

## ACCENTUATING PRODUCTIVE READING IN STUDENTS THROUGH INFORMATION RESOURCES: A SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MINNA, NIGERIA.

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### Abstract

The paper examined how productive reading could receive a boost through the provision of information resources among the secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria. The research design used for the study was survey. Purposive (judgemental) quota stratified random sampling technique was used to select 10 out of 75 secondary schools in Minna – five public and five private. The selected schools are: St Clement Secondary Schools, Gbaiko; Mawo International Schools, Bosso; Bosso Secondary School, Bosso; Ahmadu Bahago Secondary schools, Chanchaga; Government Secondary Schools, Bosso; Government Day Secondary School, Chanchaga; Government Girls Secondary School, Chanchaga; Baptist Secondary School, Bosso; Brighter International Schools, Chanchaga; and Himma International Schools, Bosso. The self-designed research instrument tagged “Accentuating Productive Reading Questionnaire” (APRQ) with the reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.87$  was used by the researchers to collect data for the study. Thirty copies of the instruments were distributed in each of the 10 schools used for the study. Out of 300 copies of the distributed instrument, 270 copies (90%) were retrieved and used for the analysis. Simple descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts, percentages and tables were used for data analyses. Part of the findings of the study is that 220 (81.5%) respondents placed high premium on visiting the libraries to avail themselves of the available information resources and that there is a dearth of information resources in most of the public secondary schools compared with private schools. It is recommended that the parents and school authorities should work as invincible team towards checking the malaise of over indulgence on entertaining gadgets especially as they affect the productivity of pupils in terms of reading and that the Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A) of the surveyed schools should work as indivisible team in ensuring that relevant, current and up to date information material are supplied to the affected schools.

**Key Words:** Productive Reading; Information Resources; Students; Secondary Schools; Minna, Nigeria

### Introduction

Productive reading in this context is defined as meaningful, gainful, profitable and beneficial reading. It is a kind of reading in which students are able to assimilate what they have read; synthesise such items with the hope of mastering them for any probable assessment. Reading that is done with full attention, concentration, commitment, loyalty and with the whole sense of responsibility and accountability is referred to as profitable reading. Information resources that are provided in a conducive environment could serve as veritable tools in accentuating profitable reading among secondary school students. Kasimi (2007) contended that developing a reading culture has become very imperative for any society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence, cultivating a good reading habit is very crucial for national development as it enables creativity to bloom, develop imaginative thinking and innovative mind.

Reading is a powerful means of communication. It can form part of an individual to the extent that it becomes a habit which once developed, becomes very difficult to break. The art of reading could be an interesting experience for children and adolescents if they are properly guided. A reading habit cultivated early in life helps the child to grow into an independent adult (Carson, 2007, Shabi and Udofia, 2009, Oji

and Habibu, 2011). However, it is imperative for every student to desire to read not only for information and recreating but also for social and personal needs which reading can do much to develop. The vital position of reading in all learning situations makes it imperative that for the students to succeed in school he must learn to read well (Joseph, 2013). The teaching of reading is, therefore, important at all levels of instruction. Reading is basically a process of perceiving and evaluating printed material. When students attain this level in reading, they can understand most materials in the schools and this should be the goal of every teacher.

In an investigative study carried out by Joseph (2013) on reading pattern among pupils, it was discovered that socio-economic background of the pupils has strong influence on their reading. Pupils who indicated high interest in reading and read after school, read a lot of novels; read in the evenings, are pupils who come from enlightened homes who have reading space/table. Other categories of pupils who were identified as non readers are pupils who do not have enlightened parents who preferred to play, watch movies, TV and eventually find reading to be very hard and confusing. To accentuate reading among pupils, Aguilar (2014) itemised ten ways by which love for reading could be cultivated and developed. The steps include: simple reading; sharing reading experiences; inviting pupils to socialise around reading; organising turn by turn reading; taking a field trip; listening to audio books; inviting authors to speak; making connections between reading and other issues; learning about specific needs for specific populations; and teaching reading strategies. Similarly, Colorado (2007) discussed some tips for developing successful reading habits at home and in the classroom. Some of the tips are the following: making sure that the children observe the reading of their parents on regular basis.

To stimulate reading, the parents should keep reading materials in the house. They should take time to talk about the pictures in books, magazines and newsletters with the children. Visiting public library and often taking advantage of the resources offered there. Children should be encouraged to read in their own native language. If reading skills are developed in the native language they will transfer into English and other languages. Parents should prevent children (kids) from watching television until they have done their daily reading. As the child becomes a better reader, the parents should talk about what he/she is reading. Oji and Habibu (2011) while bemoaning on the negative impact of recreational media on the reading culture of children admitted that with proliferation of televisions and video players, it is uncommon to see children and adolescents carrying books to read. They added that technology is gradually taking over the control of children and adolescents lives and cultivation of a good reading habit has gone with the wind. They have gradually abandoned book and reading to pursuing interests in movie watching and recently, surfing and chatting on the net.

Children should be encouraged to live in an environment that encourages reading habit. Libraries generally provide a very conducive environment that encourages people to engage in meaningful reading, learning and research activities. They provide space, reading carrels, reading materials and noise free environment. School libraries offer opportunities for developing good reading habits in children who have been immersed in a literacy environment in order words, games, rhyming, poems and storytelling are plentiful are much and likely to imbibe reading culture than those who have experienced on impoverished literacy environment. Children libraries should be normally rich in colourful and story books which captivate the interest of children and motivate them to read for pleasure (Igwesi, Chimah and Nwachukwu, 2012).

It is fact that youths have a lot of zeal and energy. The zeal and energy might be mis-directed to wrong and unproductive ventures. Children in their teens also have sharp memory. They are apt to learning at a faster rate than adults because of their age and youthful ingenuity. (Pollard and Tann, 2010; McCallum et al, 2000; Rudduck and Flutter, 2000; Babalola, 2007; Babalola, 2007). If their mind, brain and talent are not productively and profitably engaged they are most likely to be engaged in unproductive and non-profitable ventures. The adage that says "idle mind is devil's workshop" is appropriate here. Youth restiveness or youth unrest is symptomatic of idleness (Babalola, 2014). Many children who supposed to be school age students are now registered as soldiers in the rebel camps in Nigeria and across the globe. Other children of school age engaged themselves in internet fraud and thereby making evil money through such means (Rushkoff, 2011). Other students gather themselves and beat up teachers and principals who they feel are too tough. Other students have made injection of hard drugs or drinking as a normal way of life. Others join hands with other miscreants in the society to cause mayhem. Vandalisation of public

infrastructure like fuel pipelines, water pipelines, electrical gadgets and outright vandalisation of public infrastructure are some of the ills that are attributable to youth unrest which is a function of idleness.

Imaginative thinking, productive reading and creative writing are intertwined. A pupil that is giving to imaginative thinking would be able to read meaningfully, critically, constructively and productively (Kasimi, 2007, Babalola, 2014). As he/she reads new ideas emerges or comes into his/her mind. Such are likely to forecast the types of questions the teachers ask in examinations. As they read and think, they are also most likely to have proffered solutions to such anticipated questions. When such children perform excellently well in examination, teachers are apt to identify them as geniuses. This is an aftermath of productive reading. Children that are imaginative in thinking, who are also productive in reading would in all likelihood be creative in writing. For such pupils, writing becomes a hobby. They would not want any opportunity to go without looking for way of maximising such through creative writing. In order words, writing becomes a normal way of life. Therefore once any ideacomes to their mind, they use style to write in a peper down in bla

Imaginative thinking is a precursor of productive reading which is a progenitor of creative writing. Creativity, innovation and invention are closely related. When children are imaginative in their thought, they could be able to embark on productive reading. Productive reading would result in creative writing which would in turn result in creativity, innovation and invention. The scientific and technological development of any nation including Nigeria is only possible through creative and innovative minds(Kasimi, 2007, Babalola, 2007, Babalola, 2007). If students are pedagogically brought up to become productive readers and creative writers, they are most likely to contribute their own quota to the socio-economic development of the country in form of per capita income (Income per head) which have direct impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation.

Minna is the capital of Niger State in North Central Zone of Nigeria. It is blessed with a good number of federal and state institutions. Moreover, it has a total of 75 secondary schools public and private (Field Survey, 2015). The researchers chose this town because of the afore-stated advantages. It is also hoped that if information resources are used as tools to pedagogically inculcate productive reading habit in post-primary school pupils in the town, the state and by extension the country would reap the dividends of virile, creative, innovative and productive young men and women in no far future. Engaging post-primary school pupils in Minna in productive reading is a sure way of disengaging them from unproductive and unprofitable ventures. The paper, therefore, examined how information resources could be used to engage secondary school students in productive reading in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A good number of youths (especially secondary school students) in Nigeria today irrespective of race or socio-cultural inclinations are vulnerable to pleasure – seeking that is derivable from information and communication gadgets at the expense of profitable and productive reading life style. Many children have become delinquent. Majority exhibit anti-social behaviour which are not traceable to those of their parents. Many are hired as touts and others have become miscreants. Youth restiveness is the order of the day. Many engage in wanton destruction of public and private properties. It is a common occurrence to see children in their teens who are involved in heinous crimes. The reason for the afore-stated social malaise is idleness. Many youths could not sit down for a while to read. This paper therefore examined productive reading among secondary school children in Minna, Nigeria as the probable cure to the afore-stated malaise.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to know how productive reading could be enhanced among students in secondary schools in Minna, Nigeria using information resources. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the frequency of reading among secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the state of library environment and materials in promoting reading habit among secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria.
3. Identify the information resources that are available and the extent to which they aid productive reading among secondary school students that are selected for the study in Minna, Nigeria.
4. Identify the effect of entertaining gadgets on reading habit of secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

To achieve the foregoing objectives the following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the information resources that are available and to what extent do they aid productive reading among students in secondary schools that are selected for the study in Minna, Nigeria?
2. What is the frequency of reading among secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria?
3. To what extent are the state of library environment and materials help in promoting reading habit among secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria?
4. What is the effect of entertaining gadget on reading habit of secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria?

**Research Methodology**

The research design used for the study was survey. Purposive (judgmental) and quota stratified random sampling technique was used to select ten secondary schools in Minna, Nigeria; five public and five private. The selected schools are: St Clement Secondary Schools, Bosso; Mawo International Schools, Bosso; Bosso Secondary School, Boss; Ahmadu Bahago Secondary schools, Chanchaga; Government Secondary Schools, Boss; Government Day Secondary School, Chanchaga; Government Girls Secondary School, Chanchaga; Baptist Secondary School, Bosso; Brighter International Schools, Chanchaga; and Himma International Schools, Bosso. The ten secondary schools were specially selected out of 75 secondary schools, 36 public, 39 private that existed in Minna. (Field survey, March, 2015).

The research instrument used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire tagged "Accentuating Productive Reading Questionnaire" (APRQ) which was validated by LIS colleagues and copies of modified version were personally administered by the researchers to 300 respondents (who were picked mainly from senior secondary schools one to senior secondary school three) in the ten schools selected for the study; 30 copies of the instrument were administered to each of the ten schools. Purposive (judgemental) random sampling technique was used to pick students from senior secondary schools (SSS) in all the ten schools sampled for the study. Only senior secondary school students were picked on the assumption that they are expected more mature and serious than the students in the junior secondary schools. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula was used to validate the reliability of the instrument in which  $r=0.87$ . The data were collected and analysed with simple descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts, percentages and tables. Out of the 300 copies of the questionnaire instrument administered to the respondents, 270 (90%) copies of the instrument were properly filled, retrieved and used for analysis.

**Table 1:**  
**Response Rate of Instrument Administered**

S/N	NAME OF SCHOOL	L.G.A OF LOCATION	TYPE OF SCHOOL	COPIES OF INSTRUMENT ADMINISTERED	COPIES OF INSTRUMENT RETRIEVED	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.	St. Clement Secondary Schools	Bosso	Private	30	30	100
2.	Mawo International Schools	Bosso	Private	30	30	100
3.	Bosso Secondary School	Bosso	Public	30	30	100
4.	Ahmadu Bahago Secondary School	Chanchaga	Public	30	25	83.3

5.	Government Secondary School	Bosso	Public	30	20	66.7
6.	Government Day Secondary School	Chanchaga	Public	30	27	90
7.	Government Girls Secondary School	Chanchaga	Public	30	25	83.3
8.	Baptist Secondary School	Bosso	Private	30	28	93.3
9.	Brighter Internation al Schools	Chanchaga	Private	30	27	90
10.	Himma International Schools	Chanchaga	Private	30	28	93.3

In Table 1, 30 copies of the instrument that were administered at St. Clement International Schools; Mawo International School and Bosso Secondary School were successfully retrieved and used for analysis, making the response rate of 100% respectively. In Baptist Secondary School and Himma International Schools 28 (93.3%) copies of the instrument were retrieved from the two schools while 20 (66.7%) copies of the instrument were retrieved from Government Secondary School.

**Result:** What are the information resources that are available and to what extent do they aid productive reading among pupils in the post primary schools that are selected for the study in Minna, Nigeria?

**Table 2:**  
**Information Resources Available in Schools**

S/N	Name of School	Types of school	Information Resources Available
1	St. Clement Secondary Schools	Private	Information materials include: textbooks in various subjects; reference materials like dictionaries, encyclopaedias, serials etc. A computer laboratory with 20 work stations is equally available.
2	Mawo International Schools	Private	Information materials include: textbooks in various subjects; reference materials like dictionaries, encyclopaedias, serials etc. A computer laboratory with 20 work stations is equally available.
3	Bosso Secondary School	Public	The information resources available in the school are abysmally poor. The school cannot be described as having a library
4	Ahmadu Bahago Secondary School	Public	The library has few collections of textbooks and reference materials. Moreover, 20 computer workstations are available. The internet facilities are not functional

5	Government Secondary School	Public	The library has over 600 volumes of textbooks but deficient in reference materials like serials, atlases, etc. A computer laboratory that is non-functional is equally available
6	Government Day Secondary School	Public	The library lacks information resources. The few information resources that are available are outdated
7	Government Girls Secondary School	Public	The library has sizeable number of textbooks in various subjects, and teaching aids for teachers.
8	Baptist Secondary School	Private	The library is adequately stocked with over 500 textbooks and reference materials. The ICT and multimedia centre is equally available. The centre hoists-computers, television, projectors, DVD players and Audiovisual equipment.
9	Brighter International Schools	Private	The library has collections of about 4770 which include textbooks and reference materials. A very resourceful computer laboratory with about 50 work stations is equally available
10	Himma International Schools	Private	The library has collections of over 5496 which include textbooks and reference materials. A functional computer laboratory with about 50 work stations is equally available.

Source: Field Survey March, 2015

In table 2, most of the secondary schools that are owned by private bodies are by better equipped with information resources compared with the public schools that are sampled for the study.

**Research Question 2:** What is the frequency of reading among Secondary School Students in Minna, Nigeria?

**Table 3:**  
Frequency of Library Visit among students

S/N	Frequency	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Daily	30	11.1
2	Twice a week	120	44.4
3	Weekly	70	25.9
4	Bi-monthly	10	3.7
5	Monthly	15	5.6
6	Quarterly	5	1.9
7	Annually	15	5.6
8	Rarely	5	1.9

In table 3, 220 (81.5%) respondents signified that they normally visit the library at least once a week. This is a good omen as regards library use and visit. Out of the 270 respondents, 20 (7.4%) indicated that they normally visit the library once a year or rarely do.

**Table 4:**  
Time Spent on Reading by students

S/N	Reading Time Spend (in hours)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	1-2	100	37
2	2-3	120	44.4
3	3-4	30	11.1
4	4-5	10	3.7
5	5 and above	10	3.7

In table 4, 220 (81.5%) respondents indicated that they spent between 1-3 hours in reading. The remaining respondents, 50 (18.5%) affirmed that they spend 3 hours and above in reading.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent are the state of Library environment and materials in promoting reading habit among Secondary Schools Student in Minna, Nigeria?

**Table 5:**

**Assessment of library Environment and Materials**

S/N	Assessment of library environment and materials	S/A	%	A	%	D	%	S/D	%
1.	The library environment is excellent	30	11.1	20	7.4	0	0	0	0
2.	The materials are adequate and current	30	11.1	10	3.7	0	0	0	0
3.	The materials are adequate and in line with the mission statement of the school	40	14.8	20	7.4	10	3.7	10	3.7
4.	The library/resource centre is spacious enough and could allow for further future expansion	50	18.5	10	3.7	0	0	0	0

In table 5, 50(18.5%)respondents indicated that their library environment is excellent; 40(14.8%)respondents indicated that the materials are adequate and current; 60(22.2%)admitted that the materials are adequate and in line with the mission statement of their various schools while 10(3.7%)disagreed with this. Finally, 60(22.2%)respondents affirmed that the library is spacious for future further expansion.

**Research Question 4:** What is the effect of entertaining gadgets on reading habit of secondary school students in Minna, Nigeria?

**Table 6:**

**Effect of Entertaining Gadgets on Reading Habit**

S/N	Effect of Entertainment Gadget on Reading	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Brings distraction	90	33
2	Obstructs concentration	110	41
3	Retards reading	12	4
4	Wastes time	20	7
5	Aids reading	20	7
6	Encourages concentration and assimilation	15	6
7	None of the above	3	1

In table 6, 232 (86 %)respondents indicated that entertainment gadgets have detrimental effects on reading such as: bringing distraction, obstructing concentration, retarding reading and wasting time while 35 (13 %)respondents are of the opinion that entertainment gadgets aid reading; 3 (1 %) indicated that none of the available options as the effect of entertainment gadgets.

**Summary of Findings**

The following findings were made from the study:

1. Majority of the respondents sampled for this study normally visit the library at least once a week which is a positive development.
2. Majority of the respondents equally spend quality hours (at least 1-3 hours) in reading.
3. Most of the respondents admitted that the library environment is excellent and the information materials are adequate and current.
4. Most of the secondary schools own by private bodies are better equipped with information resources compared with the public schools sampled for the studies.
5. It is obvious from the study that entertainment gadgets have detrimental effect on reading habit of students.

## Discussion

Majority of the respondents, 220(81.5%) from the findings of the study affirmed that they normally visit the library at least once a week. This is so because such respondents have discovered some relevant and useful information materials in the library that serve as motivating and attractive factors for them to visit the library. When libraries are equipped with relevant and up to date information resources, library patrons would not be coerced to visit such libraries regularly. The findings of the study corroborated the findings of Carson (1990); Colorado (2007); Babalola (2007a); QUEST (2009); Shabi and Udofia (2009); Owen (2011); Igwesi, Chimah and Nwachukwu (2012) who in their various studies discovered that the availability and use of information resources by students in schools enhance the learning and assimilation processes among students. The remaining 50(18.5%) respondents who did not take pleasure in visiting the library might have done so due to what has been described as poor reading culture of Nigerians and other developing countries or due to dearth of information resources (Igwesi, Chimah and Nwachukwu, 2012). Moreover, 220 (81.5%) respondents also signified that they normally spend between 1-3 hours in the library any time they visit the library. This is a further attraction to the fact that the library patrons have been getting attractive and relevant information materials from the library. In fact, most of the respondents indicated that the library environment and materials are good and satisfying. The importance of environmental factors and relevant reading materials on productive reading of pupils cannot be over emphasised. This is in consonance with the findings of Ndagara (2007) who identified the connecting point between fine ecology and workers output and Babalola (2014) stressed the indispensability of a befitting environment on the productivity of academic librarians.

The field survey that was conducted in March, 2015 to ascertain the information resources that are available in the sampled secondary schools in Minna is a further confirmation and attestation of the deplorable condition of both primary and secondary institutions in Minna, Niger state. The investigative study carried out by Babalola in 2007 into the nursery and primary schools in Minna, revealed the pathetic and gory sight of public primary schools in terms of the provision of information resources (Babalola, 2007b). It is appalling to note that the situation in primary school in 2007 is not different from that of secondary schools sampled in 2015. The schools sampled in Minna for the study in 2015 lack most information resources that any basic school should have. In fact, some of the schools could not be said to have libraries or information resource centres at all. This is clearly seen in Bosso secondary school where little or no provision is made for reading of the students. Such schools are not making any effort to encourage pupils to read on average talk less of productive reading. When pupils could not have resources that could enhance their reading habit such might be tempted to engage in all forms of examination malpractices that are rampant in the state and across Nigeria. Productive reading could only be encouraged where a plethora of information resources are available coupled with the services of librarian (teacher librarian) who is empathic enough in making pupils to learn. Such librarians (teacher librarians) would put themselves in the position of the pupils so as to catch them young for productive, meaningful and profitable reading (Kasimi, 2007, Babalola, 2014). The findings of the study revealed that information resources that could enhance productive reading are concentrated in private schools compared with public schools. The pupils that go to such private schools are most likely to excel than those in public schools where there is dearth of information resources. The socio-economic background of these pupils vis-à-vis the type of school attended could affect their reading as well (Joseph, 2013).

The effect of entertainment gadgets on productive reading as evidenced in this research cannot be over emphasised. Entertainment gadgets are known for having damaging and destructive impact on the reading habits of all ages including school pupils. Entertaining gadgets not only take toll on the time of the users but also hinder concentration on reading and other productive venture. The social malaise of entertaining gadgets cannot be exhaustively outlined ranging from examination malpractices to all forms of delinquent behaviour. Except the scourge of entertainment gadgets are checked by both parents and teachers the future of Nigerian children as regards productive reading, creative writing, innovative thinking and ubiquitous enhanced productivity is bleak. The findings of this study on the malaise of entertaining gadgets on productive reading corroborated the findings of earlier researchers like Rushkoff (2011), Becta (2001), Wellington (2001), Oji and Habibu (2011) who in their separate researches discovered that entertaining gadgets not only took priority in the minds of the children and adolescents of this age but also have damaging effect on their academic achievement.



## Conclusion

It is apposite to conclude from this study that productive reading among secondary school students would receive a boost where a plethora of relevant, up-to date and functional information resources are made accessible to the pupils in a conducive environment and under the guidance of a humane, courteous and empathizing librarian (teacher librarian). Moreover it should be added that where information materials are provided in a conducive environment if the students do not make deliberate effort to make use of the materials, it will be difficult to achieve mere reading talk less of productive reading. In order words, the students, the teacher and all stake holders in education should work as a team if students are to be engaged in quality and productive reading.

## Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents, teachers, school librarians and all other stake holders should work as a team to curb the indiscriminate use of entertaining gadgets among post-primary school pupils in Niger State
2. The principals of secondary schools should henceforth appoint librarians (teacher librarians) who have love of pupils and love of information materials at heart. Such would be able to provide curative role for information materials and at the same time providing a relaxed and conducive atmosphere for pupils to read and learn. This is because productive reading and learning could only take place in a conducive environment- physical and social.
3. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of the surveyed schools should work as a formidable team in ensuring that relevant, current and up to date information materials are supplied to the affected school libraries/information resource centres in right quantity and quality. Financial commitment on the path of the PTA cannot be waived aside if this is to be done successfully.

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