



A Study on Reading Habits of the University Students in Nigeria: A Case of Selected Students of Economics Department at Nile University of Nigeria

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Abstract: The study entitled “A Study on Reading Habits of the University Students in Nigeria: A Case of Selected Students of Economics Department at the Nile University of Nigeria” analyzed the major factors that hinder regular or systematic reading habits among university students. To determine reading habits, the study examined the concept of reading, its types, reading culture, the importance of reading, and many others through the literature review. Using a carefully-designed questionnaire and non-participatory observations as its research instruments, data was obtained from sixty randomly selected students of the Department of Economics who constituted the population of the study. From the analysis of the data using the quantitative paradigm as the theoretical framework, the findings indicated that there were some linguistic factors responsible for the decline in reading habits among the students included in our target group. The adverse impact of the Internet, the lack of interest, television addiction, and the lack of books made reading difficult. The study concluded by reiterating the importance of reading not just for the individual but the nation at large. Thereafter, the study offered some recommendations to the students, the management of the University, and the government at large.

Keywords: *Linguistic factors; Reading habits; University Students in Nigeria*

Introduction

Background to the Study

In simple terms, reading is the mental and complex psychological process of decoding symbols to fashion and to derive meaning from the written text. It is a means of language acquisition, communication, exchange of information, and ideas. The symbols involved in the reading process are typically visual (written or printed), but in some instances, they can be decoded in a particular format like braille. The importance of reading to humans overall cannot be overstressed, primarily as information and messages are now being disseminated through the printed materials. According to Nzeako,

The ability to read is a skill that a person can develop or acquire. These skills have become more vital now than ever to live well and

succeed in our modern and complex world, which has become a reading world, one requires an effective reading skill (Nzeako, p. 1982).

In a similar vein, Hornby (2000) postulated that “reading is a developmental skill which can never be fully acquired, and one should, therefore, make a conscious effort to continue to improve one reading throughout one’s life.” The reader aims at understanding the meaning of a written text, assesses its importance, and uses what he or she has read to enhance his or her knowledge effectively or derive pleasure. Reading is seen as a means of tapping knowledge from superior minds. Similarly, Akinbola emphasized that the importance of reading cannot be ignored or denied. He stated, while citing the submission of the Nigeria University Commission, that reading culture is a sustained regime of reading

textual and non-textual materials to broaden the horizon of knowledge within and outside one's disciplinary interest. Reading is an essential commodity in the task of nation construction; it is considered a primary political weapon in the development of any nation (Akinbola 2007, p.89).

Statement of the Problem

Student's inherent ability to read is one of the critical determinants of his/her academic success or failure. For students to excel in life, not only in the field of academics but in life in general, they must acquire the habit of reading to perform well in their intellectual activities. The benefits of reading are not only limited to doing well or passing examinations but also cuts through all other dimensions of life. John Holden, in his book called *Creative Reading*, states that "reading is a vitally important gateway to economic, social, and civic life (Holden, 2004, p.18). It stimulates children's imagination, initiates learning and shapes views, broadens horizons, and aids readers to explore the world. Reading bestows individuals the chance to learn "about other people, about the history and social studies, the langue arts, science, mathematics, and the other content subjects that must be mastered in school" (Lyon, p. 1997).

Reading ability proves to be essential in various phases of people's lives: from personal to public, from academic to professional, and from social to public. This ability empowers the individuals to achieve their ambitions, well-defined objectives such as successful completion of primary or secondary education or securing a job as well as unclear and distant goals that improve a person's own life and development. It is essential for full participation in modern society because it adds value to life and grants unlimited

access to culture and cultural heritage. Reading empowers people with the necessary skills to carry out tasks of any kind and emancipates citizens from the chains of illiteracy and brings people together around a common purpose. There is no doubt that, like students in any tertiary institution, the reading habits among the students in Nile University of Nigeria cannot be overlooked or underestimated. This sense of necessity was aptly captured in the words of Onwubiko as he observed that "there is no doubt that the reading culture among the Nigerian children is tragically deficient in comparison to other western nations of the world ...reading habit has steadily declined over the year" (Onwubiko, 2010, p. 2010). It is against this background that this study aims to discover the factors that affect the decline in reading habits among this particular group of university students and to examine its effect on their academic performance.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aims at investigating the significant factors that are responsible for poor or unsatisfactory reading habits among the students of Nile University of Nigeria and particularly those of the Economics Department. The objectives of the study include:

1. To establish other reasons responsible for poor reading habits /culture among the target population.
2. To find out if poor reading habits have any consequences on students' academic performance.
3. To examine the roles and responsibilities of parents, teachers, and other participants in containing this widespread issue.

Research Questions

To determine the significant factors responsible for poor reading habits among the students of Nile University of Nigeria in general and those of the Economics Department in particular, this study attempts to respond to the following research questions:

1. What are the major factors responsible for poor reading habits among university students?
2. What are the effects of poor practices on the academic performance of the target population?
3. How can reading habits be improved among the target group?

Significance of the Study

Considering the growing concern about the apparent decline in students' interest in reading, the significance of this study lies in its ability to identify the significant factors responsible for poor reading habits, particularly among the students of the Economics Department at Nile University of Nigeria. Determining the reasons behind poor reading habits will be of vital importance not only for students, teachers, and parents but also for the entire country. It is expected that the understanding of these societal reasons, will provide the necessary motivation for addressing and subsequently curbing this perilous issue of poor reading habits as well its attendant consequences on the students and the nation at large. Once the factors causing decline in students' reading habits are identified, the concerned parties, such as parents, teachers, school principals, curriculum designers, policymakers, etc., will be able to contribute to the rectification and amendment of this pressing issue with students and take the necessary

measures to improve the situation and motivate students to attain satisfactory reading habits.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the investigation of the significant factors responsible for poor reading habits among the selected students at the Economics Department of the Nile University of Nigeria. The participants of the study were limited to the sophomore and senior year students registered at the 2018/2019 academic session whom, it is highly believed, were completely aware of the importance of reading and the implications that result from the lack of it.

Literature Review

This section of the study seeks to clarify the key concepts that verge on the title of the study, such as reading, reading habits, reading culture, and some related ideas that circle the vital issue of reading habits.

Reading Defined

Reading is the psychological and intellectual process of decoding a written message encoded in a coherent and rational language. It involves the interpretation and making sense of a language, either written or printed. In the words of William Grabe, reading is "a straightforward combination of word-recognition abilities and comprehension abilities" (Grabe, 2008, p.98). Reading is a matter of searching for the thought that was in the mind of the author but now lies in the meaning of the words that are left for the cognitive skills of the reader. It involves the meaningful interpretation of words, phrases, and sentences requiring all types of thinking and reasoning. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which

involve reading for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information, and knowledge. Reading is the logical and intellectual recognition of the written symbols and association of relevant and suitable meaning with them. It can be considered as a process of the application of various skills such as thinking, evaluation, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving. Reading can also be deemed as an instrumental tool for knowledge or information transfer, and the reading habit can be seen as an academic activity that develops the cognitive skills in reading strategies. Children, who happen to miss the chance of establishing a unique bond with books in their early stages of life, will find it challenging and difficult to cultivate good reading habits in the later stages of their lives. Catherine Wallace emphasized the vital importance of books at a young age as she stated that “books yield their best to you if you read them at the age at which each particular masterpiece can ideally be chewed and digested” (Wallace, 1992, p. 67).

Reading Habits

Reading is one of the critical skills a child is required to achieve academic success in life. Developing good reading habits proves to be instrumental in ensuring the child’s future not only in terms of academic achievement but also in terms of individual attainment. The activity of reading is deemed as a habit when it is steadily and regularly implemented by an individual. In simplest terms, reading practice is often measured with respect to the amount of materials being read, the repetition of reading activity as well as the adequate time spent on reading activity (Wagner, 2002, pp. 3-4). It also refers to an act of behavior that indicates the love for reading and tastes for reading

(Sangkaeo, 1999, p. 94). It is a pattern with which a voracious reader regulates his or her reading activities.

A good reading habit is an essential tool for stable and sustainable intellectual growth and is of vital importance in enabling an individual to improve academic performance. Furthermore, to some extent, a person’s interests are measured by the amount of reading material he/she will read and the intensity with which he/she will carry on with his/her reading activity. Through books, one gets the chance to evaluate another person’s ideas and allows him/her to accept or reject these ideas and, eventually, the person ends up engaging in an in-depth critical thinking process. Reading equips individuals with a collection of values, which gradually encourages them to develop virtues that will give them the ability to sympathize rather than condemn. Books can also be instrumental in providing comfort, especially at times when one begins to question one’s self and one’s set of beliefs.

Reading Culture

Reading culture indicates a habitual, constant, and regular reading of books and information materials. In other words, a reading culture can be defined as a conscious and willing practice of seeking knowledge, information, or pleasure through written words. Such type of exercise can be attained by reading books, periodicals, journals, newspapers, bulletins, etc. In the words of Tunde Gbadamosi,

Reading culture is the process of building up a positive reading attitude among students and children over a period of time. When an individual habitually and regularly read books and other information materials that are not

necessarily required for him to advance in his profession or career, he is said to have a reading culture (Gbadamosi, 2007, p. 44).

Therefore, in a sense, reading culture is a form of practice that considers reading and studying as a means of progressive growth and development. Likewise, Wendy Grisworld makes a distinction between a reading culture and a reading class and observed that “a reading class is a social formation, while a reading culture is a society where reading is expected, valued, and common. All societies with written language have a reading class, but few have a reading culture” (Grisworld, 2008, p. 37).

In the case of Nigeria, it has come to light due to recent developments that the reading culture among Nigerians, particularly among the youth and students, has significantly dwindled. It is quite evident that the passion and zest of the Nigerian students, like anywhere in the world, is rapidly declining as they failed to foster a healthy reading culture or habit at a very age in their respective lives. Educationalists struggle to provide an adequate response as to what might have caused this displeasing and bothersome outcome. However, the government, in collaboration with all of the parties involved, can develop strategies to instill reading culture in children at a very early age, invest in education that includes establishing libraries at schools and offer training programs to teachers who will be engaged in teaching the children how to read.

Theoretical Framework

To determine the poor reading habits of the university student, there is a need for a theory to base on the study. The theory selected for this study is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) proposed by Icek Ajzen

in 1985. This theory happens to be widely accepted by many researchers to explain human behavior in numerous scientific disciplines including reading (Miesen, 2003; Stokmans, 1999; Van Schooten & De Glopper, 2002; Van Schooten, De Glopper, & Stoel, 2004). According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour model, the closest determinant of a person’s behavior is his/her intention to stimulate the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen provided a further explanation to TPB as he observed, “a central factor in the theory of planned behavior is the individual’s intention to perform a given behavior. Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence behavior; they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181). It has been discovered that the intention to carry out a specific behavior presents itself as the most potent predictor of its actual performance (Ajzen, 1991).

Research Methodology

In this section of the study, the research design and procedure in line with the aim and objectives of the study will be introduced. It will focus on the methods employed for the collection of data, outlining the choice and description of the instruments used for data collection, the population under study, sample and sampling technique, and the data analysis procedures.

Research Design

To provide insight into reading habits among undergraduate students, and to discover which factors and indicate why these factors affect their reading habits, this study uses a mixed-methods design. A mixed-methods design is defined as “the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative

research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 123). Creswell & Clark asserted that the process of combining different information collected through both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a superior understanding of the research problem than one single method, whether it might be quantitative or qualitative (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises sixty students of the Economics Department at Nile University of Nigeria, and they were sophomore and senior year students enrolled at the 2018/19 Academic session. The focus on these students was bestowed because it was assumed that they spend a significant amount of time at the campus and were supposed to be aware of the importance of reading and the consequences resulting from the lack of it.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

This study adopted the random sampling method. The random sampling method, in the words of Arlene Fink, is a sampling method “in which each person has an equal chance of being selected from a population. The population contains everyone who is eligible for the survey” (Fink, 2009, p. 52). This technique was selected because it provides each student in the sample population an equal and independent chance of being selected, and it is often appropriate when responses are expected to vary across the sample population. Consequently, to get a portion of sixty students from a population of over one hundred students enrolled at the Department of Economics, the researchers

approached students, explained his purpose, and received their consent to participate in the study. A total of thirty male and thirty female students who studied at the sophomore or senior year at the department were chosen for the study.

Research Instrument

The study preferred to collect primary from the target population through a carefully designed questionnaire and non-participatory observation.

Questionnaire

In line with the objectives of the study, questionnaires were employed to gather primary data. The reason surveys were chosen as a method of data collection is because it allowed the researchers to collect the completed questionnaires in a short period. This saved both time and costs. Questionnaires are an efficient way to obtain data from a large number of respondents (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Sources and Methods of Data Collection

The data used for this study were collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources for the study were the data collected from the students of the Economics Department through questionnaires. For the secondary source of data, the researchers made use of information that can be found in textbooks, academic journals, published sources, and online documents.

Data Analysis Techniques

One of the most frequent data analysis tools employed by most researchers is the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS). In this study, the researchers made use of SPSS Software version 25.0 to analyze data collected through questionnaires. The descriptive

technique was used for the analysis of the collected data and allowed the researcher to present the analyzed data through frequencies and percentages. The responses received through the questionnaires were presented in tabular form.

Data Analysis

This section of the study deals with the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of the data obtained from the responses of the participants of the study through the questionnaires administered to them. A total number of twenty-one questions and student responses were presented and duly analyzed. The responses, frequencies, and percentages were presented in tables to ensure clarity and organization.

Results

The data obtained from the participants of the study were presented in tabular format and analyzed by the aim and objectives of the study.

Table 1

Question 1: Which of the following age range do you fall into?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
17-20	21	35%
20-23	35	58%
23-26	4	7%
Total	60	100%

The purpose of this question was to ascertain the average age bracket of the respondents and also to see if age played a significant role in passing evaluations about the respondents like which age group read the most. From the above table, it can be deduced that most of the respondents fell within the age group of 20-23 with a percentage of 58%.

Table 2

Question 2: What is your gender?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	50%
Female	30	50%
Total	60	100%

This question aimed to ensure that there was an equal representation of both genders. Therefore, out of 60 respondents, 30 respondents were male, with a percentage of 50%, whereas 30 participants were female, accompanied by 50%.

Table 3

Question 3: Which of the following social classes do you belong to?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Lower Class	3	5%
Middle Class	30	50%
Upper-Middle Class	15	25%
Elite Class	12	20%
Total	60	100%

Finding out the social status of the respondents was deemed necessary in establishing a correlation between the social class of the students and its impact on their reading habits/culture. Social class in this context was used to represent access to social amenities such as economic power, electricity, internet services, and electrical appliances like television, among others. In the light of above-responses, it was found out that 5% of the respondents are from the lower class, 50% of them belonged to the middle class constituting the highest percentage, 25% of the participants were from the upper-middle class and,

finally, 20% of them represented the elite class of the society.

Table 4

Question 4: Where do you reside?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Urban Cities	51	85%
Rural Areas	9	15%
Total	60	100%

The main aim of this question was to discover where the participants resided keeping in mind that those who lived in the urban areas and city centers would have better access to different social variables such as telephone, television, libraries, Internet and among other which could potentially exercise positive or negative influence on the reading habits of the participants. It is seen that 85% of the respondents reside in urban areas, whereas 15% of them lived in rural areas.

Table 5

Question 5: How would you classify your parents?

Respondent	Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Father	Literate	53	88%
	Semi-literate	4	7%
	Illiterate	3	5%
	Total	60	100%
Mother	Literate	49	82%
	Semi-literate	4	7%
	Illiterate	7	11%
	Total	60	100%

This question was asked to ascertain the educational background of the respondents' parents. The general assumption has been that educated parents would

naturally encourage their children to read and expect them to cultivate good reading habits. From the data presented above, it can be seen that 53% of the participants' fathers were literate, 7% were semi-literate, and 5% were illiterate. Similarly, 82% of the respondents' mothers were literate, 6% of them were semi-literate, and 11% were illiterate, respectively.

Table 6

Question 6: Do you have a mobile phone?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	60	100%
No	0	0%
Total	60	100%

The question on the possession of a mobile phone was directed on the participants to determine how many members of the target population owned mobile phones and, eventually, to establish what kind of effects having a mobile phone had on their affected their reading habits. From the data presented above, all (100%) of the respondents stated that they had mobile phones of their own.

Table 7

Question 7: Do you have access to television?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	59	98%
No	1	2%
Total	60	100%

The aim of the question above was to discover how many of the participants had access to television. It is highly believed that television exercises a crucial role in a student's reading habits, either positive or negative. From the table above, it can be seen that 98%

of the students had access to television, whereas only 2% of them stated that they had no access to TV.

Table 8

Question 8: Do you think that reading is important for students?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	56	93%
No	4	7%
Total	60	100%

The question above was directed at the respondents to determine their perspective on the importance of reading. The above table revealed that 93% of the respondents agreed that reading was vital for them. In contrast, only 7% of them disagreed with the statement and considered reading to have no significant benefits.

Table 9

Question 9: Do you read in your free time?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	53%
No	28	47%
Total	60	100%

This particular question sought to discover how many of the respondents spent time reading in their free time, especially after establishing the fact that they all agreed on the importance of reading. However, based on their responses, only 53% of them enjoyed reading in their leisure, while 47% of the participants preferred to engage themselves in other activities rather than reading.

Table 10

Question 10: How many hours do you devote to reading daily?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
0-2 hours	30	50%
3-5 hours	7	11%
5-7 hours	3	5%
None	20	34%
Total	60	100%

As indicated at the table above, 50% of the respondents stated that they dedicated up to 2 hours of their time for reading daily. This figure is quite low, considering that these students spent most of their time at the campus during weekdays. Quite surprisingly, 34% of the participants revealed that they devoted no time for reading. A total number of 10 students with the percentages of 11% and 5% stated that they spent 3 to 7 hours reading daily.

Table 11

Question 11: As a student, which of the following reading materials do you read more often?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Magazines	10	16%
Novels	25	42%
Textbooks	17	28%
Newspapers	8	14%
Total	60	100%

As shown in the table above, the participants who indulge themselves in reading novels constituted the highest percentage of 42%. It was followed by the students reading textbooks, magazines, and newspapers with 28%, 16%, and 14%, respectively.

Table 12

Question 12: Do you think you read as much as you should?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	33%
No	40	77%
Total	60	100%

The table above presents figures related to the participants' assessment of their dedication to reading. 77% of the respondents admitted that they did not read as much as they should, but 33 of them were quite satisfied with the degree and amount of reading.

Table 13

Question 13: Do your friends encourage you to read?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	50%
No	30	50%
Total	60	100%

The aim of the question above was to establish the role of friends in the participants' reading habits. The responses indicated that while 50% of the respondents felt that they received encouragement from their friends for reading more, 50% of them revealed that their friends did not provide any encouragement or support for reading.

Table 14

Question 14: Did your parents encourage you to read a book while you were growing up?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	56	93%
No	4	7%
Total	60	100%

Undoubtedly, parents play a vital role in the upbringing of their children. They are actively involved in their education as the children's primary schooling commences at home by their parents. As shown in the table, 93% of the respondents stated that they received encouragement and motivation from their parents to read at an early age. Only 7% of the participants revealed that they did not receive any encouragement or motivation from their parents while they were growing up.

Table 15

Question 15: If not, do you think you would have read more if your parents had encouraged you to do so earlier in life?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	32%
No	10	17%
No response	31	51%
Total	60	100%

As seen in the table above, out of 60 respondents, 32% of them felt that they would have read more if they had received any form of encouragement or support from their parents. On the other hand, 17% of them believed that they would not have read more even if their parents provided support or encouragement towards reading. However, it is surprising to note that 51% of the respondents refused to comment on the question. They might have held the belief that they are mature enough to decide on how they were going to lead or organize their respective lives.

Table 16

Questions 16 and 17: Between reading and watching TV or reading and surfing the Internet, which ones are you likely to spend more on?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Reading	12	20%
Watching TV	48	80%
Total	60	100%
Reading	7	12%
Surfing the Internet	53	88%
Total	60	100%

As shown in the table above, the respondents indicated their preference for either watching TV or surfing the Internet instead of engaging themselves in reading. While 80% of the participants opted to spend time watching TV rather than reading, 20% of them chose to read instead of watching TV. Likewise, 88% of the respondents liked to surf the Internet than reading, whereas 12% of them chose reading over surfing the Internet.

Table 17

Question 18: Do you have a personal library?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	12%
No	53	88%
Total	60	100%

Concerning the question on the library, 88% of the respondents indicated that they had no personal library at home. This can be an indirect indication that they do not attach the necessary importance to books and, therefore, do not spend their time to create a personal library. Only 12% of the participants revealed that they

had a personal library at home and paid some importance to books and reading.

Table 18

Question 19: What could be the reason for the decline in your reading habits?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Distraction from the Internet / TV	19	31%
Distraction from friends	2	3%
Lack of interest	21	35%
Non-availability of books	4	7%
All of the above	14	24%
Total	60	100%

To the question that sought to determine the factors that contributed to the decline in their reading habits, the respondents identified distraction from the Internet / TV and lack of interest towards reading to be the most significant factors that prevent them from engaging in reading with 31% and 35% respectively. 24% of the participants included all of the factors listed on the table as the significant variables distancing themselves from reading.

Table 19

Question 20: Do you think you would have performed better academically if you had put in more hours in reading books?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	92%
No	5	8%
Total	60	100%

As shown in the table above, the students confirmed the importance of reading when they indicated they would have performed better academically if they dedicated more time to reading. While 92% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their current academic performance and agreed that they would have done better academically if they paid more attention to reading, only 8% of them pointed out satisfaction and gratification with their present academic achievement.

Table 20

Question 21: Are you ready to do away with all distractions such as phones, friends, television, etc. and devote more time to reading?

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	41%
No	35	59%
Total	60	100%

This question aimed to determine the commitment of the students to reading. However, the respondents fail to realize the importance of reading and refuse to make sacrifices from their favorite pastime activities to allocate more time for reading. 59% of the participants expressed their contentment with their present lives and had no intention to make any changes to dedicate time for reading activities. Only 12% of the respondents admitted that they needed to make changes in their current lives and wished to devote more time for reading books.

Findings and Discussion

This section of the study reveals the findings that originated from the analysis of the responses given to the survey questions by the participants. There are five significant factors indicated by the students that

exercised a negative impact on their reading habits. They are the Internet, TV, lack of personal library, Parents' educational background, and ownership of mobile phones. The factors mentioned above were analyzed below.

The Internet

It was observed based on the findings as a result of the analysis conducted on the responses that the participants gave on the survey questions that 88% of the students preferred to spend time browsing/surfing the Internet rather than engaging themselves in reading activities. It is a well-known fact that the recent advancements and developments in the field of technology and communication have exerted a great influence on the pace and the standards of our lives. This vast world of the Internet seems to be more alluring and enchanting to the students as it presents itself as a vast source of information and a joyous form of a variety of entertainment. It is not surprising that university students prefer to spend more time on the Internet than engaging themselves in reading books.

Television

Television is another popular form of entertainment for children and adults alike. As we are aware, television offers many benefits and plays an important role in our lives. It is not only a source of entertainment but also a great source of knowledge and information that one can gather from all around the world. However, TV can also exercise bad or harmful influences in our lives, especially for children who are allowed to watch TV without the supervision of their parents. Similarly, as it is a pleasant source of enjoyment and fun, the students naturally choose to watch TV whenever I have free time and, thus, do not consider entertaining themselves in the peaceful

atmosphere of the books. As shown by the findings, 80 % of the respondents favored watching TV over reading books in their spare time, as 98% of them earlier indicated having access to TV at their places of residence. Watching TV ranked second in the participants' favorite choice of past-time activity. It is not surprising that the students opted to choose watching TV as a form of entertainment rather than receiving pleasure while reading books.

Lack of Personal Library

At the time, one may not be able to realize how significant it is to a considerable number of books at a home library. It is proven that the number of books a person has at home has a direct effect on the literacy and education of that particular individual. As indicated through the findings of the study, 88% of the respondents stated that they did not have personal libraries at home and also held the belief that this had adversely affected their reading habits. A person may not engage in extensive or intensive reading activities if he/she lacks reading materials or books of interest from his/her library.

Parents' Educational Background

One of the few issues that researchers on reading have been able to find a middle ground was the fact that the parental reading habits played a significant role in fostering a love for reading and developing healthy reading habits. Several studies have proved the unique positive relationship between the home environment and attitudes towards reading and reading interests and habits (Hansen 1969, Purves and Beach 1972). As indicated and discussed earlier on the question of parental encouragement, 93% of the respondents expressed the opinion that they received encouragement and support from their parents for

reading books while they were growing up. This fact is in line with the findings of the studies carried out by the reading researchers mentioned above.

Ownership of Mobile Phones

It is a fact that mobile phones are vitally important for communication and have the potential to make our lives easier. Mobile phones have begun to occupy more space in our lives and allured us to spend more time with them, especially after the introduction of smartphones in the market. All of the respondents who participated in the study indicated that they possessed personal mobile phones and preferred to utilize their browsing the Internet or engaging in other activities on the social media rather than spending their precious time reading books. It may not be wrong to state that the student's ownership of mobile phones negatively affects their reading habits.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study under investigation successfully revealed the major factors that exercise an adverse and negative influence on the reading habits of university students. Especially the spread of the Internet and social media and the recent advancements in communication have exerted a definite and indisputable influence on the way, style, pace as well as the standards of our lives. The university students prefer to engage in more enjoyable leisure activities than reading books, such as distraction from their phones, surfing the internet, playing games, watching TV or movies, spending time with their friends, lack of interest in reading and absence of personal library. It is more convenient for them to seek refuge in the virtual world because it offers them chances to interact and connect with people from different cultures and nationalities.

It was also revealed through the study that, due to distractions from technological inventions, there had been a noticeable and worrisome decline in the number of hours that students generally devote to reading books, and this had an adverse effect on their academic performance. The participants quickly established a strong correlation between their poor academic achievement and the decline in their reading habits. 92% of the respondents admitted that they would have performed better academically if they dedicated more time to reading books or building reading habits. This self-criticism by the participants may not stimulate any changes in students' desire to spend less time with the gadgets of technology and decide to devote more of their spare time in reading, but, still, they feel resentment due to their wrongdoings.

The study might offer some humble recommendations to parents, educationalists, policymakers, and the

public at large. Parents may start exercising their authority and monitor the time that their children allocate for watching TV, playing games, surfing the Internet, or spending time with their smartphones. Most importantly, they can begin to become positive role models by encouraging and motivating their children to read by creating a suitable atmosphere where all of the members of the family come together and engage in reading. Education specialists might introduce new methods or ways of stimulating students to read books by organizing contests or competitions. They can also allocate budget for building state-of-the-art libraries and find ways to allure students there. Finally, policymakers can address the issue from the perspective of the nation as a whole and introduce new laws or legislation to encourage or to stimulate the public to read.

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