

***THE INFLUENCE OF READING HABITS ON THE LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN LITERATURE; A CASE STUDY OF BUKWO SECONDARY SCHOOL, BUKWO
DISTRICT.***

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the influence of reading habits on the learners' academic performance in literature; a case study of Bukwo secondary school, Bukwo District". The objectives were; to investigate the reading habits of students of Bukwo Senior Secondary School, to find out the types of materials they read and their purposes for reading, to find out the perception of students on reading habits and academic performance in Literature and the factors that affect their reading habits. The study used a descriptive methodology that included interviews that were partially structured and questionnaires that were self-administered. By getting in touch with specialists and the investigator's supervisor, the validity of the measures was evaluated. The test-retest approach was used to assess dependability. To reach the sample size of 131 participants, a multi-stage sampling procedure utilizing simple random sampling was applied. While the qualitative information was evaluated and presented conceptually, quantitative data was investigated using the Statistical Packages for the Study of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 software. From the findings, 66.4% of the participants read educational materials, 60.3% read class notes, 31.3% read publications, and 32.1% read magazines. Storybooks were read by 72.5% of participants. Some intriguing results from the study indicate that the majority of the participants read picture books. Since participants would need to read their class notes in order to complete their exams, the investigator had anticipated seeing a response of 100% rather than just 60.3%. The PTA and other interested parties should work with the institution's administration to find more recent publications to add to the library's

collection. The pupils were encouraged to use the libraries and have access to sufficient reading resources as a result.

Keywords: *reading, habits, learners 'and academic performance*

Background of the Study

One can have the chance to increase their knowledge by being able to nurture and build good reading habits. For instance, reading is a prerequisite for every primary school subject matter, including science, math, social studies, and even handwriting. Rosenberg (2003) emphasized that early involvement with books and literacy-related events throughout a child's early years helps them comprehend the significance of printing and exhibits literate behavior long before they are explicitly taught to read. These folks also read more quickly and easily than their peers who may not have had any prior book-reading experience. Many people, especially educators who continue to bemoan shortcomings in written as well as spoken English, are concerned about the reading patterns of pupils as a whole. Reading helps people have a larger vocabulary and improves their ability to talk and write clearly (Anthony et al., 2023). Pleasant experiences with reading and reading attitudes both contribute to improved academic success. For a variety of reasons, individuals read. Some people read to learn more about a social element of life, some to pass the time, others out of boredom, and yet others to learn specific facts. Others use reading as both a pastime and a hobby. Others read to increase their understanding in order to succeed in their exams (Isaiah & Alex, 2023). Every person should read because it is regarded as a fundamental educational tool. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Intercultural Organization (UNESCO) has therefore concentrated the majority of her efforts on encouraging literacy among populations. For instance, in order to promote the

practice of reading among its member states' varied nations, UNESCO established a campaign in 1972 called "Books for All." The program's major goal was to develop and promote routines of reading among people all over the world.

Statement of the Problem

Lack of reading behaviors among students has been blamed for their current challenges, which include low exam results as well as bad English speaking and writing. Parents, lawmakers, and education experts in the nation are quite concerned about students' poor reading habits in secondary schools.

For a while now, Uganda has seen a decline in the country's students' achievement in U.N.E.B exams. Poor comprehension skills among learners are blamed for this decline. For instance, according to the report of the Executive Secretary of the Uganda National Assessments Board, 31.19% and 19.15%, respectively, of the candidates failed the U.N.E.B. exams in 2017 and 2018. The study (Chief Examiners study 2013) blamed the poor performance on a lack of thorough and lengthy reading, poor communication skills, a failure to comprehend the questions, and poor orthography or spelling abilities. The study advised pupils to read widely in order to increase their knowledge of words and widen their understanding (Micheal et al., 2023).

The Uganda Education Service Commission released another report in 2014 that again showed a decline in pupils' English proficiency. Only 45.2% of test takers successfully completed the subject to be eligible for university study, with 20.9% receiving a grade of 9 in English in 2014.

According to a study of literary works, higher education pupils and schoolchildren have been the main subjects for investigations on reading habits in Uganda. The investigator is interested in looking into reading habits and their effects on the academic achievement among pupils at Bukwo Senior Secondary School in light of the fact that there is no research on the subject in the literature regarding students in secondary schools in Uganda (Victoria et al., 2023).

Objectives of the study

- 1. To investigate the reading habits of students of Bukwo Senior Secondary School.*
- 2. To find out the types of materials they read and their purposes for reading*
- 3. To find out the perception of students on reading habits and academic performance in Literature and the factors that affect their reading habits.*

Research Questions

- 1. What are the reading interests of students of Bukwo Senior secondary students?*
- 2. What types of materials do they read and for what purposes do they read?*
- 3. What is the perception of students on reading habits and academic performance and what factors affects their reading?*

Methodology

Research Design

The research used a quantitative survey approach. Gathering, evaluating, and interpreting statistical text were all part of the quantitative investigation. It served as a method for putting theories about the relationships between variables to the test. Graphs are typically used to show relationships between quantitative factors. Quantitative research is another type of study where the researchers define and quantify the degree of relationship among a number of variables or sets of scores using correlational statistics.

Population for the Study

Any group of people or things that share at least one trait are referred to as a community. For example, the following types of groupings may be defined as the participants in various survey research studies conducted in secondary schools. Every student in Form One, Form Two, Form Three, every student who attends school during the day, every boarder or boarder, and every student majoring in the general arts. Peil (1995) also notes that the components of a community ought to remain the same, either by sharing a shared citizenship or residing in a defined territory. Teenagers in Forms 1, 2, and 3 at Bukwo Senior Secondary School in Bukwo District made up the population that was under study. There are 1,893 pupils in all. There are 876 females and 1,017 males.

Sampling Procedures

A sample, according to Singleton (2010), is the section of the plan that specifies how cases are to be chosen for observations. Consequently, the term "random sampling" refers to a method where each component of a set, such as every instance in a population, is given an equal opportunity of being chosen or a tiny subset of a population is chosen for the purpose of analysis and observation. A sample size of 7% of the total enrollment of 1,893 pupils, or a total of 133 pupils from Forms 1, 2, and 3, will be chosen for the study in order to obtain an adequate representation for the data collection.

Instrument for Data Collection

Research tools are thought of as a means through which investigators can obtain information for their study. Among the many tools used to gather data are surveys, interviews, investigation, and verbal dialogue between participants and those they are interviewing. As a data collection tool, the questionnaire is thought to have more advantages over other research methods like the interview and observation.

Data Analysis

The data collected was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS, a software package, presents the social scientist with a useful working language for data analysis (Nelson et al., 2022). It had also been designed to make the system easily accessible to users with no prior computer experience.

RESULTS

Perception of reading

Table 8: Perception of reading

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Difficult	4	3.1
Interesting	89	67.9

Rewarding	6	4.6
Boring	10	7.6
Enjoyable	20	15.3
Non-response	2	1.5
Total	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

With regards to the perception of reading, Table 1 shows that generally, reading is well perceived by respondents. Majority of the respondents (67.9%) perceive reading as interesting, 15.3% perceive it as enjoyable, and 4.6% see it as rewarding. Only 7.6% and 3.1% indicated reading as boring and difficult respectively.

Reading beyond class schedule

Table 2: Reading beyond class schedule

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	90	68.7
No	37	28.2
Non-response	4	3.1
Total	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2020

It is therefore not surprising that when they asked to indicate whether they read after classes, Table 2 shows that majority of them (68.7%) indicated they do read. The implication of this finding is that, majority of the respondents do not depend solely on what is been taught in class but do some form of reading beyond what is taught in the class.

Frequency of reading

Table 3: Frequency of reading

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Daily	82	62.6
Weekly	30	22.9
Once every two weeks	2	1.5
Monthly	11	8.4
Others (please specify)	4	3.1
Non-response	2	1.5
Total	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

The respondents were also asked to indicate the frequency with which they read. Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (62.6%) read daily and 22.9% read weekly. Others are once a month and once every two weeks.

Time spent per day in reading

Table 4: Time spent per day in reading

Hours spent in reading per day	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 to 2 hours	62	47.3
2 to 3 hours	36	27.5
3 to 4 hours	12	9.2
4 to 5 hours	10	7.6
Others (please specify)	11	8.4
Total	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

The respondents were asked to indicate the time they spend reading per day. Table 4 shows that 47.3% read 1 to 2 hours a day and 27.5% read 2 to 3 hours a day. Others are 3 to 4 hours (9.2%) and 4 to 5 hours (7.6%).

TYPES OF READING MATERIALS

The researcher wanted to know the types of materials read by the students, that is whether they read story books, textbooks, class notes, newspapers or magazines.

The respondents were given the chance to tick all that apply.

Table 5: Materials read

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Storybooks	95	72.5
Textbook	87	66.4
Class Notes	79	60.3
Newspapers	41	31.3
Magazines	42	32.1
Others	8	6.1

Source: Field Study, 2022

According to the findings (Table 5), 66.4% of the participants read educational materials, 60.3% read class notes, 31.3% read publications, and 32.1% read magazines. Storybooks were read by 72.5% of participants. Some intriguing results from the study indicate that the majority of the participants read picture books. Since participants would need to read their class notes in order to complete their exams, the investigator had anticipated seeing a response of 100% rather than just 60.3%.

Type of story books they read

The respondents were further asked if they read fiction or novel as a storybook. Table 6 shows that majority of them (91.6%) read both and 8.4% do not read any storybooks.

Table 6: Type of storybooks read (Fiction or Novel)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Both	120	91.6
None	11	8.4

Total	131	100
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Source: Field Study, 2022

Number of books read per term

As a follow up, respondents were also asked to indicate the number of books they read per term. Table 7 shows that 17.6% read one book per term, 22.9% read two books, 27.5% read three books and 18.3% read four books per term.

Table 7: Number of books read per term

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
One book per term	23	17.6
Two books	30	22.9
Three books	36	27.5
Four books	24	18.3
Others	11	8.4
Non-response	7	5.3
Total	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

Access to reading materials

Next, the investigator was interested in finding out how they got access to their studying material. The number of applicable replies was questioned of the individuals who responded. According to Table 8, the vast majority of those who participated (69.5%) borrow them from their friends, 57.3% buy them, and 49.6% check them out from the library. Other sources include family members (30.5%) and the public library (8.4%). It is evident that the material they read comes from friends and the school library.

Table 9: Access to reading materials

Response	Frequency	Percentage
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Purchase	75	57.3
From Friends	91	69.5
From Relatives	40	30.5
From School Library	65	49.6
From Public Library	11	8.4
Others	2	1.5

Source: Field Study, 2022

PURPOSE FOR READING

The researcher then wanted to know from the respondents their purposes for reading.

An option was given to the respondents to tick as many that apply.

Table 10: Reasons for reading

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To compliment my studies	52	39.7
To pass examination	66	50.4
For Pleasure	47	35.9
To acquire Knowledge	93	71.0
To improve my grades	55	42.0
To learn new things	92	70.2
To improve my vocabulary	87	66.4
To improve my spoken and written English	84	64.1
Others	8	6.1

Source: Field Study, 2022

Table 10 shows the respondents mostly read to acquire knowledge (71.0%), learn new things (70.2%), improve on their vocabulary (66.4%), and improve on their verbal and

written English. Others are to pass their examinations (50.4%) and to improve on their grades (42.0%). Only 35.9% of the respondents indicated they read for pleasure.

Enjoyment of reading

The respondents were asked to indicate how they feel when they engage in reading, whether they enjoy it very much, quite a lot, a bit, not much or not at all.

Table 11: Enjoying reading

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very much	83	63.4
Quite a lot	30	22.9
A bit	9	6.9
Not much	8	6.1
Not at all	1	0.8
Total	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

Table 12 shows that most of the respondents (63.4%) enjoy reading very much. This is followed by enjoy reading quite a lot (22.9%), a bit (6.9%), and not much (6.1%). Only 0.8% indicated they do not enjoy reading at all.

PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS READING HABITS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The study sought to find out from students whether reading has enhanced their academic performance, so they were asked if reading has actually enhanced their academic performance. The result (Table 13) shows that majority of the students (96.9%) agree that reading has enhanced their academic performance

Table 13: Academic Performance

Reading influence on academic performance	Frequency	Percentage

Yes	127	96.9
No	4	3.1
Total	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

As a follow-up question the respondents were asked to indicate the specific ways in which reading has impacted on their academic performance by strongly agreeing, agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements:

Table 14: Extent to which you agree with the following statements on reading;

Statements	Responses		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
<i>It has improved my ability to understand</i>	78(59.5%)	47(35.9%)	2(1.5%)
<i>My written english has improved</i>	81(61.8%)	42(32.1%)	4(3.1%)
<i>I can now speak English fluently</i>	65(49.6%)	58(44.3%)	2(1.5%)
<i>It has broadened my horizon</i>	51(38.9%)	53(40.5%)	9(6.9%)
<i>I do better in my examinations</i>	62(47.3%)	57(43.5%)	2(1.5%)

Source: Field Study, 2022

According to Table 14, participants gave a variety of answers. While the majority of the participants (59.5%) wholeheartedly agreed, and disapproved with the assertion that "deciphering has enhanced their ability to comprehend," only 1.5% were strongly in agreement with the second claim 1. 61.8% of the people surveyed strongly agreed, 32.1% agreed, and 3.1% disagreed with the second statement 2's claim that reading has enhanced their written English. The data shows that more participants strongly agreed with the third statement—that their spoken English has improved—compared to 44.3% who agreed and 1.5% who disagreed, with 49.6% of participants. A little over 40% of the people surveyed agree with assertion 4, 38.9% definitely agree, and 6.9% dispute that reading has enlarged their horizons.

Use of leisure time

The respondents were asked to indicate how they used of their leisure time. The results (Table 19) shows that they used their leisure time to do various things including reading storybooks (26.7), listening to music 8.4%, browsing the internet (7.6%), and watching movies (6.9%).

Others are visiting social media sites, watching TV, and engaging in sporting activities.

Table 15: Use of leisure time

Leisure time	Frequency	Percentage
Watch TV	8	6.1
Read storybooks	35	26.7
Browse the internet	10	7.6
Visit social media sites	9	6.9
Listen to music	11	8.4
Watch movies	9	6.9
Engage in sporting activities	3	2.3

<i>Others (please specify)</i>	1	0.8
<i>Non-responses</i>	1	0.8
<i>Error in Answer</i>	44	33.8
<i>Total</i>	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

FACTORS THAT AFFECT OR HINDER READING HABITS

The respondents were required to indicate the factors that affect or hinder their reading habits. The results (Table 20) shows that the three main hindrances to their reading are lack of time to read (30.5%), lack of money to buy the books (16.0%), and lack of access to reading materials (14.5%). Others are lack of interest in reading and lack of encouragement to read.

Table 16: Hindrances to reading

<i>Hindrances to reading</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Lack of access to reading materials</i>	19	14.5
<i>Lack of money to buy the books</i>	21	16.0
<i>Lack of interest in reading</i>	10	7.6
<i>Lack of time to read</i>	40	30.5
<i>Was not encourage to read</i>	5	3.8
<i>Others (please specify)</i>	1	0.8
<i>Non-response</i>	5	3.8
<i>Total</i>	131	100

Source: Field Study, 2022

Conclusion

According to the results of the investigation, it was discovered that the idea that Africans have not developed a habit of reading is not completely true because the majority of the participants were discovered to read a variety of publications outside of their regular school hours, including fiction, novels, magazines, and newspapers, etc. Literature was also found to have a variety of positive effects on students' educational achievement, including acquiring information, verbal and writing English enhancements, grades, exam achievement, and horizon expansion.

Recommendations

In order to determine the books that the pupils will find interesting and purchase them for the library's collection, administrators might organize a poll. The library abled to have a well-balanced assortment with appealing content thanks to student suggestions for resources to be bought for it.

The PTA and other interested parties should work with the institution's administration to find more recent publications to add to the library's collection. The pupils were encouraged to use the libraries and have access to sufficient reading resources as a result.

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