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Read or Perish: Reading Habits among Students and its Effect on Academic Performance: A Case Study of Eastbank Senior High School - Accra.

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**READ OR PERISH: READING HABIT AMONG STUDENTS AND ITS EFFECT ON
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF EASTBANK SENIOR HIGH
SCHOOL- ACCRA.**

Abstract

The paper was to examine reading habit among students and its effect on academic performance: using Eastbank Senior High School in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana as a case study.

A questionnaire was employed for data gathering. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the collected data. The findings of the study revealed that 45.19% of the respondents recognized the importance of reading in their studies. The study revealed further that reading habits have affected the majority of students in their learning. The findings reported that the lack of conducive home environment hinders their reading habit t when they are at home.

Based on the findings it has been recommended that the school should design a timetable for library hours to allow students to go to the library at least one and half hours in each day.

Parents should help their children to have a serene reading environment when they are at home.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Eastbank ,Ghana, Home environment, Reading habits.

INTRODUCTION

Reading proficiency is the key to knowledge. In modern life, reading depends on the individual's capacity to interpret printed or electronic page fully and accurately. Reading has personal values; it is the door to almost all knowledge and vocations, such that the mechanical worker on the factory floor needs to read some basic material like rules and regulations governing operations on the factory floor. "Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but

once formed it can last one's lifetime," (Green, 2001). Failure to read paves the way for all kinds of catastrophes in the society. It is, therefore, important that students should be encouraged to inculcate the spirit of reading right from the secondary level to the advanced level to empower them to have considerable reading skills. Academic accomplishment implies how much information the individual has obtained from the school (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012). Apart from teachers, other experts used to invest their recreation energy in reading both English and vernacular writing. English medium schools quite often requested an additional reading from their students. Be that as it may, all these have gotten to be a relic of times gone by.

As indicated by Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe, and Adedeji (2012) reading habit is a scholarly activity which is conceivable just if a man has shaped the habit for reading and rehearsing it since adolescence. The reading habit alludes to the recurrence of reading, and the normal time spent on reading materials. Bas (2012) underlined an ideal reading habit as essential for a sound scholarly development and assumes an exceptionally vital part in empowering a man to accomplish viable proficiency.

Ogbodo (2010), Bhan and Gupta (2010) and Singh (2011) have done works on reading, particularly how it influences the academic performance of students. However, the majority of these works were carried out in the western countries. Researchers like Agbezree, (2001), Larson and Owusu - Acheaw (2014) conducted theirs in Ghana but were restricted to primary, public secondary schools and Koforidua Polytechnic. It is in the light of this that it has turned out to be important to carry out this study to examine the effect of reading habit on the academic performance of students in private senior high schools with specific reference to Eastbank Senior High School which is privately owned in Ghana in the Greater Accra Region.

Statement of Problem

From the past to the present day, there have been distinctive reasons for poor reading habit among Senior High School Students. The preliminary observation by the researchers revealed that students have low enthusiasm towards reading and the majority of these students do not know how to read, and thus, they are faced with reading challenges amid examination periods.

The majority of parents, guardians, and teachers complain about the rate of the poor reading habit of students today and this notion was buttressed by the official report of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC, 2008). The net outcome of students' failure to read properly is the poor performance of most students in final examinations. From the above, it may be the case that one of the key issues standing up to students these days is not their failure to read but rather their total absence of enthusiasm for reading. From the affirmation above, the study was carried out to investigate the reading habit among students and the effect on their academic performance in senior high schools, specifically among students of Eastbank Senior High School.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study is to examine the effects of reading habit on the academic performance of students in private senior high schools with specific reference to Eastbank Senior High School in Ghana in the Greater Accra Region.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- a) To examine the influence of reading habits among students
- b) To find out the importance of reading to students
- c) To assess the type of materials students read when they visit the library
- d) To find out time spent in reading by students

- e) To discover the effect of reading habits on students' performance
- f) To ascertain factors hindering reading among students

Research Questions

- a) What influence reading habits among students?
- b) What is the importance of reading?
- c) What type of materials do you read when visiting the library?
- d) What time do you spend in reading?
- e) What is the effect of reading on academic performance?
- f) What are the factors hindering reading among students?

Literature Review

Influence of Reading Habits Among Students

Reading is the capacity to understand words contained in a printed or non- printed material and make use of the information for self-improvement and advancement (Dadzie, 2008).

Individuals read for various reasons such as joy, recreation, relaxation, information and knowledge development. Palani (2012) reports that reading is the distinguishing proof of the images/symbols and the relationship of proper significance with them. It requires recognizability and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to comprehend the importance of words in isolation and in context. Palani (2012) thinks reading is a process of assessing, judging, envisioning and critical thinking. Reading is a basic instrument for the exchange of knowledge and the habit of reading is an academic activity that builds abilities in reading methods. To know about the world and its environment, a child makes a difference himself through the reading of books, daily papers, and different magazines. Once the child has been instructed to read and has built up the affection for books, he /she can investigate for himself the abundance of human

encounters and information through reading. Children, who miss the chance of connecting with books in their initial stages of life, find it difficult to obtain good reading habit in their later years (Deavers, 2000). “Laws die but books never”. Indeed, books are the most appropriate medium through which information is transmitted from one era to another or from one person to another, (Issa et al, 2012). Philip (2009) says, “Reading habit tends to be associated with course work and examinations, rarely with pleasure”. However, it is obvious that irrespective of the discipline it will be difficult if not impossible for students to exhibit their talents when they failed to read extensively. Devendran (2007) has shown that the more the students watch the reading of their instructors, the more they need to attempt it. The more the students listen to teachers read to them, the better they get to be in reading. McKool and Gespass (2009) found that teachers who read for joy and who actualize reading lessons, utilize writing circles, give chances to reading discussions will probably urge their students to participate in quiet reading sessions, talk about their reading experiences, and suggest different books to students.

Importance of Reading to Students

Kurtus (2002) opines that reading habit is a fundamental practice that can leave a positive effect on all age groups. The study stressed further that the acquisition of knowledge through reading is a decent approach, however, it must be productive information, it must encourage a man to get on in a profession, pass an examination, be great at decision, or get hold of a status for learning. Guthrie, Benneth, and McGough, (2007) expressed that reading is the demonstration of getting importance from printed or composed words, which is the reason for learning and one of the key ingredients in regular daily existence. Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe, & Adedeji (2012) expressed that reading is generally connected with books as just the composed words give a total picture of the demonstration of reading. It implies that through reading, the individual can fabricate or settle

things, appreciate stories, find what others accept and create thoughtful convictions of their own. Subsequently, reading gives the way to all types of data vital to our everyday survival and development. As indicated by Ilegogie (2005) reading helps in the advancement of one's communication skills and insightfulness. Advancement through reading is more advanced inducing, enduring, compelling and helpful to humankind when held in the reading society.

According to Muogilim, (2000) “reading opens door to the accumulated knowledge of centuries which helps to enrich, illuminate the minds, and widen the mental and spiritual horizon of the reader because the continuous reading of material will serve as a means of strengthening the development of reading”. Sesnan (2003) cited in Mesfin (2008) stressed the significance of reading as one of the fundamental skills which everybody acknowledges is a basic tool for survival in the present day world. Akinbola (2007) observed that the significance of reading cannot be ignored. Reading is important to literacy and it is an emancipatory apparatus that frees one from ignorance, academic infection, destitution and frustration.

Tella and Akande (2007) express that reading is a vital part of life which is not just about pleasure yet a need; the fundamental device of training. Reading is key for each and each person so as to manage new and developing learning in the evolving universe of technological advances.

Types of Materials Students Read.

As indicated by Littlefield (2006) reading is mostly carried out on paper with ink: a book, magazine, daily paper, pamphlet, or notebook. Aside from these, different sorts of reading materials for scholarly reasons are journals, textbooks, encyclopedia, dictionaries, diaries, course readings, and handbooks. For voluntary reading, students can patronage materials like books, fictions, comic books and daily papers.

Annamalai and Muniandy (2013) investigated on reading habit and attitude among Malaysian Polytechnic students using 119 respondents. The findings revealed that 68.9 % of the students read the newspaper every day while 57.1% enjoy reading magazines.

Nomakhosazana (2002) did a study on Grade 11 ESL students' reading preferences. The results reported that learners are most inspired by reading magazines and daily papers and as well as topics associated with love, sports, and governmental issues.

Croston (2005) affirmed that the majority of students like reading famous magazines, frightful stories, mysteries and another couple of different topics when they are not in school. Apart from that, the students indicated specifically that they enjoy reading comics. With respect to the genres of selected book, it is established that the students enjoyed both the class of fiction and non-fiction. However, the most enjoyable topics are those on imagination, adventure, misery, and humour, which show to the fiction genres. Larson and Owusu-Acheaw (2014) did a study on reading habits among students and its effect on academic performance at Koforidua Polytechnic. Their study stated that out of 1000 respondents, 62.0% was of the view that they read lecture notes anytime they visited the library facility, another 25.0% expressed that they read textbooks, 3.0% highlighted that they read novels while 10.0% indicated other materials. In a related study by Kavi, Tackie and Buggyei (2015) reported that out of the 87 respondents 51.7% liked reading textbooks, 48.3% read story books while 28.7% read newspapers, followed by internet/websites 20.7%, song lyrics 20.7%, magazines 17.2% and audio books 11.5%.

Haliru, Marjanatu, Mohammed and Dangani.(2015) carried out a study on an assessment of reading habit among secondary school students in Kaduna Metropolis. The study highlighted that out of 480 respondents (54%) read textbooks, followed by (20%) respondent who affirmed they read novels/fiction, another (5%) read reference books while (21.0%) indicated all of the above.

Time Spent in Reading by Students

Haliru, Marjanatu, Mohammed and Dangani (2015) reported that out of the 480 respondents 250(52%) spent between 1-2 hours in reading, followed by 150 (31%) respondents who said they spent between 2-3 hours reading their books, another 50(11%) stated that they spent 3-4 hours, while 20(4%) spent 4-5 hours and 10(2%) indicated 5 hours and above. A similar study by Kavi, Tackie and Buggyeyi (2015) highlighted that the period of time spent in reading each day by respondents has extended from less than 1 hour to more than 5 hours. T

his was shown by 29 (33.3%) of the respondents followed by 4(4.6%) of the respondents who reported that they read more than 5 hours. Another 49 (56.3%) indicated that they spent 1-2 hours each engaging in reading activities. Kaur and Thiyagarajah (1999) carried out a study on the English reading habits of ELLS Students in the University Science, Malaysia and reported that the majority of the students liked spending 3-5 hours every week engaging themselves in reading activities.

The analysis of the study indicated that (69.8%) of the respondents spent their time on literary works, while (28.6%) engaged in reading newspapers, followed by novels with (25.4%).

In a similar study by Tella and Akande (2007) on children's reading habits and availability of books in Botswana Primary school, they revealed that (36.7%) read on a daily basis. According to the study insufficient reading materials in the school library and high cost of reading materials were mentioned as the factors that discouraged students from engaging in reading.

Medar and Kenchakkanavar(2015) highlighted that out of 246 respondents,(39.02%) spent 2-4 hours for reading while (30.89%) spent 5-6 hours for reading, followed by (17.09%) spent 6-8 engaging in reading while another (07.30%) spent more than 8 hours and (05.69%) spent less than an hour for reading.

Effect of Reading Habits on Students' Performance

As indicated by Tracy and Akande (2008) reading forms part of entertainment that plays a crucial role in human development and life skills. Students with poor reading habit get terrible scores in their examinations, get effortlessly distracted and eventually drop out from school. Rubin (2002) is of the view that students with poor reading habit have a higher opportunity of taking part in hostile social practices, such as delinquency, truancy, school violence, tormenting, hacking of computers and examination malpractices. While poor reading habit can be instrumental in the destruction of any individual who is tormented with it, good reading habit grows consistently and brings together a valuable personality. The acquisition of reading abilities does not just affect or enhance confidence in language expressions, but in different subjects such as: social studies, science, arithmetic etc. A student who lacks reading ability does not do well in class activities and this deficiency is extended throughout his/her academic lifetime (Fosudo, 2010). "Reading plays an invaluable role in promoting ideas and ideals, which enhance both individual development and the socio-economic development of the nation (Ike, 2000)".

Reading is a lifelong habit, the real wellspring of access to the information. It is taken as an understood practice that backs a person to accomplish unique power and builds up one's critical thinking capability. Reading habit, along these lines, is considered as a fundamental means for the advancement of individual characteristics, mental capacities, getting learning, information, and comprehension of a person (Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

Factors Hindering Students Reading Habits

Ogunrombi and Odio (1995) cited in Hassan, Olasen, and Mathew (2012), investigated 600 students in 10 secondary schools in Nigeria to distinguish factors that influenced students reading habits. It was established that home conditions interfered with reading. Other factors such as the absence of libraries and qualified librarians, the absence of reading materials, the absence of public libraries and absence of encouragement from teachers were discovered to be variables influencing the poor reading habits of students.

Wilson and Bhamjee (2007) investigated the promotion of literacy among secondary school students with the prime objective of promoting reading culture among students. The results indicated that 9% of the students came from a literate background where parents engaged themselves in daily reading, while 32% of the students reported that they had no serene environment to read at home.

Morrow (1995) cited in N'Namdi (2005) reported that parents are the first and significant educators who should spend the longest time in giving and making a favorable situation for their youngsters' reading habit. Zhang (2002) proposes that setting up large reading in the classroom also helps students to shape their reading habits and gain reading abilities.

Recent studies have confirmed that factors around the school have affected negatively the improvement of reading habits. Adetunji and Oladeji (2007) enumerated some factors that hinder proper and good reading habit as poor reading environment, peer influence, school curriculum, parental and teacher influence. The teacher is seen as the key that opens the door to the reading garden. The teacher is likewise the person who can impact the hesitant reader to read through persistent and dogged modeling (Loh, 2009). According to the views of Morrison and Cooney (2001) the home condition is an essential setting for children's initial learning and socio-

emotional advancement and it seems to be the most fundamental in the early years of a child and furthermore vital for the following years in primary school learning.

Ajila and Olutola (2000) opine that the condition of the home influences a person's reading habit since the parents are the major caretakers in a person's life. The family background and location of a child influences his/ her response to life circumstances and his level of performance.

In spite of the fact that, the school is responsible for the experience that makes up the person's life amid school periods, yet parents and the individual's contribution at home play enviable roles in building the personality of the child and making him /her a good personality in the society.

Methodology

The Case study method was adopted for the study, employing a quantitative approach to collect data on reading habits among students and its effect on their academic performance.

Questionnaires were used as the instrument for data collection in this study. The total population for the study comprised S.H.S 1, S.H.S 2 and S.H.S 3 students. The researchers employed simple random sampling technique to select one hundred and twelve (112) respondents from the total population of one hundred and twenty-eight (128). Out of 112 questionnaires distributed, one hundred and four (104) were correctly filled, hence, representing 92.9% response rate. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data.

Population of the Study

Table.1 Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	58	55.77
Female	46	44.23
Total	104	100

Source: Survey,2017

Table 1 above showed that 58(55.77) respondents were males while 46(47.8) were females who took part in the study.

Findings and Discussion

Table.2 Influence of Reading Habits Among Students

Agent(s)	SA	A	U	SD
Parents	43(41.35 %)	27 (25.96%)	12(11.54%)	22 (21.15%)
Siblings	52(50%)	31(29.81%)	9(8.65%)	12(11.54%)
Teacher(s)	23(22.12%)	49(47.11%)	12(11.54%)	20(19.23%)
Friends	33(31.73%)	35(33.65%)	13(12.5%)	23(22.12%)

Source: Survey, 2017

When the researchers sought to find out the influence of reading habits among students, Table 2 reported that 43(41.35%) strongly agreed that their parents influence them to read, while 52(50%) strongly agreed that their siblings influence them to read and 49(47.11%) agreed that their teacher(s) influence their reading habits. This study disagreed to that of Devendran (2007) which expressed that teachers influence students to inculcate reading habit because the more the

students watch their teachers reading, the more they need to attempt it and mimic what the teacher read. The more the students listen to their teachers read to them, the better they become in reading.

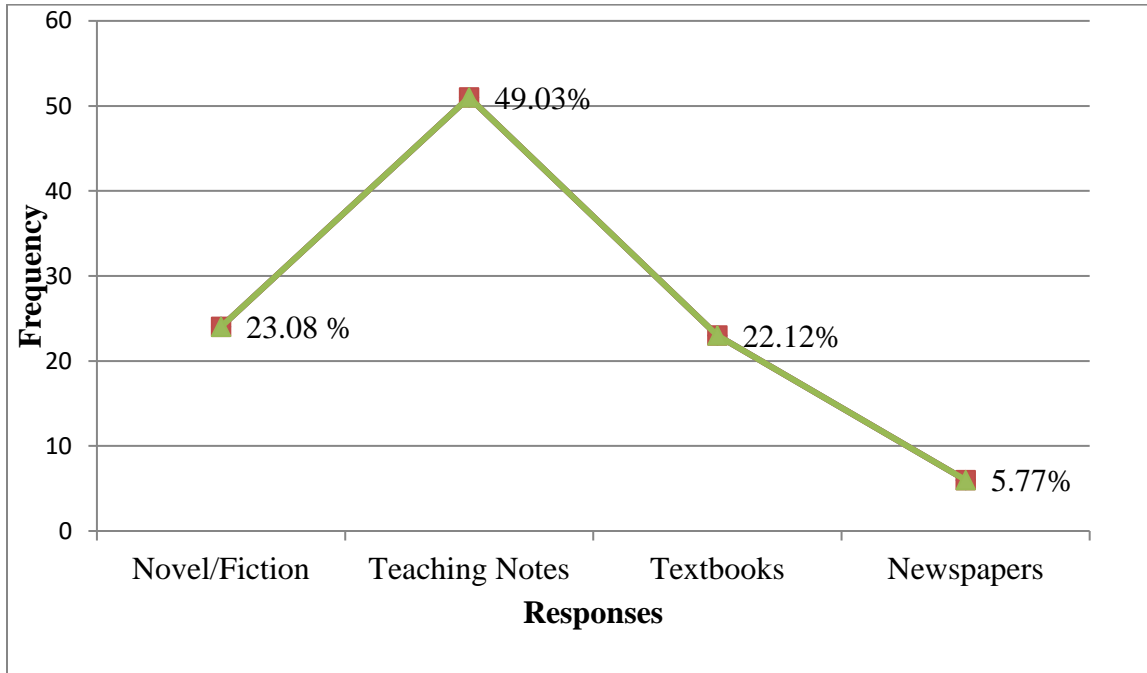
Table.3 Importance of Reading Among Students.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Broadens my Knowledge	47	45.19
Enhances my Communication	13	12.5
It makes me better perform better	26	25
It helps me speak in Public	18	17.31
Total	104	100

Source: Survey,2017

The study also investigated the importance of reading among students. The findings in Table 3 revealed that out of 104 respondents, 47(45.19%) indicated that reading broadens their knowledge while 26(25%) said it makes them perform better and 18(17.31) said reading helps them to speak in public. The findings are in line with Muogilim, (2000) which highlighted that reading opens door to the accumulated knowledge of centuries which helps to enrich, illuminate the minds, and widen the mental and spiritual horizon of the reader.

Figure.1 Types of Materials Student Read



Source: Survey,2017

Figure.1

When the researcher sought the views of respondents on the type of materials they read, out of the total respondents of 104, (49.03%) were of the opinion that they read teaching notes, while (23.08%) indicated that they read novel/fiction and (22.12%) expressed that they read textbooks. These findings are in contrast to those of Annamalai and Muniandy (2013) which results revealed that (68.9 %) of the students read the newspaper every day while (57.1%) enjoy reading magazines.

Table.5 Time Spent in Reading by Students

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30 minutes- 1hour	13	12.5
1-2 hours	24	23.07
2-3 hours	49	47.12
4hours and Above	18	17.31
Total	104	100

Source: Survey,2017

When the respondents were asked about time spent on reading,(47.12%) indicated 2-3 hours while 24 representing (23.07%) of the respondents said 1-2 hours and another (17.31%) indicated 4 hours and above. The finding here do not corroborate with the findings of Haliru, Marjanatu, Mohammed and Dangani (2015) which reported that out of the 480 respondents 250(52%) spent between 1-2 hours in reading, followed by 150(31%) students who said they spent between 2-3 hours reading their books, while another 50(11%) stated that they spent 3-4 hours, and 20(4%) spending 4-5 hours and 10(2%) indicated 5 hours and above

Table.6 Effect of Reading Habits among Students

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Express myself well in Class	23	22.12
Support my Studies	51	49.03
Makes me feel Proud	19	18.27
Makes me feel bored	11	10.58
Total	104	100

Source: Survey,2017

As shown in Table 6 above, out of 104 respondents,(49.03%) indicated that reading helps them in their studies while (22.12%) reported that reading helps them to express well in class,(18.27%) indicated that reading makes them feel proud. This study supports the work of Fielden (2004) which disclosed that “good study habits have good effects towards the academic performance of the student”.

Table .7 Factors that Hinder Students Reading Habits

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of conducive Home Environment	61	58.65
Lack of motivation to read	12	11.54
Lack of reading materials at Home	14	13.46
Inadequate novels/fiction in the School Library	17	16.35
Total	104	100

Source: Survey,2017

The result of the findings as indicated in Table 7 above reported that out of 104 respondents,(58.65%) expressed that the main factors that hinder their study is a lack of conducive home environment, followed by (16.35%) who revealed that inadequate novels/fiction in the school library while (13.46%) indicated a lack of reading materials at home. The findings here agree with those in the work of Ajila and Olutola (2000) which intimate that home condition influences the person reading habit since the parents are the major caretakers in a person's life. They stressed further that the family background and location of a child influences his/ her response to life circumstances and his level of performance.

Conclusion

The study examined Read or Perish: Reading Habit Among Students and its Effect on Academic Performance. The study discovered that 45.19% of the respondents recognized the importance of reading and indicated that reading helps them to broaden their knowledge. The majority of the respondents admitted that they spent 2-3(47.12%) hours on reading than any other activities.

The study also reported that majority of the respondents did indicate that reading habits have an effect on them and stressed that reading has supported their studies.

The study further discovered that lack of conducive home environment is one of the hindrances that encourage them to read when they are at home.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Teachers should encourage students to visit the school library and read any academic material that will help them in their reading habits and not limited to teaching notes. Students should be encouraged to borrow books from the library regularly since this can help them to inculcate reading habits. There should be a policy in the school to award students who can read and express themselves better. The school should stock the library with interesting story books that will attract students to come to the library. Parents should persuade their children to engage in constant reading both at home and school to acquire the spirit of the reading habit. Parents should provide their wards relevant reading materials that will help them to develop their reading habits. Parents should allow their children to view only educational television programs that will equip and empower them to engage in constant reading. The school should design a timetable for library hours to allow students to go the library at least one and half hours in each day. Finally, parents should help their children to have a serene reading environment when they are at home.

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