

# AN ANALYSIS OF READING ATTITUDES OF UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*This paper analysis reading attitudes of university undergraduates in Kwara state, Nigeria. The study was a descriptive survey. The population of this study were all the university undergraduates in Universities in Kwara State. However, the purposive sampling technique was used to sample one Federal, State and Private university and both 300 and 400 level students that offer Education courses in Kwara State for this study. All 300 level and 400 level university undergraduates in the Faculties of Education in all the universities in the Kwara State for the target population for this study because, they are at the penultimate level of their studies. However, 560 university undergraduates were sampled in this study. The data for this study were gathered using structured questionnaire designed by the researcher entitled: Reading Attitudes Questionnaire (RAQ), while the reliability index stood at 0.82 which is adjudged to be good for data collection. Percentage was used to answer research question one, while the formulated hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test statistical tool. The finding of this study showed that the university undergraduates had positive reading attitude. Another finding indicates that there was no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates based gender. Finding further indicates that there was no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates based school type. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that, it is important to continue fostering a reading culture. Implement initiatives such as reading clubs, book fairs, and literacy campaigns to encourage regular reading habits among students.*

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## Introduction

Reading is an essential element in learning since it is a device that skills the success of every learner in school. Reading is the cornerstone on which all other intellectual pursuits are based. Reading is an interactive activity between the reader and print materials which determines the level of academic achievement of learners. Learners' attitude towards reading matters a lot since their online activities are fundamental to their critical literacy needs in the society. Learners' critical literacy needs are information acquisition, social relation and active participation in socio-economic and political activities. Critical literacy demands should be studied in order to make value judgments about important societal concerns, and reading attitudes and social networking habits of undergraduates should be looked at. Learning new things through reading helps stimulate the process of self-discovery. It shares an individual's experience

with other readers, which can broaden their perspectives by recognising, extending, and increasing their interests, and help them grasp the world more thoroughly (Akour & Salha, 2017). In its most basic form, reading is the act of deciphering written and printed text. Along with having a positive impact on readers' attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgments, and behaviour, it is also a fruitful way of conscious learning that influences the accuracy of the information that is conveyed to them (Alqarni, 2019). In addition to one's own personal and mental development, reading is crucial for ensuring inclusion in economic, social, and civic life (Cheng & Wang, 2019).

Reading is an essential tool for acquiring knowledge, skills, and the ability to express one's ideas, particularly in the modern scientific and technological world where it is necessary to be able to take an informed interest in events in one's immediate surroundings and the rest of the world.

Furthermore, reading is thought to be essential for people from all walks of life to successfully navigate the complexities and problems of the 21st century, especially in the light of the continuously changing nature of life and the society. People can increase their knowledge of several topics through reading (Alqarni, 2019). Reading no longer has to be a challenging chore to pass an exam; rather, it now has a crucial value for further learning. The act of independent research or independent reading necessitates self-study, self-thinking and analysis, as well as mental and practical education (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012).

Lawal (2008) asserts that students who read solely to pass an exam have a negative attitude about reading, which has a negative effect on their performance in reading comprehension. Both printed and online resources can be used for reading. Online resources can be accessible through Internet platforms, whereas printed materials are books, journals, periodicals, and ephemera. Reading attitude is the practice of reading for pleasure rather than merely academic purposes (Oji & Habibu, 2011). Reading attitude typically relates to coursework and exams, very seldom to enjoyment (Dorji, 2020). According to Anyira and Udem (2020), a reading attitude may be one component of a larger culture in which reading for pleasure has become a routine part of life. Reading attitude, as described by Katranc (2015), is a person's general orientation toward reading, taking into account their emotive, cognitive, and behavioural reactions to reading materials. It involves a variety of reading-related attitudes, beliefs, interests, and values that people have, which affect their decisions and actions.

The emotive, cognitive, and behavioural components of reading attitude are among its many elements (Savaskan & Özdemir, 2017). The affective component of reading relates to a person's emotional reaction to reading, including their enjoyment, interest, and motivation (Durmus, 2014). According to Tabachnick and Fidel (2014), the cognitive component of reading involves people's attitudes, perceptions, and comprehension of reading, as well as their confidence in their reading skills. The behavioural component is concerned with the observable behaviours and habits people have in regard to reading, such as the amount of time they spend reading, the books they choose, and the reading

techniques they use (Mikael, Mats, Monika & Tarja, 2022).

Having a good attitude toward reading is essential for developing strong reading skills and a lifelong enjoyment of reading. Guthrie, Wigfield, and You, (2012) asserts favorable reading attitudes are associated with higher voluntary reading, which in turn raises reading proficiency. Additionally, a good reading attitude helps readers develop their vocabulary, critical thinking abilities, and reading comprehension (Wang, Jia & Jin, 2020). However, a number of factors, such as gender, school type, and academic level/level of study, can affect the reading attitude, social networking habits, and critical literacy needs of university undergraduates. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2020) defines gender as the social and psychological aspects of being male, female, or non-binary, which include the roles, behaviours, requirements, and personalities that society gives to people based on their sex. It is crucial to distinguish between biological sex the physical and physiological traits that normally set males and females apart and gender. The idea of gender involves a number of significant elements. Firstly, it acknowledges that gender is socially constructed, meaning that it is shaped by cultural norms, values, and expectations that vary across societies and historical contexts (Connell, 2009). Gender roles and expectations are learned and internalized through socialization processes and can influence individuals' behaviours, opportunities, and access to resources.

Gender is therefore considered to be a predictor of knowledge and attitude as well as a powerful predictor of human behaviour in the social realm. Alufohai and Ibhafidon (2015) asserts that women in Nigeria are marginalized when compared with their male counterparts. However, this does not directly affect their attitude towards their job. Although Alufohai and Ibhafidon (2015) stated that marginalization leads to women becoming less competent and experienced at their jobs. On gender, Cai, Fan and Du (2017) report significant gender difference on Internet usage. Cai, et. al., (2017) further report that males tended to be more familiar with computers and the Internet compared to females. Gender differences were reported in the literature concerning Internet addiction. Tsetsi and Rains (2017) observe that dependent Internet users

include a large proportion of men as compared to women.

However, studies such as Wigfield and Guthrie, (1997); Sullivan and Brown (2015) have found that girls often exhibit more positive reading attitudes, higher reading motivation, and greater enjoyment of reading compared to boys. Gendered socialization practices, stereotypes, and cultural expectations may contribute to these differences, highlighting the importance of addressing gender-related factors in promoting positive reading attitudes for all individuals. Also, social networking habits and critical literacy needs can be influenced by gender. Studied by Hargittai and Shafer (2006); Li and Kirkup (2017) indicate that gender differences exist in the use and engagement with social media platforms. Also, Livingstone, et. al., (2011) found that girls tend to engage more in online reading and communication activities, while boys often exhibit higher involvement in gaming and content creation. These gender differences may impact individuals' exposure to diverse digital texts, critical evaluation skills, and the ability to navigate digital information effectively. The relationship between gender, reading attitude, social networking habits, and critical literacy needs highlights the importance of adopting a gender-sensitive lens in literacy education. Previous studies on gender and social networking habit have revealed some differences which need to be reconfirmed in the present study.

Gender and school type are concept that are closely intertwined. Government-owned schools or universities are funded and operated by the government or public authorities. These institutions are primarily funded by public resources, such as taxes and government allocations, and are subject to government regulations and oversight (Altbach, 2015). They often aim to provide accessible and affordable education to a broad population, with an emphasis on public service and societal development. Private-owned schools or universities are operated by private individuals, organizations, or corporations. These institutions are funded through tuition fees, donations, endowments, and other private sources (Marginson, 2010). Private-owned institutions have more autonomy in decision-making processes, including curricula, admissions policies, and management structures,

compared to government-owned institutions.

The type of school/university students attend can also influence their social networking habits and critical literacy needs. Different institutions may have varying levels of access to technology, Internet connectivity, and digital resources, which can impact students' engagement with social media and online platforms (Hargittai, 2010; Selwyn, 2012). Moreover, the educational environment, including school/university culture and policies, can shape students' digital literacy skills, awareness of online information credibility, and ability to critically evaluate digital texts (Koltay, 2011; Livingstone, et. al., 2017). While the type of school or university has an impact on students' reading attitudes, social networking behaviours, and critical literacy requirements, it is crucial to recognize that student variability, instructional strategies, and other contextual factors also have a big impact on these outcomes.

Additionally, there is a need for further research to explore the specific mechanisms through which different school/university types influence reading attitudes, social networking habits, and critical literacy needs. The relationship between school/university type and reading attitude, social networking habits, and critical literacy needs highlights the importance of considering educational contexts in promoting effective literacy practices. While different types of institutions may influence these factors to some extent, it is important to recognize the influence of individual and contextual factors.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Reading is an essential skill that aids one's thoughts and knowledge in one's chosen field of study. The analysis of reading attitudes among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria, poses a significant concern in the realm of higher education. Despite the fundamental role of reading in academic success and personal development, there is a noticeable decline in the reading habits and attitudes of university undergraduates. (Ifedili, 2009; Edem & Ofre, 2010; Abdulkareem, 2011; Gok, 2016; Owusu, Achew and Larson, 2012). This decline in reading attitudes raises concerns about the future prospects of these students in terms of critical thinking, information acquisition, and overall academic performance.

Base on the literature reviewed, the problem lies in the fact that the reading attitude of university undergraduates in Kwara State is not receiving adequate attention, leading to potential long-term consequences. The lack of interest and motivation to engage in reading activities, combined with the influence of modern technological distractions, has resulted in a shift away from traditional forms of reading and a decline in reading culture. Furthermore, there is limited research and data available specifically focused on analyzing the reading attitudes of university undergraduates in Kwara State. Understanding the factors that contribute to these declining reading attitudes is crucial for devising effective interventions to address the issue. Factors such as access to reading materials, the impact of digital media, socio-cultural influences, educational approaches, and institutional support all play a role in shaping the reading attitudes of undergraduates (Ifedili 2009; Edem & Ofre, 2010; Abdulkareem, 2011 & Gok, 2016). Owusu, Achew and Larson (2012). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyze the reading attitudes of university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. By investigating the various factors influencing their reading habits, this research aims to identify the key challenges and develop evidence-based recommendations to promote a positive reading culture among these students. Ultimately, the findings of this study will contribute to improving the academic performance, critical thinking skills, and personal development of university undergraduates in Kwara State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to analyze the reading attitudes of university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria, specifically, the study shall investigated:

- i. general reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria;
- ii. difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based gender; and
- iii. difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based school type.

### **Research Questions**

The study provided answers to the following research questions:

- i. What is the general reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on their gender?
- iii. What is the difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on thier gender school type?

### **Research Hypotheses**

To give an appropriate direction to the study, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>:** University undergraduate in Ilorin, Kwara state generally have negative attitude towards reading.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based gender.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based school type.

### **Methodology and Materials**

The study is a descriptive survey. A survey is a way of gathering information to provide a complete description of existing practices, the condition of the subject, or a scenario, according to Ojoh, Chisikwa, and Okwara (2010). The population of this study are all the university undergraduates in the different Universities in Kwara State. Six universities exist in Kwara State, of which one belongs to the Federal government, one belongs to the state government while four are privately-owned. However, the purposive sampling technique shall be adoptended to select the sample. For this reason, federal, state and private owned universities are used. Population consists 300 and 400 level students that offer Education courses in the institutions. It is assumed that the 300 and 400 level university undergraduates have spent sufficient time in the

school system for them to be able to respond to the items on the instruments used for this research. Krejcie and Morgan (2006) table for random sample size advisor shall be used to select the respondents. In all, 560 university undergraduates were sampled to be used in this study.

The data for this study are to be gathered using structured questionnaire designed by the researcher entitled: Reading Attitudes Questionnaire (RAQ). The questionnaire contains 20 items. The responses are based on Four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A) – 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. Furthermore, the respond were given the opportunity to qualitatively respondent to issues on Reading Attitude, Social Networking Habit and Critical Literacy Need. The reliability of the instrument (RASNHCLNQ) is carried out through a test-retest method of reliability. This method was adopted by administering the instrument on 300 level and 400 level university undergraduates who were not part of the sample involved in the study within a time interval of two weeks. The two set of scores were subjected to the Cronbach's Alpha analysis, while the reliability index stood at 0.82

which is adjudged to be good for data collection. Percentage was used to answer research question one, while the formulated hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test statistical tool.

### Answering of Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** *What is the general reading attitude of university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria?*

To answer this research question one, responses of the respondents to items that addressed general reading attitude were collated and subjected to average mean analysis. The section B of the instrument that addressed reading attitude were structured on a four-point Likert of Strongly Disagree (SD) =1, Disagree (D) = 2, Agree (A) = 3 and Strongly Agree (SA) = 4. The minimum score, maximum score and range score of the respondents were 20, 80 and 60. The range was divided by the three reading attitude of (negative, ambivalent and positive) and the cut off was 20. Scores between 20 – 40, 41 – 60, and 61 – 80 are categorized as negative, ambivalent and positive reading attitude respectively. The result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 1: Percentage Analysis of General Reading Attitude of University Undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria**

Reading Attitude	Frequency	Percent
Attitude Positive	322	57.5
Ambivalent	235	42.0
Negative	3	.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Result in Table 1 indicates that 322 (57.5%) of sampled students had positive reading attitude, 235 (42.0%) of sampled students had ambivalent reading attitude, while 3 (57.5%) of sampled students had negative reading attitude. This implies that the university undergraduates in Kwara State have positive reading attitude.

### Hypotheses Testing

**H<sub>02</sub>:** *There is no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based gender.*

In order to test this research hypothesis, the undergraduates' response on reading attitudes was analysed using the t-test were analysed based on gender as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: The t-test Analysis of Difference in the Reading Attitudes of University Undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based Gender**

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	Df	Cal.t-Value	Decision
Male	281	58.48	7.79	559	1.92	.06
Female	279	59.68	7.07			

$\rho > 0.05$

Results in Table 2 indicates a calculated t-value of 1.92 and p-value of .06 computed at 0.05 level of significance. Since calculated p-value .06 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis one is not significant. This indicates that there was no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based gender.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** *There is no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based school type.*

In order to test this research hypothesis, undergraduates' response on reading attitudes was analysed using the t-test were analysed based on school type as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: ANOVA Summary Showing Difference in the Reading Attitudes of University Undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based School Type**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	380.19	2	190.11	3.45	.03
Within Groups	30709.19	557	55.13		
<b>Total</b>	<b>31089.38</b>	<b>559</b>			

Table 3 shows an F-value 3.45 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis two was rejected since the p-value of .03 is lower than 0.05 alpha level (.03 < 0.05). Thus, there was a significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based school type.

### Discussion of the Findings

The finding of this study showed that the university undergraduates have positive reading attitude. This implies that students consider reading as a vital skill and attitude that will develop in them better understanding of their subject matters. This finding is consistent with the finding of Chaudhary (2020), the results showed that 82% of learners agreed that reading does help their improvements in academic performance. This proves that if students develop strong reading habits and favorable reading attitudes, they will eventually be able to improve their English reading comprehension. Also, Oyewole (2017), reported that reading is one of the fundamental skills which students are expected to acquire through the process of schooling without which there would possibly be no other means of achieving academic success. It also corroborated the finding of Palani (2012) who affirmed that reading culture creates a positive reading attitude that is an essential and important aspect of creating a literate and developed society.

The second finding revealed that there is no significant difference in the reading attitudes of university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender. In Kwara State, there may be

relatively equal expectations and opportunities for both genders when it comes to education and reading. If there is a cultural emphasis on education for all, regardless of gender, it could lead to similar reading attitudes among male and female undergraduates. It is assumed that both male and female undergraduates have equal access to educational resources, such as libraries, textbooks, and online materials, which should result in similar reading attitudes. When there is no significant differences in the availability of resources, gender may not play a significant role in shaping their reading attitudes. This finding therefore counters that of Amri (2021) who reported that female learners have a better reading attitude than male learners in UNISEL Bestari Jaya, Selangor. Also, Ahmad, Dar, and Lone (2019), revealed that differences in reading habits and attitudes were also observed between male and female participants. There is much disparity in reading habits and attitudes between the two genders. Dilshad, Adnan, and Akram (2013) reported that the reading habits of male and female students were somewhat different depending upon their objective, liking, timing of study and other factors. Female students exhibited comparatively more positive attitude towards reading as compared to their male counterparts.

The second finding revealed that there is no significant difference in the reading attitudes of University undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria based school type. The universities in Kwara State, regardless of their type (e.g., public, private), provide equal access to educational resources such as libraries, study materials, and

reading materials, it could result in similar reading attitudes among undergraduates. When the availability and quality of resources are comparable across different school types, it may minimize the impact of school type on reading attitudes. This finding is similar to that Salem (2017) reported overall mean of attitudes of public and private schools' students towards learning in EFL is positive; however, the results indicated that students of private schools have more positive attitudes towards learning EFL than students of public schools.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of reading attitudes among university undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria, revealed that there are no significant differences in reading attitudes of undergraduates based on gender and school type. This finding suggests that factors other than gender or the type of institution may play a more influential role in shaping the reading attitudes of undergraduates in the region. The lack of significant gender differences in reading attitudes may be attributed to cultural norms that emphasize equal opportunities for education and reading among males and females. Additionally, equal access to educational resources, equitable educational policies, and similar family and social influences could contribute to the absence of gender-based disparities in reading attitudes.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to further enhance the reading attitudes of university undergraduates in Kwara State:

- i. Although the university undergraduates in Kwara State displayed positive reading attitudes, it is important to continue fostering a reading culture. Implement initiatives such as reading clubs, book fairs, and literacy campaigns to encourage regular reading habits among students.
- ii. Despite the lack of significant differences, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of reading to all university undergraduates. Promote reading as a fundamental skill for academic success, personal growth, and lifelong learning, regardless of gender or school type.

- iii. Create an environment that supports and encourages reading among university undergraduates. Establish well-equipped libraries, reading spaces, and study areas that are easily accessible to all students, regardless of their gender or the type of institution they attend.

### Funding

(TETFund/DESS/COE/ILORIN/ARJ/1)  
“TETFund Projects 2019-2021”

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