

Poor reading culture among nigerians

[Education](#)



Poor Reading Culture among Nigerians The way of life of a nation is influenced by the percentage of its citizen who are literate. Cuba, for example, is adjacent to the US and has the highest rate of literacy in the world. This is among the reasons why Cuba has a vibrant economy despite decades of diplomatic conflicts with the strongest nation in the world (Henry, 2004). Tracy (2008) asserts that being a former British colony, Nigeria's literacy culture ought to be as standardized as that of the Britain. About 99% of British citizens can read and write. The same cannot be said of Nigeria. Henry (2004), states that out of the 814 million illiterate people in the world, developing countries, especially in Africa, represent a huge percentage. However, Latin America, Asia, and others are making frantic efforts to drastically reduce the illiteracy rate, but owing to the following reasons, the same cannot be said of Africa. Tracy (2008) asserts that being a former British colony, Nigeria's literacy culture ought to be as standardized as that of the Britain. About 99% of British citizen can read and write. The same cannot be said of Nigeria. Henry (2004), states that out of the 814 million illiterates in the world, the third world countries, most especially in Africa, have a huge percentage of these illiterates. However, Latin America, Asia, and others are making frantic efforts to drastically reduce illiteracy rate, but owing to the following reasons, the same cannot be said of Africa. Poverty: In sub-Saharan Africa, the impact of poverty is deeply felt. Only a few people live above the poverty line. About 80% of Africans live under hazardous conditions. The per capita income of an average citizen in Nigeria, " the giant of Africa" with its abundant natural resources, is two dollars. This, in no little measure, affects the reading habits of Nigerians. Many are too poor to send their children to school. They lack money to buy books and pay school fees.

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Corruption: Corruption has a profound effect in Nigeria. The government is trying to fight corruption, which has drastically affected Nigerians reading culture. Corruption is present everywhere in Nigeria, from government institutions to private organizations. In schools, for instance, many students prefer to indulge in immoral acts rather than face their studies diligently. Situations like trading sex for grades, sales of ungraded textbooks to students at high fees, using money to buy examination grades, and cheating in examinations abound in our institutions of higher learning. Those who engage in these infamous acts consider reading a waste of time.

Noise culture: A learning environment requires places for quiet study. Most schools are in densely populated areas, where distractions prevent the smooth flow of learning. Moreover, the “ illiteracy syndrome” has an adverse effect on the psyche of many Nigerian citizens. Most people perceive noise to be an integral part of their culture.

Undue importance attached to wealth: Many Nigerian people celebrate mediocrity at the expense of intellectuals. This is manifest in our rush for material things. Some people abandon their educational careers for the pursuit of money. Many have abandoned their education in search of “ quick money, ” which they believe can be gotten in business or politics. Many people run away from the village schools to take up jobs in Lagos.

Lack of reading language: In many homes, the language of reading is introduced late; the first contact point of some children with this language is in school. As children grow older, reading and its associated activities become herculean.

Dearth of libraries: libraries play an important role in the promotion of reading habits. However, these libraries (school and public) are either non-existent or not playing their expected role. State and local government, and proprietors of schools (government and individuals)

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have not complied with library provisions in the National Policy on Education (NPE). Public libraries are not being established where they are needed. The few existing public libraries are neither adequately funded nor stocked with reading resources that can affect the lives of citizens. Promoting Reading Habits among Nigerians Having considered some of the factors responsible for poor reading culture in Nigeria, it is pertinent to suggest strategies that can be adopted to turn the country to a reading nation and her citizens a reading people. Imbibing the culture of reading can assist in finding solutions to socio-economic and political problems. Improved Funding: Fund is crucial to the development of education and libraries; it is a sine qua none of performance. Therefore, the Nigerian government has to improve its funding of the education sector, by increasing funds allocated to schools. This would affect provision of school library services. Funds should be earmarked for establishing, equipping and maintenance of libraries (public library inclusive). Sufficient fund should be provided to acquire adequate, current and relevant library materials — books, magazines, charts, transparencies; photographic slides, and computer instructional packages. Concerted effort should be made by the appropriate supervisory body to monitor effective utilization of funds allocated to the library. Establishment of libraries: Efforts must be made by government at different levels to establish more libraries in their schools and for the private, club, communities, Religious bodies, organizations (NGOs and CBOs), Old Students Associations, professional bodies, and individuals should be encouraged to assist in the promotion of reading by establishing libraries or supporting already established school and public libraries. This can be done through stocking libraries with good reading materials that can impact on the lives of Nigerians. These libraries

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should also be provided with professionally qualified personnel to render services to the users. Continued provision and access to books: provision of a varied collection of enjoyable and information-rich books is a major contribution of the library towards reading promotion. Availability and accessibility of instructional and pleasurable books stimulate development of reading and attainment of permanent literacy. It has been found out that school libraries are the principal source of books for supplementary instructional resources and voluntary reading. It must, however, be pointed out that many schools do not have libraries at all. Where they exist, the stock in these libraries is grossly insufficient to play the expected role.

Associating reading with pleasure: Children and students can be motivated to read and thus form good reading habit through storytelling, reading together (shared reading), formation of reading/book clubs as well as provision of conducive reading environment devoid of unwarranted noise and distractions. Storytelling is a basic and enduring form of literacy expression in Nigerian cultures. Librarians should encourage the integration of storytelling and the oral literacy tradition with the school curriculum especially in primary school. Telling children interesting stories encourages their attention and focus, develops their listening skills, and helps stimulate voluntary reading. Another way of introducing pleasure or fun to reading is by reading together. Reading together can take place in the classroom, library, or at home. Parents, school librarians, teachers, and children can read aloud to themselves at home, in the class or library, getting to an exciting point in the story book before stopping. The interest generated will inspire many students to continue the story on their own. In the course of shared reading, the passage read aloud can be discussed and a new book

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can be introduced to the students before its shared reading commences. The experience of reading and hearing increases speed; facilitates comprehension, good pronunciation; develops reading and critical thinking skills. In addition, shared reading puts confidence in some timid children and encourages them develop a voluntary reading habit. Excursions to libraries and exhibitions: Children/students in schools where there are no libraries can be taken on excursions to libraries in other schools or in their locality. They can also be taken to book exhibitions/fairs. During such visits, children would be introduced to the library and its resources. They will also be educated on the importance of books and reading to their education and future lives.

Encouragement of library usage: Teachers should encourage maximum use of the library and its resources by giving pupils/students

assignments/projects that would necessitate frequent visits to the library.

Such assignments/projects must be practical. They may entail reading a novel and summarizing it, or using the library resources to solve an

environmental problem. Appropriate legislation: It has earlier been pointed out that the National Policy on Education NPE statements on the provision of libraries have not been implemented by the stakeholders. Non-

implementation stems from the absence of appropriate legislation to back up these statements. It is, therefore, been suggested that appropriate legislation be enacted to enforce compliance with the policy statements.

Such legislation should stipulate stiffer penalties such as closure of school(s), for non-compliance with the policy statements. Resuscitation of mobile

library services: Promotion of reading habits should not be confined to students in the classroom or the physical library alone. Rather, consideration and extension of library services should be given to children and youth who,

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for one reason or another, are out of the normal school or library environment. This can be done through mobile library service, a formidable service provided by the public library. In the 1970s, Nigerian populace in the rural areas — farmers, nomadic fishermen, and cattle rearers, used to enjoy this service. Regrettably, since the 1980s, this important library service has become moribund. To attain the objective of the universal basic education as well as carry out the goals contained in the NPE, states and local governments in Nigeria must revive the mobile library service. Once revived, the library would carry reading, vocational, and instructional materials to remote communities. The library would be able to serve the needs of school children, dropouts, adult illiterates, semi-literates, nomadic fishermen and cattle rearers, and other categories of people who wish to be associated with reading and education. References Adigun, Adebayo (1984) " Lagos Central Library - Past and Present" Lagos Librarian 19 (2) pp. 12-13 Antwi, I. K (1985) " The reading habits and interest of secondary school students in Bauchi Metroplis: a case study. " Lagos: Nigerian Libraries 2 (2) pp. 52-53. Collins, Martha, and Cheek, Earl (1999). Assessing and guiding reading instruction. New York: McGraw Hill. Dike, Virginia W. (1998) " Reading promotion in Nigeria: the role of school libraries" In Elaturoti, David (ed.) Nigerian School Librarianship: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Ibadan: Nigerian School Library Association. pp 173-188. Douglas, M. P. (1961) Primary school library and its services. Paris: UNESCO. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National Policy on Education, 4th ed. Lagos: NERDC Press. Fosudo, S. (2010) " Reading as part to success" A Lecture delivered at the College Library Day, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Otto/Ijanikin, Lagos on February 24th. Henry, P. (2004) " Children reading habits and their use of media: <https://assignbuster.com/poor-reading-culture-among-nigerians/>

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