

Effect of Reading Habits on the Academic Performance of Students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia

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Abstract

Purpose: *This study investigated the effect of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: *Four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research design was used, the population of the study consisted 4300 students spread across five faculties (schools) in the Polytechnic. The sample for the study was 645 students. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire. Data generated was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, while a non-parametric statistic of chi – square (goodness of fit test) was used to test the four hypotheses at .05level of significance.*

Findings: *The results of the study revealed that the level of reading has impact on students; reading habits has significant impact on students' 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 Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia.*

Originality/Value: *It was recommended that; parents, guardians and lecturers should encourage students to read; reading competition should be organized in the polytechnic; library staffs should avail themselves of seminars, workshops and conferences that would boost their proficiency; polytechnic should create avenue for tracking use of social media in school environment; Government and philanthropist should donate books and other library materials to the academic libraries.*

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Library, Polytechnics, Reading habits, Students.*

Paper type: *Empirical research*

1.0 Introduction

One of the most fundamental skills a student needs to learn to succeed in life is reading; reading is vital not just academically but in everyday life. Reading according to Egong (2014), is an intellectual activity undertaken in literate society for obtaining information, acquiring and expanding knowledge. Reading is an important activity in the life of an individual because it motivates the individual interest towards the achievement of more knowledge. It also affords the individual to derive pleasure and entertainment in sharing from the experiences of others communicated through prints and non-print resources. It is also a process by which printed words are assimilated, interpreted and transmitted into spoken words to understand the meaning and apply it on a daily basis (Egong, 2014).

According to the Interpretation Reading Association (2005), reading is a complete system of deriving meaning from print and non-print that requires the development and maintenance of a motivation to read; the development of appropriate active strategies to contrast meaning from prints;

sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension; the ability to decode unfamiliar words; The ability to read fluently. Reading habit on the other hand can be defined as the persistence act of reading.

Academic performance according to the Cambridge University Reporter in Emeka (2017) is frequently defined in terms of examination performance. Academic performance refers to what skills the student has learned and is usually measured through assessments like standard tests, performance assessment and portfolio assessments (Santrock, 2006). The descriptive assessment information is always translated through grading system such as Grade Point Average (GPA) and course grade. Academic performance which is measured by examination results is one of the major goals of school. Emeka (2017) argued that schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance. The academic deans and the quality

assurance committee are concerned about those who do not perform well because if this poor performance goes unchecked, the school may lose its reputation which may result in loss of confidence in students (Kyoshaba, 2009).

From this definition of reading, reading habits and academic performance we can deduce that reading is a complex activity that requires good mastery and personal interest for sound effectiveness, consequently most student's loose interest and concentration thereby leading to poor reading habits among students thus affecting their academic performance.

2.0 Statement of the Study

Due to the increasing nature of poor academic performance of students especially in polytechnics, many educationists tend to shift the blame on the teaching methodology adopted by the lecturers and lack of fund from the government to provide quality reading environments. However, these might not be the main reasons why students perform poorly in examinations. It is clear from all indications that most students have poor study habits which might lead to poor academic performance. As true as this might sound, it is yet to gather adequate research evidence to prove that it is a key factor on why students fail.

This is becomes the public outcry concerning the low standard of education in the country (Imoge 2002). The declining quality of education in the country and the breeding of graduates with little technical know-how, have resulted in serious setbacks to the industrial development of the nation as such, some factors are possibly responsible for poor academic performance such as poor note taking, Nollywood and reading skills among others. In view of this, the present study focus on the effect of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia.

3.0 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia. The specific objectives of the study are to

1. Find out the level of reading among students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia.
2. Ascertain the effect of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State polytechnic Lafia.
3. Determine the effect of academic library on students reading habits in Nasarawa state polytechnic.

4. Determine the hindrances to effective reading habits among students in Nasarawa state polytechnic.

4.0 Research Questions

The following questions guided are raised to guide the study

1. What is the level of reading among students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia?
2. What are the effects of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State polytechnic Lafia?
3. What are the effects of academic library on students reading habits in Nasarawa state polytechnic?
4. What are the hindrances to effective reading habits among students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia?

5.0 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the investigation of this study:

1. Level of reading does not have significant impact on students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia
2. Reading habit does not have significant effect on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State polytechnic Lafia
3. Academic library does not have significant impact on students reading habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic.

6.0 Review of Literature

It is pertinent to note that this research work hinges on the free voluntary reading theory, propounded by Stephen Krashen in 1993. The theory posits that if students spend more time reading and enjoying materials they will read better, this in turn will lead to more reading. This theory is relevant to the study since continuous reading will be of tremendous life-long benefit to the students; it will also motivate students who lost interest in reading to read, because students are free to make choices of the materials they want to read, thereby improving students' attitude toward reading and thus having impact on their academic performance.

Several studies have been carried out on the impact of reading habits on students academic performance. In a research carried out by Orakpor (2012) to compare the reading habits of the Theology and Management students of St. Paul's University College Awka. The objectives of this study were to determine the demographic attributes of the reading habits of students of the two Faculties in St. Paul's University College, Awka; to examine the

attitudes of students in the two faculties towards academic and voluntary reading; the time the students of the two faculties spend on both academic and voluntary reading; the types of materials the students of the two faculties enjoy reading; the reading materials the students of the two faculties find relevant to their course of study and determine the factors students perceive as influencing their reading habits. Six research questions were posed to compare the attitudes of the students towards academic reading and voluntary reading and to examine factors that influence the reading habits of students. The research method used was comparative research survey design. A sample size of 497 of the Management and Theology Students was drawn using the proportional stratified sample technique; representing 10% population (213) from the Faculty of Management except in Theology where the entire population of 284 was used because it is the only department in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Questionnaire on the Comparative Study of the Reading Habits of Students was the instrument used for data collection. 213 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the students of Management and 213 (100%) were returned. While 284 copies were distributed to the students of Theology and 254 (89.4%) were returned. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, and mean scores calculated and presented on tables. Based on the analysis of data, the following findings emerged: Parental educational background of students assists the reading habits of students; students engage in academic reading because it helps them to excel in their studies; students prefer reading materials that are related to their course of studies to unrelated ones; students are interested in reading for their examination more than reading other things; students spend more time in academic reading than in voluntary reading. Furthermore, lack of conducive reading environment, access to books, equipped library and family background were found to be factors that influence the reading habits of students. It thereby recommended the encouragement of students to spend more time on both academic and voluntary reading; the provision of relevant materials for students in all Faculties, discouragement from reading only for examination purpose and improved funding for equipping the institutional libraries, with required reading resources. This research is quite unique from the other since it tends to determine the impact of

reading habits on students' academic performance in Nasarawa State.

7.0 Methodology

The study adopts the case study research design, since it deals with an in depth understanding of the effect of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia. This partly formed the objective for data gathering. The population of the study comprised of four thousand three hundred students (4300), spread across five faculties (schools) in the Polytechnic.

Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in drawing the respondents involved in the study which include 100 – 400 levels students from the institution. There are one thousand four hundred and fifty (1450) 100 level students; nine hundred and eighty (980) 200 level students; one thousand (1000) 300 level students and then eight hundred and seventy (870) 400 level students. Denga and Ali (1998) posits that a sample should be about 15% of the population; where a population is large, only a size of it that the researcher can manage ought to be used. This gave a total of six hundred and forty five (645) respondents, which include two hundred and eighteen (218) 100 level students, one hundred and forty seven (147) 200 level students, one hundred and fifty (150) 300 level students and one hundred and thirty (130) 400 level students in Nasarawa state polytechnic, Lafia.

The instrument for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire. The instrument is titled Effect of Reading Habits on the Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire (ERHAPSQ). It comprises of a 20 – item questionnaire divided into three clusters and each cluster contains relevant question items that addressed each of the three research questions. The instrument was validated through expert opinion and the completed questionnaires were analyzed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Eventually, the reliability statistic of 0.940 was established for the whole set of scores.

8.0 Results

This study has investigated effect of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia.

Research Question 1: What is the level of reading among students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia?

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Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Level of Reading Among Students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1	During my spare time I prefer reading novels, magazines or other books not related to my academic work.	414	220	9	2	3.62	1.88	Accepted
2	I read more especially when am in the library.	412	213	11	9	3.59	1.87	Accepted
3	I prefer reading electronic materials to print materials.	398	232	9	6	3.58	1.87	Accepted
4	I spend more time reading my books especially during quiz and examination	320	298	20	7	3.44	1.84	Accepted
5	I spend my leisure time reading books.	110	115	414	6	2.51	1.57	Accepted
Cluster Mean						3.35	1.81	Accepted

Bar Chart Showing Level of Reading Among Students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

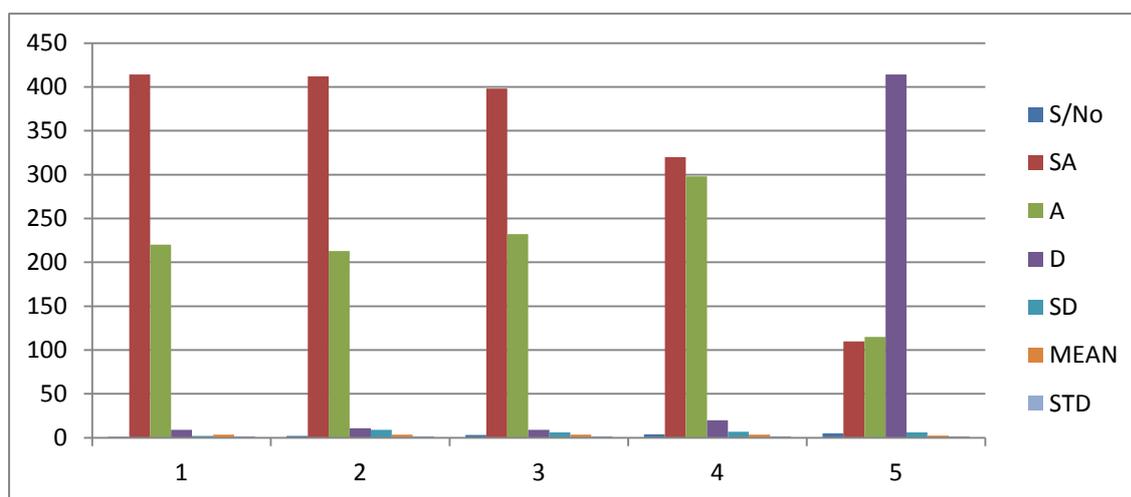


Table 1 shows the level of reading among students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia. As shown in this table, respondents ranked during my spare time I prefer reading novels, magazines or other books not related to my academic work as the

most choice. The cluster mean and standard deviation are 3.35 and 1.81 respectively.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Effects of Reading Habits on the Academic Performance of Students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1.	It reduces examination malpractice	629	16	0	0	3.98	1.97	Accepted
2	It improves self-esteem and self confidence	615	21	3	0	3.96	1.96	Accepted
3.	Reading improves students academic performance	604	36	5	0	3.93	1.96	Accepted
4.	It improves teaching and learning process	529	116	0	0	3.82	1.93	Accepted
5.	It develops life – long reading habits	539	94	12	0	3.82	1.93	Accepted
Cluster Mean						3.90	1.95	Accepted

Bar Chart on the Effects of Reading Habits on the Academic Performance of Students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

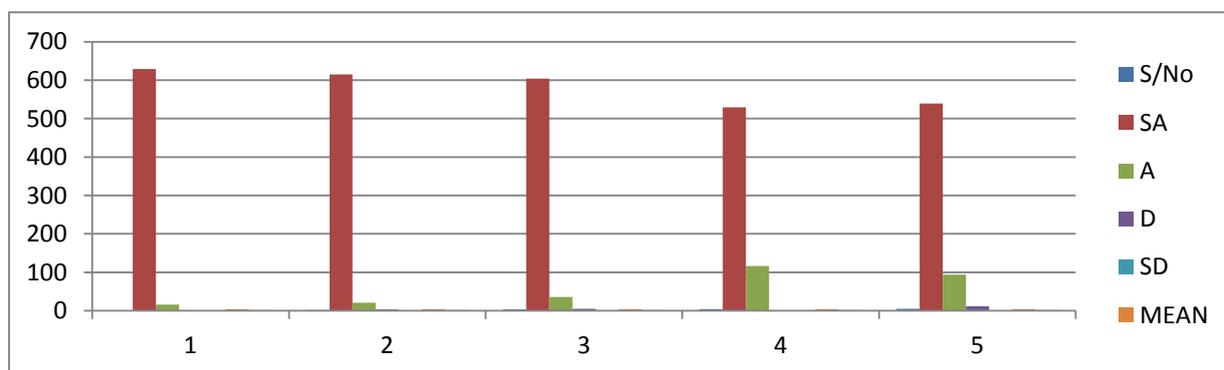


Table 2 shows the effects of reading habits on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia. As shown in this table, respondents ranked it reduces examination malpractice as the most choice. The cluster mean

and standard deviation are 3.90 and 1.95 respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the effects of academic library on students reading habits in Nasarawa state polytechnic?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Effects of Academic Library on Students Reading Habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1.	Inadequate qualified staffs to answer students' inquiries.	460	180	2	3	3.70	1.90	Accepted
2.	Attitude of the library staffs	450	96	86	13	3.52	1.86	Accepted
3.	Lack of current materials in the library affects students reading habits.	310	330	4	1	3.47	1.84	Accepted
4.	Inadequate information resources in the library	20	478	147	0	2.80	1.66	Accepted
5.	Library location affects students reading habits.	298	5	250	92	2.79	1.66	Accepted
Cluster Mean						3.29	1.79	Accepted

Bar Charts on the Effects of Academic Library on Students Reading Habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

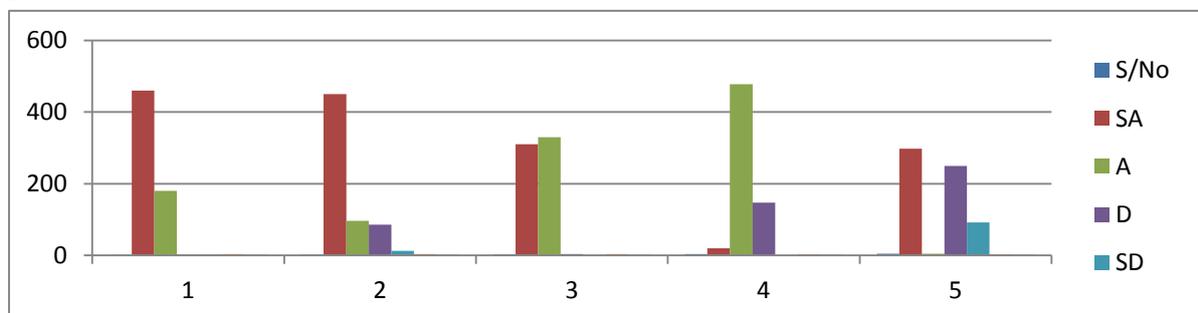


Table 3 shows the effects of academic library on students reading habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia. As shown in this table, respondents ranked inadequate qualified staffs to answer students' inquiries as the most choice. The

cluster mean and standard deviation are 3.29 and 1.79 respectively.

Research Question 4: What are the hindrances to effective reading habits among students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia?

Table 4: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Hindrances to Effective Reading Habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1.	Social media	528	117	0	0	3.82	1.93	Accepted
2.	Peer pressure	507	112	26	0	3.75	1.91	Accepted
3.	Lack of finance to acquire books	260	385	0	0	3.40	1.83	Accepted
4.	Inability to create time to read	317	231	96	1	3.34	1.81	Accepted
5.	Inadequate books in the library	326	104	158	57	3.08	1.74	Accepted
Cluster Mean						3.48	1.84	Accepted

Bar Charts on the Hindrances to Effective Reading Habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia.

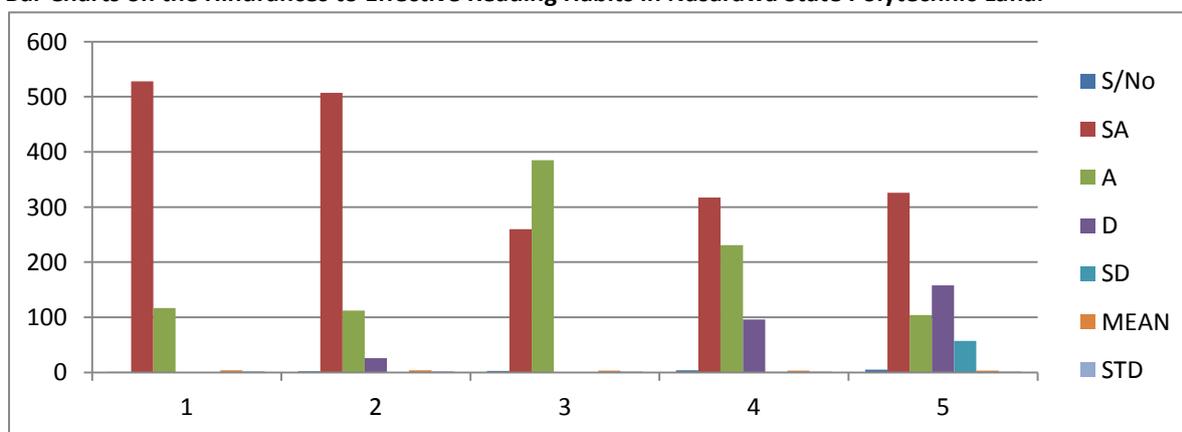


Table 4 shows the hindrances to effective reading habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia. As shown in this table, respondents ranked social media as the most choice. The cluster mean and standard deviation are 3.48 and 1.84 respectively.

Table 5: Chi Square Test on Level of Reading

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	Level of Sig	X ² Cal	X ² Tab	Decision
Not Significant	493 (15.3)	1612.5	12	0.05	1677.35	21.03	Sig
Significant	2732 (84.7)	1612.5					

From Table 5, the calculated $X^2 = 1677.35$, crit = 21.03, df = 12 at 0.05 alpha level. The calculated value is greater than the critical value therefore the hypothesis which states that level of reading does

Test of Hypothesis

Research Hypothesis 1: Level of reading does not have significant impact on students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia .

not have significant impact on students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia is rejected.

Research Hypothesis 2: Reading habit does not have significant effect on the academic performance of students in Nasarawa State polytechnic Lafia.

Table 6: Chi Square Test on Effect of Reading Habits on Academic Performance.

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	Level of Sig	X ² Cal	X ² Tab	Decision
Not Significant	20 (0.6)	1609.5	12	0.05	184.86	21.03	Sig
Significant	3199 (99.4)	1609.5					

From Table 6, the calculated $X^2 = 184.86$, crit = 21.03, df = 12 at 0.05 alpha level. The calculated value is greater than the critical value therefore the hypothesis which states that reading habit does not have significant effect on the academic performance

of students in Nasarawa State polytechnic Lafia is rejected.

Research Hypothesis 3: Academic library does not have significant impact on students reading habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic.

Table 7: Chi Square Test on Effect of Academic Library on Students Reading Habit

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Df	Level of Sig	X ² Cal	X ² Tab	Decision
Not Significant	598(18.5)	1612.5	12	0.05	1508.73	21.03	Sig
Significant	2627(81.5)	1612.5					

From Table 7, the calculated $X^2 = 1508.73$, crit = 21.03, df = 12 at 0.05 alpha level. The calculated value is greater than the critical value therefore the hypothesis which states that academic library does not have significant impact on students reading habits in Nasarawa State Polytechnic is rejected.

(2017) who is of the opinion that academic library influences students' academic performance.

The fourth finding of this study reveals that social media and peer pressure are the major hindrance to effective reading habits among students in Nasarawa State Polytechnic Lafia. This finding is in agreement with Oriugo et al (2017) who discussed about the reading habit of students of St. Paul University College performance.

9.0 Discussion of Findings

From the analysis, the first finding reveals that there is significant impact on the level of reading among students in Nasarawa state polytechnic Lafia. This finding is in agreement with that of Egong (2014n students. Owusu-Acheaw, M (2014) asserted that reading habit has influence on academic performance and there is a relationship between reading habit and academic performance.

The second findings of this study revealed that reading habits has significant impact on students' academic performance. This finding is in agreement with that of Orakpor (2012) who is of this opinion that reading habits has significant impact on students' academic performance. Palani (2010) stressed that effective reading is important avenue of effective learning and reading is interrelated with the total educational process and hence, educational success requires successful study habit.

The third finding of this study also reveals that academic library has significant impact on students reading habits in Nasarawa state polytechnic. This finding is in agreement with Emeka

10. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it has been established that level of reading has impact on students; reading habits has significant impact on students' 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 Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia.

11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made; parents, guardians and lecturers should encourage students to read; reading competition should organized in the polytechnic; library staffs should avail themselves of seminars, workshops and conferences that would boost their proficiency; polytechnics should create avenue for tracking use of social media in school environment; Government and philanthropist should donate books and other library materials to the academic libraries.

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