

# Impact of Poor Reading Culture among Selected Secondary School Students in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria

Olu Oyewole Ph.D

Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education,  
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

## Abstract

The study identified reading as the ability to obtain meaning from words. Reading culture refers to habitual and regular reading of books and information materials. Hence, the study investigated the effects and remedies of poor reading culture among secondary school students in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State. This study was a descriptive survey design which involved the use of questionnaire to obtain information from teachers and students from four selected secondary schools in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The population of the study was one hundred and twenty while the sample of twenty five students was randomly selected from the students and twenty teachers were also selected from four secondary schools in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed quantitatively using simple percentage. Results of the findings of the study indicated that majority of the respondent were of the opinion that students from educated home read fluently than students from uneducated home, it also revealed that 80% of the respondent believed that parent's inability to set high standard for students affects their reading performance, it also indicated that students do not read as much as they are expected to read, and also students do not have well-equipped libraries to aid effective reading performance. The study confirmed that reading habit has influence on academic performance and there is a relationship between reading culture and academic performance. In view of this, the study recommended among others that parents should be active and establish libraries at home where early reading culture can begin and also set high standard of reading for their children and also motivate them to read on daily basis, government should equip the libraries in the secondary schools and stock them with up-to-date books, particularly on reading, provision of more public libraries in all nooks and crannies of the country where reading can take place.

**Keywords:** Poor Reading, Culture, Students, Secondary Schools.

## Introduction

The secondary school students' attitude towards reading is an issue that has been generating controversy and frenzied reaction in the education sector. Indeed, it has been giving anxiety and concern not only to the educators, but also to academic scholars and educational commentators in the country. It is generally accept that most Nigerian students do not read, very few read for pleasure, some read when there is an examination. With this tendency, their reading narrows down to textbooks alone. Their reading therefore terminates as soon as they are freeform menacing examination.

Hornby (2000) postulated that "reading is a developmental skill which can never be fully acquired and one should therefore, make a conscious effort to continue to improve one reading throughout one's life". It also involves looking and understanding the meaning of a writing or printed words or symbols. Reading is a unique human activity that is characterized by the translation of symbols or letters into words and sentence that communicate information and mean something to the reader. The reader seeks to understanding the meaning of a written text: evaluates its significance and uses what he or she has read to enhance his or her knowledge effective, effectiveness or pleasure. Voluntary reading is important not therefore, Ogbonna (2014) states that reading literary refers to the ability to recognize and understanding characters or speak words that may be printed or written on paper and other formats or recording human knowledge. It is axiomatic that in few years back a family that produced a school certificate graduate had course to rejoice. This was because the school certificate holder was not easy to come by in those days. The product of the missionary and government school were better compared to the secondary school leavers made them essential commodities in the various field of work under government and private establishment. Their fluency in English language and their reading and their reading and writing dexterity were evident to the stuff of education received them. Patronage of school libraries incorporated to secondary school system becomes highly affected because students of today have poor reading culture.

The performance of student nowadays is attributed to their poor background in the reading culture which is a carryover from their primary school trough the secondary and up to the university level. To read is to get ideals from print or writing materials. Reading is a way of acquiring knowledge. Okusaga (2008) observed that reading is a means of tapping knowledge from the superior minds. Odiaba (2005) noted that reading increase knowledge and awareness and that provides a backup of information which reduces ignorance, this enhancing and

promoting literacy and communication. It seems that our society is yet to achieve that level of functioning, or we simply do not care. Why has it been so difficult for the youth to cultivate a reading habit? What is it that seems to scare them from books? Have we considered the potential long term effects of our poor reading culture on our society and the overall literacy level? The complacent attitude toward books seems to form at very early ages. Children in nursery and primary schools are hardly encouraged in schools and at home to pick up a book and read. Even in our secondary schools, students are being spoon fed and not allowed to read and find information for themselves. There are books that have summaries of literacy works. The import of this is that these students do not think it necessary to read the actual books and find out information themselves.

The invariable consequence is that our school system and society is producing people that are functionally literate but effectively ignorant.

Reading is an indispensable tool of learning in the various hierarchies of modern educational system. It represents a major part of the student's "business" and hobby and the success or failure of this business depends, not just on the natural intellectual endowment but also on how efficient his reading skill is. The fact that evidence that reading is a tool of effective learning carries with it the implication that educational wastage is likely to occur among potential able students, unless and until reading skills are effectively identified and taught, reading difficulties would be effectively remedied. It further suggests that no psychological theory of learning can be considered completely valid unless it takes the complex nature of the reading process, or the factors involved in learning to read, and learning into account. All this provides some indication of the relevance of the study of reading. Findings from reading research could contribute to the solution of problems of under achievement and effective and ineffective learning, not only in first language but in a second language situation.

Having established that the reading culture in Nigeria among secondary school students is very poor and frankly, largely absent in large parts of the country. The question comes up: what can individuals; parents, teachers and the wider community do to improve students reading culture? Perhaps, it may be time to move away from the traditional and explore the reading culture among secondary school students (Okebukola, 2004).

The focal point of this study lies basically on the effect of poor reading habits among secondary school students and possible solution to this subtle and terrible problem.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There have been upsurges in poor reading culture of students in our secondary school over the years. In spite of the huge investment on education in Nigeria annually and in spite of the various benefits derivable from reading, one observes that students prefer to spend their time watching television and home videos and playing on street instead of reading. There are many factors affecting the effective and qualitative reading habit in Nigerians secondary schools such as; the social-economic background of the student, availability or non-availability of libraries, the degree to which the school libraries are furnished with the necessary textbooks, the educational background and motivation from parents and also the unprecedented rise in the price of book while DVDs are becoming more affordable. All these activities ultimately cumulate in fluctuating performance in their academics in formal school setting. It is the desire to make reading more accessible and interesting as well as the need to liberate the unsuspecting learners from the shackles of this negative attitude that prompted this work.

### **Research Questions**

1. Does the standard of reading performance of students from good socio-economic background?
2. Do students who have access to good reading facilities perform better than students with poor reading facilities?
3. Are female students reading proficiency?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out the quantitative effect of secondary school students attitude towards reading and how the reading habits of students have greatly affected their academic performance and what impact it has on the academic achievement. In addition it suggests remedies to this problem and makes recommendations towards improving reading among students in Ondo State of Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Reading Process and Reading Culture**

Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Unoh, 1995). This implies making meaning out of recorded information either printed or non-printed in the life of an individual. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which include for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information and for knowledge. Reading is the identification of the symbols and association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context. Reading is believed to be a

process of thinking, evaluation, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving. Reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer and the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases the skills in reading strategies. To know about the world and its environment, a child helps himself through reading books, newspapers and other magazines. Once the child has been taught to read and has developed the love for books, he can explore for himself the wealth of human experience and knowledge through reading. Children, who miss the opportunity of getting in touch with books in their early stages of life, find it hard to acquire good reading habit in their later years.

Reading is an intellectual action which is responsible only if a man forms a habit of reading and practices these from childhood. Reading habits, therefore, play a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency. "Laws die but book never". Indeed, books are the most suitable medium through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

Wallace (1992) said "books yield their best to you, if you read them at the age at which each particular masterpiece can ideally be chewed and digested". There is little knowledge about everyday reading practices of secondary education students and how these practices affect their academic achievement. Everyday reading consists of individuals' reading activities for a variety of purposes, such as for relaxation or information. They believe that from middle childhood through adulthood, reading becomes a major component of studying, and much information learned through studying is initially acquired threading.

Wille, (2009) believe that "reading" is the act of getting meaning from printed or written words, which is the basis for learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life. Unoh, (1995) further explain that reading is usually associated with books as only the written words provide a complete picture of the act of reading. It means that through reading, the individual is able to build or fix things, enjoy stories, discover what others believe and develop ideas of beliefs of their own. Thus, reading provides the key to all forms of information necessary for our day-to-day survival and growth. Akinbola (2007) observed that the importance of reading cannot be denied. According to him while quoting the submission of the Nigeria University Commission, reading culture is a sustained regime of reading textual and non-textual materials for the purpose of broadening the horizon of knowledge within and outside one's disciplinary interest.

Reading is essential to literacy and it is an emancipator tool that liberates one from ignorance, disease and poverty as well as providing one with the liberty for all round development. For effective and efficient living and learning Ogbonna (2014) maintained that one should be able to read. Reading according to him is the foundation of literacy. However, reading always has a purpose. It is something that we do every day, it is an integral part of our daily lives, taken very much for granted and generally assumed to be something that everyone can do. The reason for reading depends very much on the purpose for reading.

Reading can have (3) main purpose; for survival, for learning or for pleasure. Reading for survival is considered to be in response to our environment, to find out information and can include street signs, advertising and time tables. It depends very much on the day-to-day needs of the reader. In contrast, reading for learning is considered to be the type of reading done in the classroom and is goal oriented. While reading for pleasure is something that does not have to be done.

For Nuttal (1996), the central ideas behind reading are:

- The idea of meaning.
- The transfer of meaning from one mind to another.
- The transfer of a message from writer to reader.
- How we get meaning by reading.
- How the reader, the writer and text all contribute to the process.

Indeed, Fosudo (2010) agreed that the amount of reading that children do for enjoyment and for school was found to be a major contributor to their achievement. For a reading culture to be possible, reading must be part of all aspect of life and not only certain parts such as school or work.

Similar findings were also made by the Reading for Change Study (2002), which showed that reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than family's socio-economic status. Thus, the frequent admonition for children to 'read', reading makes sense in that extensive reading promotes fluency, vocabulary and background knowledge. A creative and pragmatic education involves the habit of personal investigation. The act of personal investigation requires self-study to be followed by self-thinking and analysis. Self-study, otherwise referred to as reading at one's own accord, requires a habit, which is known as reading habit. Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. Reading habits is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one's life time.

Reading and academic achievement are essential for research workers and educationists to know that every child whether he or she is gifted, average, normal or backward, etc. should be educated in his or her own way but if he or she possesses good study habits, he or she can perform well in academics and in every situation. It is the reading habits which help the learner in obtaining meaningful and desirable knowledge. Good reading habits act

as a strong weapon for the student to excel in life. Pumfrey, (1990) is of the opinion that, effective reading is important avenue of effective learning, and reading is interrelated with the total educational process and hence, educational success requires successful reading habit.

He believes reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. It follows then that if you are in the practice of reading regularly without thinking about it because of the performance of its continuity, one can conclude that good reading habits have been formed. This is because a habit is formed unconsciously when an individual does something many times, and becomes part and parcel of such a person's life. Incidentally, many students do not belong in the category of those with good reading habits. Their poor or bad reading habit could partly be held responsible for general poor performance that the school systems usually record in both internal and external examinations.

In sum, reading is a psycholinguistic process (involving the mind actively processing the text) and a socio linguistic one (with multiple social factors that can affect how one gleans from the reading and more). Nevertheless, the NRP (National Reading Panel) reports became the basis for the federal government's Reading First Initiative, enshrined in the 'NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND' Act of 2001. Reading First operationally defined reading as using a set of separate skills to process text and promote the concept that reading instruction should consist of teaching those skills separately. Reading is considered differently by people depending on which social background one comes from. On one hand, reading is so much a part of daily life for people living in literature communities that they hardly think about the purpose and process involved in it. This activity is taken for granted just as listening and speaking (Wallace, 1992).

### **Reading Culture**

Sandars (2007) defines reading culture as a learned practice of seeking knowledge, information or entertainment through the written word. She says that the practice could be acquired by reading books, journals, magazines and newspapers. Having a reading culture is imperative for citizens if the future of the country is to be guaranteed. Agada (2008) cites Olaifo (2008) which defines reading culture as the art of inculcating reading habits and interest in learners through conducive reading environments and copious activities. Developing a reading culture fosters a love for reading and habit of reading among learners. The reading culture is one of the valuable assets which boost human generative powers of thinking for new innovations and development and natural endowments. Ruterana, (2012) defines reading as an integrated pattern of reading behaviours, practices, beliefs, perceptions and knowledge. Also in their study on ways of creating the reading culture, they refer to the reading culture to mean 'a culture where reading is part of the people's living and constitutes a habit that is shared by members of the society'.

According to Gbadamosi (2007) reading culture evolves when an individual habitually and regularly read books and other information materials that are necessarily required for him to advance in his profession or career. Becoming a skilled adaptive reader enhances the chances of success at school and beyond. Reading is for life. Anybody who cannot read finds it difficult solving the problem of everyday needs. It is believed that people who read always find the solutions to the mysteries of life.

### **Importance of Reading**

The importance of reading to the individual and to the society cannot be over emphasized. Chika (2009) outlines the virtues of reading to include the provision of individuals' welfare, social progress and international understanding, the provision of skills, knowledge and the right attitude that frees one from idleness or boredom. Reading is not just for school but also for life and it enhances the chances of success at school and beyond. Agada (2008) states that reading is an indispensable tool for learning in the various hierarchies of modern educational set up which he opines facilitates the learning process and effectively promotes intellectual development in the learners.

Sandars (2007), stress that reading is essential to full participation in modern society because it adds quality to life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. Reading broadens a child's understanding of life, affords him/her the tool to explore his/her talent while learning about himself and his society. Reading enables creativity to blossom in a child. The English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626) once said that while speaking makes a ready man and writing, an exact man, reading makes a full man.

Isaac (2007) listed the following as benefits:

- (i) Reading is an active mental process- Unlike TV; books make one to use his brain. By reading, one thinks more and becomes smarter.
- (ii) It is a fundamental skill builder-Every good course on the planet has a matching book to go with it.
- (iii) Improves vocabulary- While reading books, especially challenging ones, it exposes one to many new words that wouldn't be otherwise.
- (iv) Improves concentration and focus.

- (v) Improves discipline.
- (vi) Builds expertise- Reading many books on a subject for a long time makes a person an authority in that subject area.

Benefits of reading at the national level- Literacy is a basic tool for national development. For this reason, the Federal Government of Nigeria has concentrated its efforts on providing basic primary education for its citizens. The importance of literacy is usually tied to the needs of the nation and the conditions of Modern life. Literacy is required for industrialization and technological development, participate in culture and in government at different levels, facing the demands of urban life, and adapting to the rapid changes and characteristics of modern life (Iloje, 2014). The circumstances of modern life demand the development of good reading culture for the actualization of national goal, and on the individual level for the fullest and most beneficial participation in society.

Ogwu (2010) posits that education in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character and the physical ability of an individual. The place of reading and learning in educational development is a prominent one. Reading facilitates and deepens the learning activity, and effective learning results in high academic, moral and skills development. The aggregation of all such achievements by large number of persons involved in reading and learning should lead to the educational growth and development of such persons and entire society. Highly intelligent and I formed society then becomes watershed for progressive and innovative ideas which is capable for transforming the entire society for growth and development. Tella and Akande (2007) assert that the ability to read is an art capable of transforming life and society. No society and no nation can dream of meaningful development if its citizens cannot read. An educated citizenry can easily be mobilized for political, social, economic and technological development. Reading culture must be sustained; otherwise literacy could revert to illiteracy. Uhegbu (2007) noted that reading and information are critical ingredients for national development contributing immensely in such areas as educational and promotion of national objectives as well as international co-operation. Reading therefore is the bedrock of national transformation and development.

### **Reading Culture in Nigeria**

Survival instinct is an intricate part of any organic being. Wherever this instinct is lacking, the threats to organic annihilation becomes imminent. As a living organism every social system has an intrinsic responsibility to upholding its continued existence viz culture, politics, religion, economy, etc. A society dies the moment the will to survive is missing. It is worthy of note that survival is not only in terms of biological life-force. A society as a living entity has its own life which ought to be fed in order; education plays a significant role in the continued survival of the organic structure of any society.

The function of formal education in the development of Africa cannot be overemphasized. It is a known fact that Nigeria produces a high level of formally educated minds in the continent of Africa. For instance, out of all the immigrant ethnic groups in the United States, Nigeria has a high concentration of formally educated minds. Despite all these statistics, Nigeria as a nation still has a long way to go in national transformation. The fruits of the years of formal education seem to find little relevance in the reconstruction of the nation.

Nigerians are intelligent and also industrious. But the Nigerian ingenuity of entrepreneurship and massive development remain incomplete until Nigerians embrace through reading culture. There is no doubt that Nigeria as a nation is behind in imbibing a reading culture with which no nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century could make a profound headway to socio-economic, political and techno-scientific advancement. The attitude surrounding the Nigerian formal education revolves around paper qualification. This is a very myopic way of looking at the entirety of what education stands for.

People are discarding the culture of reading. Lots of people abandon reading and research once out of school programs. By so doing, lots of Nigerian graduates including Professors remain academically wedged in the evolving world of new idea. When the will and the enthusiasm to go further die, life as a comprehensive whole begins to die too. To maintain a high profile society of professionalism, Nigeria needs to also maintain a high profile of intellectualization via the reading culture.

One obstacle to the establishment of a reading culture is the fact that African societies were predominantly oral. In Nigeria, a high value is placed on sociability which discouraged reading which was looked upon as a solitary activity. In addition, the culture of reading and print is an alien culture that was superimposed by Colonialists. (Dike, 1998) connected two forms of literacy cultures. She argued that since countries in general, and Nigeria in particular, had a rich oral tradition it was hard to build a reading culture. Parents did not read stories to their children, they told stories. She stated that because of this oral background, parents were unlikely to read to their children, even if they were able to do so. Storytelling was the predominant form of literacy mediation for parents, literate and illiterate alike.

Storytelling and anecdotes are part of the African heritage. According to Dike, she argued that this tradition should be seen as a way of bridging the gap between the culture in school and that of home. These cultures do

not have to work against each other; on the contrary they can be a form of mediation between the culture at home and that of school (Dike, 1998). In addition, she stated that what she calls literacy mediation can be accomplished through using indigenous cultural expressions.

## **Attitude and Reading**

### **Concept and Theories of Attitude**

The concept of attitude has been examined in a variety of ways. Okeke (2004) refers to attitude as “consistent reactionary positions directed towards a person, an idea, an object, event or a concept”. He explained further that these reactionary positions can either be positive or negative. A positive attitude towards a thing will elicit love and interest and would be jealously guarded in order to sustain good performance. On the other hand, a negative attitude will not be guarded. He explained that attitudes are used by individuals in selecting ideas, concepts, and information items and determine the ways an individual interprets particular information within his or her reach.

Summarizing the various definitions of attitude, Bankole (1999), comes up with the following statements about attitude.

- Attitude is acquired or learned.
- Attitude gives the pattern of behaviour of an individual.
- Attitude has a predicative aspect and this determines success or failure in motivational process.
- Attitude is made up of values, feelings and beliefs.
- Attitude and learning are closely associated.
- Attitude is an important variable in the learning process. Hence attitude gives a directive way to learning.

Attitude and Reading: Okeke (2004) postulated that positive attitude can to a large extent facilitate reading and that negative attitude might hinder reading. When a reader is favourably disposed towards reading, there are basic reasons why his motivation is likely to benefit, the reader with more favourable attitudes will wish for an intensive and more purposeful reading. In this respect, favourable attitudes reinforce the reader’s grasp of his reading or the passage or text being read irrespective of the nature of the text being read. Ruterana (2012) further opined that it is probable that attitudes relate more directly to reading as it is experienced in the classroom. One important aspect of this experience is the image of the reading which the reader derives from the teacher and the materials. If this image remains the second hand, however, it may remain a weak factor compared with more general aspects of motivation such as enjoyment, stimulation through variety and above all, the experience of success.

It was observed that sometimes reading is more easily and successfully done if the reader has positive attitude towards the second language community. The teacher should therefore try to break down any prejudices towards this community and help readers to perceive the common interests that link its members with themselves. This may help suitable teaching materials and also (probably) personal contact with native speakers. And here, the teacher’s own attitude to such second language community could be studied through his own attitude to reading such second language and will thus influence the learner’s attitude.

The attitude of a learner is fundamental to the outcome of their work (Lorenzo and Denchant 1993). Experiences have shown that the English language is read in Nigeria more as an international language and the attitude of reader to reading in this situation is more of instrumental motivation than being integrative.

In conclusion of this section, it will be observed that attitude and reading are two inseparable elements that contribute either positively or negatively to second language reading.

### **Problems of Entrenching Reading Culture in Nigeria**

Okeke (2004) emphasized that the lack of acquisition of positive reading skills and a positive reading culture during the formative years impacted negatively on the students’ performance not only in the language taught, but also other subjects. Reading, whether for pleasure or academic purpose, is an essential habit that forms the bedrock of greatness in everyone, regardless of age, gender or status is hardly disputed. However, imbibing it has not always been as widespread as accepting its importance.

The practice, which was common among Nigerian students, youths and even adults in the past, is gradually being eroded.

Some education stakeholders have attributed the drop in reading culture in Nigeria to the lack of adequate awareness on its importance, inadequate library facilities, poor access to books and other reading materials, among other factors.

However, a major phenomenon that has been linked to dwindling reading culture is low of computer literacy among citizens. Added to this are the distractive and wrong application of information and communication technology (ICT) device and the high cost of books (Bankole, 1999). He postulated that as good as ICT is, it has also cast some measure of negative effects in students especially on their reading habits. Internet obsession has caused many kids to waste valuable times surfing diverse anti-moral and socially inclined websites.

Ayanbimpe (2012) listed other challenges below:

- (a) Poverty: As a result of low incomes many would-be readers kept from buying books because they do not have money to buy reading materials. This limited their ability to get exposed to a variety of information materials which could easily be accessed by buying them from bookshops if they could afford them.
- (b) Education System: The education system in Nigeria does not prioritize reading for pleasure or general knowledge acquisition that does not aim at passing examinations. For instance, Okeke (2004), asserted that the poor reading culture of students in secondary schools was as a result of poor public policy and institutional management practice, lack of essential resources for literacy development, failure to recognize reading as an essential critical skill for learning, a lack of commitment to ensure literacy was achieved, and a lack of reading policies in schools. A major challenge that was identified by Okeke (2004) is the examination- oriented education system in Nigeria. He stated that 'even the literate stopped reading after they finished writing their exams'. A reading culture cannot be present in a situation like this, where reading is only part of the school context and not of all aspects of life which was the situation in many African countries and was further exacerbated by the fact that the home environment did not encourage reading (Dike, 1995).
- (c) Reading Habits: The education system emphasized education for achievement rather than education for life. This was depicted by the fact that educators discovered that the majority of students in secondary schools highly focus on the need to pass their examinations and they read little else besides the prescribed textbooks (Magara, 2005). This affected their ring ability by hampering them from exploring other reading materials which would have inspired them to gain the habit of reading. The development of a reading culture at all level especially in developing countries was a great challenge. To ensure that reading thrives in Nigeria, concerted efforts would be required to improve the social and reading infrastructure to promote reading across the school curriculum and develop reading extension services.
- (d) Relevance of Books Available: Books that dealt with subjects that were relevant to the children's daily lives and reflected their world both inside and outside school were also believed to promote engaged reader (Hornby and Snow, 2000). Wallace (2009) emphasized that reading materials should take into consideration the culture of the learners. This was because most of the reading materials included foreign concepts that did not relate to pupils' environment, which made it difficult for the pupils to understand and relate what they were reading. Therefore, reading materials would be appreciated more by children if they based on their experience and culture.

### **Need for Effective Reading Culture**

The acquisition of reading skills has a beneficial effect in all school subjects, including social studies, science, mathematics, and so on. Poor reading skill can make a child develop a poor attitude toward school and can create self-esteem problems later in life (Fosudo, 2010).

Oke (1996) gave reasons why people read, including self-improvement, pleasure and relaxation, and a feeling of pride and prestige. According to Antwi (1985), studies has shown a relationship between readings/early literacy and child's emotional, mental health, and social behaviour. According to him, a study done in the US showed that reading correlated with delinquency, independent of neighborhood, ethnicity, and family involvement, and was the same in both ethnic groups sampled and constant over the age range studied. The degree of seriousness of delinquent act was directly correlated to the degree of severity of reading problems. The study also showed that early in the primary grades, children who are struggling with literacy begin to experience failure and related negative effects in interpersonal skills. These effects can include task- avoidance and actin out, lower levels of personal regard, and seeking of personal values in venues that are anti-social.

According to Ilegogie (2005), reading helps in the development of one's communications skills and intellect. Development through reading is more progress engendering, lasting, effective and beneficent to mankind when held in the reading culture. Holte (1998), the importance of reading is essential to full participation in modern society because it adds value to life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. Reading empowers and emancipates citizens, and brings people together. It can be thought as a factor, which has important role to play in fulfilling the multicultural structure of our country. Iheanachi (2007) opined that a healthy reading culture has a pivotal role to play in the social, economic and technological development of any country. Reading is a very essential commodity in the task of nation building. It is a main political weapon in the development of any nation.

Developed countries of the world were able to attain that height because, at a point in their history, they were able to give themselves too much reading and research. Countries like Japan, America, Britain, etc. took to reading and research to achieve technological breakthroughs. Most developing countries do not have a healthy reading culture hence they lack substantial information that could be utilized for national development. If these countries can re-orientate their citizens to have a change of attitude towards reading as well as research, we can be rest assured that it is just a matter of time before the dividends of an informed people will began to manifest

in such countries. Holte (1998) remarks that a situation in which a large number of people read, either because they lack or do not care enough to take time to concentrate will pose serious problems in the future. Reading is essential to full participation in modern society. It adds quality to life, provides access to culture and cultural heritage, empowers and emancipates citizen as well as brings people together. In the words of Sisulu (2004), reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Becoming a skilled and adaptable reader enhances the chances of success at school and beyond. Reading is not just for school, it is for life.

Reading in all its variety is vital to being better informed, a better understanding of us as well as others. It makes man to be a thoughtful and constructive contributor to a promotion of reading. They see a high level of literacy as a major source of their competitiveness and social maturity. The absence of a wide spread culture of reading in the case of Nigeria act as an effective barrier to our development and international competitiveness. The economic, social and political health of our nation today depends on building literate citizens that are able to read widely and apply it practically for development. It is therefore a necessity to making the present generation more aware of the benefits and importance reading and ensuring that they have the literacy skills required in the modern society.

According to Etim (2008) basic literacy means an individual ability to read, write and speak in English. Reading is the cornerstone of learning. Gbadamosi (2007) quoting Okwilagwe describes reading as reasoning involving the meaningful interpretation of words, phrases and sentences requiring all types of thinking such as critical, analytic, creative, imaginative, evaluative, judgmental and problem solving. When an individual habitually and regularly read books and other information materials that are necessarily required for him to advance in his profession or career, he is set to have a reading culture (Gbadamosi, 2007). Reading culture in essence therefore is the kind of culture that imbibes reading and studying as a basis of growth and development. It is the type that sees continuous and dedicated reading of information resources by pupil, students and adult for knowledge acquisition, which would be applied practically for development. Reading sharpens the mind makes one reason rational and objectively as well project one for greatness in life. This is why scholars describe readers as leaders.

### **Libraries and the Promotion of Reading Cultures in Nigeria**

Ogwu (2006) highlights the various ways by which libraries can be used as a platform for entrenching reading culture in Nigeria, The first point here is the fact that the library has a variety of learning resources such as books, computers, the virtual library facilities etc. Secondly, library offers a much more conducive atmosphere or silence which makes it conducive for reading. The third factor is that library provides reading accommodation for large number of users which is more as a result of the fact that it is cheaper to access library information than what the home or the office can offer the reader. The fourth factor in this direction is that library offer more conducive atmosphere which is necessary for developing a reading habit. In libraries, information can be discovered very quickly because the cataloguing and classification treatment has been applied.

Libraries are fundamental to the design, implementation, and attainment of educational excellence. Libraries are an integral part of the educational development of school children and youth. Without the support of efficient libraries, which are:

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
2. The inculcation of the Nigeria society.
3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
4. The acquisition of appropriate skills, social abilities and competence as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society (NPE, 2004).

Libraries provide access to reading materials through which school children and youth can gain and improve their skills. Libraries help introduce the use of reading for information, pleasure, passing examinations, and personal growth through lifelong learning. Libraries provide materials that offer more extensive and varied information than classroom study alone.

In Nigeria, literacy is recognized as a basic tool for personal and national development. The National Policy on Education (2004), places inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate efficiently as one of the objective of school education. The library must provide resources to complement education. These resources can take children and youth for above technical literacy to developing culture which makes permanent attainable.

The role of the libraries is crucial in promoting reading especially in developing scientific, reflective thinking and creativity. Libraries can help children and youths develop critical and independent thinking though their exposure to wide variety of instructional resources and learning and opportunities. Apart from the development of creative and critical thought, the role of the library in the promotion of reading culture can be seen in the reader's development of values, attitudes and appreciation. These are difficult to teach in the classrooms.

In the process of encouraging or inculcating the reading habit in children and youth, stakeholders (parents,

teachers, schools, librarians, and other library staff) should avoid nagging, bribing, judging, criticizing reading choices and setting unreasonable goals.

### Research Method

The study is a research which investigated through survey the effect and remedies of poor reading culture among school students, in which questionnaires was administered to students. Calculation of percentage was carried out on the response to the questionnaire given to them. This percentage highlighted various issues that are important and also affects reading culture among secondary school students in Owo Local Government Area, Ondo State of Nigeria.

### Population

The population of the study was made up of some secondary school students and their teachers in Owo Local Government Area, Ondo State of Nigeria.

### Sample

The sample for this comprised of 100 randomly selected students, both male and female. Also 20 English Language teachers were randomly selected in all the school in Owo Local Government Ondo State, Nigeria. The following were the school used for the study:

- i. Methodist High School, Owo
- ii. Imade college, Owo
- iii. St. Louis Girls Grammar School, Owo.
- iv. Fourah-Bay Secondary School, Owo.

Two sets of questionnaire were used to collect data from the teachers and their students respectively. These attached as appendices. The two and questionnaire were used for data collection from the respondents. The teacher's questionnaire contained 10 items while that of the students contained 20 items.

### Data Analysis

Data collected was presented in frequent counts and percentage. Hypotheses formulated were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-test and Chi-Square statistical tools.

### Results and Discussion

#### Research Question 1: What are the effects of socio-economic background on reading performance of students?

**Table 1: Socio-economic background on reading performance**

S/N	Questions	Yes		No		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Do you agree that students from standard socio-economic background perform better in reading than students from poor socio-economic background?	17	85.0	3	15.0	20	100.0
2	Parent's inability to set high educational standards for students affects their reading performance?	16	80.0	4	20.0	20	100.0
3	Motivation from parents helps students read better?	95	95.0	5	5.0	100	100.0
4	Do we think illiteracy is consequently the outcome of poor reading?	50	50.0	50	50.0	100	100.0
5	Do you agree that students from rich home read fluently than students from poor home?	28	28.0	72	72.0	100	100.0
6	Family financial status affects reading proficiency?	67	67.0	33	33.0	100	100.0

Table 1 showed the effect of socio-economic background on reading performance of the selected secondary school students.

Item 1 revealed that 85% of the respondents (teachers) were of the opinion that students from standard socio-economic background performs better in reading than students from poor socio-economic background while 15% of the respondents (teachers) opposed. Item 2 disclosed that 80% of the respondents believed that parent's inability to set high educational standards for students affects their reading performance while 20% of the respondents did not believe the assertion. Item 3 unveiled that 95% of the respondents (students) opined that motivation from parents helps students read better while 5% of the respondents (students) against the opinion.

Similarly, Item 4 showed that 50% of the respondents (students) agreed and opposed that illiteracy is consequently the outcome of poor reading performance.

Item 5 revealed that 28% of the respondents (students) agreed and opposed that illiteracy is consequently the outcome of poor home while 72% of the respondents (students) disagreed. Item 6 disclosed that 67% of the

respondents were of the opinion that family financial status affects reading proficiency while 33% of the respondents opposed it. In view of the above analysis, it is justifiable to conclude that standard of reading performance of students from good socio-economic background.

**Research Question 2: Does students who have access to good reading facilities perform better than students with poor reading facilities?**

**Table 2: Reading facilities for students**

S/N	Questions	Yes		No		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Does your school have enough instructional materials that can aid students reading proficiency?	13	65.0	7	35.0	20	100.0
2	Do your students make use of the school library effectively?	10	50.0	10	50.0	20	100.0
3	Does class learning environment affect reading performance of students?	17	85.0	3	15.0	20	100.0
4	Does your school have enough instructional material that can aid effective reading?	61	61.0	39	39.0	100	100.0
5	Does your school have a library?	93	93.0	7	7.0	100	100.0
6	Do you read in your school library when you are free?	81	81.0	19	19.0	100	100.0
7	Well-equipped library normally enhances students' reading performance?	89	89.0	11	11.0	100	100.0

Table 2 showed the effect of access to good reading facilities on reading performance of students of selected secondary school students. Items 1 revealed that 65% of the respondents (teachers) were of the opinion that enough instructional materials aid students reading proficiency while 35% of the respondents (teachers) counter the opinion. Item 2 disclosed that 50% of the respondents (teachers) believed that students make use of the school library effectively while 50% of the respondents (teachers) disagreed. Item 3 showed that 85% of the respondents (teachers) were of the opinion that learning environment affects reading performance of students while 15% of the respondents (teachers) were of different opinion. Item 4 disclosed that 61% of the respondents (students) believed that their schools have enough instructional material that can aid effective reading while 39% of the respondents (students) did not believe the claim. Item 5 revealed that 93% of the respondents (students) agreed that their school have a library while 7% of the respondents (students) disagreed. Item 6 disclosed that 81% of the respondents (students) opinion that they normally read in their school library when they are free while 19% of the respondents opposed it. Item 7 unveiled that 91% of the respondents (students) opined that well equipped library normally enhances students reading performance better while 9% of the respondents (students) were against the opinion. In view of the above, one can therefore conclude that students who have access to good reading facilities perform better than students with poor reading facilities.

**Research Question 3: Are female students reading proficiency better than male students?**

**Table 3: Differences in reading proficiency of male and female**

S/N	Questions	Yes		No		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Do you sincerely think that the reading proficiency of the female students surpasses that of their male counterpart?	8	40.0	12	60.0	20	100.0
2	Do students generally feel reluctant towards reading?	14	70.0	6	30.0	20	100.0
3	Provision of reading timetable in schools increase reading proficiency?	89	89.0	11	11.0	100	100.0
4	Does poor reading culture often lead to high failure rate?	70	70.0	30	30.0	100	100.0
5	Do male students lead in academic activities because they read better than female students?	44	44.0	56	56.0	100	100.0
6	Do you think female student's show nonchalant attitude towards reading than their male counterpart?	42	42.0	58	58.0	100	100.0

Table 3 showed differences in reading proficiency of male and female of selected secondary school students. Item 1 disclosed that 40% of the respondents (teachers) believed that reading proficiency of the female students surpasses that of their male counterpart while 60% of the respondents (teachers) did not believe the claim. Item 2 revealed that of the respondents (teachers) agreed that students generally feel reluctant towards reading while 30% of the respondents (teachers) disagreed. Item 3 revealed that 89% of the respondents (students) opined that reading timetable in schools increases reading proficiency while 11% of the respondents against the opinion. Item 4 unveiled that 70% of the respondents (students) agreed that poor reading culture often lead to high failure rate while 30% of the respondents (students) were against the opinion.

Similarly, Item 5 showed that 44% of the respondents (students) against opined that male students lead in

academic activities because they read better than female students while 56% of the respondents (students) agreed with the opinion.

Item 6 disclosed that 58% of the respondents (students) disagreed with the fact that female students show nonchalant attitude towards reading than their male counterpart while 42% of the respondents (students) supported the opinion. It is therefore concluded that female students reading proficiency is better than male students.

### **Discussion of findings**

The present study investigated the effects and remedies of poor reading culture among some selected secondary schools in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. For the purpose of this study, three research questions and hypothesis were raised respectively. Results revealed that there is significant difference in the performance of students from good socio-economic background and students from poor socio-economic background. This result is in agreement with Joan (2009) assertion that socio-economic status and parents' level of education is part of a larger constellation of psychological and sociological variables influencing children's school outcomes. According to Lawal (2010) parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Taiwo (1993) submits that parents' educational background influences the academic achievement of students. Mark (2011) who said that a child that comes from an educated home would like to follow the steps of his or her family and by this, work actively in his or her studies. He said further that parents who have more than a minimum level of education are expected to have a favored attitude to the child's education and to encourage and help him or her with school work.

Mark (2012) concludes that a child from a well-educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This is because the child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and nutritious feeding. Families from different socio-economic groups create different learning environments that affect the child's academic achievement. There is no doubt that parents' attitude help to condition their children's attitude. A parent who shows complete regard for education might have some effect upon his or her children's education progress. Students from the educated parents who attended and finished form four or form six or university performed considerably better than the students with parents who did not finish primary or just finished primary school. Students whose fathers had university degree may likely have the highest increase in test score. Similarly Ojoawo (1990) cited in a study of Socio-economic determinants of primary school dropouts found that High academic attainment of the parents significantly reduces chances of primary school drop out for both boys and female children in rural and urban areas. Also educated parent are more concerned and more effective in helping their children in academic work.

Results further revealed that there is significant difference in the performance of students accessible to good reading facilities and students with poor reading facilities. This result is in consonance with Fabunmi (1997) assertion that school facilities when provided will aid teaching learning program and consequently improve academic achievement of students while the models guiding their provision to schools could take any form as rational bureaucratic and or political model. Whichever model is adopted, according to him, there is always a common feature of differing allocation of facilities to schools. Oni (1992) submitted that no effective science education program can exist without equipment for teaching. This is because facilities enable the learner to develop problem-solving skills and scientific attitudes. When facilities are provided to meet relative needs of a school system, students will not only have access to the reference materials mentioned by the teacher, but individual students will also learn at their own paces. The net effect of this is increased overall academic performance of the entire students.

World Bank publication (1990), linked performance of students to the provision of adequate facilities while referring to a survey of 51 primary schools in Botswana that students performed significantly better on academic tests when they had adequate classrooms, desks and books. Fagbamiye (1979) attesting to why students 'performance standard fall observed 559 cases from 13 secondary schools in Lagos State using age, type of school (Day or Boarding, mixed or single, sex), teachers qualification and teaching experience as well as in take quality using students 'entrance examination achievement. His findings revealed that schools which are equipped had good records of achievement and attracted more students. He concluded that good quality schools in terms of facilities and younger students 'intake performs better in WASCE. Commenting on why high academic attainment is not in vogue in Nigeria. Adesina (1981) identified poor and inadequate physical facilities, obsolete teaching technique, overcrowded classrooms among others, as factors. Throwing more light on school facilities and moral guiding provision, in his words, Ojoawo (1990), however, noted that certain schools are favored in the allocation of facilities at the expense of others, writing on poor performance of students in public examinations.

Lastly, results unveiled that there is no significant difference in reading proficiency of male and female students. The result is in disagreement with Keshavarzi (2008) position that females are better comprehends of English tests. Brat Meier (2002) found that female EFL learners, outperformed male in reading comprehension

tests. The most important reader variable that affects reading comprehension is gender. There are clear differences between men and women's use of language. These differences can be attributed to women domination in using language or can be viewed as a product of gender. Research has shown that at all levels of education (from school to university) male students talk more than females, and receive more class time than females. But, as far as reading is concerned, it seems that female students are more successful than males. In the opinion of Wardhaugh (1993), facing more failure and difficulty in reading than girls, does not mean that boys are inherently not equipped to learn to read there may be socio-cultural reasons for their poor performance compared to girls.

### **Conclusion**

It goes without saying that reading is the heart of any formal learning situation. In as much as this remains so, it becomes incumbent on all learners, teachers and the sponsors of formal learning to put the necessary machineries in place for positive attitude towards reading that is at the planning stage. A close perusal of the findings in this study has shown that students alone cannot be blamed for the prevalent problems that characterize poor reading culture in secondary schools in the study vividly shows that the government, parents equally share in the necessary facilities that can facilitate effective reading. The students too have been found to be indifferent to the need to develop themselves in the reading process. The effects of these problems consequently affect the student's academic performance and hence providing half-baked students.

It is against this backdrop that some solutions in form of recommendations have been made in this study to tackle the identified problems. Therefore, making conscious efforts towards reading efficiency will no doubt save secondary students the agony of struggling to pass examination and enhance a positive use of their free time at home and school.

### **Recommendations**

As a consequence to the various identified problems confronting reading culture of students in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State, the following recommendations have been made to rectify the anomalies. First and most importantly, all hands must be on desk to inculcate the right attitude towards reading among the secondary school learners. Therefore, the task must start from where parents are expected to encourage the learners to read through the provision of adequate and relevant reading materials. At school, teachers should complement parents' efforts with varieties of contemporary teaching methods. Constraint supervision will also go a long way to complement individual remedial reading classes where necessary. These should be done with the use of appropriate instructional materials.

The government should equip the libraries in secondary school and stock them with up-to-date books, particularly on reading. The government at all levels should establish libraries across the length and breadth of the country, in all schools and for the public. This can be done by reasonably increasing the education budget allocation and deploying a good part of it into setting up libraries. These libraries should be sufficiently supplied with reading resources so as to achieve the desired learning impact on the readers. The Ministries of Education, both at the federal and at the state levels should review the curriculum to include reading and it should take a prominent position on the school timetable. The subject of reading on the school timetable should be strictly observed to make the whole school do actual reading simultaneously. The government should make it compulsory for all schools to engage in reading competition as regularly as possible. When reading competition is established among students, government should introduce annual awards for the best reader of the year, both at zonal as well as the state levels. It is pertinent to note that because of the vital role that libraries play in the enhancement of reading culture of secondary school student, the researcher suggests that libraries should be incorporated in all secondary schools in Nigeria with books and non-book materials especially audio-visual materials. Professional librarians should be employed. Funding of school libraries should be done by the Federal Government and should be in a separate vote. The outdated books can therefore be replaced with new ones. Journals should also be bought from different vote. The system performance evaluation in schools in the country should focus more on using library and information resources in the execution of students' assignment, project, drama, and debating activities.

However, teachers like their counterparts, in the civil service, public or private sector deserve good remuneration and better conditions of service in order to enhance effective teaching. Government should stop lukewarm attitude to education in order to promote reading culture of the children. Government should organize various courses, workshops and conferences to sell the noble idea of good reading culture to student and all stake holders in the educational system. Where the above steps are taken and implanted with all sense of seriousness and commitment, the reading culture of our secondary school student will definitely improve.

The learners need to be reminded of the inexhaustible gains of reading. The personal efforts of individual learners count so much in order to cultivate the desired attitude towards reading, learners should devote much of their time to purposeful activities. Taking pains to read both at home and school will enhance language

proficiency and intellectual supremacy, which are highly prized among equals and in the academic circle.

Furthermore, English teachers need to close ranks and exchange ideas in their respective schools besides participating in professional seminars and workshops in order to update their knowledge and spice up their teaching methods and approaches. The researcher believes that if the foregoing recommendations are implemented, the secondary school students' attitude towards reading will change for the better.

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