

Factors Responsible for Poor Reading Habits among Senior Secondary School Students in Osun State

¹Abubakar Abdulkarim & ²Raji Ridwan Abiodun

^{1&2}School of Languages, Department of English, Federal College of Education, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria

abubakarabdulkarim6@gmail.com/abubakara@fceiwo.edu.ng

+2347039172715

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Abstract

Reading habit refers to the regular and consistent practice of reading, which is crucial for academic success and life-long learning. Poor reading habit in Nigeria, specifically among senior secondary school students, has reached alarming state. The situation needs to be urgently addressed before it gets out of control. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the factors responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The research adopted survey research design. The population comprised 21,393 senior secondary schools (SS2) students in 243 public secondary schools across Osun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three Local Government Areas (LGAs) from each of the three districts across the state. Three schools were randomly selected from each of the sampled LGAs to make a total of 27. Random sampling technique was used to select 78 students from each school to make a total of 2,106 respondents. Factors Responsible for Poor Students' Reading Habits Questionnaire (FRPSRHQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated, tested for reliability and yielded reliability coefficient of 0.87. The finding revealed that student-related factors including poor interest, poor time management, low motivation, distraction from technology and among other factors were responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State. Study recommends that schools and parents should motivate students, manage their time and social media use, and support their reading skills to improve students' good reading habit.

Keywords: Reading habit, Students, Teachers, Parents, School environments

Introduction

Reading is certainly a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in the academic success and overall intellectual development of students. It is also an important activity for expanding knowledge of a language and critical thinking abilities. Napa-Rodriguez (2025) and Garg (2025) defined poor reading habits as student's lack of consistent and meaningful engagement with reading activities that develop comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency, often characterized by low interest, limited time spent on reading, weak comprehension skills and preference for non-academic or digital distractions. Research indicates that students with poor reading habits tend to show low motivation toward reading and inadequate development of reading skills, which negatively affects their academic performance. Smith (2014) opined that reading habits is a vital tool for acquiring knowledge, developing critical skills, and fostering personal growth. It is essential to point out that, despite efforts in funding public schools by stakeholders, poor reading habits persist among senior secondary school students in Osun State. Concerns from parents and other stakeholders considering the financial and material investment made to provide education to learners, many senior secondary school students nowadays have poor reading habits despite the availability of reading materials online in Nigeria (Oyetunde & Moudumogu, 2016). Research indicates that students who acquire effective reading habits are more likely to have a better performance, developing critical thinking, and fostering personal growth than their counterparts who lack these habits (Yahaya & Adejaju, 2024). The factors responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students include poor library facilities, lack of parental involvement and among other factors (Jabbar & Warraich, 2021). However, enough research had not been conducted on assessing factors responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to holistically assess the factors responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State Nigeria.

Literature Review

Students related factors have been identified as some major contributors to poor reading habits among secondary school students. Research indicates that many students demonstrate low interest and weak motivation toward reading, often preparing to spend their leisure time on social media, mobile phones, rather than engaging in academic or leisure reading. Akande and Oyedapo (2018), Ibode (2015) and Napa-Rodrieguez (2025) reported that student's poor reading attitudes, lack of interest, and among others significantly contribute to weak reading

habits among secondary school students. Oyetunde and Muodumogu, (2016) identified students related factors as mainly lack of interest and distractions. Collectively, these studies suggest that student's attitudes, behavioral patterns, and reading competencies play a significant role in the prevalence of poor reading habits among senior secondary school students, which is highly relevant to the present study in Osun State.

Sheba and Ahmad (2018) investigated poor reading habits among secondary school students, highlighting factors like inadequate resources, ineffective teaching methods, and socio-economic challenges. However, its applicability to senior secondary students in Osun State is limited due to the general focus. Building on this, researching local factors and specific challenges in Osun State could inform effective strategies to address poor reading among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. Study by Innocent (2020) on 'Poor Reading Culture: The Way Forward', provides an overview of the challenges facing Nigeria's reading culture. The study defines reading habits as a crucial aspect of academic success and national development, emphasizing the need to promote a reading culture among Nigerians. Some of the factors identified to be responsible for poor reading habits, include lack of access to books, poor teaching methods, and socio-economic challenges. However, the significance of the study lies in its contextual relevance to our research on assessing school related factors responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State. The study informs our understanding of the complex interplay of factors contributing to poor reading habits and highlights the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to promote reading culture. By building on these works, our research can provide specific recommendations for policymakers, educators, and parents to improve reading habits and academic outcomes in Nigerian

Oyeyemi (2013) explored factors responsible for poor reading habits among secondary school students, highlighting factors including lack of resources, poor library facilities, and limited access to books. Similarly, Akande and Oyedaopo (2020) observed that an examination-driven curriculum and teaching approaches are teacher-related factor negatively responsible for student poor reading habits. In support of these findings, Babalola (2020) noted that insufficient teacher encouragement and lack of dedicated time for reading within the school timetable further weaken student's interest and commitment to reading. Collectively, these studies indicated that inadequate school facilities, insufficient instructional practices, and limited instructional support significantly contribute to poor reading habits among secondary school students, which is pertinent to present study. The work is relevant to

assessing poor reading habits in Osun State's senior secondary schools. Beyond individual and cognitive factors, school-related factors such as inadequate libraries, limited access to textbooks, reading materials, and the absence of organized reading programs have been identified as barriers to cultivating a reading culture among students. In many Nigerian secondary schools, including those in the southwest region, the lack of functional reading corners or literacy clubs reduces opportunities for students to engage in regular reading activities, thereby weakening their reading habits.

Studies by Haliru (2015) and Osenina (2019) identified key factors contributing to poor reading habits, including socio economic background, limited access to reading materials, parental level of education, poor supervision, lack of support and parental influence. The findings of the study are significant to our research on assessing factors responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State, as they highlight the need to explore similar factors in our local contexts, enabling targeted intervention to promote reading culture. Georgious (2023) defined parental involvement as a crucial factor in student's academic success, emphasizing the need to look beyond demographics and explore how parents engage with their children's learning. Furthermore, Nwokocho's (2019) study emphasized a supportive reading environment and promoting engaging texts as a significance parent-related factors responsible for poor reading habits among students. The study provided insights into student poor reading habits in Nigerian secondary schools. By applying these insights, targeted interventions can be developed to address poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the factors responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The study specifically sought to:

1. Investigate the student-related factors responsible for poor reading habit among students of senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria;
2. Assess the teacher-related factors responsible for reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria;
3. Determine the school-related factors responsible for reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria;
4. Examine the parental factors responsible for reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research question:

1. What student-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among students of senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?
2. What teacher-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?
3. What school-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?
4. What parent-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?

Methodology

The research adopted survey research design to assess factors responsible for reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The population comprised 21,393 senior secondary schools two (SS2) students in 243 public secondary schools across Osun State. A Simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) Local Government Areas (LGAs) from these (LGAs,) twenty-seven (27) public secondary schools were randomly selected. Seventy-eight (78) SS2 students were sampled from each school, yielding a total sample size of 2,106 students. Of the two thousand one hundred and six (2,106) questionnaires administered, 2100 were valid and returned, while 6 unreturned. Data were collected using Factors Responsible for Poor Students' Reading Habits Questionnaire (FRPSRHQ) designed to elicit information on factors responsible for student's reading habits. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts in educational measurement. Reliability was established through a pilot study, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. The respondents consisted of male and female SS2 students from the selected public secondary schools. Data collected were analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages.

Results

Research Questions 1: What student-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among students of senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on Student-related Factors

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Poor interest	1,365 (65.0)	420 (20.0)	126 (6.0)	189 (9.0)	3.41	0.89	Agreed
2	Poor time management	689 (32.0)	1,116 (53.0)	137 (7.0)	158 (8.0)	3.09	0.78	Agreed
3	Low motivation	604 (29.0)	499 (24.0)	456 (21.0)	541 (26.0)	2.56	1.09	Agreed
4	Distractions from social media	612 (29.0)	773 (37.0)	284 (13.0)	431 (21.0)	2.74	0.97	Agreed
	Poor reading skills	384 (18.0)	836 (40.0)	397 (19.0)	483 (23.0)	2.53	0.96	Agreed

Source: field 2025

Note: N= 2100

Likert Scale Coding: strongly agree (A) = 4, agree (A) = 3, disagree (D) = 2, strongly disagree (SD) = 1, Criterion Mean = 2.50. Total Responses per Item = 2,100.

Table 1 above shows that 65.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that poor interest is a factor responsible for poor reading habit, 20.0 % agreed, 6.0% disagreed while 9.0% strongly disagreed. Meanwhile, 32.0% strongly agreed that poor time management is a student-related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 53% agreed, 7.0% disagreed while 8.0 % strongly disagreed. 29.0% strongly agreed that low motivation is a students related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 24.0% agreed, 21.0% disagreed, while 26.0% strongly disagreed. 29.0% strongly agreed that distraction from social media is a student-related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 37.0% agreed, 13.0% disagreed, while 21.0% strongly disagreed. 18.0% strongly agreed that poor reading skills is a student-related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 40.0% agreed, 19.0% disagreed and finally, 23.0% strongly disagreed. Therefore, the descriptive analysis of the above responses reveals that student-related factors are responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State. All items record's mean values were above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating agreement by respondents. The highest mean score 3.41 shows that most student poor interest is a significant factor responsible for poor reading habits.

Research Questions 2: What are teacher-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on Teacher-related Factors

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Poor teaching methodology	1,554 (74.0)	294 (14.0)	105 (5.0)	147 (7.0)	3.55	0.79	Agreed
2	Poor commitment	1,323 (63.0)	504 (24.0)	168 (8.0)	105 (5.0)	3.45	0.82	Agreed
3	Poor student assessment	840 (40.0)	756 (36.0)	357 (17.0)	147 (7.0)	3.09	0.93	Agreed
4	Inadequate teaching skills	756 (36.0)	777 (37.0)	231 (11.0)	336 (16.0)	2.93	1.01	Agreed
5	Ineffective use of instructional resources.	651 (31.0)	819 (39.0)	210 (10.0)	420 (20.0)	2.81	1.05	Agreed

Source: field 2025

Note: N= 2100

The table 2 above showed that 74.0% strongly agreed that poor teaching methods are teacher-related factors responsible for poor reading habits. 14.0 % agreed, 5.0% disagreed, and 7.0% strongly disagreed. While, 63.0% strongly agreed that poor commitment is a teacher-related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 24.0% agreed, 8.0% disagreed, while 5.0% strongly disagreed. 40.0% strongly agreed that poor student assessment is a teacher-related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 36.0% agreed, 17.0 % disagreed, while 7.0% strongly disagreed. Responses representing 36.0% strongly agreed that inadequate teaching skills are teacher-related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 37.0% agreed, 11.0% disagreed, while 16.0% strongly disagreed. 31.0% strongly agreed that insufficient use of instructional resources is a factor responsible for poor reading habits. 39.0% agreed, 10.0% disagreed, and finally, 20.0% strongly disagreed. Therefore, the table above revealed that teacher-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State. All the items record's means values were above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed that teacher-related factors are responsible for poor reading habits. The highest mean score 3.55 indicates that poor teaching methodology strongly influence students' reading habits of senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria.

Research Questions 3: what school-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 3 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on School-related Factors

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Lack of well -equipped library	1,134 (54.0)	168 (8.0)	210 (10.0)	588 (28.0)	2.88	1.22	Agreed
2	Reading materials	1,491 (71.0)	210 (10.0)	210 (10.0)	189 (9.0)	3.43	0.86	Agreed
3	Shortage of time allocated to reading on the school timetable	1,134 (54.0)	777 (37.0)	189 (9.0)	0 (0.0)	3.45	0.65	Agreed
4	School clubs and initiatives	1,071 (51.0)	609 (29.0)	189 (9.0)	231 (11.0)	3.20	0.93	Agreed
5	Conducive classroom for teaching reading	882 (42.0)	672 (32.0)	210 (10.0)	336 (16.0)	3.00	1.05	Agreed

Source: field 2025

Note: N= 2100

From table 3 above, 54.0% strongly agreed that lack of well-equipped libraries is a school related factor responsible for poor reading habits. 8.0% agreed, 10.0% disagreed, 28.0% strongly disagreed. 71.0% strongly agreed that reading materials is a school-related factor responsible for student's poor reading habits. 10.0% agreed, 10.0% disagreed, 9.0% strongly disagreed. 54.0% strongly agreed that shortage of time allotted on the school timetable is a factor responsible for poor reading habits. 37.0% agreed, 9.0% disagreed, 0.0% strongly disagreed. 51.0% strongly agreed that school clubs and initiatives is a factor responsible for poor reading habits. 29.0% agreed, 9.0% disagreed, 11.0% strongly disagreed. 42.0% strongly agreed that conducive classroom for teaching reading is a school-related factor responsible for student's poor reading habits. 32.0% agreed, 10.0% disagreed, and finally 16.0% strongly disagreed. From the table 3 above, it showed that school-related factors were responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school in Osun State. All the items record's mean values above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed that these teacher-related factors were responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria.

Research Question 4: What parent-related factors are responsible for poor reading habit among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on Parent-related Factors

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Parents level of education and literacy awareness	357 (17.0)	798 (38.0)	357 (17.0)	588 (28.0)	2.44	1.12	Disagree
2	Availability of reading materials at home	498 (24.0)	431 (20.0)	633 (30.0)	538 (26.0)	2.42	1.10	Disagreed
3	Socio-economics status	1,092 (52.0)	567 (27.0)	210 (10.0)	231 (11.0)	3.20	0.97	Agreed
4	Parental support and encouragement	1,323 (63.0)	399 (19.0)	168 (8.0)	210 (10.0)	3.35	0.86	Agreed
5	Conducive home environment for reading	1,092 (52.0)	756 (36.0)	168 (8.0)	84 (4.0)	3.36	0.78	Agreed

Source: field 2025

Note: N= 2100

From the table 4 above, 17.0% strongly agreed that parents' level of education and literacy awareness is a parental factor responsible for poor reading habits among students. 38.0% agreed, 17.0% disagreed, 28.0% strongly disagreed. 24.0% strongly agreed that availability of reading materials at home is a parental factor responsible for poor reading habits reading. 20.0% agreed, 30.0% disagreed 26.0% strongly disagreed. 52.0% strongly agreed that socio economic-status is a parental factor responsible for poor reading habits among students. 27.0% agreed, 10.0% disagreed, 11.0% strongly disagreed. 63.0% strongly agreed that parental support and encouragement is a factor responsible for poor reading habits. 19.0% agreed, 8.0% is agreed, 10.0% strongly disagreed. 52.0% strongly agreed that conducive home environment is a factor responsible for poor reading habits. 36.0% agreed, 8.0% disagreed, and finally, only 4.0% strongly disagreed. Thus, the table revealed that parental factors were responsible for poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 indicates that student-related factors _ low interest in reading, poor time management, low motivation, distractions from social media, and weak reading skills contribute to poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State. These results are consistent with earlier studies (Oyedapo, 2018; Ibode, 2015; Moudumugo, 2016), which identified low interest, insufficient motivation, external distractions, and limited reading competence as key contributors to poor reading habits.

Table 2 identifies teacher-related factors associated with poor reading habits, including ineffective teaching methodologies, low teacher commitment, inadequate student assessment

practices, and limited teaching skills and instructional materials. This finding aligns with UNESCO (2018), which highlights the role of suboptimal instructional approaches in students' weak reading habits, and corroborates studies by Sheba and Ahmad (2018) and Innocent (2020), which point to inadequate resources and ineffective pedagogical methods as important determinants.

Table 3 shows that school-related factors-insufficiently equipped libraries, limited reading materials, inadequate time allocated to reading in the school timetable, lack of reading clubs and initiatives, and non-conducive classrooms-are associated with poor reading habits. These results agree with prior research (Oyeyemi, 2013; Aande, 2020; Babalola, 2020 that emphasize the negative impact of poor library facilities, limited teaching aids, and restricted access to books on students' reading development.

Table 4 demonstrates that home-related factors availability of a conducive reading environment, parental support and encouragement, and socioeconomic status significantly influence students' reading habits. These findings corroborate Akande (2007) and Georgious (2023) who found that access to reading resources enhances reading engagement. It also agrees with Yahaya et al. (2024) who identify parental involvement as a strong predictor of positive reading habits and academic success.

Overall, the findings suggest that poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State are multifactorial, involving student attributes, teacher practices, school resources and structures, and home environment. Interventions should therefore be multifaceted, addressing student motivation and skills, teacher training and resources, and parental engagement.

Conclusion

This study found that poor reading habits among senior secondary school students in Osun State were influenced by multiple interacting factors such as student-related issues, teacher-related factors, school-related constraints, and home-related conditions. These results imply that interventions must be multifaceted: strengthen students' reading motivation and skills, improve teacher preparation and instructional resources, upgrade school reading facilities and timetabling, and promote parental involvement and home literacy supports. Prioritizing coordinated efforts across home, school, and teacher development is likely to produce the greatest improvement in students' reading behavior and academic outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Schools and parents should motivate students, manage their time and social media use, and support their reading skills to improve students' good reading habits.
2. Teachers should use learner-centered methods, stay committed, assess students regularly, and use teaching aids effectively to improve students' reading habits.
3. Schools should improve facilities, reading time, and supportive learning environments to enhance students' reading habits.
4. Parents should improve their literacy awareness, provide reading materials at home, support and encourage their children, and create a conducive home environment to promote good reading habits.
5. Future work should evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions (e.g., teacher professional development in reading pedagogy, library enhancement programs, and parent-engagement initiatives) and examine how these strategies interact across contexts in Osun State.

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