

# Exploring the Prevalence of Poor Reading Culture and Its Effects on Learning Development amongst Primary School Pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone, Kano State

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the prevalence of poor reading culture and its effects on learning development among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone, Kano State, Nigeria. Specifically, it identified the causes of, and factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in the study area. The study also examined the effects of poor reading culture on learning development of primary school pupils in the study area, with a view to proposing effective strategies for improvement. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative approaches. The population comprised primary school headteachers, teachers, pupils, and parents. Multi-stage cluster sampling technique was used to select the sample. Questionnaires and interview scales were used to collect the data for the study. The instruments were face and content validated and reliability checks were conducted and found to be valid and strongly reliable for the study. The data collected were analyzed thematically and statistically in line with qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures. Findings of the study revealed that the major causes of poor reading culture included lack of scheduled reading lessons, lack of reading and storybooks, poverty, influence of modern media, and inadequate parental support. The findings also showed that factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture included poor teacher welfare, poor classroom conditions, political interference, and a shortage of qualified literacy teachers. In addition, the effects identified included poor academic performance, lack of interest in learning, and general educational backwardness among pupils. Based on these findings, the study recommended improved provision of reading materials, enhanced teacher welfare, better learning environments, increased parental involvement, and policy interventions to promote a sustainable reading culture among primary school pupils in the study area.

**Keywords:** Poor reading culture, causes, factors, effects

## INTRODUCTION

Learning to read is the acquisition of a foundational skill that exerts far-reaching positive impacts on learners and their lifelong educational development. Reading is not only a basic academic requirement but a critical tool for intellectual growth, critical thinking, and effective participation in society. It fosters the development of a sustainable reading culture, which is essential for achieving functional literacy. Functional literacy, in turn, equips individuals with the ability to comprehend, interpret, and apply information in everyday life, thereby enhancing learning across all levels of education. A strong reading culture encourages curiosity, independent learning, and continuous self-improvement, all of which are indispensable in an increasingly knowledge-driven world. Despite the recognized importance of reading, there has been a noticeable decline in interest in reading books and related materials globally. This trend is often attributed to the rapid emergence and widespread use of digital communication technologies, such as smartphones, social media platforms, and other internet-based applications. While these technologies provide easy access to information, they have also contributed to shorter attention spans and a preference for quick, fragmented content over sustained reading. As a result, many learners,

particularly young pupils, are gradually losing interest in reading traditional print materials, which has significant implications on their literacy and academic development.

In the Nigerian context, the situation is particularly concerning. Empirical studies (e.g. Akinfenwa, 2019) indicate that reading culture is significantly low across the country. This assertion is further supported by the World Culture Score Index (WCSI), which ranks Nigeria among countries with the lowest levels of reading culture globally. In addition, statistics from the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NCMLANE) reveal that approximately 30% of Nigerians are not literate, while about four in ten primary school children are unable to read with adequate comprehension. Furthermore, Adebayo (2018) reports that nearly 40% of Nigerian adults have not completed reading a single fiction book from cover to cover after leaving school. This suggests that poor reading habits persist beyond formal education and may have long-term consequences for personal and national development. At the basic school level, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) exercise conducted in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, and Katsina states revealed very low levels of reading skills acquisition for both government and IQTE schools, with the results of government school pupils noticeably low (RTI International and USAID/Nigeria, 2016). The 2025 literacy and numeracy data released by UNICEF Nigeria revealed that only 9.6 and 11.2 per cent of primary school pupils in Kano state possess reading and numeracy proficiency skills respectively (Premium Times, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025). These empirical evidences revealed poor acquisition of reading skills which, in turn, leads to poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano state (Kano south inclusive).

Given this problem and its underlying negative consequences, it's imperative to explore the causes, contributing factors, and potential effects of poor reading habits on primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano state, Nigeria. Understanding these is essential for designing effective literacy interventions especially at the basic education level. Such interventions will strengthen learners' ability to acquire functional literacy, improve academic performance, and foster a lifelong interest in reading. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the causes and impacts of poor reading culture among learners, with a view to providing practical recommendations for enhancing reading practices and promoting sustainable literacy development at all levels of education.

Thus, the study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the causes of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone?
2. What factors are responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone?
3. What are the effects of poor reading culture on the learning and development of primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone?
4. What strategies can be adopted to reduce the effects of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigeria is a densely populated country that has an estimated population of 196 million people as of 2017. About 65 per cent of that population had a very low level of literacy (Adamu, 2017). This situation raises serious concerns about the reading habits and literacy development of citizens, particularly among school-age children. Reading culture, which refers to the habitual and consistent practice of reading for knowledge, information, and pleasure, is a fundamental component of educational development and lifelong learning.

Given the centrality of reading to educational success, efforts are made at various levels to improve effective acquisition of literacy skills and remove barriers to its development especially among young learners. This notwithstanding, certain barriers exist and cause of poor reading culture among primary school pupils. One of these barriers is the reallocation of learners' attention toward digital media. Ibrahim (2023) argues that mobile technologies and social platforms fragment attention and reduce the time devoted to extended reading. Complementing this, Niah (2024) suggests that while digital tools expand access to information, they often

encourage skimming rather than deep engagement, thereby weakening habits required for sustained comprehension. Taken together, these perspectives imply that the issue is less about access to information and more about the quality and depth of engagement with texts. Material access remains another critical constraint. Evidence from Nigeria indicates that many schools operate with limited or outdated reading resources and, in some cases, non-functional libraries (Francis & Olayinka, 2010; Otache, 2020). Where print exposure is minimal, opportunities to practice reading are correspondingly reduced. This challenge is amplified in rural and low-income settings, where public library infrastructure is sparse.

Afolabi (2018) links household poverty to reduced availability of books, constrained study time, and competing demands on children's labor. Parental education also matters: where caregivers have limited literacy, they are less able to model reading or support homework, weakening early literacy development (Aina et al., 2011). Cultural and linguistic considerations add another layer. These strands converge with the current study's evidence particularly the combined influence of limited materials, economic hardship, home support, and digital distraction, while highlighting the need to examine how these elements interact at the primary-school level within specific localities. Also, most of the literature treats broad populations (secondary or adult learners) or national aggregates. Fewer studies isolate early-grade pupils in specific communities, where foundational habits are formed.

Beyond proximate causes, the persistence of weak reading habits is tied to system-level conditions. Instructional quality is repeatedly identified as pivotal. Adamu, Tsiga, and Zuilkowski (2022) note that when teachers lack specialized training in early literacy, classroom practices tend to emphasize rote activities over explicit reading instruction. Relatedly, Kabir et al. (2022) document shortages of instructional materials and inadequate classroom infrastructure, both of which limit effective pedagogy. Teacher motivation and welfare are equally consequential. Where instructional time is eroded, opportunities for guided reading and feedback decline. Home literacy environments continue to shape outcomes over time. Davis and Andala (2021) and Sethy (2018) show that regular parent-child reading, availability of books at home, and positive attitudes toward reading are associated with stronger habits. Conversely, homes with limited literacy practices tend to reproduce weak reading behaviors. Language policy and orthography present additional challenges in multilingual contexts. Difficulties arising from the language of instruction can slow decoding and comprehension, particularly when transitions between home language and school language are abrupt.

While many factors combined to cause poor reading culture especially among primary school pupils, the effects of these factors on pupils' academic and socio-economic life are severe, the most widely reported is diminished academic performance. Learners with weak reading habits struggle to access content across subjects, resulting in lower achievement and slower progression (Aina et al., 2011 and Wamani, 2016). Reduced comprehension also affects task completion and assessment performance. Motivational and affective outcomes are also salient. Samuel (2022) links limited reading engagement to low interest and disengagement from learning tasks, while Rubin (2002) associates weak reading habits with reduced confidence. Over time, these patterns may reinforce avoidance behaviors. At a broader level, scholars connect weak reading culture to societal knowledge gaps and constrained human capital development (Otache, 2020; Akong, 2014). Individual trajectories may include limited lifelong learning and restricted access to opportunities that depend on strong literacy. Findings from the current research extend this evidence by documenting behavioral and moral dimensions alongside academic effects. Existing work prioritizes academic indicators, often underexploring behavioral and socio-moral consequences that emerge in specific local contexts.

Furthermore, a review of designs used in the field reveals a strong reliance on single-method approaches. Large-scale surveys provide breadth but can miss context-specific explanations (Li et al., 2024; Samuel, 2022). Pure literature reviews synthesize themes but lack primary data (Amanambu et al., 2021). Experimental studies offer causal insights in controlled settings, though their conditions may not mirror everyday classrooms (Anna et al., 2020; Roslina, 2017). By integrating interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires, the present study triangulates perspectives and balances depth with pattern detection. Inclusion of pupils, parents, teachers, and policymakers strengthens ecological validity.

In summary, while the reviewed literature and the present study share common ground in identifying key determinants and consequences of poor reading culture, they differ significantly in context, methodology, and analytical focus. The present study distinguishes itself by its localized scope, mixed-method approach, and structured analysis, thereby contributing more specific and practical insights into improving reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone.

## METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts a mixed research methodology, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine reading culture in selected primary schools within Wudil and Kibiya Local Government Areas of Kano South Senatorial Zone, Kano State, Nigeria. The qualitative component involves the use of interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), while the quantitative aspect utilizes structured questionnaires to obtain measurable data. This combination allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issue by integrating in-depth perspectives with numerical evidence. The focus of the study is on Primary 4 and Primary 5 pupils, who are at a critical stage of literacy development.

Four schools were purposively selected for the study: Fagaci Science and Project Primary School and Indabo Central Primary School in Wudil Local Government Area, as well as Kibiya Special Primary School and Nariya Central Primary School in Kibiya Local Government Area. These schools were selected based on their relevance and representation of the study area.

The study population comprised pupils, parents, teachers, and policymakers. In each of the selected schools, six pupils, three parents, three teachers, and three policymakers were interviewed, making a total of 60 interview participants across the four schools (24 pupils, 12 parents, 12 teachers, and 12 policymakers). In addition, questionnaires were administered to other teachers to complement the qualitative data.

Data collection methods included interviews, focus group discussions, and administration of structured questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with pupils, parents, teachers, and policymakers to gather detailed insights into their experiences and perceptions. FGDs were organized with the selected participants to explore shared views and collective experiences, while structured questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative data on patterns and trends related to reading culture. The data collected were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically, while quantitative data from questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics. These methods were used to address the research questions by identifying the causes, examining the factors responsible for the prevalence, and assessing the effects of poor reading culture, as well as proposing strategies for improvement.

From the theoretical perspective, this research uses the Simple View of Reading (SVR) proposed by Hoover and Gough (1990) as one of its theoretical framework that is centered on the reading acquisition in beginning readers. The theory focuses on the comprehension of reading by the learner which manifests in the relationship between the reader's oral vocabulary and word recognition (decoding). Thus, text comprehension by a learner can be summarized as:  $RC = DC \times LC$ . This theory is supported by the Interactive reading model, which was developed by Rumelhart (1985) in an attempt to provide a reading instruction approach that compensates for the weaknesses of the Bottom up and Top- down models. The Interactive reading model presupposes that reading is at once a perceptual and cognitive process and a reader must be able to make use of sensory, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic information to accomplish a reading task.

The study provides valuable insights for teachers, school administrators, curriculum planners, and policymakers by offering a comprehensive understanding of reading culture among primary school pupils in the study area and presenting evidence-based recommendations for enhancing literacy development.

## RESULTS

This section presented the result of the investigation of causes and effects of poor reading culture on learning development of primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria. The four research

questions were answered using the qualitative and quantitative data collected. The data collected were analyzed and the results were presented below:

### What are the causes of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone, Kano state, Nigeria?

To investigate the causes of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone of Kano State, Nigeria, oral interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, parents and policymakers were conducted. Thematic analyses of their responses were done to identify the specific causes of poor reading culture among primary school pupils. Table 1.1 presents the result of the analyses.

Table 1.1: Causes of Poor Reading Culture

| Source                        | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Subtheme                                                                                                                              | Theme                                                                |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher, parents policymakers | Lack specific reading/storybooks, non-scheduled reading lessons, negative peer group influence, poverty, low parental care/support, irrelevant curriculum, inadequate & irrelevant instructional resources, poor classrooms condition, long distance to school, teacher and pupils lateness, truancy & influence of modern media. | Inadequate & irrelevant resources, lack of scheduled reading lessons, media influence, poverty & poor parental educational awareness. | Low government & parental care/support & poor policy implementation. |

Source: CEPRCI, 2025

The policymakers, teachers and parents interviewed expressed divergent views on what they think are the causes of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria. The summary of their various responses revealed that lack of specific reading/storybooks in schools and homes, non-scheduled reading lessons in schools and homes, negative peer group influence, poverty, low parental care/support, irrelevant curriculum, inadequate & irrelevant instructional resources, poor classrooms condition, long distance to school, teacher and pupils' lateness, truancy and influence of modern media contributed to the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in the zone. In the subtheme, the various responses were believed to reflect the problems of inadequate relevant resources like qualified literacy teachers, curricula, texts etc., lack of scheduled reading lessons, modern media influence, poverty & poor parental educational awareness. In the main theme, all such causes were believed to be specifically caused by low government and parental care and support as well as poor policy implementation.

In addition to the qualitative data collected on the causes of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in the study area, quantitative data was also collected using a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire. The 29-item questionnaire that indicated some possible causes of poor reading culture among primary school pupils was administered to twelve (12) primary school teachers in the study area. The result of the data collected and analyzed was presented in table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: Causes of Poor Reading Culture

| Respondents | N  | Mean   | SD     |
|-------------|----|--------|--------|
| Teachers    | 12 | 2.8966 | .60731 |

Source: CPRCQ, 2025

Twelve (12) teachers (N) from the study area responded to the copies of the questionnaires. In a scale of 1 – 4, the mean obtained was 2.91 and a standard deviation (SD) of .60731, indicating an above average agreement with the expected causes identified in the questionnaire.

## What are the factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone, Kano state, Nigeria?

There might be different factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in the study area. Interviews and focus group discussions with the selected teachers, policymakers and parents were conducted and the results were presented in table 2.

Table 2: Factors Responsible for the Prevalence of Poor Reading Culture

| Source                           | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Subtheme                                                                                                                    | Theme                                                                  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teachers, parents & policymakers | Poor teacher – welfare, low teacher commitment, inadequate reading resources, low parental support, inadequate qualified teachers, poor classrooms condition, political influence, medium of instruction, influence of modern media and suspension of demotion policy | Inadequate & poor condition of resources, low government & parental care/support, poor policies & influence of modern media | Inadequate government and parental support & influence of modern media |

Source: CEPRCI, 2025

The data of the interviews and FGDs conducted with the teachers on the factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria were presented in table 2. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

The responses revealed that the respondents believed that poor teacher – welfare, low teacher commitment, inadequate reading resources, low parental support, inadequate qualified teachers, poor classrooms condition, political influence, medium of instruction, influence of modern media and suspension of promotion and demotion policy were the factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria.

These factors were sub themed as inadequate and poor condition of resources, low government and parental care and support, irrelevant policies & influence of modern media. In the main theme, it can be said that the factors were inadequate government and parental support.

## What are the effects of poor reading culture on learning development of primary school pupils in Kano – South Senatorial Zone, Kano state, Nigeria?

To determine the effects of poor reading culture on primary school pupils' learning development in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria, qualitative (oral interviews & FGDs with pupils, parents and policymakers) and quantitative (teachers' questionnaire) data were collected. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interviews and FGDs data while descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) was used to analyze the data collected through the administration of the questionnaire. The results of the analyses are presented in table 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1: Effects of Poor Reading Culture

| Source                         | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Subtheme                                                             | Theme                                     |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Pupils, parents & policymakers | Struggles with understanding tasks and instructions, overall reading difficulty, lack of interest, teacher discouragement, truancy and dropout, immorality and criminal activities, poor academic performance and educational backwardness | Pupils' irregular attendance, poor academic performance & immorality | Low academic achievement & moral standard |

Source: CEPRCI, 2025

Table 3.1 showed the results of the interviews and FGDs conducted with pupils, parents and policymakers on the effects of poor reading culture on learning development of primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano state, Nigeria. The responses revealed diverse effects most of which revolving around the idea that primary school pupils' poor reading culture negatively affects their academic performance and achievement, skills acquisition and lifelong learning opportunities as well as moral development. Pupils used to lack interest in their studies leading to lack of proper concentration which in effect make learning difficult and dropping out as well as engaging in other criminal activities.

In addition to the interviews conducted, 4-point Likert scale questionnaire with 10 items was administered to the twelve (12) teachers. The questionnaire contained items on the negative effects of poor reading culture. The data collected through the administration of the questionnaire to teachers was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and the result of the analyses is presented in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Effects of Poor Reading Culture

| Respondents | N  | Mean   | SD     |
|-------------|----|--------|--------|
| Teachers    | 12 | 3.1833 | .53908 |

Source: EPRCQ, 2025

Twelve (12) teachers responded to the questionnaire on the effects of poor reading culture on learning development of primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria. In a scale of 1 – 4, the mean obtained was 3.1833 and the standard deviation was .53908, indicating that teachers highly agreed poor reading culture negatively affected primary pupils' academic performance and achievement, skills acquisition and lifelong learning opportunities as well as moral development.

### What are the possible strategies for reducing the effects of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano South Senatorial Zone, Kano State, Nigeria?

On the possible strategies to ameliorate the menace of poor reading culture and its negative effects on learning development of primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano state, Nigeria, interviews and FGDs with parents, teachers and policymakers were conducted. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis and the result is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Strategies for Reducing the Effects of Poor Reading Culture

| Source                           | Responses                                                                                                                                               | Subtheme                                                    | Theme                                  |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Teachers, parents & policymakers | Improved teacher condition, parental & community support, provision of adequate relevant learning materials, use of mother tongue & improved curriculum | Improving teacher, parents, community, materials and policy | School, community & policy improvement |

Source: CEPRCI, 2025

The parents, teachers and policymakers' responses on the possible strategies to ameliorate the menace of poor reading culture and its negative effects on learning development of primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria revealed that improved teacher condition, parental & community support, provision of adequate relevant learning materials, use of mother tongue & improved curricula would go a long way in reviving the reading culture hitherto common among primary school pupils in the zone and state in general. These strategies require improvement of school, community and policy conditions in order to enhance reading culture and in effect overall quality of primary education in the zone.

## DISCUSSIONS

This study investigated the causes, factors and effects of poor reading culture on primary school pupils' learning development in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria with a view to propose strategies to improve pupils' reading culture in the zone. Over the years, governments, non-governmental organizations and individual philanthropists continue to make frantic efforts to improve the literacy levels of pupils which will, in turn, improve the overall educational standards in Kano state (Kano south zone inclusive). Yet, evidence shows a very low level of reading skills acquisition among the pupils. This, in part, implies a high prevalence of poor reading culture amongst primary school pupils in the zone. Many investigations by different scholars (e.g. RTI International and USAID/Nigeria, 2016; Adamu, Tsiga & Zuilkowski, 2022; Kabir, Marty, Akinrimade & Zuilkowski, 2022; Opeyemi, 2020; Fabunmi & Folorunso, 2010 etc.) have documented different causes and factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture in different parts of Nigeria including learners' inability to deliver the basic skills required to facilitate the reading process in beginning readers, inadequate and lack of culturally relevant materials, inadequate and dilapidated infrastructure, lack of proper supervision and monitoring in government schools, harsh economic realities etc.

In Kano south senatorial zone where this study was conducted, the findings on the causes of poor reading culture revealed that inadequate (and in some situations 'lack of') relevant resources like textbooks, storybooks, etc. and lack of scheduled reading lessons. Reading is not yet regarded as a subject of its own by the Nigeria's basic education system but an aspect of English language curricula. Despite Kano State Government's effort to improve the teaching of reading through the development and implementation of literacy lesson plans from primary 1 – 3, teachers' inadequate knowledge of literacy and how literacy is taught and lack of literacy lesson plans and other materials necessary for its delivery hinder effective teaching of reading in the state. A study on the availability of teaching and learning materials for reading, Kabir, Marty, Akinrimade & Zuilkowski (2022) found that a lot of primary schools had no textbooks, charts, pictures etc. In such a situation, acquisition of appropriate reading skills would be low and in effect, low reading culture. Another cause of poor reading culture found was the influence of modern media. Because android phones are common at homes and streets, children prefer to watch videos than read books or other reading materials. This is more likely because some of their parents (especially mothers) that are expected to motivate them by providing them an opportunity to read are not literate and don't read at home. They almost always watch their televisions and phones together with the children. This was found to have a serious negative effect on children's desire to read. In a related cause of poor reading culture, poverty and poor parental educational awareness also affect children's reading ability. Children from literate and high socio-economic status families usually perform better in reading and have a more positive reading culture than those from low socio-economic status. This is so because parents that are educated and financially stable tend to support their children's learning by motivating them through the provision of relevant reading materials such as storybooks, supporting and providing them with the opportunity to do their home works, assignments and independent readings at homes. Buttressing this, Oyewole (2017) found in his study that majority of students whose parents are literate read more fluently than those from homes where the parents are illiterate. Also, Opeyemi (2020) maintained that parents can learn to create a supportive environment for their children to begin learning. Where such is done, children's reading skills and culture will significantly improve.

As important as it is to understand the causes of poor reading culture in Kano south senatorial zone, it is also vital to understand the factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in the area. Although many perceived the two (causes and effect) as similar, the findings revealed a slight difference. To most respondents, poor teacher welfare, low teacher commitment, inadequate reading resources, low parental support, inadequate qualified literacy teachers, poor classrooms condition, political influence, medium of instruction, influence of modern media and suspension of demotion policy were the major factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone. Thus, in addition to the already discussed causes like inadequate instructional materials for teaching literacy, parental care and support etc., poor teacher welfare leading to low teacher commitment – absenteeism, lateness, etc. – poor classroom condition, political influence, medium of instruction and the suspension of promotion and demotion policy were believed to be the factors responsible for the prevalence of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in the study area. Whereas relevant literacy curriculum and other materials



are needed, adequate, qualified, competent and committed teachers are needed to effectively implement literacy curriculum.

A study by Wamani (2016) found that low teacher commitment and motivation and limited time for children's reading at home and in school are among the factors responsible for poor reading culture among primary school pupils. Even if teachers possess the needed literacy knowledge and skills for teaching it, low commitment make them to be incessantly absent in school and late for classes. Where the allotted time for teaching is not appropriately utilized, the skills expected to be taught and learned would not be delivered fully. This low teacher commitment itself is, perhaps to some extent, caused by poor remuneration, supervision, motivation as well as poor classroom or school condition especially in public schools. Some research (e.g. Zuilkowski & Barnes, 2020; Underwood, 2018) believed that for students to be fully literate, they need to receive 60 to 90 minutes of literacy instruction (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) per day. Writing about the developing countries like Nigeria, Abadzi (2013) drew from several studies and submitted that "the actual time on task teachers spent on reading instruction is much lower than that allotted by government policy." It is therefore not surprising that literacy levels among primary school pupils is low in Kano south senatorial zone and Kano State or even Nigeria in general.

On the effects of poor reading culture on primary school pupils' learning development in Kano south senatorial zone, both qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed confirmed poor reading culture leads pupils to struggle to understand texts, tasks and instructions, leading to overall reading difficulty. It also leads to lack of interest in what is done in class and school; discourages teachers by making the class boring; leads pupils to becoming truant, dropping out of school and sometimes engaging in criminal activities. In school, it leads to poor academic performance and overall educational backwardness. These show that the effects, causes and factors responsible for the prevalence of poor academic performance are sometimes twined and interrelated; one cause leads to an effect and an effect leads to a cause. These findings corroborated with the findings of other scholars such as Aina et al. (2011), Wamani (2016), and Otache (2020) who reported that poor reading habits lead to low academic performance, poor comprehension, and limited intellectual development. Rubin (2002), on his part, observed that individuals with poor reading culture have a higher chance of anti-social behaviour. A healthy reading culture influences an individual's personal development (Igwe, 2011).

On the possible strategies of reducing the effects of poor reading culture among primary school pupils in Kano south senatorial zone, the data collected and analyzed showed that improving teacher and general school condition, parental & community support, provision of adequate relevant learning materials, use of mother tongue & improving literacy curriculum will improve the poor reading culture of pupils and in turn reduce its negative effects. Teachers are the backbone of every education system; they implement curricula as such improving their condition is non-negotiable. While other strategies are important, quality pre-service teacher education, continuous in-service trainings, adequate remuneration, recognition, incentives, and overall motivation are necessary for teachers to function effectively. Fabunmi and Folorunso (2010) maintained that systematic and well-structured reading instruction and reading interventions improve children's reading skills and support those who struggle with their reading. Only competent and motivated teacher can deliver systematic and well-structured reading instruction. Perhaps next to teacher is the curriculum and of course language policy. In an education system where the language of instruction and the literacy language differ from the language of the environment, reading culture could be poor. Most pupils have no motivation to read English outside the school environment. Prints e.g. signboards, calendars, wedding invitations etc. are written in Hausa rather than English. This, coupled with lack of adequate relevant instructional materials, makes it difficult for pupils to imbibe positive reading culture.

## RECOMMENDATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several implications on policy and practice of education especially as it relates to literacy. First, the provision of adequate and competent teachers of literacy should be given much priority by the governments. Education budgets and allocations should be increased in accordance with the needs of schools and pupils. This will enable employment of additional competent teachers, continuous training and retraining, and the improvement of teachers' remuneration, welfare and incentives. Because instructional materials are next

to teachers, government, local and international donor agencies that mostly complement government efforts should pay special attention to provision, distribution and utilization of instructional materials. This also requires adequate funding. Grade-level texts, storybooks, charts etc. for the teaching and learning of reading skills should be made available for teachers and pupils. The curriculum, which provides the impetus for both teachers and pupils, should be better understood by all teachers and school authorities who guide and oversee teachers' instructional practices. This reaffirms the need for continuous training of literacy teachers of Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria.

The findings also imply the need for literacy policy review to align early grades literacy language with the lingua franca of the people of Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State i.e. the need or purposes for which literacy is meant to serve. Put simply, literacy policy for early primary school pupils should be Hausa language rather than English. This does not mean precluding the teaching of English language as a subject or medium of instruction as the debates continue but making all reading components form the basis of Hausa language curriculum. Since learning to read in one language supports reading in another language, English language curriculum should continue to carry literacy contents.

Another critical implication of the findings is the urgent need for increased parental involvement. A lot happens here. Parents' poverty and low educational awareness are negatively affecting pupils' reading culture in Kano south senatorial zone, Kano State, Nigeria. Parents, especially mothers who mingle and stay long with the pupils should be mobilized to understand the effect of watching television, videos and audios in their smart phones etc. on their children's reading culture. To achieve this, teachers, SBMC members, quality assurance officials and other education stakeholders within the community can be engaged, empowered to mobilize the parents. Through parental involvement and engagement, meetings and home visits can be organized within each neighbourhood.

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