

Analyzing the Impact of Student's Reading Habits on Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the reading habits of students and their impact on their academic achievements. The study was conducted within the confines of District Dera Ghazi Khan, specifically focusing on high and higher secondary schools. Employing a qualitative approach, data was collected and analyzed. The results were derived from interviews conducted with six students, serving as a basis for the findings. The research revealed that the majority of the participants recognized the significance of reading, engaging in both scientific literature and fictional works such as stories and novels. Notably, only one student admitted to reading solely with the intention of passing examinations. These outcomes firmly establish the substantial influence of reading habits on academic performance, illustrating a clear correlation between the two. In light of these findings, it is recommended that teachers encourage students to utilize the library for reading purposes and assign additional reading material to foster a stronger reading habit among students

INTRODUCTION

Students develop consistent reading habits to comprehend school subjects and succeed in exams. These habits play a crucial role in shaping academic achievement. Reading and academic performance are intertwined, mutually impacting each other. Students' reading habits vary due to their diverse backgrounds. For instance, some students demonstrate excellent reading habits, while others exhibit poor ones. Academic success indicates the depth of information attained through education (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012).

Students must cultivate good reading habits if they want to support a creative education. Consistent reading is a must for a reading habit, particularly in free time. Students can experience a wonderful journey of self-discovery and a deeper understanding of their own experiences through reading. The formation of a reading habit is most effective during early school years, but once established, it can endure throughout one's lifetime (Green, 2001).

Palani (2012) emphasizes that fostering a reading habit is vital for building a literate society. This practice not only molds an individual's personality but also enhances logical reasoning, thinking skills, and critical thinking abilities. Effective learning relies on effective reading, as it is intertwined with academic achievement. Therefore, developing proficient reading habits is a prerequisite for educational success. By actively adopting such habits, students can improve their comprehension skills, ultimately enhancing their academic performance.

It is often wondered how people in the past managed to find ample time for reading before the advent of television. In their free time, they would spend hours reading books, novels, periodicals, and newspapers. Many schools and teachers still encourage their students to read books outside of what is required of them. The prevalence of television and other forms of entertainment, which enthrall both young and elderly, according to Palani (2012), has reduced the importance and influence of the reading habit in modern times. The current emphasis is on encouraging pupils to read solely for the sake of passing tests, which reflects the educational system's minimal interest in cultivating a genuine joy for reading.

Academic success and reading have a close relationship. A student's performance increases not only in academic courses but also in a variety of other scenarios when they have good reading habits. These reading practices allow children to learn important and worthwhile information. For kids to succeed and excel in life, having good reading habits is essential (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Dadzie (2008), reading is the skill of comprehending and deriving personal growth from the words within a text or document. This implies the process of extracting meaning from the information provided. Individuals engage in reading for various purposes, such as acquiring new knowledge, deriving pleasure, and seeking personal enrichment.

Understanding written words and learning from them through reading promotes personal development. This highlights how crucial it is to infer meaning from textual information. Reading is done for a variety of purposes, including as fun, expanding one's knowledge, and discovering new things. By

reading books, magazines, newspapers, and other forms of information, people can learn a wide range of things about people and get a variety of experiences. The development of a reading habit is crucial since it enhances reading strategies and abilities. If youngsters do not have the opportunity to develop a love of reading while they are young, it is more difficult to do so later in life. (Deavers, 2000).

According to Palani, reading involves recognizing symbols and associating them with appropriate meanings. It necessitates identification and comprehension, with comprehension skills aiding students in understanding new vocabulary both in context and independently (Palani, 2012).

Therefore, instilling the habit of reading from childhood is vital, as reading habits play a pivotal role in achieving practical efficiency. As the saying goes, "Laws die but books never," highlighting the enduring value of books as a practical means of transmitting knowledge across generations (Issa et al., 2012). Singh (2011) carried out research into high school pupils' study practices and academic performance. 100 pupils were chosen at random from two high schools for the study. The results showed that there were significant variations between boys and girls in terms of their academic performance and study habits.

In contrast, a study by Bhan and Gupta (2010) that looked at academic achievement and study habits among students from both scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste backgrounds. The results showed that gender had no bearing on students' study behaviors and academic success.

Consistently engaging in this activity can lead to the development of a reading habit. Additionally, Tampubolon (1990:41) affirms that building a reading habit requires a considerable amount of time as interest and motivation play crucial roles in its formation.

According to Reid (2007:2), habits serve as emotional regulators or sources of comfort. They influence someone's thoughts and behavior by using the ingrained mental processes that have become known to them. In order to understand information and find amusement from written material, reading is a regular behavior that can be described as a habit. Reading can take many different forms, including books, periodicals, newspapers, and works of fiction and non-fiction.

The reading preferences of middle school pupils at a large public school in Atlanta, Georgia, were examined in a research by Higginbotham (1999). The study's findings confirmed a number of cultural preconceptions by highlighting gender variations in reading habits. Romance, friendship, animal stories, adventures, and historical fiction were all genres that women reported a stronger interest in. In contrast, males showed a larger propensity for sports and science as well as a higher predilection for non-fiction than did girls.

According to Gallo (2007), books are most beneficial when read at the right time in a reader's life to fully comprehend and assimilate each work of literature. The impact of students' daily reading habits on their academic performance, however, is poorly understood. Students read every day for a variety of reasons, including enjoyment and knowledge acquisition (Issa et al., 2012). Since reading accounts for a sizeable amount of the knowledge retained when studying, many

students are aware of the crucial role reading plays in learning. Therefore, students' regular reading habits may have an impact on their ability to learn and, as a result, their academic achievement. Good study habits are closely related to students' academic success and achievements (Issa et al., 2012).

Reading, according to Guthrie, Benneth, and McGough (2007), entails interpreting written or printed words to determine their meaning. It lays the groundwork for education and has a big impact on people's daily life. Issa et al. (2012) further highlight the fact that reading is frequently connected to books since written words capture the essence of the reading action. People can learn new things, become engrossed in stories, and investigate various viewpoints and views by reading. It allows for the formation of unique ideas and beliefs. Therefore, reading gives us access to a wealth of knowledge that is necessary for our survival and personal development in day- to-day life.

When reading begins to occur regularly for a person without any conscious effort, they have developed a reading habit. This habit develops subconsciously as the person reads frequently until it becomes a normal part of their daily routine. However, it should be mentioned that a significant part of students does not have strong reading habits, which may be the reason why they perform poorly on school tests. (Issa et al., 2012).

The lack of effective reading habits among students has become a major concern for all stakeholders within the education system, primarily due to its negative impact on academic performance in exams (Issa et al., 2012). The presence of inadequate programs within schools has hindered the development of positive reading practices. Consequently, the majority of students within the educational system today demonstrate a notable absence of enthusiasm for engaging voluntarily, pleasurably, and extensively in reading practices (Issa et al., 2012).

According to Senechal and Cornell (1993), the Vygotskyian viewpoint, children learn skills through interactions with adults. According to Vygotsky, parents are extremely important in the development of their children's reading abilities. Cook-Cottone (2004), Dodici and Pertson (2003), and Rashid (2005) all noted that children are more likely to take reading seriously when they get support and praise for their reading efforts at home.

Parental support is crucial for motivating kids to read at home and in school, according to Smith et al. (2007). Studies by Fan and Chen (2001) and Dearing et al. (2006) have indicated that parental involvement in their children's reading has a positive impact on academic performance. When parents actively involve, support, and motivate their kids, the kid is more motivated to put in a lot of effort, which leads to academic success (Melhuish et al., 2001).

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative methodology to collect data and address four specific research questions:

What are the various reading habits exhibited by students? How do reading habits affect students' academic performance? What motivate students to engage in reading?

Are students' reading preferences and their academic success related?

This research methodology was employed in the study in an effort to gain a complete grasp of these problems.

To find out more about students' reading preferences and how they impact their academic achievement, the researchers conducted interviews. They also provided recommendations for future behavior modification. In order to gather accurate data regarding participants' reading preferences, direct observation was also performed.

The qualitative methodology was adopted in order to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon by allowing the researcher to delve into the actual reading habits of a variety of students.

Population

This study was focused on students in a public school in a city in Dera Ghazi Khan. Cycles 1, 2, and 3 were the three cycles in the school.

Student Population: 300 students

Sample

The student population comprised 300 students. The actual sample size consisted of 7 students, slightly exceeding 1% of the total population. The researchers conducted interviews with these seven students. The selection criteria were based on availability and accessibility, making it a convenience sample.

The small number of participants prevents generalization of the focus group's findings. Nevertheless, they offer insightful data regarding what students believe and think about the practices of buying, borrowing from, and reading books.

Instruments

Semi-structured interviews served as the main technique of data collection for this study's qualitative research design, which was used to answer the study's research questions. The interviews were really helpful in studying and understanding the subject of student reading habits and how they affect academic performance. They helped the study's investigation and offered in-depth insights. Seven students voluntarily agreed to participate in the interviews after being asked to do so. Participants received assurances that the researchers would keep their private information private, and the researchers adhered to stringent procedures to guarantee data confidentiality. The students were given the initials (S.1, S.2, S.3, S.4, S.5, S.6, S.7) in order to preserve their anonymity. The researcher also used direct observation, recording in-depth information about the students' regular trips to the school library and their general reading habits.

Validity

To ensure the validity of the study, the interview questions were developed based on a thorough review of relevant literature. This process involved cross-referencing the information with established research and the viewpoints of renowned scholars in the field, including Palani, Vygotsky, and others. Additionally, to further validate the interview questions, a team consisting of two teachers from the school participated in an initial interview and provided feedback. Adjustments were made to the questions based on their input, considering any comments that reached an agreement of 85% or higher.

Finally, an AQIO (Assessment and Quality Improvement Officer) volunteered to conduct a final review of the interview questions before their implementation. This comprehensive approach was taken to enhance the validity of the study.

Reading Habits among Students and its Effect On Academic Performance
 A survey method using questionnaires was used to acquire the data. The questionnaires were distributed to Dera Ghazi Khan pupils while they were in class with the aid of qualified research staff. A systematic simple random sampling technique was used to establish the sample size, and 20% of Dera Ghazi Khan's total student population, or 5261 pupils, were chosen. This sample size is in line with Babbie's (2005) guideline that for populations of 1000 or more, a sample size of 10-20% is suitable. Any mistakes, amendments, and rewordings were rectified and included in the questionnaire's final form based on the observations.

A great response rate of 95.0% was attained among the distributed 1,052 copies of the survey, with 1,000 responders filling out and returning the form.

Table 1. Population of the Study

Schools	Total No.	Sample Size	No Retrieved School	Percentage Retrieved Per School
Higher	4284	856	832	83.2
High	787	157	145	14.5
Private	190	38	23	2.3
Total	5261	1052	1000	100.00

Data Analysis

Table 2.Importance of Reading Novel or Fiction(N=1000)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Better Self Expression	625	62.5%
Learn New Things	149	14.9%
Imagine Things	101	10.1%
Complement Studies	85	8.5%
From Getting Bored	40	4.0%
Total	1000	100

Referring to Table 1, the data collected from a total of 1000 respondents reveals interesting insights. It demonstrates that 62.5% of respondents cited enhanced self-expression as the key benefit of reading fiction or novels. Additionally, 14.9% said they wanted to learn new things, while 10.1% mentioned their appreciation for the imaginative aspects of reading. In addition, 8.5% of the respondents believed that reading novels or fiction complements their studies, and 4.0% expressed that it helps them alleviate boredom. These results highlight the prevailing opinion among the respondents that reading novels or fiction plays a crucial role in enhancing their self-expression skills.

Table 3. Materials Read at Library (N=1000)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Lecture Notes	620	62.0%
Text Books	250	25%
Novels	30	3.0%
Other Materials	100	10.0%
Total	1000	100

Based on the information in Table 2, it can be seen that out of a total of 1000 respondents, 62.0% said they studied lecture notes when they went to the library. Additionally, 25.0% said they read textbooks, 3.0% said they read novels, and 10.0% said they read other materials when they went to the library. According to the most common response, most respondents prefer to use the library to study class notes. It's interesting that this conclusion runs counter to Ogbodo's (2010) suggestion that students read periodicals in addition to their lecture notes and textbooks. This advice is based on the theory that reading magazines on occasion might help pupils unwind, renew their minds, and prevent mental tiredness.

Table 4. Leisure Time (N=1000)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Visit Social Media Sites	620	62.0%
Read Novels	130	13.0%
Watch Movie	150	15.0%
Play Music	100	10.0%
Total	1000	100

Upon inquiry in Table 3, regarding their leisure time activities, the survey findings revealed that 62.0% of the participants showed a preference for visiting social media sites. Moreover, 13.0% of the respondents reported engaging in reading novels, while 15.0% mentioned watching movies as their preferred activity. Furthermore, 10.0% of the participants mentioned engaging in music-related activities in their free time. These findings show that a sizable majority of respondent's priorities using social media platforms during their free time rather than doing reading-related activities.

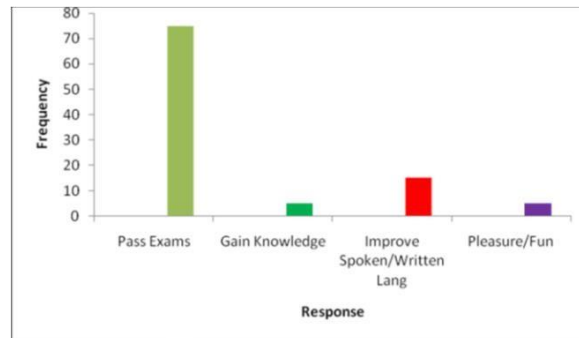


Figure 1. Engagement in Reading

Referring to Figure 1, among the 1000 respondents surveyed, 75.0% stated that their reading was primarily driven by the goal of passing examinations. When asked why they read, 5.0% said it was to learn new things, 15.0% said it helped them become more fluent in both spoken and written English, and 5.0% said it was just for fun and enjoyment.

These results show that the majority of survey participants read primarily for academic performance.

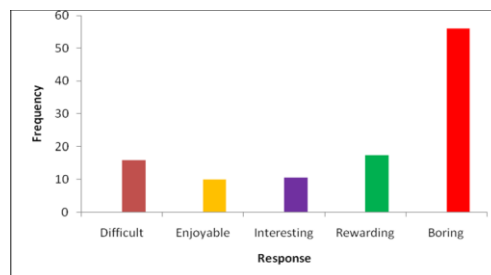


Figure 2. Perception about Reading

When 1000 people were asked about their opinions on reading, it was discovered that 10.9% of them thought it was challenging, 10.1% thought it was fun, 10.5% thought it was intriguing, and 12.5% thought it was rewarding. 56.0% of respondents said reading is uninteresting, though. These results imply that a sizable majority of people view reading to be a boring pastime. As a result, those who are not exposed to books early in life may have trouble subsequently forming good reading habits.

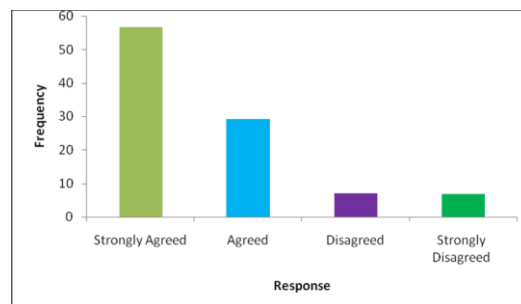


Figure 3. Influence of Reading on Academic Performance

Figure 3 shows that out of the total of 1000 respondents, 56.7% strongly agreed that reading has a favorable impact on academic performance, followed by 29.3% who agreed, 7.1% who disagreed, and 6.9% who severely disagreed.

According to these results, a sizable majority of respondents, or 86.0%, either agreed or strongly agreed that reading has an effect on kids' academic success. According to the study, kids who have good reading habits outperform those who have poor reading habits or don't read at all in terms of question understanding and increased self-expression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this qualitative study demonstrated that students have the ability to develop positive reading habits over time. They emphasized the influential role of parental and teacher encouragement in fostering these habits. The participants also acknowledged the significant impact of good reading habits on their academic performance. They expressed that their reading habits expanded their knowledge and contributed to improvements in both their academic performance and overall achievement. Furthermore, they reported enhanced performance across all subjects and attributed it to the establishment of effective reading habits.

This study's objectives were to investigate the reading preferences of pupils attending a Dera Ghazi Khan public school. The researcher also wanted to see how much these reading habits affected the pupils' academic performance. The researcher used two presumptions in her work:

1. On a regular basis, students engage in reading various genres of books during their free time.
2. The students' established reading habit contributes to their improvement in academic achievement.

The results revealed a significant association between good study habits and enhanced academic performance across different subjects. The participants reported that reading books and magazines expanded their knowledge and bolstered their confidence in their own intellectual abilities. Consequently, establishing effective reading habits positively impacted their overall academic achievement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study's results revealed that the majority of participants valued reading and understood how it helped them express themselves. It was concerning that only 18% of participants claimed to have read any novels or fiction in the two semesters prior, whereas 81.9% reported not having done so. The study also showed that a significant portion (75.0%) of the respondents only read to pass their exams.

According to the study's findings about library use, 62.0% of participants went there mostly to get lecture notes, 25.0% to get textbooks, and just 3.0% to read fiction or science fiction literature. The majority of participants in the study also thought that their reading habits had a direct impact on how well they did in school, highlighting the link between reading habits and academic success. In addition, the study found that participants' laziness was a significant obstacle to reading.

The study emphasized the crucial influence of external factors, particularly parental and teacher support, in fostering and reinforcing reading habits. The encouragement and guidance provided by parents and teachers act as catalysts, motivating students to embrace reading as a habit and integrate it into their daily lives. Additionally, the availability and accessibility of well-stocked libraries play a vital role in facilitating students' access to a wide range of reading materials.

Academic institutions should emphasize the importance of reading by integrating it into the curriculum, assigning relevant novels or works of fiction as mandatory readings. Faculty members should actively encourage students to visit libraries, which should maintain a diverse collection of books to cater to their interests. Moreover, a shift in the assessment paradigm, with greater weightage given to assignments and presentations, will encourage students to delve deeper into research and develop their information retrieval skills.

In conclusion, this study underscores the undeniable impact of reading habits on students' academic performance. By fostering a love for reading and creating an environment that supports and encourages this habit, educational institutions and stakeholders can contribute significantly to the overall academic success and personal growth of students. The cultivation of reading habits not only empowers individuals with knowledge but also equips them with essential skills necessary for their future endeavors.

Reccomendations

In light of the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- a) Teachers should actively encourage their pupils to use the library and read books other than their lecture notes, such as novels and fiction. It is crucial that the library maintain a wide variety of novels and fiction books in order to facilitate this.
- b) Further recommendations include making courses like communication skills required for all first-year students and mandating that they read a minimum of two novels or other works of fiction each semester. Similar to this, non-scoring courses for students in the 200 and 300 level should be developed, with the requirement that passing the course is required for graduation. These actions will significantly aid in the formation of kids' reading habits.
- c) Finally, it is advised that parents actively encourage reading in their kids from a young age and make it a part of their daily lives. Community libraries can be great places to encourage kids to read books and other literature. This routine will help them sharpen their written English and expressive skills, which will ultimately result in greater academic performance in the near future.

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