD = 1.94) and (2.14, 1.81). This finding can be attributed to poor orientation and culture exhibited by students.

Table 4: Factors influencing students reading habits in the college

Influencing factors	SA (%)	A %	D %	SD %	Mean	SD
Examination purpose	22(44.00)	18(31.59)	14(24.56)	3(5.26)	3.04	2.65
Self-development	21(36.84)	19(33.33)	14(24.56)	3(5.26)	3.02	2.63
Assignments and coursework	28(49.12)	21(36.84)	8(14.03)	0(0.00)	3.35	2.89
Pleasure and relaxation	20(35.08)	29(50.88)	6(10.52)	2(3.51)	3.18	2.73
To improve spoken/written English	21(36.84)	28(49.12)	8(14.03)	0(0.00)	3.22	2.77
To impress my parents	9(15.79)	12(21.05)	29(50.88)	17(28.82)	2.21	1.94
To while away time	5(8.77)	13(22.81)	24(42.11)	15(26.31)	2.14	1.81

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree
Source: Field survey, 2022

Research Question 3: To what extent do factors of personality militate against students reading habit?

Table 5 reveals the rating of factors of personality militating against reading habits of students. Inadequate information resources in the library, social media, lack of interesting and current reading materials, peer pressure and watching TV/playing games ranked high with mean score and standard deviation of (M = 3.39, SD = 2.91), (2.98, 2.55), (2.98, 2.52), (2.72, 2.42), and (2.70, 2.78) respectively. However, Unpaid tuition fees, distraction from opposite sex and hostility of library staff ranked low with mean scores and standard deviation of (M = 1.98, SD = 1.58), (1.82, 1.47) and (1.75, 1.39).

Table 5: Factors of personality militating against reading habits of students

Items	SA (%)	A %	D %	SD %	Mean	SD
Inadequate information resources in the library	27(47.37)	25(43.86)	5(8.77)	0(0.00)	3.39	2.91
Lack of interesting and current reading materials	12(21.05)	32(56.14)	13(22.81)	0(0.00)	2.98	2.52
Unpaid tuition fees	2(3.51)	9(15.79)	32(56.14)	14(24.56)	1.98	1.58
Social media e.g., Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, 2go etc.	16(28.07)	25(43.86)	15(26.32)	1(1.75)	2.98	2.55
Much time spent on television watching and playing games	8(14.03)	27(47.37)	19(33.33)	3(5.26)	2.70	2.78
Hostility of library staff	2(3.51)	5(8.77)	23(40.35)	22(38.59)	1.75	1.39
Distraction from opposite sex	3(5.26)	6(10.53)	26(45.61)	22(38.59)	1.82	1.47
Peer pressure	19(33.33)	13(22.81)	15(26.31)	10(17.54)	2.72	2.42

Source: Field survey, 2022

Discussion

The results of the findings of this study showed that the distribution of respondents who participated actively were males with 54.39% compared to their female counterparts with 45.61%. Also, the respondents of age group of 25 years and above were the highest with 33.3% followed by respondents of age groups of 22-24 years with 31.58%, 19-21 years with 28.07% and 15-18 years with 7.01% respectively. The findings of this study also showed that the distribution of respondents by level revealed that 50.88% were Higher National Diploma (HND) students while 49.12% were National Diploma (ND) students. CPT Department had the highest respondents with 26.62%, followed by HLT Department with 23.91%, PMT Department with 23.00%, FOT Department with 17.54% and AEM Department with 8.93% respectively.

In addition, the study indicated that the highest number of respondents read for assignment and course work, followed accordingly by respondents who read for examination, respondents who read for self-development, respondents who read for improvement in spoken and written English, respondents who read for pleasure and relaxation, respondents who read to impress parents and respondents who read to while away time. The result of this study corroborates the view of (Oyewunmi, *et al.,*2009 and Edem *et al.,* 2010) of Nigeria which reveals that majority of students read their notes and handouts with the main purpose of passing their examinations, while very few read to satisfy their intellectual curiosity. Furthermore, 45.61% of the respondents indicated that they read newspapers & magazines, followed respectively by novels and textbooks with 21.05%, textbooks by 17.54% and e-resources with 10.52%. Based on the findings, factors of personality that militate against students reading habit include inadequate information in the library, lack of interesting reading materials, peer pressure and social media e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, 2go etc. This finding agrees with Emeka (2017) who is of the opinion that academic library influences students' academic performance. Hence tertiary institutions should ensure that the libraries are well stocked with relevant materials and E-resources to enhance students' academic performance.
Also, school authorities should ensure that the services of professionally trained educators are sought, and these educators should regularly meet the students to discuss issues that affect their studies.

Conclusion

It has been established in this study that reading habits has significant impact on students perceived academic performance; academic library has significant impact on students reading habit; social media and peer pressure are the major hindrances to effective reading habits among students in Federal College of Forestry Jos, Plateau state, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:
1. Students should be motivated and encouraged by their lectures to read different information resources other than their notebooks and handouts so as to be exposed to diverge and broader views to knowledge.

2. Academic libraries should endeavour to provide adequate information materials (both print and non-print) and ensure convivial and conductive atmosphere suitable for students to study and read without distractions.

3. Also, they should try to implement internet monitoring policy, so that students will meticulously use it for academic purpose

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