

Impact of Reading Habits On Children's Cognitive Development A Library Based Study

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Abstract

The function of school libraries in fostering lifelong readers was the focus of this research. The survey included 120 students from an elementary school. We used descriptive statistics like percentages and frequencies to make sense of the data we gathered from interviews and surveys. The majority of responders were in the critical early years of reading development (five to eight years old), according to the results. The most popular reading materials were storybooks and textbooks, with very little interest in comic books, newspapers, and magazines. Reading comprehension, test scores, and students' overall academic performance were all favourably affected by school libraries, according to the research. By making a wide range of literature available, piquing people's interest in reading, helping them become more proficient readers, and encouraging them to read regularly, the library was also instrumental in fostering reading habits. According to the results, students' reading habits and academic performance are greatly enhanced by the school library, making it an indispensable educational resource.

Keywords

Habit, Children, School Library, Students, Environment.

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Introduction

As it paves the way for further learning, intellectual development, and personal improvement, instilling reading habits in youngsters is an essential part of education. Reading comprehension and critical thinking skills are more important than ever in today's information-rich and fast-paced environment. There are many things that affect kids' reading habits, but the school library is among the most important and influential. It is more than just a place to store books; it is an interactive classroom that encourages exploration, creativity, and reading as a lifelong value. Academic achievement and personal growth are both aided by the school library's role in encouraging children to read for pleasure.

Beyond the required textbooks, a school library gives pupils access to a vast array of reading resources. Stories, novels, periodicals, reference books, and digital tools are all part of this collection, which aims to meet the needs of readers of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels. The library promotes curiosity and the development of individual interests by providing access to a wide range of materials. In the early years of school, this exposure is vital because it teaches kids that reading may be fun instead of a chore. Students are more likely to acquire the intrinsic motivation necessary to create a persistent reading habit when they are allowed to pick what they read.

The school library does more than just provide books and other materials; it also fosters an atmosphere that is ideal for learning and reading. Students' attitudes toward reading may be greatly impacted by a library that is well-organised, peaceful, and inviting. The library is designed to be a relaxing and productive space for students by providing comfortable seats, enough lighting, and a warm ambiance. Because of the supportive atmosphere, they are more likely to read more often, either on their own or with others. Additionally, pupils are given specific time to read every day as part of the school schedule, which helps to establish reading as a habit.

Inspiring children to read regularly is an important part of the school librarian's job. With the aid of librarians, students are able to choose books that are tailored to their interests and reading levels. Reading becomes more of an adventure and a conversation when they host events like storytelling sessions, book discussions, reading contests, and literary groups. Students' engagement with reading and the development of critical thinking, communication, and comprehension abilities are all aided by these exercises. Librarians are crucial in turning hesitant readers into passionate ones via the support and advice they provide.

The school library also has a major impact on how well pupils do in class. Reading on a daily basis enhances reading comprehension, linguistic competence, and vocabulary, all of which are crucial for excelling in different courses. Making

good use of the library resources helps students grasp difficult ideas, find relevant information, and finish their work. They are able to improve their academic performance as a whole since they have access to reference materials and supplemental resources that help them learn more about their topics. The library serves as a resource for both classroom teaching and self-study.

Inspiring students to develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime is another vital function of the school library. When kids start reading at a young age, it's not uncommon for them to keep reading even as adults. Not only does this practice aid in lifelong learning, but it also keeps people informed, improves their critical thinking skills, and allows them to make better judgements. Reading also encourages creative thinking and opens minds to many cultures, ideas, and points of view. Literature plays a crucial role in children's personal and social development by helping them to comprehend the world and build empathy.

The use of digital materials and technology in school libraries has been expanding in recent years. In order to keep up with the ever-evolving demands of today's students, school libraries are progressively adding digital resources such as e-books, databases, and multimedia. Particularly for the younger demographic that has grown up with digital media, this use of technology makes reading more approachable and interesting. In order to promote reading habits even further, school libraries may accommodate various learning styles and preferences by combining conventional and digital resources.

Many schools fail to fully use the potential of their school libraries, despite the fact that they are vital resources for students. Its efficacy may be compromised by factors including insufficient financing, an absence of qualified librarians, and restricted resources. For this reason, school districts must prioritise the upkeep and improvement of their libraries. To maximise the library's influence on students' reading habits, it is important to provide enough resources, keep the collection current, and organise reading activities on a regular basis.

School libraries are vital for the development of lifelong readers because they provide students with a variety of reading resources, foster an accepting atmosphere, and inspire students to actively interact with literature. Not only does it help pupils succeed in school, but it also helps them develop intellectually and personally. School libraries play an important role in developing students into critical thinkers, readers, and future citizens by encouraging a love of reading. Thus, educators and lawmakers who are committed to promoting kids' holistic development and excellent education should prioritise the building of school libraries.

Review of Literature

Ali, Imran et al., (2023) Examining the relationship between students' reading

habits and their academic achievement was the primary objective of this research. Secondary and higher learning institutions in District Dera Ghazi Khan were the primary foci of the investigation. A qualitative approach was used for data collection and analysis. The data used to derive these results was derived from interviews with six students. Findings show that most individuals like reading for pleasure, whether it's fiction or nonfiction (e.g., scientific publications). The fact that just one student admitted to reading for the exam is significant. These findings show that regular reading is directly related to academic achievement. Based on these findings, it is reasonable to assume that teachers should encourage additional reading assignments and encourage students to utilise school libraries as resources for improving their reading habits.

Malipatil, Basawaraj (2021) Literacy is a skill that every person has to acquire during their lifetime. This study aims to investigate the reading habits of first-year students at SP College Sholapur Yadgir in Karnataka in relation to the present reading culture issue and the importance of reading for all people. The statistics show that students would rather use their time on social media than read. This project primarily aims to discover methods to enhance reading experiences via the use of technology and to identify ways in which public libraries in Karnataka might promote reading habits among school-aged children.

Celik, Bunyamin (2019) Reading aloud is one of the first forms of formal education and is still widely used in developing countries, first in homes and then in kindergartens. This research aims to investigate how preschool-aged children's family, school, and library environments contribute to the formation of a reading habit that will last a lifetime. The results of an examination into the factors impacting the reading habits of Ishýk Kindergarten students at Ronaki Hawler Education Company in Erbil, Iraq, are included in this research. For this study, researchers spoke with 106 kindergarteners and 20 teachers from the same grade level to get their perspectives on the first year of elementary school. During this period, the kindergarten was under constant surveillance. After that, the SPSS program was used to analyse the survey data. In addition, formal interviews were used to gather data about programs that encourage reading among kindergarten teachers. In light of the factors that promote the formation of reading habits in children, the final part of the research analysed the gathered data. The research found that families have a crucial influence in encouraging reading habits in children. It was also decided during this planning period that the kindergarten education, libraries, group of friends, environment, and range of books and genres were important.

Nneka, Umejiaku et al., (2016) the study's overarching goal was to provide empirical evidence that reading instruction was beneficial for primary school pupils

in the Awake South Local Government Area. Six questions formed the basis of the inquiry. This case study investigation looked at the Awake South Local Government Area in Anambra State. The study's population consists of all fourth- and fifth-graders from the selected schools. A basic random sampling method was used to choose the sample from the population. We randomly selected 50 teachers and 100 pupils to participate in the survey. For this study, we surveyed both students and teachers using questionnaires. A weighted mean was used to examine the data of the research. The researchers used the likert rating scale to ascertain the replies. The decision rule of 2.5 may be used to get the mean criteria. A large number of the schools surveyed do not have well-maintained libraries, as stated in the study. It was also discovered that not all of the pupils at these schools had their own personal library. A dearth of reading materials and instruction has a direct impact on these students' reading habits.

Research Methodology

The research used a field survey to examine one elementary school. Because of its convenient location and relevance to the research question, this school was chosen on purpose to examine the impact of school libraries on students' development of lifelong reading habits. A thorough comprehension of the problem at hand was achieved by combining qualitative and quantitative research methods in the study. Information was gathered via interviews and self-administered surveys. Twelve students from the chosen school, ranging in grade from first to fourth, participated in the research. Because students are at a pivotal point in their reading development—when they are learning how to read, how well they do in school, and what books they want to read—they were thought to be a good fit for the research.

The population of the study comprised pupils from a selected primary school under the jurisdiction of DAV Public school Meerut. The study specifically focused on pupils in Grades 1 to 4 because they are in the early stages of reading development, where the influence of the school library is most significant in shaping reading habits. The total population targeted for the study was 120 pupils, who regularly used the school library and were considered appropriate for providing relevant information on reading habits, library usage, and academic performance.

In order to reflect students in the early and intermediate grades, the answers came from a range of ages, with the majority falling in the 5–9 age brackets. To ensure that every student had an equal opportunity of being included in the research, a simple random sampling procedure was utilised to choose students from each grade using class registers. As a result, the selection process was more equitable and less prone to prejudice. Storybooks, textbooks, comics, periodicals, and other library resources were the primary focus of the study's examination of students' reading habits. Academic performance

markers such as reading comprehension, test scores, interest in reading, and overall academic growth were also measured.

Because they have vital information on students' reading habits and library use, important informants including teachers and library workers were chosen using a purposeful sample strategy. Their thoughts provide light on the role of the school library in fostering reading habits and enhancing academic achievement. The study's tables and frequencies were generated using quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Tables 1-4). In order to bolster and clarify the numerical results, the qualitative data collected via interviews was subjected to thematic analysis. The combination of the two approaches shed light on the ways in which the school library affects students' reading habits and overall academic growth.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Demographic of the respondents

Table 1: Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 4 years	0	0
5 – 6 years	39	32.8
7 – 8 years	54	45.3
9 and above	27	21.9
Total	120	100

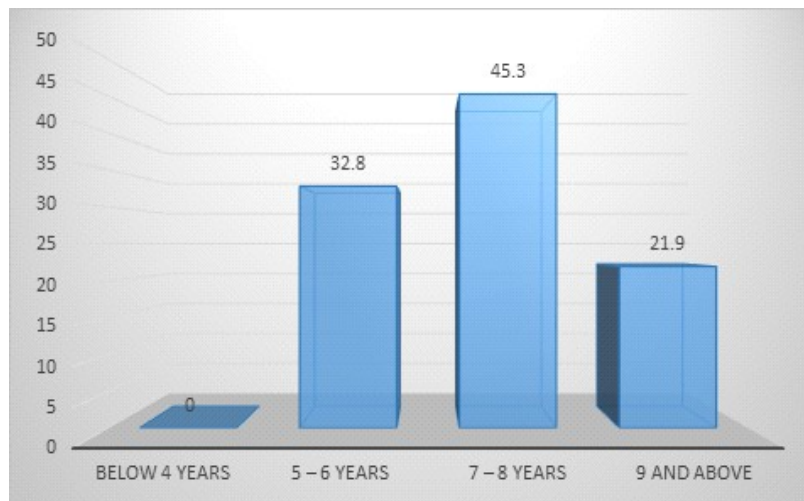


Figure 1: Age of the respondents

Table 1 displays the age distribution of the 120 respondents that participated in the survey. Clearly, not a single responder in the sample was less than four years old. This means that the research didn't include extremely young kids, who may not be interested in organised reading or library usage quite yet, but rather kids in the school-going age range. Of the whole sample, 54 children (or 45.3% of the total) fell within the age bracket of 7-8 years, making up a considerable share of the respondents. It seems that most of the participants are in the middle childhood stage, which is a crucial time for building reading habits and abilities. Independent reading skills and library use are more common among children in this age bracket.

With 39 responders, or 32.8% of the total, falling within the 5-6 year old age bracket, this is the second biggest group. The inclusion of a large number of younger children in the research is suggested by this. At this age, most kids are only starting to pick up the basics of reading, so any opportunities they have to interact with books and library programs may help foster a lifelong love of reading. Finally, twenty-one people (or 21.9% of the total) were in the age bracket of nine and above.

The sample is nonetheless meaningfully represented by this group, despite it being the smallest of the active groups. The library can serve the academic and recreational needs of children in this age group, who are often more proficient readers. It is clear from the table that the research mainly focuses on early and middle childhood, as the bulk of respondents are between the ages of 5 and 8. Because reading habits are largely acquired during adolescence, this distribution is ideal for studying the school library's role in fostering them.

Children reading preferences

Table 2: Materials respondents read most

Material	Frequency	Percentage
Story books	71	59.4
Text books	43	36
Magazines	2	1.6
Novels	0	0
Comics	4	3
Newspapers	0	0
Other (s)	0	0
Total	120	100

Table 2 shows that out of a total of 120 respondents, the most popular sorts of reading materials are... With 71 replies, or 59.4 percent of the total, it is clear that children's storybooks are the most popular reading resource. What this means is that

most kids like reading for fun and imagination, which is great since it helps kids get interested in reading and enjoy it more. With 43 responders (36% of the total), textbooks come in at number two on the list of favoured materials. Reading for school seems to be the primary motivation for a large portion of the student body. Although textbooks are necessary for education, the lower proportion when compared to picture books shows that kids prefer reading books that teach them while having fun.

Only four people (or 3% of the total) said they enjoy comics, hence their use is limited. Similarly, only 2 people or 1.6% of the total, read magazines. These low numbers indicate that either fewer of these items are accessible in the school library or that students do not find them as interesting as textbooks and picture books. Notably, there was no proportion or frequency reported for books, newspapers, or any other kind of media. It seems that not a single responder mentioned having read any of these resources. Reasons for this might include materials not being suitable for younger audiences, a lack of accessibility, or insufficient familiarity with them. According to the data in the table, youngsters mostly like reading storybooks and textbooks, with very little or no usage for other reading materials. The significance of stocking school libraries with interesting and suitable books for children's reading levels, especially picture books, is highlighted by this trend.

Academic performance of children who use the library

Table 3: Academic performance of children who use the library

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Improved reading skills	31	25.8
Helped understand other subjects better	22	18.3
Made me pass tests and exams	36	30.0
Helped me develop love for books	31	25.8
TOTAL	120	100

Table 3 displays the results, based on a total of 120 respondents that demonstrate how library usage affects children's academic achievement. According to the data in the table, 36 people (30.0%) said that they were able to do better on tests and examinations after visiting the library. This provides strong evidence that students' access to materials in the school library helps them succeed academically by allowing them to better comprehend course material and prepare for tests. Eleven kids (or 25.8% of the total) said that the library had a positive impact on their reading comprehension and sparked a lifelong passion for reading. These results highlight the library's twin function as a place for skill development and the promotion

of good reading attitudes. Improving one's reading comprehension is crucial since it lays the groundwork for learning in any field, and cultivating a passion for reading promotes independent and consistent reading. The library also improved my understanding of other disciplines, according to 22 people (18.3%). Despite being the lowest of the characteristics given, it nevertheless makes up a significant share of the sample. This proves that the library helps with academic assistance in general by making available resources that go beyond what is taught in the classroom and improve students' understanding. Students' reading growth and academic success are significantly influenced by the school library, as shown in the table. The most obvious advantage is that it helps kids do better on tests and exams, but it also helps them become better readers and gives them a lifelong passion for reading.

Table 4: The Role of the School Library in Inculcating Reading Habit

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Provides access to a variety of reading materials	30	25.0
Creates interest in reading	28	23.3
Improves reading skills	25	20.8
Develops habit of regular reading	20	16.7
Enhances academic performance	17	14.2
TOTAL	120	100

Table 4 shows the results from a survey of 120 students on their experiences using the school library to develop a love of reading. Among the many functions performed by libraries, the provision of access to a wide range of reading materials was deemed most important by 30 respondents (or 25.0% of the total). Because they enable pupils to explore various interests and reading levels, diverse and readily available books and materials are crucial in promoting reading among youngsters. Among the many valuable contributions made by libraries, 28 people (or 23.3% of the total) ranked the promotion of reading as the second most important function. This provides further evidence that the library setting, along with its programs and materials, is an important factor in inspiring young people to read. Reading becomes more of a habit for kids when they love it and find it interesting.

In addition, twenty-five people (20.8%) said that going to the library helps they become better readers. In particular, this demonstrates how the library may serve as a learning tool to improve pupils' reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. Children develop reading confidence and skills via consistent exposure to reading content. The library also encourages regular reading habits, according to 20 respondents (16.7%). This demonstrates that children who have regular access to

library materials are more likely to include reading into their daily routines, which is crucial for their development as learners and as people. In conclusion, 17 people (14.2%) said that using the library helps them do better in school. This is the least mentioned job, but it shows how the library helps students succeed in school by providing them with resources to enhance their coursework. The chart shows that there are several ways in which the school library encourages students to read. The library plays a crucial role in building skills, encouraging regular reading habits, and achieving academic achievement, in addition to providing access to a varied range of books and inspiring a love of reading.

Conclusion

According to the results, students' reading habits may be greatly improved with the help of their school library. It encourages students to read outside of their textbooks by providing them with access to a range of reading options. Researchers discovered that having access to picture books was the most important element in getting students interested in reading, which in turn helped them enjoy reading more.

In addition, students' reading comprehension, subject matter knowledge, and overall academic achievement are all positively impacted by frequent library usage, according to the results. A love of reading is a cornerstone of a lifetime education, and the library is a great place to foster that love in students.

In sum, the school library serves as a vital resource for students' academic and personal growth. Improving students' reading habits and academic performance may be achieved by enhancing library resources and promoting frequent use.

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