

Reading Habits of Secondary School Teachers: A Study of Selected Secondary Schools in Ado-Odo Ota Local Government Area

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Introduction

Access to information is crucial to individual advancement as well as corporate educational development. Information is indispensable, and, according to Yusuf (2007), bridges the gap between knowledge and ignorance. One of the major avenues for acquiring information is reading. Reading is the foundation upon which other academic skills are built. It offers a productive approach to improving vocabulary, word power, and language skills. Tella and Akande (2007) 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. Yani (2003) posits that reading habits of Nigerians are a matter of concern in our educational and national development, stating further that in a developing country like Nigeria, the concept of reading habits should not be relegated to the background. Nweke (1990) states that it has a real role to play in development of the individual. Sangaeo (1999) observes that a reading habit must be promoted from an early age. This view is supported by Yusuf (2007), who says that that children imbibe good character during their formative years. The most important factor in student learning in schools is the quality of teaching. Teachers are the chief drivers of the education engine. They design the curriculum and the behavioral goals that are its products (Olajide, 2008). Since education involves interaction between learners, learning materials, and teachers, teachers must be avid readers themselves in order to ignite a lifelong reading habit in their students. Students should be motivated to read and know how to use reading materials to improve themselves and their social environment. Trelease (2006) observes that teachers are seldom seen reading. A good teacher must have a broad information base and should not depend on their lesson notes, which cannot contain all the information on a given topic. Teachers should provide reading lists to accompany what is done in class and give assignments that will prompt students to research in the school or public library.

Objectives

- To determine how often teachers read
- To examine their purpose for reading
- To examine the type of materials they read

Methodology

The instrument for collecting data was a questionnaire. The populations of the study are teachers in selected secondary schools in Ado-Odo Ota Local Government Area. One hundred teachers were randomly selected from the secondary schools under study. Simple percentage was used to analyze the data generated for easy interpretation and were presented in tables.

Findings and Discussions

One hundred questionnaires were administered for the study. The schools selected for study are: Iganmode Grammar School, Anglican Grammar School, Ansarudeen Comprehensive High School, and Iju-Ebiye High School, all in Ado-Odo Ota Local Government Area. Ninety-five questionnaires were returned. The demographic data of the participants are presented below.

Table 1: Gender

Gender	N	%
M	31	33
F	62	65.3
Total	93	98.3

Table 2: Age

Age	N	%
20-25	24	25.3
26-35	36	38
36-45	29	31
46-50	4	4.2
Total	93	98.5

Table 3: Educational qualification

Educational qualification	N	%
N.C.E	28	29.5
B.ED	50	52.6
M.ED	3	3.2
Others	14	14.7
Total	95	100

Table 4: Work experience

Work experience	N	%
Below 5 years	51	53.7
6-10 years	16	16.9
11-15 years	17	18
15-20 years	6	6.3
Total	90	95

Table 5: Reading frequency

Reading frequency	Iganmode		Anglican		Ansarudeen		Iju - Ebiye	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Daily	15	75	21	84	15	60	20	80
Twice a week	2	10	-	-	6	24	2	8
Once a Month	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At leisure	3	15	4	16	4	16	3	12

The data in table 5 show that respondents who read daily were the majority. This is encouraging, because reading plays an important role in developing the individual (Nweke, 1990)

Table 6: Types of materials read

Types of materials read	Iganmode		Anglican		Ansarudeen		Iju - Ebiye	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Newspapers	11	55	8	32	5	20	4	16
Magazines	9	45	6	24	1	4	6	24
Textbooks	17	85	18	72	14	56	16	64
Novels	6	30	2	8	5	20	5	20

Most of the teachers read textbooks most often. This indicates that they read to prepare for teaching or to write lesson notes, which is consonant with literature (Sangaero, 1999; Gnawali, 2008)

Table 7: Purpose for reading

Purpose for reading	Iganmode		Anglican		Ansarudeen		Iju - Ebiye	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pleasure	4	20	4	16	6	24	6	24
To pass an exam	2	10	1	4	-	-	2	8
To be current with developments	17	85	20	80	15	60	17	68
To write lesson notes	4	20	3	12	4	16	3	12

Only a few of the teachers read for pleasure, to pass an exam, or to write lesson notes. A majority read to be current with developments. This is consistent with literature as reported by Trelease (2007).

Table 8: Time spent reading

Time spent reading	Iganmode		Anglican		Ansarudeen		Iju - Ebiye	
One hour	-	-	3	12	6	24	4	16
Two hours	-	-	1	4	2	8	1	4
No fixed time	20	100	21	84	17	64	20	80

The teachers sampled have no fixed time for reading. This implies that they read when they feel it necessary or when circumstance compels them (Yani, 2003).

Conclusion

The findings of this study make it clear that most of the teachers sampled read textbooks daily. This indicates that they read to keep abreast of information in their field and may not be versatile in knowledge. Teachers should develop a love for reading, because their students see them as role models. It is also good for them to broaden their knowledge base by reading, since it is one of the avenues whereby new things are learned and new information gathered. Anyone who professes to be educating young people should value and have a positive attitude towards reading.

The importance of teachers in any educational setting cannot be overemphasized. Stakeholders such as the government, the National Library of Nigeria, and the Nigeria Library Association should collaborate to revitalize school libraries, which are indispensable if academic excellence is to be achieved.

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