

Pleasure Reading among Adolescents in Enugu Public Libraries

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Abstract

The study focused on pleasure reading among adolescents in Enugu State Public Libraries. The study was guided by four objectives. The population of the study was made up of 168 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 21. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was developed based on the objectives of the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores and percentages. Findings reveal that 67.16 percent of the adolescents who read for pleasure in public libraries were secondary school students and the reading materials most preferred by them were books on true life stories. It was recommended, among others, that books on true life stories which attract the attention of adolescent readers should be made a major part of public library collection on pleasure reading.

Key words: Pleasure, Public, Libraries, Recreational, Adolescents, Reading

Introduction

Reading for pleasure has been defined in various ways by authors. British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) (2014) defines it as reading that is primarily for enjoyment. It encompasses a wide range of genres and publications which include both fiction and non-fiction. Clark and Rumbold (2006) defined reading for

pleasure as reading that people do out of their own free will, anticipating that satisfaction will result from it. Pullman (2004) defined it as a form of creativity and a way of connecting with text. UK Department of Education (2012) posits that active encouragement of reading for pleasure should be a core part of every student educational entitlement whatever their background or

attainment, as extensive reading and exposure to a wide range of texts make a huge contribution to students educational achievement. Gilbert and Fister (2011) observed that reading for pleasure can as well be called recreational reading, reading for fun or leisure reading.

Reading for pleasure is of immense benefit to young adults. BBC (2014) posits that reading for pleasure helps to increase sense of achievement, confidence, self esteem and self awareness in individuals: it widens horizons, helps to develop relationships, promotes inclusion and empathy through sharing of opinions and ideas; prevents boredom and promotes relaxation. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2002) suggests that leisure reading is more important for adolescent's educational success than their families' socio-economic status. Clark and Rumbold (2006) observed that people cannot be active or informed citizens unless they can read. The authors went on to say that reading, especially reading for pleasure has been identified as one of the major factors that can be used to lessen ignorance and broaden world view of individuals, especially adolescents. In the same vein, Parlette and Howard (2010) discovered that reading for pleasure allowed adolescents to develop intellectually, and gain perspectives on different topics, improves the possibility of learning new things. Babbitt-Bray, Pascarella and Pierson (2004) discovered that the more college

students read for pleasure, the more they develop a strong vocabulary and cultural literacy. Government of South Australia (2012) observed that reading for pleasure opens doors to people's inner and outer worlds, provides access to knowledge and power and can provide a lifetime of enjoyment. The Government of South Australia went on to say that reading for pleasure is important for educational, social and personal development and can influence children and adults to achieve their life goals and raise their self esteem. Howard (2011) also observed that reading for pleasure helped collage students formulate future vocational goals, either by providing important general knowledge or by expanding their vocational horizons, making them aware of new career possibilities. Among older women, reading for pleasure helps to reduce tension and nurture people emotionally (Cuban, 2001). Reading for pleasure is not restricted to printed works alone. It includes online reading, whether on a website or via an e-reader such as a kindle (BBC, 2014).

Different types of materials are available for people who engage in pleasure reading. Some of these include fiction materials like novels, short stories, jokes, poetry, lyrics and script; and nonfiction materials like reference books, newsletters, mails, biographies, memoirs, newspapers, magazines and websites. On the type of materials adolescents particularly read, Parlette and Howard (2010) observed that among their

respondents, 50 percent read general fiction, 21 percent read non-fiction (biographies, autobiographies, and true life stories). 15 percent read science fiction/fantasy while the remaining read other types of genre fiction. Clark & Foster (2005) examined reading choices of college students outside classroom, and discovered that magazines, websites, text messages, jokes and books/magazines about television programs emerged as the most popular reading choices. More than 50 percent of the people in the study indicated reading emails, fictions, comics, while newspapers were also popular choices. In a similar study, Bossman, Houston and Kelly (2010) discovered that among their respondents who were mostly adolescents, 50 percent preferred reading materials on mystery/suspense and another 50 percent preferred other choices like politics, religion, inspirational music or travel/health magazines.

Despite the many gains of pleasure reading, it has been observed that the urge to read for pleasure among adolescents is in decline. In UK, Sainsbury & Schagen (2004) observed that the percentage of school aged children who engage in reading for pleasure has dropped from 77% in 1998 to 71% in 2003. In the United States of America (USA), Office of research and Analysis (2007) observed that reading for pleasure among adolescents dropped from 35% in 1984 to 22% in 2004. In Australia too, Dickenson (2014) noted that reading

for pleasure among adolescents dropped from 75% in 2003 to 66% in 2012. Clark & Rumbold (2006), Cron (2008) and Gilbert & Fister (2011) attributed these drops in reading for pleasure to lack of time, overcrowded curriculum, the need to pass examinations and inability of many children to select appealing reading materials. Parlette & Howard (2006) observed that many academic libraries do not have pleasure reading collections. Clark & Rumbold (2006) stressed the importance of choice in fostering pleasure reading. The authors posit that when people participate in choosing what they want to read, many will read and enjoy, even if the books are difficult to understand. The authors advised that to promote pleasure reading among adolescents, pleasure reading collections should be established in academic libraries. The authors further advised that a quiet, comfortable reading area should be developed near pleasure reading collections. The authors posit that such a comfortable reading area will encourage adolescents to use the library for recreational reading. Clark and Foster (2005) discovered that activities that would help people read more would be meeting authors/celebrities, helping younger children read, reading for prizes, establishment of reading groups with friends and reading for charity. In Africa, the story is not different. Griswold, (2000) observed that reading for pleasure which was common among Nigerian adolescents and even adults in the

past, is gradually being eroded. Though there was no recorded data on the rate of the drop in reading for pleasure among Nigerian adolescents, Igwe (2011) noted that literacy rate dropped from 62% in 1992 to 52% in 2006. Griswold (2000) attributed the drop in reading for pleasure among Nigerians to inadequate library facilities, poverty and high cost of purchasing books and other reading materials. Ihejirika (2014) and Obafemi (2006) observed that the presence of technological devices like television, video and computer generated games at home occupy the time that would have been used for pleasure reading. Ifedili (2009) noted that poor feeding, poor accommodation and the location of academic institutions in busy urban area are some of the problems affecting pleasure reading among adolescents in Nigerian institutions of higher learning. The author opined that though pleasure reading is currently in decline, there is hope that it should be revived in the future if teachers, lecturers, administrators of higher institutions and government should devise means of encouraging adolescents to read for pleasure. Akabuike & Asika (2012) advised that to encourage adolescents to read for pleasure, schools and libraries should provide access to interesting and meaningful reading materials. The authors posit that reading programmes should be designed for adolescents in institutions of higher learning. Oladunjoye (2012) recommended that back to reading campaign should be organized in

schools, colleges and community centers to encourage adolescents to read. Though different definitions and age ranges have been used to denote adolescents such as those of American Psychological Association (APA) (2002), United Nations (2011) and Sacks (2003)' Adolescents as used in this study refer to people between the ages of 10 and 24 Edberg (n.d). Brown and Jekielek (2005) posit that people of this age bracket are in transition from childhood to adulthood. Many explore the world around them through pleasure reading (Howard, 2011) and are the greatest users of public libraries (Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu, 2012).

Researchers such as Parlette and Howard (2010); Clark & Rumbold (2006) and Clark & Foster (2005) amongst others have chronicled much on reading for pleasure among adolescents in Europe and America. Though a body of research exists in adolescent and reading in Nigeria, much of this work is on poor attitude to reading for pleasure and poor reading culture among Nigerians. None of these studies is conducted on the few Nigerian adolescents who still read. It is this gap that this work intends to fill.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to examine pleasure reading among young adults in Enugu State Public Libraries. Specifically, the study:

1. determined the perceived benefits of pleasure reading by adolescents in Enugu State.

2. identified the types of books read by adolescents in Enugu State
3. determined problems militating against pleasure reading activities of adolescents in Enugu State.
4. determined strategies for promoting pleasure reading among adolescents in Enugu State.

Methodology

Area of Study: The Area of study was Enugu State. The study covered public libraries in Enugu State. Enugu State is in the South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The libraries are National library of Nigeria, Enugu; Enugu State Library Board of Enugu, Awgu, Nsukka and Children's Centre Library, Nsukka.

Design of the Study: The study adopted descriptive survey design.

Population of the Study: The population of the study was 631 adolescents pleasure readers who were registered with the libraries under study. There are 371 girls and 260 boys. Adolescents as used in this study refer to people between the ages of 12 -24.

Sample for the study: The sample size is 168 adolescent pleasure readers. Convenience sampling was adopted for the study. This is a sampling method in which a researcher selects for the sample size those study units that happen to be available at the time of data collection. The nature of the population (adolescents) made it necessary that this sampling method should be used as most adolescents are students. It is likely that many will be away to school especially those

living in school dormitories and hostels. Moreover there is the possibility that many registered adolescents may be holiday makers who visited their relatives at Enugu state and must have gone back to their residences.

Instrument for data collection: A structured questionnaire based on four point scale measurement of Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; and Strongly Disagree =1; was used for data collection. The questionnaire had four clusters. Each cluster reflected a research question and each research question represented an objective of the study. The questionnaire was validated by three academic staff of the department of Library and Information Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their observations, ideas and opinions were incorporated in the questionnaire. The validated questionnaire was then trial tested on 16 young adult pleasure readers of Anambra State Library Board, Awka. The trial test was computed by the Cronbach's alpha method of internal consistency and reliability. The reliability coefficient was 0.76 which showed that the instrument is highly reliable.

Method of Data Collection: A total of 168 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents. Only 134 copies (79.76 percent) were retrieved. The data collected were analyzed using percentages and mean scores.

Findings of the study

The following findings were made.

Respondent's characteristics: Academic qualifications showed that 25 (18.66 %) respondents had West African School Certificate (WAEC), 19 (14.18%) had Ordinary National Diploma (OND), 90 (67.16 %) were secondary school students and 25 (18.66 percent) were undergraduate students. Also, 19 (14.18 %) of the respondents were civil servants. This implies that majority of adolescents who read in public libraries for

pleasure are secondary school students. Analysis of respondents age range show that 18 (10.7%) are within 12-15, 81(48.2%) within 16-18, 32 (19.04%) within 19-21 and 37 within 21-24 age ranges. 71 (42.2 %) were males while 97 (57.7 %) were females.

Perceived Benefits of Pleasure Reading: Findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Responses of Benefits of Pleasure Reading on Adolescents.

S/n	Benefits of Reading for Pleasure Pleasure reading helps to:	Mean Scores	Decision
1	gain knowledge of different topics	3.49	A
2	expose the individual to new ideas	3.54	A
3	fight loneliness	3.07	A
4	improve the power of oration	3.24	A
5.	develop character	3.25	A
6.	choose a career	2.97	A
7.	connect with others imaginatively	3.09	A
8.	provide information on high risk behaviors	3.06	A
9.	develop somebody intellectually	3.67	A
10.	develop positive outlook on life	3.17	A

Key: A=Agreed; NA=Not Agreed

Table 1 shows that all the listed items are benefits of pleasure reading on the lives of adolescents because all fall above the criterion mean of 2.5. The table shows that the highest benefit is in the intellectual development of

readers while its lowest benefit is on choosing a career.

Types of Materials Adolescents use for Pleasure Reading. Findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean responses of Types of Materials Adolescents read during Pleasure Reading

S/n	Types of Materials Read by Adolescents during Pleasure Reading	Mean	Decision
1.	Biographies.	2.91	A
2.	Author biographies	2.90	A
3.	True life stories	3.67	A
4.	Science Fiction	3.09	A

5.	Magazines	3.48	A
6.	Websites	3.30	A
7.	Text Messages	3.04	A
8.	Jokes.	3.31	A
9.	Comedy.	3.32	A
10.	Adventure	3.37	A
11.	Horror stories	2.76	A

Key: A=Agreed; NA=Not Agreed

Table 2 shows that all the materials listed in items 1-11 are read by adolescents. The table also shows that true life stories constitute the greatest materials read by adolescents in public

libraries while horror stories are the least materials read by them.

Challenges inhibiting Pleasure Reading among Adolescents in Nigeria. Findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean responses of Challenges Inhibiting Pleasure Reading among Adolescents in Nigeria.

S/n	Challenges of Pleasure Reading	Mean	Decision
1.	The need to read prescribed school textbooks in order to pass examinations	3.51	A
2.	Inability to locate interesting reading materials	2.90	A
3.	Much time spent on video games	3.37	A
4.	Much time spent on computer games	3.33	A
5.	Much time spent on watching television	3.41	A
6.	Much time spent on surfing the internet	3.28	A
7.	Lack of pleasure reading collections in academic libraries	2.89	A
8.	Lack of comfortable reading spaces in libraries	2.32	D
9.	Book promotion programs that do not encourage people to read the book of their choices	2.51	A

Key: A=Agreed; NA=Not Agreed

Table 3 shows that the greatest factor inhibiting pleasure reading among adolescents is the preference to reading prescribed school textbooks in order to pass examinations. Among acceptable challenges, it is also shown that book promotion programs that do not encourage people to read the books of their choices is the least

challenging factor to pleasure reading. Respondents did not consider lack of comfortable reading spaces in libraries as a challenge to pleasure reading.

Strategies for enhancing pleasure reading among adolescents. Findings are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean Scores of Strategies for Enhancing Pleasure Reading among Young Nigerian Adults

S/n	Options	Mean	Decision
1.	Establishment of pleasure reading collections in academic libraries	3.51	A
2.	Ensuring that young adults have access to pleasure reading materials	3.49	A
3.	Ensuring that materials in pleasure reading collection are interesting and meaningful	3.59	A
4.	Permitting young adults to select and read materials of their choice	3.29	A
5.	Organizing meetings with known authors	3.08	A
6.	Helping younger children read	3.45	A
7.	Organizing reading for prizes programs	3.43	A
8.	Establishment of reading groups in schools and libraries	3.42	A
9.	Establishment of reading for charity groups.	2.94	A

Key: A=Agreed; NA=Not agreed

Table 4 shows that the respondents accepted all the listed items as strategies for enhancing pleasure reading among adolescents in Enugu State, Nigeria. The table also shows that the best strategy for promoting pleasure reading among adolescents is by ensuring that materials in pleasure reading collection are interesting and meaningful.

Discussion of Findings

Intellectual development was found to be the highest benefit of pleasure reading to adolescents in Enugu State. This is not surprising; being young and students, the need to acquire intellectual development which is highly needed for academic excellence outweighs any other benefit. This finding is consistent with the findings of Parlette and Howard (2010) in which it was discovered that reading for pleasure allows students to

develop intellectually and gain perspectives on different topics. The finding is also consistent with that of Howard (2011) in which it was discovered that students read for pleasure to improve their overall literacy or thinking skills.

True life stories constitute the greatest reading materials read by adolescents in Enugu State. True life materials are nonfiction materials. This contradicts the findings of Clark and Foster (2005) who examined the reading choices of college students outside classroom in UK and discovered that majority of the students (95 percent) read fiction. This finding also contradicts the findings of Parlette and Howard (2010) in which it was discovered that only 21% of first year undergraduates in Canada read non-fiction materials.

Reading prescribed textbooks in preference to pleasure reading is a

challenge to pleasure reading activity in Enugu State. The finding is consistent with the findings of Ihejirika (2014) and Obafemi (2006) in which it was observed that people do not spare time to read for pleasure because of the need to pass examinations. The need to pass examination has overshadowed everything adolescents in Enugu State, Nigeria do, as the mark of excellence for students in Nigeria is based on paper qualifications, not on what people are capable of achieving. The findings of the study also revealed that book promotion program that does not encourage people to read the book of their choice is the least challenge inhibiting pleasure reading. This finding contradicts the finding of Parlette and Howard (2010) in which it was postulated that students resist campus reading and book discussion programs because they view the books to be read and discussed as imposed on them. It was discovered also that lack of comfortable reading spaces in libraries does not constitute a challenge to pleasure reading. This finding is very encouraging as it shows that public libraries in Enugu State have comfortable reading spaces. Findings from the study further revealed that the greatest strategy to enhance pleasure reading in Public Libraries in Enugu State is to ensure that materials in pleasure reading collection are interesting and meaningful. This finding supports the finding of Akabuike & Asika (2012) who advised that to encourage adolescents to read for pleasure,

schools and libraries should provide access to interesting and meaningful reading materials.

Conclusion

On the bases of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that majority of readers in public libraries who engage in pleasure reading are secondary school students. Intellectual development is the highest benefit of pleasure reading. All the identified types of materials for pleasure reading were appreciated by young adult readers. A major challenge to pleasure reading which is perceived by adolescent readers is reading prescribed school text books in preference to pleasure reading. All the identified strategies for enhancing pleasure reading were perceived as being relevant and apt by the adolescent readers.

Recommendations

1. Public libraries should house pleasure reading collections to help readers develop intellectually.
2. Books on true life stories should be made a major part of public library collection. This type of collection can serve as character molding and some characters in the collection can serve as models to some young readers.
3. Prescribed school textbooks should also be a considerable portion of public library's collection. Such collection can attract more students and other categories of readers to the library. Such

collection can also serve as a stop gap to some readers.

4. Public libraries should ensure that pleasure reading collections are interesting and meaningful.

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