

READING CULTURE AND MEMORY RETENTION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study investigated the reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State, Nigeria. It specifically investigated the relationship between reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. The study found out the correlation between effective study habit and level of memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. It also Investigated the difference in reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students on the basis of gender in Ondo State and established the level of usage of school libraries influence on memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. The population of the study comprised all public secondary school students of class two (SS2) in the three senatorial districts in Ondo State. The sample for this study was six hundred (600) students of class two with multi-stage sampling procedure involving simple random and stratified sampling techniques. The instrument tagged "Reading Culture and Memory Retention Questionnaire (RCMRQ)" was used for the study. The findings revealed that reading culture and effective study habit significantly influenced memory retention among the students in Ondo State and that the use of library and learning strategies improves learning recall and academic achievement among secondary school students. The study concluded that effective study and reading culture, along with proper use of library resources, significantly enhance memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State, with variations observed by gender and location. The education stakeholders should show greater commitment to the provision of necessary library infrastructures facilities and acquisition of recent information materials in to the library for enhanced library usage and memory retention.

Keywords: academic achievement, memory retention, reading culture, secondary school students, study habit.

INTRODUCTION

Reading culture play a significant role in education which cannot be removed from learning process. Reading is defined as the ability to interpret and decode array of words through a cognitive process (Ayoti, and Enamen, 2015). It is the complex act of dealing with

communication in written or visual form (Ogwu, 2010). According to Wikipedia online Dictionary, reading is defined “as a complex process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning” (Haliru, et al., 2015). Culture refers to the way of life of a particular group of people (Ogugua, et al., 2015). Reading habit or culture, therefore is defined as an act of engaging in reading on a regular basis (Enamen, 2015). It is a learned practice of seeking knowledge or information through the written words or symbols. It is also defined as a culture where reading is part of people’s living and constitutes a habit that is shared by members of the society (Ruterana, 2012). Haliru, Abdulkarim, Mohammed and Dangari (2015) noted that reading is an essential component that constitutes central part of any learning condition. Gbadamosi, (2007) observed the absence of good reading habit skills which brings lack of confidence in children resulting in poor attitude towards school work and as well as esteem problems later in life. He observed that, in reading, the child’s task is to understand the information given and to translate and apply the information. This project examined the areas where reading culture and memory retention can support the development of education and suggest ways by which reading culture among students can be encouraged.

The decline in the standard of education has seriously affected reading ability. It is not surprising; therefore, Nigeria has the highest number of children who have dropped out of school of the 20 Million children who were out- of- school worldwide in 2017, 10.5 Million of them were from Nigeria (Umoru 2017). To prove further the prevalence of poor reading culture in Nigeria, a review of the extent literature shows that about 30 Million people have graduated from secondary school with poor reading culture (Aina, et al., 2017). Anyanwu, Obichere and Oyemike Victor Ossai- Onah (2012) identified the harsh economic environment as a main constraint influencing reading culture among Nigerian students.

One of the most significant problems students face today in Akure area of Ondo State is the reading culture. Reading culture and memory retention in the research literature has been a major factor why students are not performing very well in their academics. Students laxity in academic performance in the area of assignment, visit to the library, personal time- table, addiction to social media and involving in examination malpractices have significantly pointed to the ill effect of memory retention experience of many students in secondary schools in Ondo State. Weak literacy foundation, reading language problem, poor quality teachers, unprioritized reading, the degree of attention, vigilance, awakening and concentration has a far reaching and negative impact among students in secondary school.

However, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. Nevertheless, specifically, the study sought to determine the correlation between effective study habits and memory retention. The study was guided by questions such as: does reading culture influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State? And does effective study habit significantly influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State? Meanwhile, in order to provide statistical precision, several null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance, including the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between reading

culture and memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. Effective study habit does not significantly influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. There is no significant influence of reading culture on memory retention on the basis of gender among secondary school students in Ondo State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Concept of Memory

Memory is the faculty of the mind by which data or information is encoded, stored, and retrieved when needed. It is the retention of information over time for the purpose of influencing future action. In psychology, it is referred as faculty of encoding, storing, and retrieving information. Every individual has to depend on their memory to perform a particular task and draw conclusions by referring to the past experiences. However, memory as a general ability which enables individuals to interpret the perceptual world by helping them to organize their response to changes that takes place in the world. This process of maintaining information over time is called memory. There are many types of memories: 1) Short-term memory. Short-term memory is the place data is prepared. It is accepted that short-term memory can hold just around seven pieces of data one after the another. Short term memory is the capacity to store a small amount of information in the mind and keep it readily available for a short period of time. It is also known as primary or active memory. 2) Sensory Memory. Sensory memory is a brief information in humans wherein information momentarily registered until it is recognized, and perhaps transferred to Short – term memory. 3) Long Term Memory. Long term memory refers to the transfer of information from short- term memory into long- term storage in order to create enduring memories. This type of memory is unlimited in capacity and stable lasting for years or even a lifetime.

Concept of Reading Culture

Research has shown that people who read for examinations lapse into illiteracy in the end. Rosenberg, (2000) adds that without the opportunity to read widely, what is taught in the classroom is not reinforced and the quality performance of the benefit of education is endangered. In Nigeria, reading culture has suffered from widespread poverty, corruption, ineptitude and a dearth of dedicated quite reading spaces like libraries. It becomes harder when one has to deal with many distractions and challenges that comes with being a student and living in a country like Nigeria. Reading is one of the most important ways of knowing the world around us. It helps you grow mentally, emotionally and psychologically. Reading is crucial to learning as it exposes students to extensive information and knowledge. Aina, Adigun and Ogundipe (2011) considered reading as a practice that entails the use of comprehensive thought processes to read printed symbols as meaningful components and understand them as a thought component in order to recognize a printed message.

Concept of Study Habit

Building up good habit is fundamental issue for human life because our behaviour is largely affected by our habits. Study habit determines not only students' academic achievements but also their success in the future (Ebele and Olofu 2017). Gardner-McTaggart & Palmer, (2025) explained that schools that support service learning or out-reach initiatives may have only token obedience to interdependency. Ogbodo, (2002) describes the study habit the study habit as “the adopted way and manner a student plans his private readings, after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subject”. According to him, “good study habits” are good assets to learners because they (habits) assist students to attain mastery in area of specialization and consequent excellent performance, while opposite constitute constraints to learning and achievement leading to failure”. Owuanam, (2007) define the term study habits as “The student’s way of study whether systematic, efficient or inefficient etc”. Going by this definition, it literally means that good study habit produces positive academic performance while insufficient study habit leads to academic failure.

Concept of Library

Library- from the Latin liber, meaning “book”. A collection or group of collections of books and/or other print or non-print materials organized and maintained for use (reading, consultation, study, research, etc.). The primary purpose of the library is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure. Without a memory of the past, we cannot operate in the present or think about the future. As the prevalence of AI is becoming alarming, school leaders are expected to demonstrate practices aligned with multiple frames (Hilal & Gardner-McTaggart, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

Multi- Store Model by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin

Multi - Store Model Theory was proposed by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin in 1968. This model suggested that information exists in one of three states of memory: the sensory, short-term and long-term stores.

MULTI-STORE MODEL

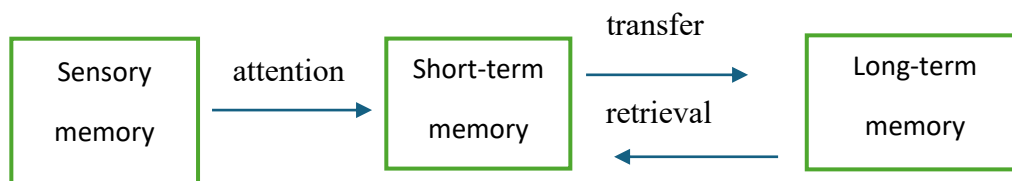
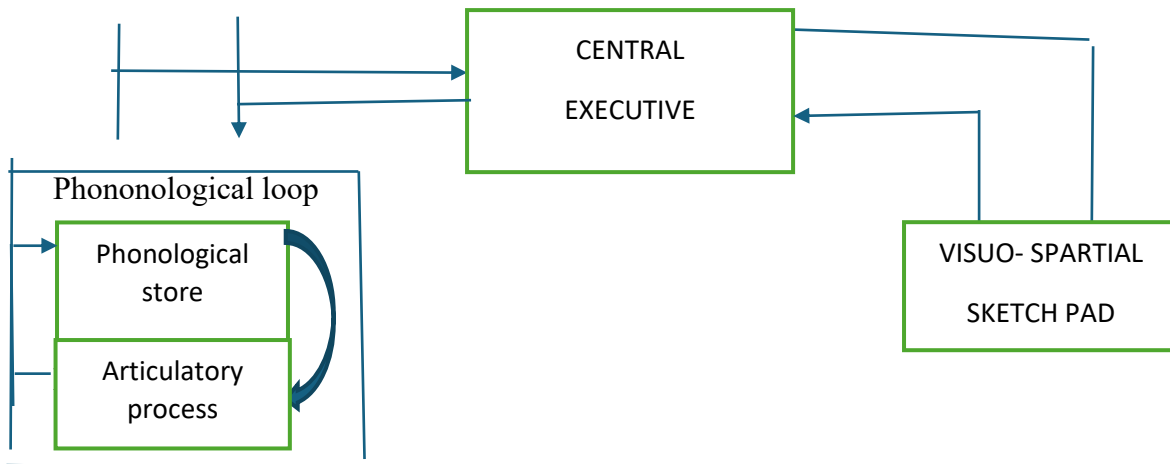


Fig 1: Multi-store model

In order for a memory to go into storage (i.e., long- term memory), it has to pass through three distinct stages: Sensory Memory, Short- term Memory, and Long- Term memory. According

to the Atkinson- Shiffrin model, if memories in the short- term store are rehearsed, they will be encoded into the long- term store. The long-term store has a capacity and duration that is so large. It is without any known limit, and it stores memories even if they are not actively recalled.

WORKING MEMORY MODEL



The working memory model posited that as opposed to the simplistic functions of short-term memory in providing short- term storage of information, working memory is a multi-component system that manipulates information storage for greater and more complex cognitive utility.

Interest Driven Creator by Asian researchers

A group of Asian researchers came together collaboratively to propose a macro-level theory called Interest Driven Creator (IDC) theory. The preliminary work giving an overview of IDC theory and highlighting its origin with some history was published in 2018 (Chan et al., 2018). According to IDC theory, when driven by interest, Students can be engaged in the creation of knowledge (generating ideas and artefacts). By repeating this interest driven creation process in their daily learning routines, students will develop twenty first century skills, form a habit of creation and excel in learning. IDC theory calls for actions by practising in everyday routines, the ultimate goal of IDC is to nurture our next generation to become lifelong interest driven creators. Only by forming a habit of interest- driven creations a habit hopefully sustaining for life- can the ultimate goal be realized. If interest talks about why we learn and creation about how we learn, then habit talks about how often we learn in order to realize our goal. Given that creation is a complex cognitive process, building a habit of creation is a long – term undertaking. Habits can be classified into three types which are:

- i. Motor habits- refer to the muscular activities of an individual (Ruterana and Robbe 2015).
- ii. Intellectual/cognitive habits: are related to psychological process requiring our intellectual abilities such as good observation, accurate perception, logical thinking, use

of reasoning ability before taking decisions and testing conclusions, and others (Collier and Logan 2010).

- iii. Habit of character: some of our characters are expressed in the form of habits (Ebele 2017).

Interest Driven Creator theory applies to both individuals and groups.

Empirical Review

Odewole, (2019) carried out a study on reading culture and use of library information resources among undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Kwara State. The study found that majority of respondents cultivate reading culture and majority of them use textbooks, reference resources, novels and magazines. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommended that library management should encourage students by providing necessary infrastructures facilities into the library and libraries should acquire recent information materials in to the library to keep enticing the students to use the library. Evaluative methods such as examination, projects, and presentations are assessments of learning results (Oloruntoba & Aladejebi, 2025). Egong (2014) also showed that, there was no effort towards the promotion of literacy and academic performance that can suffice without acquiring reading skills. Odushina, E.S Oloniruha, E. A (2020) revealed that, majority of students use library to enhance knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, A. C. Gardner-McTaggart, (2025) explained that educational leadership has an important role to play that goes beyond school organization. He also shows that the current mainstream theoretical orientations in educational management administration and leadership are increasingly concerned with success, over understanding, producing agents who act strategically in order to exert causal influence on each other and the disasters of climate change.

Mohammed I.(2018) carried out a study on predominant factors contributing to low reading abilities of pupils. The researcher made use of interview. The researcher made use of purposive sampling technique to select twelve (12) classroom teachers. Interview was used to collect data on one-to-one in-depth individual interview. The findings reveal that, their lack of confidence to practice how to read in class and lack of library to improve the reading abilities of the pupils, contributed to low reading abilities. Ailakhu, Ugonna V.(2022) carried out a study on Librarians promotions of reading culture and student's responsiveness in selected secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The researcher concluded that there was a good reading culture in the schools with libraries and recommended that regular library orientation be given to the students in addition to book tales and book review. Ihedioha, L.N.(2021) also showed that reading culture does significantly affect students' academic performance. Also, the study revealed that all the school stakeholders should encourage training or workshops for their teachers to enable them acquire the necessary techniques that will make teaching and learning interesting to the learners and also concludes that strict monitoring of teachers should be encouraged immediately after due performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all public secondary school students of class two (SS2) in the three senatorial districts in Ondo State. The sample for the study consisted of six hundred (600) students selected through multi-stage sampling procedure involving simple random sampling and stratified sampling techniques. The Instrument used for data collection was titled Reading Culture and Memory Retention Questionnaire (RCMRQ) which was adapted from Multi-factorial Memory Questionnaire by Troyer & Rich (2002). The face and content validities of the instrument were ensured by giving it to the researchers who are experts in counselling psychology and tests and measurements for proper scrutiny and in-depth proof-reading, correction and comments on the items in the instrument yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.85. The instrument measured reading culture, study habit, library usage and memory retention among secondary school students. Participants' reading culture, study habit, library usage and memory retention were assessed via four (4) point Likert scale with item scoring ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1) for forward scoring while negative items were reversed. Mean score on each item was obtained by summing the product of frequency and weighted point and dividing by the sample size. Each item mean was compared with a criterion mean score of 2.50 which was obtained by adding all the 4 point rating scale (1+2+3+4 = 10) divided by 4. The instrument was administered to the respondents and the data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, the research questions were answered using descriptive statistics involving frequency counts, percentage and mean and standard deviation. Hypotheses one and two were analysed using inferential statistics involving chi-square and t-test respectively at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Question 1

Does reading culture significantly influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State?

Table 1: Reading culture and Memory retention among Secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	SD
1	One's reading habit or culture has a great effect on the assimilation of a student	390 (65.0%)	210 (35.0%)			3.65	.477
2	Your interest in a subject determines how quick and easy it is to retain the concepts of the subject	390 (65.0%)	200 (33.3%)	10 (1.7%)		3.63	.516

3	One's degree of concentration determines the memory retention of the subject	370 (61.7%)	160 (26.7%)	70 (11.7%)		3.50	.696
4	The reading atmosphere has a great effect on the memory retention of the subject	300 (50.0%)	200 (33.3%)	100 (16.7%)		3.33	.746
5	The vocabulary used in the text of the subject influences the memory retention of the individual	240 (40.0%)	220 (36.7%)	130 (21.7%)	10 (1.7%)	3.15	.814
6	Provision of a certain duration to studying influences memory retention	290 (48.3%)	250 (41.7%)	40 (6.7%)	20 (3.3%)	3.35	.750
7	The cultural and social environment for studying influences the retention capacity of an individual	310 (51.7%)	250 (41.7%)	30 (5.0%)	10 (1.7%)	3.43	.668

Criterion mean = 2.50, *Negative items are reversed

Table 1 presented reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students. The result indicated that, using a criterion mean score of 2.50 for the affirmative of the statements, all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point. This implied that reading culture significantly influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State.

Question 2

Does effective study habit significantly influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State?

Table 2: Effective study habit and Memory retention among Secondary school students

S/N		SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	SD
8	I take time to study every day in order to be able to retain what I have read	340 (56.7%)	210 (35.0%)	50 (8.3%)		3.48	.646
9*	Reading everyday does not have anything to do with my remembering of the subject that has been taught	60 (10.0%)	180 (30.0%)	130 (21.7%)	230 (38.3%)	2.82	1.035

10	I tend to remember what I read if the subject is very interesting and easy to study	420 (70.0%)	140 (23.3%)	40 (6.7%)			3.63	.605
11*	I remember little of what I study	80 (13.3%)	220 (36.7%)	200 (33.3%)	100 (16.7%)		2.53	.922
12*	Tests make me nervous that I easily forget what I have read	100 (16.7%)	90 (15.0%)	250 (41.7%)	160 (26.7%)		2.78	1.019
13*	I spend too much time reading a subject and yet I'm not able to recall	100 (16.7%)	130 (21.7%)	160 (26.7%)	210 (35.0%)		2.20	1.093
14	I make sure to pay attention to every explanation being made in the same class by the teacher	350 (58.3%)	200 (33.3%)	30 (5.0%)	20 (3.3%)		3.47	.741

Criterion mean = 2.50, *Negative items are reversed

Table 2 revealed the effective study habit and memory retention among secondary school students. The result indicated that, using a criterion mean score of 2.50 for the affirmative of the statements, all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point. This implied that effective study habit significantly influences memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State.

Table 3: Chi- Square Analysis of reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	χ^2 -value	p
1	One's reading habit or culture has a great effect on the assimilation of a student	390 (65.0%)	210 (35.0%)			54.00*	0.000
2	Your interest in a subject determines how quick and easy it is to retain the concepts of the subject	390 (65.0%)	200 (33.3%)	10 (1.7%)		361.00*	0.000
3	One's degree of concentration determines the memory retention of the subject	370 (61.7%)	160 (26.7%)	70 (11.7%)		237.00*	0.000
4	The reading atmosphere has a great effect on the memory retention of the subject	300 (50.0%)	200 (33.3%)	100 (16.7%)		100.00*	0.000
5	The vocabulary used in the text of the subject influences the memory retention of the individual	240 (40.0%)	220 (36.7%)	130 (21.7%)	10 (1.7%)	220.00*	0.000
6	Provision of a certain duration to studying influences memory retention	290 (48.3%)	250 (41.7%)	40 (6.7%)	20 (3.3%)	390.67*	0.000
7	The cultural and social environment for studying influences the retention capacity of an individual	310 (51.7%)	250 (41.7%)	30 (5.0%)	10 (1.7%)	464.00*	0.000

*p<0.05, df=3

Table 3 showed that the computed χ^2 -value obtained at 3 degree of freedom was significant at $p < 0.05$ level for all the items. Therefore, the result was significant; showing that there was a significant relationship between reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State.

Hypothesis 2: Effective study habit does not significantly influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State.

Table 4: Study habit and memory retention among secondary School Students

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Study Habit	600	19.58	2.643			
Memory Retention	600	24.05	2.371	599	29.554	0.000

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4 showed that the computed t-value (29.554) obtained at 599 degree of freedom was significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that effective study habit would significantly influence memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from research question 1 and hypothesis 1 clearly indicated that reading culture significantly influenced memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. This finding is in line with the assertion of Rosenberg (2000) that without the opportunity to read widely, what is taught in the classroom is not reinforced and the quality performance of the benefit of education is endangered. Reading is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. The findings also support Mohammed (2018) that opined that lack of confidence to practice how to read to improve reading abilities of the pupils contributed to low reading abilities. The finding is consistent with the outcome of Fabunmi and Folorunso (2009) that the culture of reading enhances the reader and provokes something inside students who take their career more seriously.

Findings from hypothesis 2 showed that effective study habit significantly influenced memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. This was in support of Ogbodo (2002) who opined that study habit is the adopted way and manner a student plans his private

readings, after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subject. Also, Odewole (2019) found that majority of the undergraduates students cultivate reading culture and use textbooks, reference resources, novels and magazines.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that effective study and reading culture influences memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State. If library resources were properly utilized, it would enhance memory retention among secondary school students. Reading culture and memory retention among secondary school students in Ondo State vary by gender.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Reading should be compulsorily taught at all levels of education and it should be part of pupils and students' evaluation at primary, secondary and tertiary tiers of education in order develop their reading culture and enhance memory retention.
2. The education stakeholders (e.g government, NGOs, philanthropists, school administrators and parents) should show greater commitment to the provision of necessary library infrastructures facilities and acquisition of recent information materials in to the library for enhanced library usage and memory retention.
3. There should be more praise, motivation into what catches the interest of male student in reading such as books on heavily future humour, science fiction, action, or horror and they should be independent and encouraged when they do something well because they often feel that mistakes equal failure.
4. Female students should be more encouraged to inculcate the habit of reading culture through library collections, readership campaigns, reading clubs and World Book Day Activities.

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