Reading Environment and Reading Interests of Public Sector Secondary School Students

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Abstract
This study explored the reading environment, reading interests and available reading facilities for Public Sector students in Secondary Schools. A Structured questionnaire and a reading interest inventory were used as survey instruments on 9th and 10th class (N= 3600) students in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The findings of the study highlighted that parents, friends, teachers, and examinations influence the reading interests of students positively. Parents and teachers both can encourage nourishing the minds of adolescence towards reading. Significantly a greater number of students viewed their teachers and examinations to be playing a motivational role for reading. The majority of the students asserted that magazines and newspapers were available at their schools and homes as the reading facility. Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that the majority of the students appeared to be interested in reading magazines.

Key Words
Reading environment,
Reading facilities,
Reading interest

Introduction

Reading is an interactive association between text and reader. It needs constant practices, growth, and improvement. Grabe and Stoller (2002) viewed reading as a skill getting meaning from text and presuming information properly. Erdem (2014) viewed reading as a normal activity in adolescence and shaped during life. Though reading ability is the heart and goal for academic success yet just reading words without assembling their meaning is not enough for success. Reading is compulsory for one's scholastic accomplishment (Ögeyik & Akyay, 2009). It encompasses many events and conditions keeping an individual truly free from lack of knowledge and fabricated ideas (Unal, 2010).

There is a positive relationship between reading engagement and reading capability. According to Cunningham and Stanovich, (1998) students who read well along with vocabulary development, spelling capacity, linguistic use, and writing style can get more understanding through wide and varied reading activities which prompt information, required for doing great in academic matters. According to Guthrie (2008), grasp on reading is seizing as students' interest in reading is falling down. Many types of research on reading asserted that reading habit develops when an individual reads again and again willingly for free time. Students' reading capability depends on their reading habits. Reading un-responsiveness makes it further bewildering to assistance struggling readers (Bohn-Gettler & Rapp, 2011; Katzir, Lesaux & Kim, 2009).

Reading Environment

Reading environments are the structures, networks, innovation, space, time, culture, and strategy that motivate students and instructors to achieve the information. In today's world, the reading environment appears as a combination of physical and digital grounds to support learning consistently. It proposes a place and space like a school, a classroom, a library. Reading for learning during free time is of significance. As indicated by Susar, (2012) book reading is essential for learning. According to Greenhough and Hughes, (1998) reading habits improve adult's knowledge and understanding.

The positive reading environment is supportive of students' scholarly, social and mental enthusiasm and prosperity. Learning networks like rapid broadband, teachers, students, and families' joint efforts within and outside of the school can bring extensible improvements in reading. Every home and school have different environment calling its own measures, instructional methodologies and

practicable administration to meet the needs of students. Başusta (2009) considered physical, psychological, social and environmental factors important for academic success. Through a relaxed, noiseless environment for studying and an extensive range of interesting book selection, schools and homes may support any type of reading through magazines, funnies, memoirs, non-fiction or any other interesting material.

Impact of Environmental Features on Reading: The Home

Home impacts students reading interests and academic performance. Generally, it is noticed that the advantages of the parental association are clear for student success. The most fundamental thing for the reading environment is the linkage between home, teachers, and policymakers. Passionate readers both male and female can be generated through a gorgeous reading environment at the home and school.

It is generally embedded view that the role of parents is associated with social class. Roberts (2011) revealed that lower or under social class parents incline to non-educational accomplishments and outlooks. Parental occupation and educational level could boost the leisure reading habits of students. Apparently, the reading environment at home like reading for an adolescent, usage of the public library, getting books as presents & gifts, a massive collection of the book at home personal expenses on magazines promotes reading habits. It is generally observed that the students whose parents are educated appear to be mature having better reading practices at home before coming to school.

Impact of Environmental Features on Reading: The Teacher

Teacher plays a vital role in improving reading skills and building a reading attitude among young students. Vinay (2009) revealed that parents and teachers play a constructive role in inculcating reading habits among children by creating eager, enthusiasm and responsiveness. Cremin, Mottram, Collins and Powell (2014) asserted that teachers' understanding of the youngsters as readers, collections of texts and their views about reading affect reading interests of the youngsters. He pointed out that if teachers predominantly perceive reading just as talent and capability to read well and disregard reading as a meaning building exercise then adolescents' assignation and their interests toward reading will be malicious. School teachers should provide guidance to enhance youngsters' reading interests genuinely. Brozo (2002) asserted that teachers can discover countless reading material by using an interest inventory to legalize topics of students enjoy. It was further asserted that students participate actively when teachers are vigilant of their individual pleasure and needs. Clarke (2016) described that school teachers' insights of students' competence, gender, social class, culture and the teaching applies for reading, shaped them as struggling readers.

Impact of Environmental Features on Reading: The Library

Adkins and Brendler, (2015) stated that the availability of a diversity of materials in school libraries, encouraging the environment in schools and students' assistance in selecting books can promote reading interests among students. They further viewed that school libraries are fundamental for nurturing academic achievement and promoting a reading culture. Libraries in school can motivate students giving a wide variety of books including magazines and comics and well-known writing for reading (Constantino, 2008). Cultivation of positive human connections is indispensable to support and improve the learning procedure. Schools should focus on libraries as an effective center of learning to accumulate students to get data, to get the pleasure of learning and to escape from the burdens of the day. The 21st-century library seems to be focusing on completing its conventional role of disseminating information to the students along with being a hub that empowers students to investigate, combine and assess assets in manners that show learning and make create new information. The library plays a dynamic role in cultivating reading abilities and reading interests in adolescents. School library mostly be significant in assisting students who are less capable of reading and belonging to lower socioeconomic status families. Libraries can assist students, teachers and parents to motivate them and to develop reading interests (Somsong, 1999). It was further revealed that parents and teachers play a greater role in enhancing reading capability. In this regard, Bland, Hughes and Willis (2013) proposed that caring for the particular learning environment in the library can assist instructors with maximizing their utilization of library space. The physical conditions of the library can promote signals to shape social conduct inside specific spaces and to support favored learning practices (Cleveland, 2017) in schools. The library appears to be a cool and calm place for reading (Cross, 2001). The school library should promote the reading of books physically and on the web through social networking websites or social media junctures like Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to look at new books.

Impact of Reading Environmental Features on Gender Differences

Usually, it is supposed that environmental features like parents, peers, teachers, and the school library services

equally have a greater influence on the reading interests of students of different genders and ages. Reading interests of girls and boys belonging to different age groups are different considerably inclined by core elements like home, motivation and attitude. The study of Shelly, (1999) on youngsters of six and eight class found that generally, the students liked historical fiction, humor, horror stories, mysteries, science fiction and adventure. It was further asserted that most chosen reading types by girls were romantic, historical fiction, friendship and animal stories and boys chosen books were on sports and science fiction. Youngsters read for affection and entrainment in holidays (Hussain & Munshi, 2011). Furthermore, the students desired to read books on literature, magazines, religion, romantic books and novels. The authors further endorsed that students at secondary school level preferred newspapers, traveling stories and scientific books to read besides the drama, poetry, literature, and autobiographies.

It is a general observation that girls choose romantic and boys favor action-oriented books. Abilock (2002) asserted that sampled girls privileged books equally about both gender whereas boys selected fiction about themselves. However, there are different views on whether girls are better readers than boys. The girls demonstrate a positive outlook on reading (Abilock, 2002; Swalander & Taube, 2007). Clark, Osborne & Akerman, (2008) compared a wide range of genres of male preferences for reading.

Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to (a) techniques used by secondary schools for promoting reading environment; (b) explore reading facilities and reading materials available in secondary schools, and (c) identify reading interest of secondary school students.

Method

The study was a descriptive type used general survey method. The population of this study contained 9th& 10th class students of public sector secondary schools of Southern Punjab, Pakistan to conduct the study. Sample of 3600 students from 24 secondary schools (12 from urban strata, 12 from rural strata) was selected through stratified random sampling. The sample of the study was from 9th and 10th class science and arts group students. The 50% (1800) sample consisted of boys as well as 50% (1800) were girls.

Tool Development

The instruments for the study were questionnaire and reading interest inventory comprising of structured questions about reading facilities, reading environment that had been recognized as credible predictors of interest in reading to collect data from public sector secondary school students.

Data Analysis and results

Arithmetic average, mean and standard deviation were applied through SPSS (The Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to explore the reading environment and reading interests of 9th and 10th class students. Observing the scope of this study student's reading environment preferred reading interests, as well as reading facilities, were measured, presented and discussed. The data analyzed through SPSS being presented in the following tables:

Table 1. Teachers Assign Reading Work to Secondary School Students

Teachers assign reading work to students	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D
Always	875	24.30		
Sometimes	1318	36.61		
Never	1407	39.08	33.33	7.91
Total	3600	100.00		

N=3600

It is obvious from table 1 that 60.91% of the respondents were of the view that their teachers assign them reading at school, whereas 39.08% were of the otherwise viewpoint. The standard deviation was 7.91.

Table 2. Techniques used by Secondary Schools for Promoting a Reading Environment

School's Techniques for promoting a reading environment in the school	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D

Charts and Pena-flex	1317	36.58		
Writings on walls of the school	1408	39.11		
Daily news and verse/ or a proverb on the notice board of school	875	24.30	33.33	7.92
Total	3600	100.00		

N=3600

Table 2 demonstrates the opinion of secondary school students about techniques used by their schools for promoting reading among students. According to the table majority of the students (39.11%) pointed out that their schools display writing on the walls, 36.58% appreciated charts and panaflex in the classrooms and 24.30% valued daily news and verses and/ or proverbs on the school's notice board(s). The standard deviation was 7.92 respectively.

Table 3. Availability of Library Facility at Secondary Schools

Library at school	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D
Yes	2657	73.80		
No	943	26.19	49.99	33.66
Total	3600	100.0		

N=3600

According to table 5, the majority of the respondents (73.80%) affirmed the existence of the library at their schools whereas, 26.19% were of the otherwise view. The standard deviation was 33.66.

Table 4. Availability of Facilities in The School Library

School library has	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D
Proper lighting	546	15.16		
Proper sitting	636	17.66	24.99	9.96
Ventilation	1216	33.77		
Heating and cooling	1202	33.38		
Total	3600	100.0		

N=3600

It is evident from table 4 that 15.16% and 17.66% of the secondary school students affirmed that the library in their respective schools has proper lighting and proper sitting arrangements in the library. Similarly, 33.77% and 33.38% of the respondents acknowledged that the library in their respective schools is properly ventilated and have proper heating and cooling system respectively. The standard deviation was 9.96 respectively.

Table 5. Availability of Reading Materials in The School Library

Reading materials available in the school library	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D
Newspaper	1045	29.02		
Magazines	917	25.47		
Storybooks	407	11.30		
Scientific books	319	8.86	14.28	8.97
History books	306	8.50		
Islamic books	312	8.66		
Children books	294	8.16		
Total	3600	100.0		

N=3600

Table 5 shows the availability of reading material at the school library. The results indicate that 29.02% and 25.47% of the respondents acknowledged the availability of newspapers and magazines respectively in the school library. Similarly, 11.30% and 8.86% recorded that storybooks and scientific books respectively were available in the

library. Even so, 8.50%, 8.66% and 8.16% of the respondents affirmed the availability of historical books, Islamic books and children literature respectively in the library of their respective schools. The standard deviation was 8.97.

Table 6. Reading Interests of Secondary School Students

Preferred Reading Interests	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
No interest	2	0.05		
Course-related books	274	7.61		
Posters/signs	213	5.91		
Magazines	626	17.38		
Travel books	275	7.63		
Fiction	541	15.02	7.68	4.25
Poetry	244	6.77		
History Books	235	6.52		
Islamic books	243	6.75		
Children books	246	6.83		
E-Books	244	6.77		
Newspapers	238	6.61		
Websites material	219	6.08		
Total	3600	100.0		

N=3600

Table 6 shows the reading interests of secondary school students. According to the table that students have different reading interests as 17.38% of the students viewed that they enjoy magazines; 15.02% of readers were passionate about fiction; 7.63% of students pointed out that they choose to read travel books and 7.61% students like better to read course-related books. The ratio of students' reading interests was to read the children literature 6.83%; 6.77% e-Books and 6.77% poetry; 6.75% Islamic books. Likewise 6.61% like to read newspapers; 6.52% of students like history books; while 6.08% prefer webs reading. However, 5.91% of the students were interested in posters and /or signs and finally, it was remarkable to note that less than one percent of the students stated that they had no interest in reading. The standard deviation was 4.25 respectively.

Table 7. Availability of the Books of Interest of Secondary School Students for Reading

Availability books of interest in the school library	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D
All books of interest are available	529	14.69		
Majority of the books of interest are available	840	23.33		
A few of the books of interest are available	1138	31.61	24.99	7.77
None of the books of interest is available	1093	30.36		
Total	3600	100.00		

N=3600

Table 7 demonstrates that when the respondents were asked about availability of the books of their interest in the school library, the 31.61% of the students remarked that a few books of their interest were available in their school's libraries; whereas, 30.36% were of the view that the books of their interest were not available in the library. Similarly, 23.33% of the respondents affirmed the availability of the majority of the books of their interest in the school library and only 14.69% of the respondents acknowledged the availability of all books of their interest in the school library. The standard deviation was 7.77.

Table 8. Technology-Based Reading Interests of Secondary School Students

Secondary School Students use for Reading	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D
IMO	435	12.08		
Viber	386	10.72		
Twitter	363	10.08	16.66	7.64
WhatsApp	947	26.30		

Face book	519	14.41
None	950	26.38
Total	3600	100.00

N=3600

Table 8 shows that when the respondents were inquired about "Internet tool for reading" mostly (26.38%) students answered none. 26.30% of students stated that they had Whats app as an internet tool for reading. 14.41% of students described that they had Face book as an internet tool for reading. 15.33% of urban girls and 12.88% of rural girls described that they had Face book as an internet tool for reading. 12.08% of students labeled that they had IMO as an internet tool for reading. 10.72% of students described that they had Viber as an Internet tool for reading. 10.08% of students designated that they had Twitter as an internet tool for reading. The mean score and standard deviation scores of Preferences in reading material are 16.66 and 7.64 respectively.

Conclusion

The findings of the study were drawn from data based on the survey. This research aimed at studying the reading environment and reading interests of students of public sector secondary school level. Environmental determinant: parents, friends, teachers and examination, reading interest towards different reading materials available at home or school, reading facilities available to public sector secondary school students were measured through statistical data analysis. When the students of public sector secondary school were asked about motivator to consult library to check environmental determinant: parents, friends, teachers, examination, the result showed that the teacher is a significant motivator to consult the library. It was also found that examination, friends and parents were also a great source of motivation to consult the library to read books.

It became clear from the data analysis that Islamic books, magazines, library books, storybooks, history books children books and newspaper though less or more were at least available as reading facilities at home or school to student in the public sector secondary school and they had fairly consistent reading interest of different types listed in the table no. 4. Data has provided significant evidence that it can be tempered by the fact that students in the public sector secondary school are indeed reading. It is concluded that though there were numerous implications for measuring the reading interests of public sector secondary school students however present study consider only travel books, posters/signs, poetry, fiction, Islamic books, children books, history books, e-books, newspapers, magazines and websites material or none of following. Our survey results showed that they are reading travel books, posters/signs, poetry, fiction, Islamic books, children's books, history books, e-books, newspapers, magazines and websites material or none of following though less or more. It seems that students who are readers continue to read if given the occasion to read a diversity of books, they might read even more but they were more interested in magazines reading. Possibly if we just endure to admire the worth of magazines, those magazines find their way to the readers. Findings from this study reflected that most of the students were reading magazines. It is also realistic that the materials the children's interests are not located in the libraries, classrooms and homes. Students can enjoy reading if they may found materials of their interests to relate it and observe the impact of it on their individual lives. It seems valuable that homes, library and classrooms should provide a reading environment with a diversity of reading materials and other electronic resources, print media like newspapers, magazines, electronic resources etc. This study may be of assistance for creating and improving the reading environment at home and school to enhance reading interests through the provision of reading facilities and motivation to students in the public sector secondary school.

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