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Theme: Story: Global Reflections on the Role of Story and Narrative in School Librarianship

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Teachers'/students' library use and reading habits in Ido local government area, Ibadan, Nigeria

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Reading is a skill which can be acquired in a library environment therefore educators need to get a general profile of reading habits of teachers and students and their use of library for effective educational planning. This study investigates the reading habits and use of library of teachers and students in primary and secondary schools. Using a purposive sampling technique, Questionnaire, Observation and Interview methods were used to gather information from122 respondents from five schools in the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria regarding general attitudes towards reading, reading habits, reading speed and general use of library. Parental interest in reading, teachers and governmental encouragement of students as well as organisation of reading programmes by Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), societies and clubs are some of the solutions proffered.

Introduction

One of the most important functions of education is the transfer of information from one generation to the next. It is widely recognised that information is the communication of instructive knowledge, and that knowledge is not static but dynamic. It is the key resource at all levels of life. Information may exist in abundance, but if it is not collected, organised and made accessible then it is a wasted development resource.

The library plays a similar role in the school curriculum just as science laboratories or language laboratories do. The only difference is the fact that while a science laboratory is specific in its functions the library has an unlimited jurisdiction in the field of knowledge. The library is not only a reading or materials centre but also a service and teaching centre. The library being a repository of knowledge, supplements the work of the teacher, thereby helping the teaching-learning process. It is a place where teachers can develop and update their knowledge and teaching skills.

Modern education has relied on books and this is what the library provides, therefore libraries are a source of educational inspiration and a tool on which the educator can rely for the transmission of culture from generation to generation and the development of reading habits. The proper uses of the library will increase and encourage the reading habit of both the teachers and the students. The reading habit of a particular society depends on the background and the civilization of such a society. People living in an educational environment are more likely to have better reading habits than those from the villages and rural areas. The presence of libraries in such environments makes for more awareness of education, and encourages both teachers and students

to read. The less developed areas or rural communities tend to have less educationally aware people in it.

This study is directly focused on both privately owned and government owned primary and secondary schools in the Iddo Local Government Area of Ibadan in Oyo State. Iddo Local Government consists of villages and newly developing areas between Ibadan South West and Ibadan North Local Government. It has about fifteen public secondary and six private secondary schools with thirty-two public primary and twenty private nursery/primary schools. The primary school pupils are of the age range 5 to 11 years old, and the secondary school students' age range from 11 to 17 years. For this study, two public secondary schools and one private secondary school were purposively selected as well as one public and one private primary school in the Iddo Local Government.

The schools chosen were Awotan / Araromi Community Grammar School, Awotan, Apete, Ibadan; St Michael African Church Grammar School, Owode, Ibadan; Reliance International High School, Ijokodo, Ibadan; Hope Central Primary School, Omi-Adio, Ibadan and D-way International School, Adagbada, Arola, Ibadan.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to assess the reading habits and the use of library among the teachers and students of primary and secondary schools in Iddo Local Government area in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria and find out if the use of library helped in improving reading habits.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:
- What are the reading habits of the teachers?
- What are the reading habits of the students?
- Does the use of library help teachers of Primary/Secondary schools to improve their reading habits?
- Does the use of library help both students of Primary/Secondary schools to improve their reading habits?

Literature Review

School Libraries in Education of Students

Apotiade (2001) identified the educational role of the school library as encouragement of reading habits and development of students' ability to learn from books. He further said that school libraries are "To provide books and other information materials that will assist students in the use of library resources and encourage recreational reading by providing newspaper, magazines, books on sports, adventures, hobbies, folklore and fiction".

Elaturoti (2000) recommended core areas of school library services. Some of these areas focus on developing and sustaining in children the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning, and the usage of the library throughout their lives. He also mentioned integration of library hour on the school timetable and suggested that the qualification of school librarians should ideally be a minimum of a Diploma in librarianship.

Obajemu (2002) reported his assessment of school library service and uses in Osodi and Isolo Local Government Area Council in Lagos State, Nigeria and made use of school library

standards prepared by the Lagos State Government. Certain standards are noted as being recommended for each student but the standard as to number of books is lacking.

Daniel (2000) described the primary school libraries in Abuja (The Federal Capital Territory) as meager. She suggested the roles to be played by the Nigerian School Library Association (NSLA) and international bodies to improve the situation and advocated for standardization of services in the school libraries.

Dike (2000) discussed the preparation of school library development for the UBE (Universal Basic Education) programme. She elaborated on how the government wanted to go about the provision of library services in the UBE programme. This shows that the importance of school libraries in the programme was much realised by the Federal Government than what it was in the Universal Primary Education Programme (UPE) of 1976.

Afzal (2002) posits that reading habits are dwindling gradually in all age groups, and this is being hastened by the existence of a majority of government schools without proper libraries in Lahore. He said people and students should be given attention and care especially with reference to their eagerness to learn, which should be encouraged in good educational institutions with well – equipped libraries.

Reading Habits of Educators

Habits are what a person does often and almost without thinking, especially something that is hard to stop doing (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English). A habit is not only peculiar to children but adults also have habits. Rosenberg (2003) explained that reading cannot be separated from learning or better still from knowledge acquisition. Although the youth of today have the privilege of learning through media devices that abound around them, the fact remains that a substantial part of human knowledge is acquired through reading. Adigun and Oyelude (2003) expatiate on the following points as reasons and importance of reading:

- Reading generally extends one's capacity in language. By reading one could add the efforts of other writers to one's own, thereby gaining perhaps greater powers of expression.
- Through reading one can engage is aspects of human experience not available to one directly.
- It is only through reading that youth will acquire the speech and experiences that they need for practical purposes of existence when they might have left the four walls of school. As Abe (1991) argues, if a child fails to master the skills of reading, his academic life is either a flat failure or only a limping success.

In Turkey, teachers and future teachers prefer reading newspapers to reading magazines (Oguz, Yildiz & Hayirsever, 2009). They also do not read professional literature frequently. Most teachers who are to teach future generations do not have reading habits. Ogeyik and Akyay (2009) however discovered that student teachers at foreign language departments in Trakya University, Turkey had positive attitudes to reading and were much involved in reading activities.

Doiron (2003) believes that literacy educators have a tendency to use mostly fiction books as a chief source of materials for motivating the reading habit of students. When students reading interests and the books they choose for their independent reading were examined, it was discovered that many children enjoy and even prefer to read fiction books than information books. Doiron explores the rationale for balancing the use of information books in literacy programmes with a focus on how fiction books can be used to encourage and motivate student to do more independent reading. Ideas for practical applications of this rationale for both classroom teachers

and school librarians are provided in the hope that all elementary literacy teachers will start using more fiction books to motivate their young readers.

Reading Habits of Students

Reading gives emotional satisfaction and also helps the student attain aesthetic pleasure and knowledge about the world. This knowledge they derive from books (Sarland, 1991, Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Children are likely to emulate reading habits of people around them, especially adults. If students are constantly in an environment where reading is promoted, they are likely to read more.

Adigun and Oyelude (2003) identify some barriers to good reading habits thus – "Parents in most Nigerian homes are not literate or are lazy or poor readers. ..... Other problems are slow reading rate, slow comprehension rate, difficulty in reading, making good summaries, uncritical reading behaviours and inadequate reading interest" (pg. 78).

Parents play a major role in the reading habit of the child. This opinion aligns with that of Noble, Farah & McCandliss (2004) who state that the number of books in the home is significantly related to the progress the child is likely to make in reading.

A survey conducted by The Education Department in Hong Kong (2001) revealed that parents' participation in students' reading promotes reading; easy access to reading material helps; as do schools organising reading activities and creating a good reading atmosphere.

Powell-Brown (2003) suggested the following as possible solutions to poor reading habits:

- Be a reading mentor for others to copy.
- Remind students that reading is a recreational choice, just like computer games, instant messaging and hanging out.
- Help students develop habits like reading 15 minutes every night before going to sleep.
- Encourage them to take a book to the pool or beach.
- Teach them that a book may be the best escape mechanism when recovering from life's bruises.

Mackey (2003) said that young people read for many reasons. He considered it a great paradox that reading can provide a safe environment for experimenting with moral and psychological risk. Alternatively, reading may provide a safe haven, a world of real-life risk. Either way the reader needs to feel a sense of control over his or her reading content. Adults, he posits, who work with young people need to be clear about the importance of this control and to realize that by attempting to wrest that control away from young readers, they may wind up devaluing the power of reading in that person's eyes.

Methodology

The survey method was used for data collection in this study. The respondents were students and teachers of primary and secondary schools in the Iddo Local Government area of Oyo State in Nigeria. For each of the five schools, twenty-five students and ten teachers were selected. The students were randomly selected from the senior secondary school classes and the senior classes in primary schools. Questionnaire, observation and unstructured interview were the instruments used.

Data Collection and Analysis

The 20-item questionnaires were for the two sets of respondents - the teachers and the students. Each questionnaire had two sections. Section A asked for personal information and the use of

library while Section B questioned reading readiness and reading habits. A trained research assistant administered the questionnaires in all the schools. The researcher conducted the interviews.

175 copies of the questionnaires were distributed and 122 (69.7%) were returned in good enough condition to be analysed. 28.8% were from teachers, 67.2% were from students and 4% were from the school librarians. The statistical analysis of the data was computed using the SPSS software program. Each item was evaluated on the basis of frequency and percentages.

Findings of the Study

Demographic Information

The questionnaire was analyzed and displayed in three tables and one figure separately. Respondents from the schools were distributed as follows (See Table 1):
 Awotan/Araromi Community High School (19.2%) respondents consisting of 6 (25.1%) teachers, and 16 (66.6%) students; St. Michael Church Grammar School had 30 (24.1%) respondents with 8 (26.6%) teachers, and 20 (66.7%) students; Hope Central Primary School had 28 (22.5%) respondents with 10 (35.7%) teachers and 17 (66.7%) students;

Table 1. Response of Schools, Teachers, Students and Librarians (Key: T = Teachers, S = Students, L = Librarians)

Schools	Type of school	No of Response	%	T	%	S	%	L	%	Ranking
Awotan Community	Public secondary	22	18.0	6	16.7	15	18.1	1	33.3	4th
St. Michael	Public secondary	29	23.8	8	22.2	20	24.0	1	33.3	1st
Hope central	Public primary	28	22.9	10	27.8	17	20.5	1	33.3	2nd
D-Way	Private primary	19	15.6	3	8.3	16	19.3	-	-	5th
Reliance International	Private secondary	24	19.7	9	25.0	15	18.1	-	-	3rd
Total		122	100%	36	100%	83	100%	3	100%	

D-Way International School had 19 (15.3%) respondents with 3 (15.7%) teachers and 16 (84.2%) students; and Reliance International School had 24 (19.6%) respondents consisting of 9 (37.5%) teachers and 15 (62.5%) students.
All the public schools in the study had librarians while none of the private schools had them. The male respondents were 63 (51.6%) while the female were 59 (48.4%).

The family background of the students was investigated to see if this has implication on their reading habits. Information on the occupation of the parents of the students gathered (See Figure I) indicated that majority of the parents i.e. 30 (35.7%) of the fathers and 19 (22.6%) of the mothers were civil servants. Larger numbers of mothers - 46 (54.7%) were traders while 15 (17.8%) of the fathers were traders.
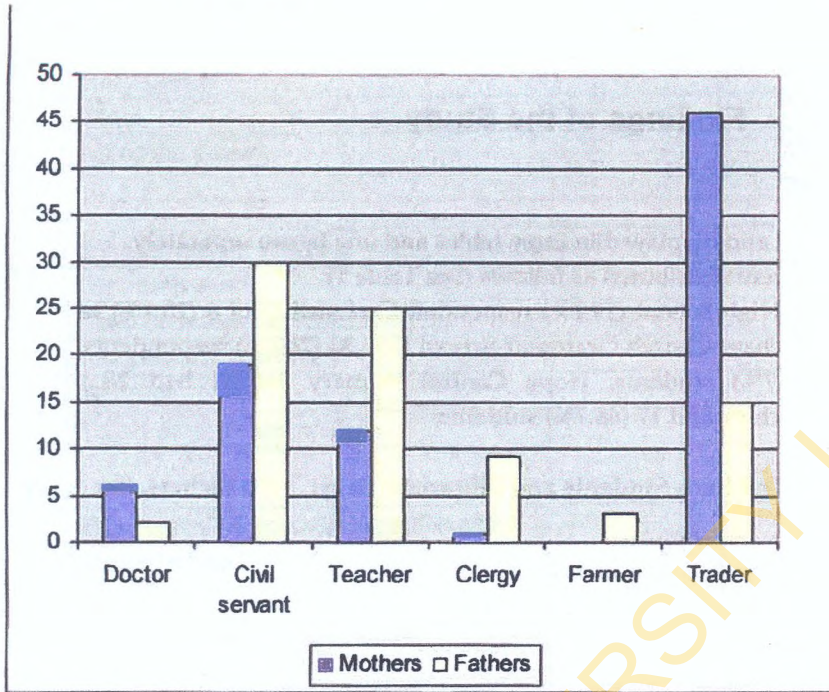
Figure 1. Occupation of Father and Mother of Students Respondents

Only 2 (2.3%) of the fathers and 6 (7.1%) of the mothers were medical doctors. Also, 25 (29.7%) of the fathers were teachers while 12 (14.2%) of the mothers were teachers, and 9 (3.5%) of the fathers and 1 (1.1%) of mothers was clergy. 3 (3.5%) of the fathers were farmers, but none of them had a mother farmer.

Use of Library

Table 2 shows the form of library resources that both teachers (school librarians inclusive) and students prefer, what prompts them to use the library and how often they use the library.

Table 2. Uses of Library and Library Materials

	Uses of Library and library materials	Respondents			
		Teachers		Students	
	What form of library resources do you prefer?	No.	%	No.	%
A.	Recommended books	14	35.9	51	61.6
B.	Maps and charts	-	-	4	4.7
C.	Story books	5	12.8	2	2.5
D.	Other	1	2.6	2	2.5
E.	All of the above	19	48.7	25	28.7
Total		39	100.0	84	100.0
	What prompts you into using of the library?				
A.	For assignment	1	2.6	13	15.4
B.	For educational enhancement	22	56.4	14	17.0
C.	For pleasure reading	14	35.9	56	66.4
D.	To relax	-	-	1	1.2
E.	To prepare lesson notes	2	5.1	-	-
Total		39	100.0	84	100.0
	How often do you visit the library?				
A.	Never before	-	-	20	23.1
B.	Daily	12	30.8	30	35.5
C.	About once in a week	15	38.4	-	-
D.	Occasionally	12	30.8	34	41.4
Total		39	100.0	84	100.0

In response to the question of what library resources they prefer, a large number of students 51 (61.6%) and few teachers 14 (35.9%) prefer recommended books while the largest number of teachers 19 (48.7%) and a sizeable number of students 25 (28.7%) prefer both recommended books maps and charts, story books and other materials. Only 4 (4.7%) of the students prefer to consult maps and charts while no teacher tries to consult maps and charts. This lack of consultation on the part of the teachers may be because some of these maps and charts were made by the teachers and from observation some of the maps and charts are even in the staff rooms.

Questioned on what prompts them into using the library, it was gathered that only 1 (2.6%) teacher and 13 (15.4%) students were prompted to use the library for assignments while 14 (35.9%) teachers and 56 (66.4%) students were there for pleasure reading. This shows that both teachers and students prefer pleasure reading than any other purpose of visiting the library. With this it can be deduced that the students and teachers are making the proper use of the library by reading for pleasure and for personal interest, confirmed by our observation, they really enjoy.

The larger number of teachers - 22 (56.4%) - go to the library for educational enhancement while 14 (35.9%) of the students go for that purpose. That is to say that very few of the students visit the library for their educational enhancement and thus they do have poor results at the end of the session, from their school records.

All the teachers have visited the library one time or the other while 20 (23.8%) of the students indicated that they have never been in the library. These students are from the schools, which did not have a library. Twelve (30.8%) teachers indicated that they visit the library daily while 30 (35.5%) students do so as well. Another twelve (30.8%) of teachers and 34 (41.4%) of students used the library occasionally. This shows that the percentages of those who visit the library are only slightly higher than those who do not.

Interview Findings

Reading habits of the people interviewed varied. Age and status contributed to the ability to form reading habits. From the interview it was gathered that some students did not cherish reading and some teachers find it difficult to read outside the class environment and hardly read for pleasure. The teachers seemed to have different reading patterns. Some of them declared that they did not have money to set up a proper home library while some said that they did not have space where their home library could be situated.

Also from the interview it was discovered a few of the students have libraries in their homes. Those students who have libraries in their homes were those whose parents are educated and these students have been influenced to cultivate the habits of reading and library use. Many of the students' parents were ignorant of the importance of having a home library yet it is of utmost importance in forming reading habits of their children.

More than half of the teachers (53.8%) sometimes buy books for their children as gifts while 38.4% always buy book gifts for their children. 2.6% of the teachers rarely buy book gifts while 5.2% do not buy book gifts for their children. Their responses to questions asked them show that every teacher would like his or her child to form good reading habits however.

In order to find out how ready both groups of respondents are for reading they were questioned on the ways in which they read. They were asked to describe how they read, when they decide to stop reading and why they put off reading. These results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Reading Habits (Key: T = Teachers, S = Students, L = Librarians)

	T-No & %		S-No & %		L – No & %	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
I put off reading to do other tasks.						
Always	3	8.3	28	33.3	-	-
Sometimes	18	50.1	34	40.5	1	33.3
Rarely	7	19.4	8	9.5	-	-
Never	8	22.2	14	16.6	2	66.7
Total	36	100	84	100	3	100
I read with T.V./radio/music on						
Always	1	2.7	18	21.4	-	-
Sometimes	11	30.6	24	28.5	1	33.3
Rarely	13	36.1	9	10.7	1	33.3
Never	11	30.6	33	39.4	1	33.3
Total	36	100	84	100	3	100
I enjoy reading						
Always	29	80.6	62	73.8	3	100
Sometimes	2	5.6	21	25	-	-
Rarely	5	13.8	1	1.2	-	-
Total	36	100	84	100	3	100

Very few teachers (8.3%) put off reading always to do other tasks while 33.3% of students do. Some of them do not always bother to do their assignments, particularly in the public primary schools. Half of the teachers and very many (40.4%) students put off reading sometimes. 22.2% of

teachers, 16.6% of students and 40% of librarians never put off reading. These sets of respondents are the ones that had the best reading habits.

From the interviews it was found that some teachers are not good at reading because of their poor eyesight. When asked why they do not use reading aids such as eyeglasses or magnifying glasses, some confessed that the economic cost of getting the aid was a problem.

A very large population of the teachers (80.6%) and students (73.8%) are those who enjoy reading always. 5.6% of teachers sometimes enjoy and 13.8% rarely enjoy reading. Among the students 25% sometimes enjoy and 1.1% rarely enjoys reading.

Since most students cannot link the library with their reading skills or reading habits they could not realise that library use can help and develop good reading habits in them regardless of their age, school and interest. At the same time, it is revealed in this research that the family background and education of parents contributed greatly to the enhancement of pupils' reading habits and library use since most homes do not have libraries. Parents lacked the time to see monitor their children's leisure and did not model reading in the home. Many students who developed the practice of reading were used to their parents act of reading and making the greater use of their leisure. This corroborates the findings of Clark and Akerman (2006) that children from poor socio-economic backgrounds read less for enjoyment than those from richer social classes.

From the research some of the teachers identified that they had sight problems and that they cannot read properly because of that challenge. Such teachers can no more enjoy reading and therefore cannot progress in acquiring knowledge. Their students will likely be affected in some areas, since current information will not be passed to them.

Though there is prevalence of the oral culture in Nigeria as in Turkey, the results from the Oguz, Yildiz and Hayirsever (2009) study corroborates the findings in this study and shows that something serious has to be done to encourage reading habits in teachers, students and parents for the educational system to improve.

Recommendations and Conclusion

First and foremost, schools should be mandated to have or establish school libraries and employ professional or teacher-librarians to staff them. Teachers' reading habits and library use should be promoted and encouraged by the school authority by including library periods in the school time-table at least twice in a week.

Librarians should be involved in making decisions and should take part in management of the school library. The librarian must be sociable and approachable to attract the students and make friends with those who do not have interest.

Students should be encouraged to borrow books for reading at home by their school librarians. Skilled teachers and staff should also be employed and encouraged to inculcate good reading habits in the students. Parents should buy more books for their children.

Teachers should refer students to the library for library resources by way of assignments requiring them to make use of the materials available in the library. Readers' clubs should be organised and formed by the school librarian in collabortion with interested teachers serving as co-ordinators. Outside bodies or organisations that are ready to promote reading should be co-partners in this reading campaign.

The government should ensure an adequate provision of libraries and the materials needed most especially in the rural areas. They should open local government libraries. Skilled teachers and staff should also be encouraged who will inculcate good reading habits in the children. Total support and encouragement should also be given to the expansion of the printing industry to increase book production sold at affordable prices to teachers.

The library should be seen as path to improving reading habits and skills of the students, therefore there should be an ample funding for library development in all primary and secondary schools. As such, libraries especially school libraries, should be set up in every primary and secondary school, with support being offered by community groups, non-governmental organisations and library associations. The various schools should come together and have cooperative lending programmes, book clubs and organise reading competitions to stimulate and sustain the interest of the students.

The mass media should be used to advance and encourage good reading habits therefore programmes on television and radio that are educational and could incorporate reading promotion should be properly co-ordinated and the efforts sustained by all teachers and educationists to ensure that the younger generation are "caught" while young and therefore grow with the good habit of reading, reading for knowledge and also for pleasure.

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