

# READING HABITS AMONG LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF JOS

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## Abstract

The study examined the reading habits of the students of Library and Information Science of the University of Jos, which is located in the North Central Zone of Nigeria, based upon a random sample of 186 students from 100 to 300 levels. Data for the study were collected via 186 copies of questionnaire administered to all the students of the discipline in the University, from which 160 were properly filled and returned, representing a response rate of 86.02%. The findings showed that majority (80.5%) of the respondents read to gain knowledge; 94(59.9%) read textbooks in the library; 43.4% indicated that reading is rewarding and 44.3% read novels or fiction to learn new things. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that parents should help their children cultivate reading skills at an early age through living by example and giving them books, so that reading may become part and parcel of the child's life; lecturers should give only skeletal notes, coupled with assignments to students, so as to spur the students to seek more knowledge and also learn to find more information independently; and lecturers should emphasize the value of novels towards improving the student's spoken language, and encourage students to visit the library not only to read lecture notes and textbooks but read and borrow novels as well.

**KEY WORDS:** *Reading, reading habits, novels, textbooks, school library, undergraduate students, University of Jos, library and information science*

## Introduction

Reading is a basic tool of education. It is essential to academic success and to intellectual growth. Like every other habit, the habit of reading in an individual develops with time. Students therefore need to develop reading habit to help them in their academic performance.

According to oxford advance learner's dictionary (2000), 'to read' means to look at and understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols, while a "habit" is a thing that one does often and almost without thinking, especially something that is hard to stop doing.

Reading habit can therefore be defined as looking at and understanding the meaning of written or printed words or symbols used often and almost without thinking, which has become part and parcel of one's life. Reading at one's own accord requires a habit which is known as "reading habit". Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age, and once formed, it can last one's life time (Green 2001).

Students often come from different environments and localities; they therefore differ in their reading habits. While some of the students have good reading habits, others tend to exhibit poor reading habits (Bashir and matto, 2012). This simply implies that the type of environments and localities students come from contribute to their reading habits positively or negatively. It is important that teachers, parents and librarians ascertain whether students read, what they read, just as why they read, what they read and how much. This will help them as major stakeholders in the teaching- learning process to seek useful ways by creating of learning environments that promote learning among the students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The present era of industrialization and technological progression is taking over the passion for reading nowadays. Many youths these days spend their time to watch movies, video games, television, and chat using internet to mention a few they do not have much interest in reading books, magazines and journals among others. Students these days are being more inclined to high-tech contemporary ways of occupying their leisure time, which has brought about a decline to the current situation of reading kept at bay.

Since good reading habit is an important factor to academic success and intellectual growth, students of this generation need to form/develop good reading and study habits. Reading not only gives people new ideas, information, and insights, it also helps them become more complete in every aspect in life. For parents, lecturers, librarians and even the students themselves, this underscores the need to ascertain whether students read, why, what, how often and how much they read. This study was therefore conducted to examine the reading habits among students of Library and Information Science of the University of Jos.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were as follows:-

1. To examine the reading habits of students,
2. To examine the materials students read when they visit the library, and
3. To ascertain why students engage in reading.

### **Research questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:-

1. What are the reading habits of the Library and Information Science students of the University of Jos?
2. What materials do the students read when they visit the library?

### 3. Why do the students engage in reading?

#### **Conceptual framework**

Ogbodo 2010 identifies three (3) main types of reading habits namely hobby reading, recreational reading, and concentration reading. Hobby reading is an activity one does because one derives some joy and satisfaction from doing it. Some people like reading as their hobby to widen their horizon in areas like educational, religious, political, economic, current affairs, fiction and non-fiction. Reading as a hobby helps one to be versatile in knowledge in many areas and the person can discuss issues knowledgeably with others.

Reading for recreation or relaxation is very common among the educated elite, particularly those who are gainfully employed and spend the whole day in office trying to solve problems related to their jobs. When they return home from work, they normally desire a change by reading books, newspapers and other materials which are of interest to them. Students who read magazines and newspapers at intervals learn to relax, cool their brain and avoid mental fatigue. In most cases, its effects in inducing sleep and rest after tedious reading in the classroom or the library adds to good health habits. Concentration reading is the most important type of reading for reaching the desired outcome. It is the bedrock of reading for serious study and constitutes result-oriented reading which is used for extracting information accurately.

#### **Literature Review**

The importance of reading in the lives of people from all disciplines for their overall development as well as success in coping with the complexities and challenges of 21st century cannot be over emphasized. According to Clark and Rumbold (2016) the art of reading is a priceless instrument for everyone. Palani (2012) had long observed that reading habit is an essential and important aspect for creating a literate society. Reading shapes the personality of individuals, helps them develop proper thinking methods, and also helps them create new ideas.

As propounded by Green (2001), reading habit is best formed at childhood and once it is formed at that age, it can last throughout one's life time. It therefore becomes hard for children who missed the opportunity to get in touch with books early in life to form good reading habit later in life. But once a child is taught how to read early and the child develops love for books, that child can learn from the experience of others and also gain knowledge through reading. It means that through reading, the individual can discover what others know and believe and from there develop ideas or beliefs of their own (Deavers 200).

Lesene (1991) opined that older people can inspire younger ones to develop good reading habit, by enhancing their own reading habit and by demonstrating the art of reading to the younger generation. Teachers, parents and guardians should therefore be readers themselves because only telling young people to read without demonstrating it is not sufficient. According to Bashir and Matto (2012), reading habits help the learners' in obtaining meaningful and desirable knowledge and good reading habits act as a strong weapon for students to excel in life. Issa, Aliya, Akangbe and Adedeji (2012) believe that everyday reading activities that students engage in may considerably influence their study skills and

consequent excellent academic performance. They further explained that there is a link between good reading habits and the academic performance of students generally. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which include for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information, and for knowledge. Whichever type of reading it is, reading is usually associated with books as only the written words provide a complete picture of the act of reading. Reading is particularly important in education as well for unhindered intellectual growth of a person.

**Methodology**

The study used survey research method in which 186 copies of questionnaire were administered to all the students of Library and Information Science of University of Jos, at the end of the first semester of 2014/2015 academic year. From the 186 copies of questionnaire distributed, 160 (86.02%) were filled and returned and used. These data were calculated, and then the diagrammatic representations of the tables were also given.

**Discussion of findings**

From the total of 186 copies of questionnaire distributed, 160 (86.02%) were filled and returned. The data were put into frequency tables and their percentages were calculated, then the diagrammatic representations of the tables were also given.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:**

**TABLE: 1**

Do you like reading voluntarily					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	143	89.4	89.4	89.4
	No	17	10.6	10.6	100
	Total	160	100	100	

**Table 1: Reading voluntarily.**

Out of the 160 respondents, 89.4% indicated that they like reading voluntarily; while 10.6% do not like reading voluntarily. 34.4% of those who read voluntarily were 100 level undergraduates, 19.4% were 200 level students, and 35.6% were 300 level students. It was also revealed that 58.5% of those who like reading voluntarily were between ages 16-25 years. The finding also shows that the older the students, the lesser their reading. Thus, the youngest in age (16-25years) read most.

**TABLE 2**

What material do you read in the library					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Textbooks	94	58.8	59.9	59.9
	note books/lecture notes	31	19.4	19.7	79.6
	novel or fiction	24	15	15.3	94.9
	Others	8	5	5.1	100
	Total	157	98.1	100	
Missing	System	3	1.9		
Total		160	100		

**Table 2: Material read in the library**

The finding here shows that 59.9% of the respondents read textbooks when they go to the library; 19.7% read notes books/ lecture notes; 15.3% read novels or fiction, and 5.1% read other materials.

**TABLE 3**

What is your perception about reading					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	difficult and boring	10	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Enjoyable	21	13.1	13.2	19.5
	Interesting	59	36.9	37.1	56.6
	Rewarding	69	43.1	43.4	100
	Total	159	99.4	100	
Missing	System	1	0.6		

**Table 3: Perception about reading**

As shown in the figure about, 6.3% of the respondents perceived reading as difficult and boring; 13.2% were of the opinion that reading is interesting; enjoyable; 37.1% felt that reading is interesting; then 43.4% indicated that reading is rewarding.

Table 4

Reason for reading novels or fiction					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	enhances better self expression	60	37.5	38	38
	enables one to learn new things	70	43.8	44.3	82.3
	keep one from getting bored	15	9.4	9.5	91.8
	help one to imagine things	13	8.1	8.2	100
	Total	158	98.8	100	
Missing	System	2	1.3		
Total		160	100		

Table 4: Reason for Reading

Responding to the question on reason for reading, 9.4% read to pass examinations, 80.5% engaged in reading to gain knowledge; 10.1% read to improve spoken/ written language. No wonder that 59.9% in figure 2 read textbooks in the library.

TABLE 5

How important is reading novels or fiction to you					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	enhances better self expression	60	37.5	38	38
	enables one to learn new things	70	43.8	44.3	82.3
	keep one from getting bored	15	9.4	9.5	91.8
	help one to imagine things	13	8.1	8.2	100
	Total	158	98.8	100	
Missing	System	2	1.3		
Total		160	100		

TABLE 5: Importance of reading novels or fiction

From the 160 respondents, 38% indicated that reading novels or fiction enhances better self-expression; 44.3% were of the opinion that it enable them the to learn new things; 9.5% expressed that it keeps them from getting bored; while 8.2% felt it helps them to imagine things.

**TABLE 6**

<b>How often do you read novels or fiction</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Monthly	72	45	45.3	45.3
	every semester	36	22.5	22.6	67.9
	within each academic year	34	21.3	21.4	89.3
	Others	17	10.6	10.7	100
	Total	159	99.4	100	
Missing	System	1	0.6		
Total		160	100		

**TABLE 6:** Frequency of reading novels

It was found out that 45.3% of the respondents read novels or fiction monthly; 22.6% read novels or fiction every semester; 21.4% read novels or fiction within each academic years; and 10.7% opted for other. 42.5% of the respondents read one- two novels or fiction during the academic year, 12.5% read five- six novels or fiction within the academic year; 6.3% respondents on the other hand did not read any novels or fiction.

**TABLE 7**

<b>How many novels or fiction do you read during the academic year</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	one-two	68	42.5	42.5	42.5
	three-four	62	38.8	38.8	81.3
	five-six	20	12.5	12.5	93.8
	None	10	6.3	6.3	100
	Total	160	100	100	

**TABLE 7:** Number of novels or fiction read in academic year

In answer to the question about the number of novels or fiction read during the academic year, as many as 42.5% of the respondents declared that they read only one or two novels or fiction material. This was closely followed by 38.8% three or four such material, and a distant 12.5% who read five or six while a disappointing 6.3% read none at all.

**TABLE 8**

<b>Why do you engage in reading</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	to pass exams	15	9.4	9.4	9.4
	to gain knowledge	128	80	80.5	89.9
	to improve spoken/writing language	16	10	10.1	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	1	0.6		
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>		

**TABLE 8: Motivation for reading**

In response to the question about the reason for engaging in reading in general, only 9.4% of the respondents said they read in order to pass exams, the majority claimed they read to gain knowledge while surprisingly; only 10.1% of the respondents identified the improvement of their spoken and written language as their motivation for reading.

### **Conclusion**

The study revealed that 89.4% of the respondents like reading voluntarily and 80.5% of them read to gain knowledge; thus, they acknowledge the importance of reading. 59.9% of the respondents visit the library to read textbooks and 43.4% perceive reading as rewarding. This is another factor that the students acknowledge the importance of gaining knowledge. The study also revealed that 44.3% respondents view the reading of novels or fiction as important because it enables them to learn new things, and 42.5% read one-two novels or fiction during the academic year. However, only 10.1% of the respondents engage in reading to improve their spoken/written language.

### **Recommendations**

On the bases of the findings of this study it recommended that parents should help their children cultivate reading skills at an early age by giving them books and living by example, so that reading may become part and parcel of the child's life. Moreover, lecturers should give only skeletal notes, coupled with assignments to students, so as to spur the students to seek more knowledge and also learn to find information. Lecturers should emphasize the value of novels towards improving the student's spoken language, and encourage students to visit the library not only to read lecture notes and textbooks but read and borrow novels as well.



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