

# Assessment of the Reading Habit among College of Education Students in Kwara State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

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*This study assessed reading habit among college of education students in Kwara State, Nigeria, with particular reference to the influence of students' gender, age, college proprietorship and course of study on the reading habit of college of education students. The research adopted the descriptive research design of the survey type. The findings of the study revealed that what the college of education students in Kwara State considered as reading is from the utility perspective, connoting the reading of personal notebooks or textbooks either at home or in the library. There was no significant influence in the reading habit of college of education students based on gender, age and college proprietorship but there was a significant influence in the reading habit of the college of education students based on course of study. Based on the findings, the study recommended that students should become highly focused, versatile and knowledgeable in life.*

**Key words:** Assessment, Reading, Reading habit, College of education students

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## Introduction

Reading, one of the most fundamental building blocks of learning, is a process that requires the use of complex thought processes to interpret printed symbols as meaningful units, and to comprehend them as a thought unit in order to understand a printed message (Aina, Ogungbemi, Adigun, & Ogundipe, 2011, p. 1; Onuoha, Unegbu, & Umahi, 2013, p. 2). In other words, reading is a process of decoding symbols in order to derive or construct meaning. Reading is, therefore, vital for everyday activities of being better informed, sharpening and shaping the mind, rational and objective reasoning leading to greatness in life. Reading is also said to be an encapsulating process which is integrative in nature, and which affects the reader's perceptual, cognitive, and affective domains (Oriogu 2013, p. 61). Simply put, reading is not just for school, it is for life! It is affirmed that humans are capable of transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations through reading. This confirms the assertion that success in school or any life endeavour is dependent on a good foundation in reading competence (Oriogu, 2013, p. 61). Reading has been said to be the only form of entertainment that is also an essential life skill. Reading allows an individual the opportunity to grow and develop insights

into life and the world at large. Thus, he is able to make effective decisions that lead to personal health and happiness". Reading is one of the most rewarding pursuits in life and an art that is central to human development. Therefore, developing a reading habit is pertinent to success in life.

Reading culture helps to build up a positive reading attitude. This is when reading becomes a part of the individual's life and not only certain aspects, such as school or work. Phillip (2005, p. 1) affirms that reading is not just for the acquisition of literacy, but also for the cultivation of the habit of reading when he stated: Giving someone literacy skills is rather like teaching a person to drive and then giving them only a few drops of petrol to practise with - the machine is perfect and the driving skill has been acquired but it is not yet an automatic skill because there has not been enough practice. Once the fuel runs out, the driving skill becomes useless and begins to deteriorate. With a harnessed reading habit, on the other hand, the person is provided with a continuous supply of easily processed fuel so that the new driver can go places, can get to enjoy driving and can eventually realize the limitless possibilities it opens up.

In 2001, according to Omo-Ojugo (2005),

the World Bank in conjunction with the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research, Ibadan produced a grim report on the Nigerian graduate which has confirmed the fears of educators, publishers, parents, employers and the general public about the degeneration of the country's education. The report revealed that the average graduate who leaves a university, polytechnic, or college of education with a degree or certificate is not worth the qualification, which he is supposed to have. The report concluded that the average Nigerian graduate lacks technical skill, has a poor command of English, is poorly trained and largely unemployable.

The Nigeria Certificate in Education programme of all colleges of education is aimed at grooming and producing teachers who could meaningfully handle learners in the primary and Junior secondary schools and their equivalent elsewhere. However, this aim would only be attainable if the teachers in training are able to cope with the books of different sizes and prints which the various disciplines prescribe as the efficacy of the NCE programme would seem to depend on the effectiveness of the literacy skills that NCE students have acquired throughout the programme. One of such literacy skills is the art of reading which has been defined by (Olajide, 2004) as intellectual milestone. The most important factor in student learning in schools is the quality of teaching. Teachers are the chief drivers of the education engine, (Kashim, 2015). They design the curriculum and the behavioural goals that are its products (Olajide, 2008). Education involves interaction among learners, learning materials, and teachers, teachers both professional and in training must be avid readers themselves in order to ignite a lifelong reading habit in their students (Trelease, 2006).

Reading habit is best developed in the formative years of the child. This is why reading should be a major part of the school curriculum and also, an instrument of thoroughly understanding the subject-matter of any school subject. Reading is one of the fundamental skills which students are expected to acquire through

the process of schooling without which there would possibly be no other means of achieving academic success (Oyewole, 2017, p. 92).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is a general feeling that many Nigerian students do not like reading. The high failure rate in examinations, the increase in student dropout rate, the production of ill-prepared graduates, are all affecting the country socially, educationally, economically and politically. The government's effort in addressing illiteracy is being thwarted by the students who do not read neither their prescribed textbooks nor for pleasure. The much needed manpower which the College of Education is supposed to produce fall below required standard because of the students' nonchalant attitude towards their studies with regard to reading. Many students, who would have contributed immensely, if properly trained, drop out because of poor performance due to inadequate preparation for their examinations. Very little has been done specifically on reading among college of education students, while nothing appears to have been done on their reading habit based on gender, age, college proprietorship, course of study and level of study with particular reference to Kwara State, Nigeria. This study was therefore carried out to investigate the status of the reading habit among College of Education students in Kwara State, Nigeria and the influence of the selected personal and institutional variables on their reading habit.

### **Research Questions**

The research sets out to answer the following questions:

- (a) What do college of education students in Kwara state read habitually?
- (b) Why do the college of education students in Kwara state read habitually?
- (c) Where do the college of education students in Kwara state read habitually?
- (d) When do the college of education students in Kwara state read habitually?

- (e) How do the college of education students in Kwara state read habitually?
- (f) Does gender influence the students' reading habit?
- (g) Does age influence the students' reading habit?
- (h) Does course of study influence the students' reading habit?
- (i) Does college proprietorship influence the students' reading habit?
- (j) What are the implications of answers to questions a – i above for the assessment of the respondents' reading habit?

sampling technique was used in selecting six (6) Colleges of Education involving one hundred and eighty (180) students of the schools of Arts and Social Sciences, Sciences and Vocational and Technical Studies in the selected colleges of education. The data were analysed using the descriptive and inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument consisted of a researcher-designed Reading Habit Assessment Instrument (r=0.81)

**Results**

**Research Question One**

Research Question One focused on what college of education students in Kwara state read habitually. The relevant finding is contained in Table 5.

**Methodology**

The research design adopted was the descriptive research method of the cross-sectional survey type. The stratified random

**Table 1:** Mean Analysis of what College of Education Students in Kwara state read habitually

S/N	Items (Resources)	Mean	Ranking
1	Lecture notes	2.85	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Library books	2.28	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Poetry materials	1.74	7 <sup>th</sup>
4	Novels	1.87	5 <sup>th</sup>
5	Short stories	1.73	8 <sup>th</sup>
6	Play/dramatic texts	1.90	4 <sup>th</sup>
7	Religious text	1.20	12 <sup>th</sup>
8	Fiction	1.50	6 <sup>th</sup>
9	Inspirational	1.54	9 <sup>th</sup>
10	Games and Sport	1.54	9 <sup>th</sup>
11	Business and Economy	1.35	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	Health	1.18	13 <sup>th</sup>
13	Society and Culture	1.15	14 <sup>th</sup>
14	News	2.08	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 1 indicates the mean ratings of the resources college of education students in Kwara state read habitually. The resources with the highest mean signifies the resources that was mostly read while the resources with the lowest mean signifies the resources that was least read by college students. From the table, lecture notes with a mean of 2.85 were the mostly read habitually by college students followed by library books with a mean of 2.28, then News with a mean of 2.08... down to the least read

resources – Society and Culture with a mean of 1.15. This shows that the lecture notes were the most read resources and Society and Culture resources were the least read resources by the students.

**Research Question Two**

Research Question Two examined why college of education students in Kwara state read habitually. The pertinent finding is indicated in Table 6.

**Table 2:** Mean Analysis of Why College of Education Students in Kwara state read habitually

S/N	Reasons for reading	Mean	Ranking
1.	To improve my English language	2.71	1 <sup>st</sup>
2.	For pleasure	1.81	7 <sup>th</sup>
3.	For general information	2.47	4 <sup>th</sup>
4.	To pass examination	2.30	5 <sup>th</sup>
5.	For self-development	1.95	6 <sup>th</sup>
6.	For educational development	2.69	2 <sup>nd</sup>
7.	To acquire specific skills	2.54	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of the reasons for reading habitually among college of education students in Kwara State. The item with the highest mean signify the most reason for reading while the item with the lowest mean signify the least reason for reading among college of education students in Kwara State, From the table, 'to improve my English language' with a mean of 2.71 was the most reason college of education students read, followed by the 'for educational development' with a mean of 2.69, then 'to acquire specific skills' with a mean of

2.54... down to the least reason– 'for pleasure' with a mean of 1.81. This shows that most college of education students read to improve their English language and just a few of them read for pleasure.

#### Research Question Three

Research Question Three examined where college of education students in Kwara state read habitually. Detail of the analysis is presented in table 7.

**Table 3:** Mean Analysis of Where College of Education Students in Kwara state read habitually

S/N	Favourite location for reading	Mean	Rating
1.	Library	2.39	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2.	Home	2.44	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3.	School	2.57	1 <sup>st</sup>
4.	Park	2.10	7 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Field	2.21	6 <sup>th</sup>
6.	Kitchen	2.06	8 <sup>th</sup>
7.	While travelling	2.26	5 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Open air	2.30	4 <sup>th</sup>

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of the location where college of education Students in Kwara State read habitually. These range from library, school, home, park, field and others. The item with the highest mean signify the most preferred location for reading by college of education students while the item with the lowest mean signify the least preferred location for reading by college of education students. From the table, school with a mean of 2.57 was the most preferred location used by students for reading, followed by home with a mean of 2.44, then

library with a mean of 2.39... down to the least preferred location – kitchen with a mean of 2.06. This shows that the school was the favourite location for reading by college of education students in Kwara State and kitchen was the least chosen location for reading by college of education students in Kwara State.

#### Research Question Four

Research Question Four focused on when college of education students in Kwara State read habitually. The relevant finding is contained in Table 8.

**Table 4:** Mean Analysis of When College of Education Students in Kwara State read habitually

S/N	Chosen time for reading	Mean	Rating
1.	After lecture hours	2.59	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2.	At scheduled time daily	2.93	1 <sup>st</sup>
3.	Anytime daily	2.37	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4.	In the morning	2.20	5 <sup>th</sup>
5.	In the afternoon	2.15	6 <sup>th</sup>
6.	In the evening	2.06	7 <sup>th</sup>
7.	At night	2.36	4 <sup>th</sup>
8.	At dawn	2.02	8 <sup>th</sup>

Table 4 shows the mean ratings of the time when College of Education Students in Kwara state read habitually. These range from after lectures, at scheduled time daily, anytime daily and others. The item with the highest mean signify the time that most students choose for reading habitually, while the item with the lowest mean signify the time that a few students choose for reading habitually. From the table, 'scheduled time daily' with a mean of 2.93 was the most chosen time that students used for reading habitually, followed by 'after lecture hours' with a mean of 2.59, then 'anytime daily' with a mean

of 2.37... down to the least chosen time – 'at dawn' with a mean of 2.02. This shows that most students of college of education in Kwara state chose scheduled time daily for reading habitually, and a few students of college of education in Kwara state chose dawn for reading habitually.

#### Research Question Five

Research Question Five examined how college of education students in Kwara state read habitually. The pertinent finding is indicated in Table 9.

**Table 5:** Mean Analysis of How College of Education Students in Kwara state read habitually

S/N	Posture chosen for reading	Mean	Ranking
1.	Sitting comfortably	2.98	1 <sup>st</sup>
2.	Lying down	2.81	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3.	Standing	1.97	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 5 shows the mean ratings of how college of education students in Kwara state read habitually. The item with the highest mean signify the most chosen posture for reading while the item with the lowest mean signify the least chosen posture for reading. From the table, 'sitting comfortably' with a mean of 2.98 was the most chosen posture for reading, followed by 'lying down' with a mean of 2.81, then 'standing' with a mean of 1.97. This shows that most college of education students in Kwara

state sit comfortably to read and just a few of them read while standing.

#### Hypotheses Testing

##### Research Hypothesis One

Research Hypothesis One stated that, “there is no significant influence in the reading habit of male and female college of education students in Kwara state”. The relevant finding is contained in Table 6.

**Table 6:** t-test Analysis on the Influence in Reading Habit of College of Education Students based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std	Df	Cal.t	Sig.(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	98	14.2692	11.64	178	.412	.793	Do not Reject H <sub>01</sub>
Female	82	13.8182					

**P>0.05**

Result from table 10 shows the t value yielded .412 which is not significant with P value .793 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there was no significant influence in reading habit of college of education students in Kwara state based on gender.

#### Research Hypothesis Two

Research Hypothesis Two stated that, “there is no significant influence in the reading habit of college of education students based on age”. The pertinent finding is contained in Table 11.

**Table 6:** An ANOVA Analysis on the Influence in Reading Habit of College of Education Students based on Age

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	103.334	2	45.113	2.145	.013	<b>Reject H<sub>02</sub></b>
Within Groups	334.186	178	32.157			
Total	437.520	180				

**P>0.05**

Table 6 indicates the df (2, 113) and F value yielded 2.145 which is not significant at 0.05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected since the P-value .13 is greater than 0.05

(.13 > 0.05). This means that there was no significant difference in the reading habit of college of education students based on age.

**Table 7:** Duncan MT's post hoc Analysis on the Influence in Reading Habit of College of Education Students based on Age

Age	N	Mean	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
			SD	S.Error
18-25	112	16.0234	2.91952	.32135
26-35	58	16.2487	2.20436	.33664
36-above	10	16.3394	4.75822	1.24785
Total	180	16.3063	4.17880	.23638

Table 7 shows the Duncan Multiple Test's post hoc Analysis on the reading habit of college of education students in Kwara state, based on age. It was revealed that the three age groups were not significantly different.

#### Research Hypothesis Three

Research Hypothesis Three stated that, “there is no significant influence in the reading habit of college of education students based on course of study”. The pertinent finding is contained in Table 13.

**Table 8:** ANOVA Analysis on the influence in the Reading Habit of College of Education Students based on Course of Study

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	2534.918	2	1483.459	2.103	.026	<b>H<sub>03</sub> Reject</b>
Within Groups	3846.362	178	400.438			
Total	6481.170	180				

**P<0.05**

Table 8 indicates the df (2, 113) and F value yielded 2.103 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected since the P-value .034 is less than 0.05 (.026 < 0.05). This means that there was a significant

difference in the reading habit college of education students based on course of study.

**Table 9:** Duncan MT's Post hoc Analysis on the Influence of Reading Habit on College of Education Students based on Course of Study.

Course of study	N	Mean	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
			SD	S.Error
Sciences	55	20.56	4.20436	.33664
Arts and Social Sciences	89	18.23	4.91952	.33167
Vocational Studies	36	12.12	4.9824	1.23341
Total	180	50.91	14.10628	1.90172

Table 9 shows the Duncan Multiple Test's post hoc Analysis of influence on reading habit of college of education students based on course of study. It was revealed that students in the science-based courses and the Arts and Social Sciences were not significantly different on the reading habit but were significantly different and better than those in the Vocational Studies.

**Research Hypothesis Four**

Research Hypothesis Four stated that, "there is no significant influence in college of education students' reading habit based on college proprietorship". The pertinent finding is contained in Table 10.

**Table 10:** t-test Analysis on the Influence in Reading Habit of College of Education Students based on College Proprietorship

Gender	N	Mean	Std	Df	Cal.t	Sig.(2-tailed)	Decision
Public	110	14.44	14.82	178	.457	.648	H <sub>04</sub> Do not Reject
Private	70	13.65					

**P>0.05**

Result from table 10 shows that t value yielded .457 which is not significant with P value .648 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there was no significant influence in the reading habit of college of education students based on college proprietorship.

**Discussion**

The findings show that the lecture notes were the most read resources and Society and Culture resources were the least read resources by the students, most of the students read to improve their English language and just a few of them read for pleasure, the school was the favourite location for reading by college of

education students in Kwara state and kitchen was their least preferred location for reading, most of the students chose scheduled time daily for reading habitually, and a few students of them chose anytime daily for reading habitually, most of the students would usually sit comfortably to read and just a few of them read while standing. There was no significant influence in reading habit of college of education students in Kwara state based on gender, age and college proprietorship. There were no significant difference in the reading habit of students of Science and Arts and Social Sciences based courses but they were significantly different and better than those of Vocational studies.

### Conclusion

What college of education students in Kwara State considered as reading was from the utility perspective. It can be deduced that most students read in their areas of specialization for educational development. This disposition is a direct consequence of lack of the right attitude towards books and reading generally. It is not surprising then that many students read, in the true sense of the word, only when examinations are fast approaching, after which they seldom continue the utilitarian reading.

### Recommendations

Reading along tests and examinations paths alone does not bring along with it the benefit of widening one's knowledge base and horizon and should therefore be discouraged among them. Also, there is the need for students to read more of novels, poetry materials, dramatic texts and news from print materials such as magazine, journals and periodicals in order to boost their vocabulary. Imbibing a positive reading habit will prepare students for a more responsible and independent life. Lecturers should discourage students' over-dependence on restricted textbooks, notebooks and handouts by giving them library-based assignments and group works. Curriculum developers should modify the curriculum to be

task and activity-oriented. Parents should help or encourage their wards to cultivate the reading habit when they are young, so that it becomes part and parcel of their life. Parents should provide reading materials and create favourable or friendly reading environment for their wards.

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