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LIBRARIANS' PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF READING CULTURE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY USERS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study is on reading culture and academic performance of library users some selected academic libraries in South-West Nigeria which includes Federal University of Technology Akure, University of Ibadan, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Federal, University of Technology Akure and Ekiti State University Osho respectively. The study adopted a descriptive survey using a questionnaire to collect data. The population of the study consists of 112 sampled sizes from the academic libraries under study. A total of 112 questionnaires were distributed, 107 were retrieved. Descriptive statistics (mean and percentage) were used for analysis. A mean score of 2.5 and above and a percentage score of 50% were considered for decision making. The results shows that the impact of reading culture and academic performance of library users as cognitive and academic enhancements, vocabulary and comprehension, critical thinking , examination success and information retention. Also, the extent to which reading culture influences academic

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performance of library users was high. The study recommends that the university management should ensure that their library is well stocked with relevant library materials.

Keywords: Reading culture**,** academic performance, library users, academic libraries

Introduction

Academic libraries are libraries attached to tertiary institutions for the purpose of reading, learning and research. Library users use the university libraries in order to enhance their reading culture. It turns reading from a required school assignment into a daily routine that fosters creativity, strengthens critical thinking, and strengthens communities. According to Okebukola (2004), reading culture gives library users the means to pass on information to the next generation and enables them to hear the wisdom of the past. Reading culture is vital because it frees the mind and the citizens of any society. According to Sinsulu (2004), referenced in Abalaka (2016), reading culture is one of the essential components of learning. Mullis (2020), opined that reading culture is an essential ability that affects student's academic achievement and lifetime learning. It is believed that a strong reading culture influences academic performance.

Academic performance is how successfully a student meets their educational goals, like grades, test scores, and graduation rates. Academic performance is closely linked to the development of students' self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy as it often represents the

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first external benchmark through which they are evaluated outside the family environment. On the other hand, academic performance has traditionally been associated with students' prior intellectual capacity. Cano Celestino and Robles Rivera (2018), suggest that students' school accomplishments determine their academic performance which is impacted by their reading culture. Bestě-Laguna and Escolano-Pérez (2021), define it as a measure of what students have learned during the educational process, as demonstrated by planned evaluation procedures or as a collection of students skills and abilities to demonstrate their knowledge in various areas. A vibrant reading culture turns the library from a place to study into a catalyst for academic success and improved performance. It is in the light of the above that prompted the researcher to embark on the titled reading culture and academic performance of library users in some selected academic libraries in South-West Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Regular reading will help library users not only do well academically but also increase their vocabulary, write better, and develop their critical thinking abilities. In order to succeed academically and in daily life, library users must learn how to analyze data, draw conclusions, and find connections. Both the everyday lives of literate individuals and the academic advancement of library users depend heavily on reading. If a first-year student cannot read at all or very poorly, they will not be able to handle the expectations of

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the classroom. In the past, you see library users patronizing the library and read for their exams, but with the advent of social media, the reading culture has declined drastically. Higher academic performance is significantly positively correlated with a strong reading culture. This is in line with Onwuegbuzie (2021) who conducted a series of study to find out the relationship between academic success and reading habit and reported positive relationship between the two variables.

It has been observed that research topics exist on reading culture and academic performance, but no study has been done on reading culture and academic performance of library users with a particular reference in some selected universities in South-West Nigeria hence the need for this study.

Research questions

The following questions guided the study

1. What is the perception of librarians towards reading culture of library users in some selected academic libraries in South-West Nigeria?

2. To what extent has reading culture influences academic performance of library users in some selected academic libraries in South-West Nigeria?

Literature review

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The practice of fostering a healthy reading culture in students over time is known as reading culture. According to Gbadamosi, (2007), a person is said to have a reading culture if they regularly and habitually read books and other information materials that are not necessarily necessary for them to advance in their career or profession. Also, Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014), opined that a good reading habits are a powerful tool for Ghanaian students' academic success. Cain & Oakhill, (2011) suggested that reading has an impact on student's vocabulary development.

Early access to reading materials encourages students to become curious about what is written in books as they grow into adults. According to Deal & Peterson, (2016), a worldwide study found that children's achievement is impacted when they have access to learning resources and books. The study further emphasized that academic achievement and the quantity of books available in the family are positively correlated. According to research by Whitten et al. (2016) and Fatiloro et al. (2017), students who establish regular reading habits are more likely to succeed academically. In another development, Bibi et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between students' study reading habits and academic achievement in a different study and discovered a statistically significant positive correlation. This suggests that one of the effective study techniques that support students' academic success is reading. In same vein, Ehsan and Sultana (2020) discovered that students' academic performance is significantly impacted by their reading habits. The

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report emphasizes how important reading is to students' academic success. Jamil and Aziz, (2021)., opined that for students reading proficiency is essential since it can affect their academic achievement and future career aspirations.

Furthermore, a study by Hassan et al. (2021) examined secondary school students and found a significant relationship between their reading habits and reading ability. This emphasizes how crucial it is to develop good reading habits in students at an early stage of their academic careers. Actually, there is a positive correlation between reading habits, study strategies, and English academic accomplishment. Abid et al., (2023), in their research revealed that reading habits and study techniques have a moderate impact on students' academic achievement. These findings are consistent with the literature review findings of Hassan et al. (2021) , Ameyaw and Anto (2018), who found a positive relationship between academic achievement and reading habits indicating that reading habits have an impact on students' academic performance.

People who learn English as a Second Language (ESL), according to Hassan et al. (2021) opined that in the course of learning, the reading culture have a significant impact on their reading proficiency. Over time, ESL students' reading proficiency is likely to gradually increase as they cultivate positive and consistent reading habits. According to Cerna and Pavliuchenko (2015), international students' study habits were influenced by their cultural orientation. Students from individualistic cultures tended to participate more

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actively in their education than those from collectivist backgrounds. By examining the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), Fong et al. (2021) demonstrated the intricate, multifaceted character of study habits. To explain how many facets of study behavior contribute to academic performance, they developed a three-factor paradigm that includes affective/effort, anxiety-rousing, and cognitive dimensions.

Aramide (2022) proposes the following strategies to enhance reading: government support in the form of financial incentives for parents facing socioeconomic difficulties so they can give their children relevant materials, the construction of libraries, and the provision of appropriate reading materials. In order to raise reading standards, students should be encouraged to frequent libraries and utilize their resources. One way to encourage students to participate in reading activities on a daily basis is to give writers incentives to hire talented illustrators and to enhance the design, illustration, and creation of children's content. According to Issa et al. (2022), guardians have a huge responsibility to ensure that within the constraints of their financial situation, their children or wards are consistently given the necessary reading materials.

Research methodology

The design of this study is descriptive survey. According to Nworgu (2006), descriptive survey is concerned with collecting data and describing in a systematic manner,

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the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The instrument was self developed by the researcher. The instruments were validated by two senior professional in library and information science. The instrument was administered through questionnaires and the return rate was 91% which is acceptable for the study. The respondents were librarians because they were the first to have direct contact with these students while preparing for their examinations. The area of study is some selected universities in South-West Nigeria South-West Nigeria which includes Federal University of Technology Akure, University of Ibadan, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Federal, University of Technology Akure and Ekiti State University Osho respectively. 112 sample sizes from the university libraries under investigation make up the study's population. Out of the 112 surveys that were issued, 107 were recovered. For analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and percentage) were employed. When making decisions, a mean score of 2.5 or higher and a percentage score of 50% were taken into account.

Table 1 Population of the Study

S/N	Names of institutions	State	Ownership	Total numbers of librarians	Total number retrieved
1	Federal University of	Ondo	Federal	18	16

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	Technology Akure				
2	University of Ibandan	Ogun	Federal	46	41
3	Federal University Oye Ekiti	Osun	Federal	17	13
4	Federal University of Technology Akure	Oyo	Federal	16	16
5	Ekiti State University Osho	Lagos	Federal	15	11
		State		**10**	**10**
	Total			**112**	**107**

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The study depicts the population of the study in the following order: Federal University of Technology Akure (18), University of Ibandan (46), Federal University Oye Ekiti (17), Federal University of Technology Akure (16) University of Lagos, (15), and Ekiti State University Osho (10) respectively. While the total number retrieved were 107.

Table 2

What is the perception of librarians towards reading culture of library users in some selected academic libraries in South-West Nigeria?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
1	Cognitive & Academic Enhancements	**56**	**29**	**13**	**9**	**3.2**	**Agreed**
2	Vocabulary and Comprehension	**43**	**41**	**17**	**6**	**3.1**	**Agreed**
3	Critical Thinking	**33**	**51**	**11**	**12**	**2.9**	**Agreed**
4	Examination Success	**39**	**41**	**21**	**6**	**3.0**	**Agreed**
5	Information retention	**51**	**40**	**10**	**6**	**3.2**	**Agreed**

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To what extent has reading culture influences academic performance of library users in some selected academic libraries in South-West Nigeria?

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	NA	-X	Decision
1	Availability of Academic library	**33**	**34**	**29**	**11**	**2.8**	**Agreed**
2	Accessibility to public library	**51**	**43**	**10**	**3**	**3.3**	**Agreed**
3	Availability of reading materials at home	**31**	**32**	**31**	**13**	**1.4**	**Disagreed**
4	Accessibility to reading materials in school	**39**	**51**	**14**	**3**	**3.1**	**Agreed**
5	Availability of reading materials in the school	**44**	**41**	**21**	**1**	**3.2**	**Agreed**

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Results and discussions

The study focuses on the perception of reading culture and academic performance of library users in academic libraries in South-West Nigeria. To direct the investigation, two research questions were developed. Table 2 shows the following perception of librarians towards reading culture of library users in some selected academic libraries in South-West Nigeria as cognitive & academic enhancements (3.2), vocabulary and comprehension (3.1), critical thinking (2.9), examination success (3.0) and information retention (3.2) respectively. Also, table 2 shows the extent to which reading culture influences academic performance of library users in the following order: Availability of academic library (2.8), accessibility to public library (3.3), accessibility to reading materials in school (3.1) and the availability of reading materials in the school. This implies that when reading materials are available in schools, homes and public libraries, it spur library users to academic performance. One can therefore infer that the extent to which reading culture influences academic performance of library users was high. This outcome is in line with the findings of Deal and Peterson's (2016) study, which found that giving library users access to reading materials will foster a love of reading and a desire to read books as they study. These results supports the claim made by Clark and Poulton (2011) that library patrons who

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possess their own books read more frequently and enjoys reading more. The findings of this research work will help students and other library users to cultivate the habit of consistent reading culture in order to actualize their academic performance.

Recommendations

1. The University management should ensure that their library is well stocked with relevant library materials

2. Parents should encourage their children to develop a reading habit by giving them access to the necessary learning tools or facilities

3. Sensitization of reading culture should be done during orientation of new library users

4. Library users should registers with book club to enhance their reading culture

Conclusion

As reading has been highly acknowledge by different authors as an influencing factor to academic performance. In summary, the study was carried out to determine the variables that contribute to students' bad reading habits, the advantages that students receive from reading, the amount of time spent reading, the frequency of students' reading engagement, and strategies for improving students' reading habits. This is supported by

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Hassan et al. (2021) who opined that over time, ESL students' reading proficiency is likely to gradually increase as they cultivate positive and consistent reading habits. Reading is a process that can only be mastered via consistent practice, frequent library visits, and reading-related activities. Therefore, the current study will assist parents and guardians as well as school administration in understanding the elements that contribute to students' bad reading habits. The study's conclusions will close the gap and act as a benchmark for further research in this field. Thus, the mixed method technique can be used in future research.

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