

**THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF A READING CULTURE ON SELF-DIRECTED
LEARNING AMONG PUPILS IN THE SELECTED GOVERNMENT
AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NABUMALI TOWN
COUNCIL, MBALE DISTRICT**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, MUSUMBACHAI ANNET(BU/UP/2022/1756), declare that this is my original work and that it has never been presented to any university, college or institution for any award of a diploma or degree.

Signature 

Date..... 30/7/2024

APPROVAL

This research for **MUSUMBACHAI ANNET (BU/UP/2022/1756)**, has been carried out at Busitema University for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of bachelor of education primary. It has been carried out under my close supervision and guidance.

Signature 

Date 30/7/2024

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Research proposal to my family, my husband Mr. Nanganka Moses, my children Mark, Mercy and Tracy who have always encouraged me to achieve the best and motivated me to complete this research. This research is also dedicated to Nabumali Boarding primary school pupils and staff

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRT	Children’s Reading Tent
DEO	District Education Officer
DIMP	Decentralized Instructional Materials Procurement Program.
EABDA	East African Book Development Association
EUPEK	Enhancement of Universal Primary Education in Kampala
UPE	Universal Primary Education

ACRONYMS

MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
RAU	Reading Association of Uganda
ULIA	Uganda Library and Information Association
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation
DEAR	DAY Drop Everything and Read

ABSTRACT

The study was carried out with the purpose of providing strategies for developing a reading culture among pupils under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme in Uganda. The study was carried out in Nabumali town council in three UPE schools. The study examined the reading practices among pupils in UPE schools in Nabumali town council in order to provide strategies for developing a reading culture. The objectives of the study were to establish reading practices in UPE schools, examine the major challenges faced by pupils as they read, and develop appropriate strategies to improve the reading culture among the pupils. Through use of the qualitative approach, the study employed a case study research design. Interview and observation methods were employed to collect data from pupils, teachers and head teachers. Research findings from the schools studied indicate that there was unplanned frequency of reading by pupils and the only reading that happened was limited to available reading materials and resources. However, inefficient reading materials and their accessibility, Inefficient reading facilities and non- involvement of parents have inhibited the progress of reading culture among the pupils. Inadequate reading facilities and non- involvement of parents inhibited the reading culture among the pupils. The study thus recommended introduction of reading in mother tongue at infant levels by encouraging pupils to read and write their own stories, availing pupils with appropriate reading materials and provision of school library services. The study further recommends the formation of book clubs in schools that would involve parents participating in reading activities in schools. In conclusion reading would be enhanced by embracing government policies or strategies like the National text book policy to ensure a lifelong learning environment in UPE schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The study discussed the reading culture among UPE school pupils in Uganda and how it can improve in order to empower pupils with skills to get them to read. This chapter covers the background to the study, problem statement, specific objectives of the study, research questions, justification and significance of the study, conceptual framework, definition of terms, scope of the study and limitations.

Background to the Study

African society has been labelled with phrases such as, an oral society" or one that „lacks a reading culture (Mulindwa, 2001). Sangkeo (1999), while presenting a paper on reading habits promotion in the Association of South- East Asian Nations (ASEAN) libraries, noted that, „we are not a reading society but a chatting society". He explained that people preferred conversing rather than reading. He emphasized that traditional educators were great narrators of stories which they said out loud and accompanied with dramatization and demonstrations. This explained pupils" failure to engage in reading: most of them came from backgrounds where stories were told to them verbally rather than them having to read these stories. Further still, books and libraries are often seen as redundant in societies that are mainly based on oral traditions and practices. In such societies, people stop reading once formal education is completed as "they derive more pleasure from the oral and performing arts like talking, singing, dancing, socializing than from the rather private and individual reading of a book. Since the majority are illiterate, they affect the minority who can read, with the result that the oral mode remains prevalent" (Tötemeyer, 1994).

The importance of literacy not only in Africa but globally cannot be over emphasized. The importance attached to literacy is demonstrated by annual celebration of World literacy day commemorated on 8th September every year. The world literacy day was first declared in 1966 serves to remind the international community of the need to overcome issues about learning. With about 95% of the world illiterate people living in developing countries of which 50% are in sub-saharan Africa, the importance of this study in the context of Uganda is therefore significant. It has implications for policy, theory and practice.

Reading does not develop suddenly but increases gradually, depending on exposure and background. This exposure can be through, for instance, people reading for leisure, knowledge, information or interest. Mackenzie, as cited by Magara and Batambuze (2005), emphasized that in order to develop the reading culture in a society; people require knowledge in order to utilize existing information, materials and resources. Furthermore, Ribeiro (2001) emphasized that attitudes towards information use were very vital to improving the reading culture of a society and concluded that a reading culture determinethe success of a person and the nation as a whole(Magara and Batambuze,2005). This is why there is need to explore opportunities for developingreading culture among pupils in primary schools in Uganda.

The development of a reading culture in Uganda is influenced by the formal education system. The formal education system in Uganda can be traced to 1844, when Sheik Ahmad bin Ibrahim arrived with a few other Arabs and Swahilis at the court of KabakaSuna II of Buganda (Sekamwa,2000). According to Sekamwa, the first schools were established by both Catholic and Protestant missions and they aimed at training catechists. The educational activities of the missionaries later extended to children and proper schools were established by 1898. However,

the education system in Uganda underwent various reforms from mission schools to privately-owned schools, all of which followed the same education curriculum.

It was not until 1997 that the Republic of Uganda adopted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme to ensure universal access to primary education by children of school-going age. The UPE serves to remind the international community of the need to overcome issues about learning. The UPE scheme aimed at enrolling all pupils of school-going age from Primary One to Primary Seven. Universal Primary Education schools are characterized by large numbers of pupils where the teacher-student ratio is 1:100, less qualified teachers, and lack of equipment and instructional materials (UNEB, 2000). According to Wagana (1993), most pupils in UPE schools in Uganda hardly read outside school since reading is not emphasized so much in the curriculum. Even with the few reading materials available in UPE schools, the readership of these materials is still very low. This is not only because pupils are reluctant to read, but also due to a number of factors which this study aims to establish.

The poor reading culture in Uganda has led to an underdeveloped book industry, which is characterized by inadequacy of the availability of reading materials. In addition, a poor reading culture affects the social and economic development of many communities in Africa (Mulindwa, 2001). This situation also affects pupils in UPE schools due to lack of positive reading skills and a reading culture during their formative years. This impacts negatively on the pupil's performance in and out of school both in the language taught and other academic subjects (Gitachu, 2007). The other factors that affect reading in schools include the nature of the general physical facilities at home and in schools, the attitudes of parents towards reading, an examination-oriented education system in which pupils only read to pass examinations but never engage in pleasure reading.

Statement of the Problem

The Government of Uganda has from time to time attempted to address reading as an important aspect of the education system in UPE schools in Uganda. This is evidenced by the various efforts government has engaged in through the Ministry of Education and Sports to encourage reading in schools, development of local languages, providing schools with instructional materials and introducing Universal Primary Education (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2003). The government has as well introduced DEAR DAY to create awareness and promote the reading culture in children. To support the development of a reading culture among pupils in UPE schools, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports has played a major role of putting in place a National Textbook Policy and implemented the Decentralized Instructional Materials Procurement Program (DIMP) to increase the stock of textbooks and supplementary readers in schools. Despite, the government and other stakeholders' efforts to enhance reading skill in schools, pupils' always concentrate on reading only prescribed textbooks to pass examinations, a situation that has created poor reading culture and self-directedness among the learners leading to poor academic performance and this has consequently hampered the pupils' creativity in various aspects of life. Therefore, the proposed study seeks to establish the influence of a reading culture on self-directed learning of pupils in the selected government aided primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the two objectives as below;

General Objective

The study sought to examine influence of reading culture on self-directed learning of pupils in the selected government aided primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.

Specific Objectives

- i.** To establish the current reading culture among primary school learners in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.
- ii.** To identify the factors that hinder the development of the reading culture among primary school learners in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.
- iii.** To suggest out the mitigating measures to the factors hindering the development of the reading culture in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district

Research Questions

- i.** What is the current reading culture among primary school learners in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district?
- ii.** What are the factors that hinder the development of the reading culture among primary school learners in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district?
- iii.** What are the mitigating measures to the factors hindering the development of the reading culture in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district?

Justification of the Study

- i.** The study was carried out because it would help to create awareness among the pupil's teachers, about the importance of reading in order to be more knowledgeable. It would also be a source of literature review for those intending to do further studies.
- ii.** The research was carried out because it would help learners master the concepts and interpret them correctly in a way that they mastered the content the read in order to improve o their performance and apply it in their daily life as part of self-directed learning.

iii. The findings from this study would implore the researcher to always encourage learners adhere to ideal reading culture as part of the best process of self-directed learning in order to improve on their academic achievements. To the administrators the study would also provide a conducive environment and buying relevant materials in the schools to facilitate desired reading culture in the school

iv. The study would help education policy- makers in Uganda in streamlining curricula that make reading a necessity by implementing a strong reading policy to guide schools on how to make their pupils more interested in reading and why it is important to read. Hence the study would provide ideas on how policy-makers and teachers can encourage pupils to make reading a habit in order to develop a good reading culture.

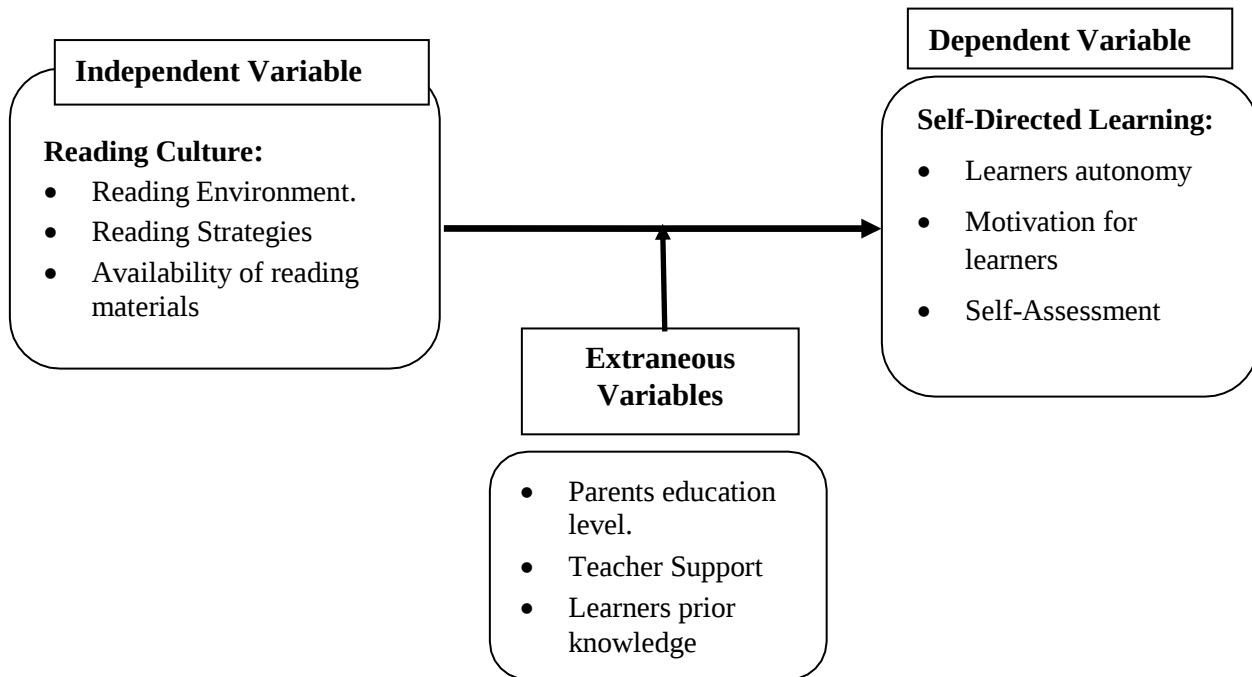
Significance of the study

- i. The study would produce a guide on how reading practices from schools with different curricula, like international schools, could be implemented in UPE schools to help create a strong reading culture among pupils following the Uganda education curricula.
- ii. The research would also provide a wealth of knowledge on how teachers can guide pupils to read, policy-makers, and schools in order to improve the reading culture in UPE schools in Uganda. It is hoped that this would create more awareness among the pupils and teachers about the importance of reading in order for them to be more knowledgeable and acquire the love for reading.
- iii. Furthermore, the study would be a source of literature to be reviewed by those intending to do further research on the problem under study. The study would be consulted by other people carrying out research about reading in order to acquire facts about the reading practices in UPE schools in Uganda.

Conceptual Framework

The study aimed at examining the perceived influence of a reading culture on self-directed learning among the pupils of selected primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district. The influence of reading culture would be expected to have an impact on self-directed learning in selected primary schools in Nabumali Primary schools, Mbale district. Figure 1 depicts all the essential prototypes of reading culture practices and self-directed learning among pupils in primary schools and how these variables relate.

Fig 1.1: Conceptual Framework Concerning Reading Culture and Self-Directed Learning.



Source: Adopted and Modified from Blumer (1969)

Fig 1.1, above shows the relationships between Reading Culture and Self-Directed Learning in selected primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale District. The indicators of the independent variable are Reading Environment, Reading Strategies, and Availability of reading materials. Self-directed learning is the dependent variable with Learners autonomy,

Motivation for learners and Self-Assessment. The dependent variable is the intended result of reading culture. In the study, it would be postulated that pupils self-directed learning depends on the effectiveness of the reading culture among the pupils in the schools. However, for the independent variable to have an effect on the dependent variables there should be extraneous variables like; Parents education level, Teacher Support and learners" prior knowledge.

Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

Reading; in this study would be taken to mean an act of getting meaning from printed or written words. I would also be understood as a learning skill which aids all other learning activities. In the context of this study, reading is the interpreting of meaning from printed words.

Reading culture: Developing a reading culture is an instrument for acquiring lifelong learning. This requires the ability to recognize access, evaluate and utilize information in the available literature or information materials. The ability to read and write alone cannot lead to a reading culture. Reading must play a significant role in a person's day-to-day life and become a habit in order to constitute a reading culture. In the context of the study, reading culture refers to a way of life characterized by the habit of reading intensively and extensively. reading culture is when an individual habitually and regularly reads books and other information materials that are necessarily required for him or her to advance.

Pupil; in this study would refer child of school going age attending primary one to primary seven

Primary schools in Uganda in the study are schools that follow the Uganda education curriculum. These schools teach pupils from Primary One to Primary Seven who are within the age bracket of 6 to 13 years old.

School: In this study, a school is taken to mean a place or an institution where the pupils or learners go from home to interact with the teachers in order to acquire knowledge and skills for purposes of improving their future life style.

Self-Directed Learning; would be taken to mean an educational strategy where students take control of the content and delivery of their assignments by setting their own goals and deadlines in accordance with learning objectives.

1.1 0 Scope of the Study

The proposed study would be based on the following scope and they included; Content, Geographical and Time scope as detailed below.

Content Scope

The study was limited to the perceived influence of a reading culture on self-directed learning among pupils in the selected primary schools in Nabumali town council, Mbale district. This would however include among others the current reading culture.

Geographical Scope

The Study was conducted in Nabumali town council in three UPE primary Schools out of the five. Nabumali town council is located in Bungokho County on the northern part of Mbale district.

Time Scope

The study concentrated on time period from February to June 2024; with the focus on the perceived influence of a reading culture on self-directed learning among pupils. This is the period where pupils reading became a critical issue in the teaching and learning in UPE primary schools and Nabumali town council is not an exception.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the study to enable the researcher to support the findings. Literature relevant to the study was reviewed in accordance to the specific objectives of the study as detailed below;

Current Reading Culture among Primary School Learners

Literature is reviewed through the use of primary sources such as newsletters, research reports and secondary sources like dissertations, journals and the Internet. The literature review enables the researcher to analyze the reasons why pupils fail to pick up the habit of reading in UPE schools and how best they can improve the culture of reading in their schools in order to come up with appropriate strategies to ensure that pupils make reading a part of them.

Reading is a learning skill which aids all other learning activities. The more one reads the better one learns (Kerman, 1984). Therefore, for any individual to develop a reading culture they need to practice reading. Furthermore, he pointed out that children master reading at different paces. He suggested that teachers should try to be patient, especially with slow learners. To him, children needed to be praised and encouraged. For instance, poor readers should never be rebuked as this frustrates them and destroys their efforts to master reading.

Indeed, Cox and Guthrie (2001) agreed that the amount of reading that children do for enjoyment and for school was found to be a major contributor to their reading achievement. For a reading culture to be possible reading must be part of all aspects of life and not only certain parts such as school or work (Magara and Batambuze, 2005). Similar findings were also made by the Reading for Change study (2002), which showed that reading for enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status. Thus „the frequent

admonition for children to read, read, read” makes sense in that extensive reading promotes fluency, vocabulary and background knowledge (Pressley, 2000).

Factors that Hinder the development of the Reading Culture among Primary School

Learners

One obstacle to the establishment of a reading culture that was mentioned is the fact that African societies were predominantly oral (Magara and Batambuze, 2005). According to Machet (2002), there was a difference between the nature of oral tradition and the nature of literate tradition. She stated that reading is viewed by black communities in South Africa as an abnormal and anti-social activity as well as connected only to educational purposes. Such attitudes did not promote the development of a reading culture. She claimed that the social nature of the oral tradition contradicted the requirements of a literate tradition, since reading was a private and solitary activity.

Parents face many problems in promoting reading habits among children, like unavailability of time, shortage of reader as a role model, parent's lack of interest, child's lack of interest, home environment, etc. The researcher reviewed the literature to figure out the problems/hindrances parents face in cultivating their children's reading habits. According to Acheaw (2014), laziness is a significant hindrance to reading among students. Faculty instructions regarding more and more visits to the library helps them in developing good communications skills (Pinquart, 2016).

According to Ogunrombi and Adio (1995), parents' illiteracy, improper reading atmosphere, the non-reading attitude of parents, inadequate reading material, lack of good reading skills, lack of libraries, and heavy reliance on school books are the major problems in fostering reading habits among students. Children who don't love reading are more likely to be less motivated, consume more time watching television, poor decision-makers, and have comparatively low performance

in their studies. Bad outreach policies, insufficient funds and lack of genuine commitment to implement reading projects among children are some reasons for these kinds of projects (Chidiebere et al., 2013).

According to Mudzielwana (2014), education level, lack of time, laziness, and lack of resources and skills are the primary reasons for the absence of parent's role in their children's reading development. Socio-economic background, physical abnormalities, mental imbalance, lack of interest, teacher's inability to help children, etc., are reading deficiencies among children (Akubuilu et al., 2015). Also found that excessive use of screen time other than the purpose of reading books negatively affect the reading interest and reading development of the children. According to Akindele (2012), lack of time, lack of parental involvement, and less interest are significant hindrances in developing reading habits among children.

Even if Machets article looked specifically at the situation in South Africa, oral traditions were present in virtually all African countries. In the case of Nigeria, Dike (1995) discussed similar aspects as Machet. She stated that a high value was placed on sociability in Nigeria which „discouraged reading which was looked upon as a solitary activity“. In addition, the culture of reading and print is an alien culture that was superimposed by colonialists. Dike connected two forms of literacy cultures. She argued that since African countries in general, and Nigeria in particular, had a rich oral tradition it was hard to build a reading culture. Parents did not read stories to their children, they told stories. She stated that because of this oral background, parents were unlikely to read to their children, even if they were able to do so. Storytelling was the predominant form of literary mediation for parents, literate and illiterate alike.

Storytelling and anecdotes are part of the African heritage. According to Dike, she argued that this tradition should be seen as a way of bridging the gap between the culture in school and that at home. These cultures do not have to work against each other; on the contrary they can be a form of mediation between the culture at home and that at school (Dike, 1995). In addition, she stated that what she calls literacy mediation can be accomplished through using indigenous cultural expressions. It has been stated that in Uganda indigenous cultural expressions are part of the oral tradition which can be used in school as a way of bridging the gap between the children's home and school environment (Kwikiriza, 2000). Magara (2005) also pointed out that drawing, scribbling, dancing and plays can be part of the concept of family literacy and can be one way of creating a reading culture among children

According to Dike (1995), stories, lullabies, proverbs, tongue twisters, riddles, legends, fables, myths and songs are all part of the children's everyday life, so they should be acknowledged as something that can lay the foundation for reading practices among children. She further noted that it is mostly at home that this form of literacy is practiced. Dike also stated that in almost all the homes, of the children in the Nigerian study, someone told stories to 99 per cent of the children. According to the study, when the teachers told stories, something that was occasional, it was frequently as time filler after examinations had ended rather than as part of the curriculum. Storytelling took place in informal settings such as the home and the playground. Further still the way literacy was manifested was different at home and in school. Dike argued that literacy mediation, through oral tradition and other cultural expressions, was required to promote a reading culture in Africa. She connected the need for literacy mediation with the children's view of reading.

The children in the study stated that they preferred stories that first of all are familiar, second are understandable, and third teach lessons. Dike stated that folk tales are likely to be familiar since they are part of the storytelling tradition. Similarly, folk tales had a strong moral lesson, which is also, a reason for preference by the children regarding reading materials (Dike, 1995). Osakwe (2005) made a similar point when she argued that storytelling, which was part of a long-standing oral tradition and informal education in Africa, should be incorporated into today's formal education system. Through storytelling literacy, reading could be taught in a meaningful context.

Literacy could become a meaningful, interesting and motivating activity contrary to a drill- and skill-based teaching method. In my own view, reading culture has been hindered by the media which has made adults and children alike glued more to televisions, watching drama, home videos as a way of enjoying leisure instead of reading.

The cliché „a reading nation is a winning nation“ forms the foundation for a number of reading activities and programmes coordinated by stakeholders. The Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA), the National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU) and the Reading Association of Uganda (RAU) are some of the stakeholders involved in various reading activities that promote the reading culture. For children to gain control of the reading process, the following combination of factors had been discussed in order to get ideas that would enable schools to help in promoting the culture of reading among the pupils.

The first characteristic of an early reading environment is the availability of books and the regular modeling of reading. Farrant (1997) emphasized that the best way of promoting reading is the use of informal methods of reading rather than formal methods. He further noted that informal methods stimulate a desire in the child to read before trying to teach him to read. He

noted that this was done through storytelling and reading by the teacher and by consulting books to find out things so that children could associate books with pleasure and usefulness.

Indeed, Gibson (2004) pointed out that for pupils to be encouraged to read they should be allowed to choose the books they would like to read, to read books with lots of pictures in them, to read for contests, to have a classroom library and to have an author read to them at school. Once pupils were exposed to different practices of reading and reading materials they were likely to broaden their imagination and engage in the practice of regular reading. Furthermore, access to text would encourage reading. A starting point is the provision of classroom libraries to the pupils to expose them to a wide range of books, magazines and other print materials in a variety of genres and at various levels of difficulty. Through such activities pupils were likely to become more exposed and encouraged to develop a culture of reading. Beers (1996). The more skill- and drill-based education may not lead to better results. On the contrary, this pedagogy seems to lead to readers that do not read outside school and it does not create engaged readers (Elley, 2001) in order for the reading culture to evolve, reading should be carried out on a regular basis and not necessarily only in schools. Thus, it was interesting to see how possible it was to make children read not just for school purposes but also during their leisure time.

Early readers have been characteristically left alone to look at books and practice reading-like behaviors that have been modelled for them and no one monitors their efforts to read or pressures them to sound it out (Phinney, 1988). Gitachu (2007) noted that adults who offer to read to young children often helped them to develop as independent readers by engaging them in conversation about what they had read. This is why Nannozi (1996), as referred to by Nnam, (2003) recommended that in order to promote the reading habit in schools, reading should be taught as a subject in its own right, regularly and systematically, and therefore a lot of time must

be specially allocated on the timetable for it. Nnam (2003) emphasized that schools should put in place policies, routines and curricula that require pupils to visit the library at least once a week.

Teachers gave students assignments that required library research to encourage them to read ahead and expand on what they had learnt in class. Through the use of planned reading sessions, pupils would be able to utilize the time they got to visit the libraries and get exposed to a wide variety of reading materials, which would encourage them to engage in reading. In addition, Earl (1997) emphasized that as a means to promote reading among pupils "reading logs should be introduced. The reading logs helped pupils to note their reading activities inside and outside of class. They included what was read; how long it was read or how many pages were read.

The logs not only served as an adequate reminder to read but they also conveyed a strong and clear message about the importance of reading outside of class and provide a structure for tracking progress. Through such an activity pupils were likely to be encouraged to read more. Research has shown that children who read with their parents had a higher intelligence, reading ability and better communication skills. According to Corirossi (2001), reading should be fun and entertaining. Corirossi encouraged people „never to associate reading with punishment or their children“. For instance, punishing your child by sending him or her to a room to read had a negative effect on his or her interest in reading.

Sangkeo (1999) asserted that parents who spent time reading to their children gave them the best possible start on the road to literacy. To him those children who did best in literacy skills at school were those who came from homes where they interacted with books and their parents as well as who read to them. He thus suggested creative ways for parents to foster the reading habits among children and these included reading story books aloud, creating a learning environment

by setting up a home library, and visiting libraries and bookshops, among others. The development of good reading habits largely depended on the way children were introduced to reading. Usually, teachers taught pupils to identify the different letters of the alphabet before introducing them to the reading of syllables and simple sentences. For instance, Bakunda et al. (2003) asserted that in order to improve reading practice with the objective of developing learners reading skills, the Enhancement of Universal Primary Education in Kampala (EUPEK) project decided to use a phonic approach to teach reading.

According to Sentuwa (2004) children from well-to-do families preferred spending their leisure time watching movies, surfing the Internet, and visiting friends whereas children of the poor sell foodstuffs and collect water to earn a living rather than read. Further still, Nnam (2003) pointed out that the poor state of reading in our society today was as a result of most children valuing co-curricular activities highly as compared to reading. Sanyu (1999) noted that teachers had a negative attitude towards reading and reading lessons. According to her, most teachers viewed reading as a leisure activity which children could do on own, without teachers' guidance and support. Bitamazire (2001), as cited by Magara and Batambuze (2005), asserted that even the literate stopped reading when they finished writing examinations, a problem that had been blamed on an examination-oriented system of education.

The education curriculum did not emphasize reading as an important aspect of the education system. The Uganda education curriculum supported an examination-oriented system whereby pupils read in order to pass examinations rather than gain knowledge or think creatively (UNEB, 2002). According to the East African Book Development Association (EABDA, 2006) report, the poor reading culture was partly due to lack of a national book policy in Uganda and high taxation on paper, which led to increased costs of production and unaffordable book prices.

Furthermore, only a small number of schools had libraries, resulting in poor reading habits among pupils (Nnam, 2003). This implied that there was need for the education curriculum to be revised to cater for reading activities as part of the school curriculum such that pupils learnt the importance of reading in order for them to acquire a reading culture. This would in turn lead to the development of functional school libraries.

As a way of dealing with „failure“ by many pupils to read or to attain acceptable“ levels of literacy in primary school, the government came up with a new curriculum. The curriculum“s previous focus on the acquisition of facts and recall by students was seen as one of the reasons why this system failed. The implementation of the new thematic curriculum started in 2007 and its two main features were the strengthening of the previous language policy and a stronger focus on the children“s needs (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2006). In the new curriculum, it was stated that only when the language mix in a school was such that there was no predominant local language, then the curriculum would be delivered and assessed in English (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2006).The languages that were considered to be languages of wider communities“ were Luganda, Luo, LugisuAteso(Uganda Government, 1992).

According to Charles Batambuze (2008), who is the Executive Secretary, National Book Trust of Uganda, the culture of reading has fizzled out especially at the upper primary school level. Batambuze recalled that when he left primary school in 1987, there was a deliberate policy on reading lessons in primary schools. He noted that today these lessons had been substituted with homework and revision lessons.However, with the development of the Thematic curriculum, reading lessons were being encouraged from Primary one to Primary threeand government was trying to implement the language policy whereby pupils first learnt how to read in their mother tongue while in lower classes before they were taught to read using the English language,

however, from Primary four to Primary seven, teachers used the reading lessons for revision to try and finish what was not covered in the syllabus he observed.

Lyaru (2007) emphasized that the lack of acquisition of positive reading skills and a positive reading culture during the formative years impacted negatively on the pupil's performance not only in the language taught, but also in other subjects. Hence lack of reading among pupils was as a result of the challenges discussed below. According to Batambuze (2008), Ugandans lacked the motivation to buy books because they had to meet basic human needs such as food, health, shelter and clothing. As a result of low incomes, many would-be readers kept away from buying books because they did not have money to buy reading materials. This limited their ability to get exposed to a variety of information materials which could easily be accessed by buying them from bookshops if they could afford them.

The education system in Uganda does not prioritize reading for pleasure or general knowledge acquisition that does not aim at passing examinations. For instance, Magara and Nyumba (2004) asserted that the poor reading culture of pupils in primary schools was a result of poor public policy and institutional management practice, lack of essential resources for literacy development, failure to recognize reading as an essential critical skill for learning, a lack of commitment to ensure that literacy was achieved, and a lack of reading policies in schools. A major challenge that was identified by Magara & Batambuze (2005) is the examination-oriented education system in Uganda. They stated that even the literate stopped reading after they finished writing their exams". A reading culture cannot be said to be present in a situation like this, where reading is only part of the school context and not of all aspects of life which was the situation in many African countries and was further exacerbated by the fact that the home environment did not encourage reading (Dike,1995). When children returned home from school, they found that

there was little time for reading because of things like domestic chores. Some homes did not even have books that were suitable for children to read.

Reading had been connected with passing examinations and had been seen as a way of accomplishing academic success. This view did not inspire pupils to read during their leisure time since they associated reading with textbooks and attending school. Pupils associated reading as an activity that they are forced to do, so that they could be successful in the future. Evidently the education system examination-oriented structure could be seen as one of the obstacles to creating a reading culture. Apart from this feature of the education system, Magara and Batambuze (2005) identified other obstacles to creating a reading culture such as the fact that there was limited access to books in most schools because teachers seemed protective of books for fear of mutilation. It was also observed that the books were normally kept in the head teachers' offices. Further still, in many countries of the developing world there was a serious lack of reading materials and hence a lack of reading culture. UNESCO stated that "the goal of Education for All²⁶ also involved the development of literate societies in the developing world, and could not be attained solely by providing quality learning materials to schools. If people were to stay literate, they had to have access to a wide variety of written materials and continue the habit of reading in their adult lives" (UNESCO, 1980).

The education system emphasized education for achievement rather than education for life. This was depicted by the fact that educators discovered that the majority of pupils in primary schools highly focused on the need to pass their examinations and they read little else besides the prescribed textbooks (Magara and Batambuze, 2005). This affected their reading ability by hampering them from exploring other reading materials which would have inspired them to gain the habit of reading.

The development of a reading culture at all levels, especially in developing countries, was a great challenge. To ensure that reading thrives in Uganda, concerted efforts would be required to improve the social and reading infrastructure to promote reading across the school curriculum and develop reading extension services (Magara & Batambuze, 2005). Books that dealt with subjects that were relevant to the children's daily lives and reflected their world both inside and outside school were also believed to promote engaged readers (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Sentuuwa (2004) stated that Walusimbi (1987) emphasized that reading materials should take into consideration the culture of the learners. This was because most of the reading materials included foreign concepts that did not relate to the pupils' environment, which made it difficult for the pupils to understand and relate to what they were reading. Therefore, reading materials would be appreciated more by children if they were based on their experience and culture.

In Uganda most books, both educational and fictional books, were published in English. It was stated that 80 per cent of all new literature in Africa was written in the former colonial languages, despite the fact that less than 5 per cent of the continent's people were considered to be fluent in these languages (Sturges & Neill, 1998). This situation hardly promoted the development of engaged readers and must also be seen as a challenge that the publishing industry had to tackle.

Moreover, one of the things that hampered the development of vernacular publications was the fact that not all Ugandan languages had a standard orthography and there was a lack of consensus as to how local languages should be transferred into written script in both Uganda and the whole of Africa (Machet, 2002).

Mitigating Measures to the Factors Hindering the Development of the Reading Culture.

In order for pupils to develop a strong foundation for reading there was need for teachers to adopt better methods of teaching reading, in order to create sustained interest among pupils to read non-text-book reading materials at home, school as well as within the community. To encourage reading among the pupils all stakeholders were to be involved, including teachers, parents, pupils and the community, who would all be trained to use the library, and this would create an environment that is conducive to reading. According to the Uganda education curricula, there was no national school library policy in Uganda and school libraries in Uganda have been neglected for a very long time. As a result, libraries frequently did not exist in schools or were considered to be inadequate in the schools that did have them (Kigongo-Bukenya, 1990). There had been efforts to improve the situation.

One of them was the School Library Development Project launched by the National Library of Uganda (NLU) and the East African Book Development Association where books were selected and purchased annually and distributed among 36 primary schools in 12 districts. The NLU also monitored and evaluated the use of these books through regular visits (National Library of Uganda, 2007). In addition, Abidi (1991) asserted that the educational aims of the school library included the encouragement of a reading culture, the development of independent reading among the pupils and giving social training to young children. If librarians wanted pupils to read and knew about their socio-economic and ethnic composition, they had to give pupils attractive and appropriate reading materials and a comfortable reading atmosphere different from that of the classroom. Pupils need to be encouraged to read by arousing in them interest in books and other information media.

There are many ways to improve reading habits among children, such as providing a better environment, appropriate reading material, giving them reading rewards and prizes, establishing

a library at home, giving them proper time, etc. Inspiration from teachers, family members, and parents plays a result-oriented role in the child's reading and literacy development. Parents' healthy reading activities develop and promote their children's critical thinking and analytic skills (Ahmad et al., 2020; Bano et al., 2018). It is also noteworthy to mention that practical and results-oriented training programs are necessary for parents to have better and result producing involvement, which will lead to their children's educational development and intellectual growth (Patte, 2013).

The role of parents is vital in cultivating reading habits, stimulating intellectual growth and building a strong healthy society. Exposure to the importance of reading by parents at an early age gives one an edge over those whom parents have never provided such experience. Parent's constant encouragement and motivation are the primary sources of reading culture stimulation in their children's lives. This habit might change in lifelong learning if it ignites at regular intervals. Reading is the source of extracting gist from written words. The research study primarily focused on problems faced in the development of leisure reading habits which are otherwise used in literature as voluntary reading, independent reading, pleasure reading, self-selected reading and spare time reading. This study did not address reading habits relevant to school course-related assignments, homework and reading activities assigned by school teachers or reading to get high marks in examinations.

According to Yusof (2010), book sharing culture with young children yield very encouraging result in language and vocabulary development and the continuous habit of book reading. Reading aloud with children promotes literacy development like listening ability, the book's orientation, page-turning and print recognition, which ultimately leads to increased reading achievement. Researchers were also of the view that parents should continuously follow their

children to assess whether their intervention promotes reading habits and promotes literacy development or not. Among other strategies, building up a small personal library for the child with gifted books and books bought with his own pocket money is one of the best means of promoting reading habits and reading development. The researcher also argued that parents should prepare reading lists giving short descriptions of the books and motivate a child to read. Authors further suggested that parents should be careful while selecting reading books for the children because some books may be very harmful to the positive habit development of the children. Yochum & Miller (1993) reported that better understanding between parents and teachers about a child's learning difficulties is essential in improving reading and learning deficiencies among children. Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) also act a binding force between teachers and parents to recognize their due and result-oriented role and contribution to cultivating the students' reading habits (Yusof, 2010).

According to Hanna & McAllister (1968), the function of school librarians was to meet the need for reading by taking a class to the library at regular intervals for the purpose of selecting the books wanted to read. According to them, libraries and librarians needed to be vigilant and acknowledge their role in promoting the reading culture in Uganda. The acknowledgement of librarians implied acceptance of the reading problem and joining the struggle to combat it.

Campagna (2005) emphasized that teachers should encourage pupils to come up with techniques for reading independently such as how to pick a book that is not too hard, a range of strategies to employ when encountering word level or comprehension difficulties and how to find time to read. In addition, he recommended that pupils should be provided with 10 to 15 minutes of class time daily to read reading books, magazines, websites. Setting up book clubs made up of pupils

interested in reading the same book and providing discussion questions and formats for talking about the book which would encourage pupils to develop interest in reading.

Nnam (2003) noted that teachers must display a positive attitude towards reading, and even make a public show of their interest in reading, if they were to encourage pupils to read. This could be displayed through practices which teachers engaged in such as storytelling and reading aloud to the pupils. Reading aloud was one of the effective strategies for connecting kids to books because “the more you read to them, the better they got at it and liked it and they got to know more and grow smarter (Trelease, 2005). In addition to using good methods to encourage good reading habits, the teacher’s attitude and enthusiasm towards reading was proven to play a key role in encouraging the reading habits.

Schools played a major role in influencing pupils to read. Farrant (1997) asserted that the classroom environment was important in the promotion of the reading culture. He suggested a book corner of supplementary readers with pre-readers which could be used to entice pupils to learn to read with their teachers. He noted that children learnt to differentiate the relationship between written and spoken language. This was because within written language there was information to which they could respond. A suitable environment was necessary for good reading to develop. Hence if pupils were provided with quiet places or rooms for reading where they could read without interruption both at school and at home they were likely to develop interest in reading once availed with reading materials. Even in societies where literacy prevailed and books were in abundance, many people who lacked a reading environment were not motivated to read (UNESCO, 1980).

By adopting the new thematic curriculum for primary schools, the Ugandan government showed a will to give the mother tongue a higher status and role in primary school. The new curriculum would surely lead to an increase in the publishing of books in local languages. The government stated that the pupils' learning materials should be in the local language for the first three years of school. As a result, the production of textbooks in local languages would begin to increase (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2006). The aim of the Children's Reading Tent (CRT) was to promote a reading culture among children first and foremost, but the people behind the project also wanted to reach out to adults such as parents, teachers and basically everyone in the community (Sarjant, 2005). Taking reading into an informal setting and out of the ordinary classroom situation was considered as a way to promote a new attitude towards reading. The hope is that children would view reading as a source of pleasure through the different enjoyable activities connected to reading at the CRT.

In my own view, good methods should be used to encourage good reading habits, the teacher's attitude and enthusiasm towards reading to play a key role in encouraging the curriculum. By adopting the new thematic curriculum for primary schools, it has showed me that it gives a mother tongue a higher status and role in primary school. According to Sarjant (2005) the CRT helped promote local publishers through the use of their books during the actual project as well as donation of their books to both the host school and the rest of the participating schools. This was seen as one way of getting books that were relevant to the target groups and to the particular local context.

Research Gap

Several research studies had been undertaken to examine the reading culture situation in Uganda. In addition, specific interventions had been tried to enhance reading in primary schools.

However, in most developing countries, Uganda inclusive, the majority of children did not have any interest in reading. The literature reviewed also indicated that the pupils' performance in class as well as their expression as they engaged in conversation was poor since they preferred co-curricular activities to reading. However, it was not clear how schools can integrate various reading practices to overcome the poor reading culture among pupils. It is therefore important to provide strategies for the development of a reading culture among pupils in selected primary schools in Nabumali Town Council, Mbale district.

Conclusion

Basing on the evidence the conclusions can be drawn. The children are not familiar with individual reading thus weakening their reading ability as individuals. Therefore, reading materials are not supportive of promotion of reading among the pupils. In addition, pupils do not have access to reading materials because they lack space or infrastructure (libraries) for storage of the materials, they lack professionals who could provide them with reading materials systematically, this implies that the library services and library staff affect how and when pupils read books. However, even, inappropriate reading materials discourage pupils from reading. Reading materials may be inappropriate because the language used is too advanced for the pupils' level of proficiency; because the content of the reading materials is not culturally relevant; or because the material is considered to be morally harmful. The way in which a particular information material is presented, in terms of the language and content, usually affects the way in which pupils will perceive that information material.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research methods that were employed when carrying out the study. It discusses the research design, area of study, population of study, sampling methods, research procedures, data collection methods and techniques, data quality control, analysis and presentation techniques that were adopted during the research.

Research Design

Research design involves a discussion of when, where, how and why the research is going to be started and accomplished (Enon, 1998). The case study research design was used during the study. According to Bell (1997), the Mixed Research Design approach was applicable where the researcher got an opportunity to study the problem in depth within a limited timescale. This allowed the researcher to concentrate on specific schools and identify the various interactive processes at work. The researcher also used interview and observation as data collection methods to collect qualitative and quantitative data as a basis of unraveling the causes of poor reading culture.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Mbale district among three selected UPE schools basing on their PLE results for the previous five years in relation to reading practices. The study was carried out in three selected UPE primary schools in Nabumali town council with focus on the influence of reading culture on self- directed learning of pupils.

Geographically Nabumali town council is found in Mbale district, in Eastern region of the Republic of Uganda. Nabumali town council is approximately 227 kilometers (158 miles) by road and 191 Kilometers (116 miles) by plane from Kampala capital city. Nabumali town

council borders Nyondo sub-county to the North, Bukiende to the East, Bumbobi sub-county to the South and Bungokho sub-county to the West. Nabumali Town Council is approximately 28.5 Kilometers (18 miles) by road South of Mbale city. There being no evidence of related study the researcher was compelled to investigate the influence of reading culture on self- directed learning of pupils in the selected government aided primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.

Study Population

In this study, population can be defined as the group of people with one or more characteristics in common (Sowell, 1982). It is useful to distinguish between the population from which the results were required, the targeted population and the covered population. The population comprise pupils who are involved in reading, head teacher, teachers, who play a key role in the reading lives of the pupils therefore it is important to establish their views on their contribution of the reading, teachers in charge of reading and librarians who were chosen for their special role in matters pertaining to reading culture of the children. The research was carried out in Nabumali town council UPE Primary School with the population of 789 pupils and from which she used a sample size of 96 respondents of primary seven class who comprised boys and girls both impaired and normal.

Sample Size

Sample size is the process of selecting the number of objects or individuals from the population as a representative sample. Therefore, a target population of 96 were selected in participating in this study among whom 96 pupils and 8 teachers as seen in the table 1.1 below.

Presenting the Sample size and Sample Selection Techniques

SCHOOL	Category of Respondents	Study Population	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques
A	Pupils	1500	19	Simple Random Sampling
	Teachers Head Teachers	26 05	03 01	Purposive Sampling Purposive Sampling
B	Pupils	700	21	Simple Random Sampling
	Teachers Head Teacher	28 05	03 01	Purposive Sampling Purposive Sampling
C	Pupils	650	21	Simple Random Sampling
	Teachers Head Teacher	16 05	03 21	Purposive Sampling Purposive Sampling
Total		2920	75	

Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling was used to select the sample size from the target population to participate in the study. In the study, the researcher used her own judgment about which respondents to choose and she selected only those who met the purpose of the study. According to Bailey (1994) a researcher uses his /her own judgment about which respondents to choose and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study. Therefore, purposive sampling offered logic and power in selecting information rich cases for in depth study. Therefore, Probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling was used and these included; purposive and simple random sampling to select the sample for the study. In this study only 9 teachers were selected using purposive sampling while 66 pupils were selected using simple random sampling. This is because every component of the population had an equal and independent chance of being selected for the

sample and this also helped to minimize biases during the study. Three head teachers out of five were selected taking one head teacher from each of the selected UPE primary schools.

0 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The research used three methods of data collection each accompanied by an instrument. These included;

Interview Method

Moster & Kalton (1997) described interview as conversation between the interviewer and the respondents. They explained that it helped the researcher to continue, eliciting certain information from the respondents. The researcher used in-depth interview in order to obtain detailed information for the study by interviewing the pupils and teachers with a view of finding out the practices they engaged in as they read. The teachers were also interviewed to get an idea of the ways in which they encourage reading in their respective school. The interview method allowed probing and gathering of more information depending on the knowledge, ability and experience of the respondents. The researcher used the interview method of data collection because it is reliable in obtaining verbal and non-verbal information from respondents. The study involved the use of closed and open-ended questions which were arranged systematically according to the research objectives that allowed logical flow of the conversation between the researcher and the interviewee. An interview schedules were used as an instrument for data collection in relation to the above data collection method. (see appendix A and B).

Observation

Observation is an important part of data collection. The researcher uses an observation schedule as an instrument of data collection in collaboration with the observation method of data collection.

The researcher observed events and activities in the school among the pupils which helps

her/him to obtain first-hand information that is important to verify the response from other methods of data collection. For the researcher to achieve her objectives, she employed participant observation as a method of data collection. Brinkerhoff (1988) defined participant observation as an instrument of research which consists of three elements, observing participating and meaning of human behavior.

The researcher scrutinized notice boards for any information on school organizational structures. The researcher observed whether the school has reading practices such as group reading, individual reading, organization of classroom libraries, or information charts that were displayed in classrooms or other reading rooms. The researcher observed how the school libraries and book stores (in schools where they were present) were organized, the labeling of books and shelves and general tidiness. This assessment also provided evidence of whether the reading materials were to be used for reading or whether they are just stored without the pupils being encouraged to use them. Some photographs were taken to show what was observed both inside and outside the classrooms and libraries which guided the research.

Document Review Analysis

The researcher analyzed existing literature on the reading culture among pupils in UPE schools in Uganda with the use of secondary and primary sources, the researcher consulted literature in the form of research studies carried out by other people in the same area of study. This method provided comprehensive detail and yield information relevant to the study that cannot be obtained through the interview and observation methods. Documents were used in the search for information about the study comprised primary and secondary documents, both published and unpublished. Primary documents included newsletters, research reports, school and timetables.

Secondary documents include books on reading, dissertations and journals concerning reading and the Internet were considered relevant in the study.

Data Quality Control

In order to ensure the quality of the data to be collected, two quality control methods were employed as below;

Validity

This is the extent to which a tool gauges the construct under study (Amin (2005). It reflects the appropriateness of the instrument. To establish validity, the researcher used the expert judgment method by involving experts to assess the relevance of the interviews and questionnaire. The researcher did this by pre-testing the instruments in a pilot study to detect any errors. The researcher then used the formula for Content Validity Index (CVI) to establish the authenticity of the research instrument and to ensure that only variables scoring 0.70 are considered: -

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{Number of valid items}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

Therefore, the CVI = items rated relevant/total number of items

$$\text{CVI} = 35/39 \times 100,$$

$$\text{CVI} = 89.7\%$$

Therefore, since the CVI result obtained was above 70% as suggested by Amin (2005), it was considered validity.

Reliability

Refers to consistency of a tool in measuring whatever it is expected to measure (Amin, 2005). To ensure reliability, the tool was administered to another sample in a different area to determine the constancy of the results. The researcher used Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha to compute the

consistency of tools, and the results were computed using Software Package for Social Sciences. The range of 0.7 and above indicates a reliable research instrument as asserted by Amin (2005).

Data Management and Processing

The researcher opened a data base where all the information regarding the study was kept. Each day, the researcher after the field work, arranged the answered questionnaires in order, coded, edited them in categorized format so as to avoid distorting and mismatching the data collection process. Data files were created for easy access of data during analysis/interpretation process. The researcher during analysis process manually coded the data into categories for generating quantitative and qualitative data.

Data Analysis.

Data analysis is the process of looking at and summarizing data. Therefore, data was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods as below;

Qualitative Methods

According to Allan Blackwell (2004), qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live in. This method enabled the researcher to have an in depth understanding of the effect of school environment on retention of girls in secondary schools in Busia district. The choice is further affirmed by Marshall and Rossman (2006), who reason that those human actions are influenced by the setting in which they occur and one needs to study behavior in those real-life situations.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data from questionnaires was translated, coded, cleaned and entered into the SPSS package. Descriptive statistics was then be generated to describe and summarize the data, in order to respond to the research questions and support the hypotheses. Descriptive statistics were used because it is ideal

in giving meaning when describing a distribution of scores using a few indices or statistics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured the informants of confidentiality. The information given to the researcher was used solely for the purposes of research. The researcher avoided using any kind of enticement for the purpose of obtaining information. Throughout the period of the study, it was crucial that ethical issues are taken into consideration to ensure reliability and accuracy of data. Anonymity and confidentiality was observed during description and reporting of findings. From the beginning of the research, the researcher made sure that the respondents' privacy was respected. The researcher also tried to protect respondents against potentially harmful effects of participation, for example stress through participation and loss of self-esteem.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct research was obtained from The Faculty of Science and Education Busitema University. The researcher introduced herself with the help of a letter from Busitema university department of Education to the authorities in the different schools where the study was to be carried out in order to obtain permission to interview the pupils and teachers. A thorough explanation was given by the researcher about the purpose, content and context of the study to ensure a clear perception of the study with the help of school authorities. The researcher used instruments like the interview guide to ask pupils and their teachers' questions about reading practices. This involved interacting with respondents on a one-on-one basis as the researcher recorded their responses. The researcher also observed reading materials such as books and magazines that were of value to the study. Throughout the exercise, the researcher kept taking notes. After collecting the data, the researcher edited and analyzed it before coming up with a report.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Private (2014) defined that research ethics as a term used to identify and describe actions that researchers have to take in order to conduct moral and responsible research by anticipating how their research may affect others be it in a positive or negative way. They can also be a set of principles that guide research design and practices. The study upheld among others the following ethical principles of social science research. Before commencing the research, an introductory letter from the University was sought and the purpose of the study explained to the authorities to avoid inconveniences and misunderstandings about the research.

Respondents' confidentiality was adequately protected. There being a tendency for people expecting money wherever someone visits an area, it was important to take time to clarify as there is no money in course of the interviews. Reporting; the researcher endeavored to report the research outcomes objectively in a manner that does not slant or change them to serve personal interests since this would be very unethical. The researcher thus reported findings in a clear, unbiased, accurate, and objective ways possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses key findings of the study, which are presented in relation to the objectives of the study. The interview and observation methods were used to collect data. The respondents comprised the pupils, teachers. Major discussions included the reading practices common in Uganda UPE schools, the challenges affecting the reading culture in UPE schools and the strategies that should be adopted to improve the reading culture of pupils in UPE schools. The findings were descriptive, and were enhanced by illustrations in the form of tables, graphs and pie charts where necessary.

Characteristics of Respondents

Of the 75 targeted respondents from the three UPE schools in which the study was conducted, a total of 62 respondents responded to the study making a response rate of 79 percent (79%). Those interviewed included pupils, teachers and head teachers from the three in the Nabumali Town council. All these respondents were interviewed about the reading practices, challenges they face and any strategies they would recommend to develop the reading culture among the pupils in UPE schools in Nabumali town council. The pupils interviewed were from Primary Five to Primary Seven, and in each class five pupils were selected basing on their academic performance. A total of 15 pupils were therefore interviewed in each school. However, 15 respondents, representing 21% did not respond as a result of absenteeism or misinterpretation. Out of the 62 respondents, 73 per cent were pupils, 6 per cent were head teachers, 6 per cent deputy head teachers, 10 per cent teachers responsible for reading.

Gender Characteristics of the Respondents

There were more female participants than male. The details are reflected in Table 4.1 below. Approximately 56 per cent of the respondents were female and 44 per cent were male.

Table 4.1: Respondents by Gender

Gender	No. of respondents	Response Rate
Female	35	56%
Male	27	44%
Total	62	100%

Source: *Field data (2024)*

The findings from table 4.1 above revealed that out of 62 respondents; 35 respondents, representing 56% were female while 27 respondents, representing 44% were male. Implying that the data collected in this study represented all the gender with also a disparity in the reading culture among the female and male.

Assessing the status of literacy

The objective of this study was to assess the status of literacy by pupils in UPE schools in Nabumali Town Council. In order to assess these practices, the study evaluated the frequency of reading, reading practices in schools, reading materials, and the factors that attract pupils to read books. Using the interview method, it was established that reading practices among pupils in the various schools under study hardly differed from school to school. The findings are explained below.

Frequency of Reading

Seventy per cent of the respondents interviewed admitted that they engaged in reading activities daily, i.e. every day of the week they got to read either a textbook or a storybook. Other pupils stated that they read during their free time, such as during the morning or lunch break or after classes. Some of these respondents stated that they read from habit while others said that they only read to pass their examinations, hence they read mainly textbooks. The other pupils admitted that they hardly read at all because they lacked interest in reading.

Table 4.2: Showing Reading Frequency of Pupils

Engagement in Reading Activities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rarely read	10	22
Daily	10	22
Free time	25	56
Total	45	100%

Source: Field data (2024)

The findings from table 4.2 above, revealed that out of the 45 respondents interviewed, 10 respondents representing 22% stated that they read on a daily basis after they left class. They asserted that what they read included textbooks to help them gain better understanding of their lessons at school. On the other hand, 56 % of the pupils interviewed stated that they read during their free time and that this was whenever they felt like reading. This implies that these pupils only read when they had some free time on their school timetable coupled with the availability of the reading materials.

Furthermore, also 10 respondents representing 22% of the pupils confessed that they were not interested in reading so they hardly read any books at all. Figure 1 represents the reading frequency of pupils in the various schools where the study was carried out. **One of the respondents, Noted that;**

I never get time to read books like storybooks because I don't understand some of the words and i find the books boring, the only time I can force myself to read is when i am going to do exams because I want to pass them.

In addition, another respondent, asserted that; *"I don't like to read because most of the books are written in English and I can't read it easily because I don't understand the words."*

The above findings indicate that language is an important aspect of promoting reading culture. The pupils' reading is hindered by their failure to interpret language in which text is written. The government's language policy is important because it has implications for all that is, teachers and pupils, following the language in which information materials are written, language of instruction and examinations, and language in which teachers are trained. According to the

government language policy as articulated in the Government White Paper on Education (Republic of Uganda 1992; 15-16), stipulates thus regarding the language of instruction: Mother tongue should be used as a medium of instruction in all educational programmes up to Primary Four. English should be taught as a subject from Primary One. From Primary Five onwards English should become the medium of instruction. The above policy is being implemented through the adoption of the thematic curriculum. A principal feature of the new curriculum is its use of a child-centered approach. This is reflected in the way the curriculum uses themes as a way of focusing on the child and its needs. The use of themes brings the curriculum closer to the child. The themes have been selected on the basis of their being close to the child's interests and experiences and reflecting more closely the way in which the child views the world.

Besides, the content, concepts and skills in subject areas such as Science and Social Studies have been rearranged in themes that are familiar to young children's experiences (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2006). The impact of the new thematic curriculum is of course impossible to gauge now, because it has not yet been fully implemented and it will take time before the result of this new approach is seen. This implies that if pupils are given an opportunity to read materials that are commensurate with their reading level in terms of simplicity of text and language, they will be able to read actively. This will lay the foundation for a strong reading culture.

Reading Practices in UPE schools in Nabumali Town Council.

The findings of the interview indicated that all UPE schools in Nabumali town council selected for the study did not engage their pupils in reading. Individual pupil behaviors, attitudes and beliefs are nested within the school and societal environments in which they exist (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999). Attitudes towards reading and the use of non-textbook reading materials

(NTBRMS) are therefore assumed to be shaped not only by pupils' personal interests and reading habits but also by the larger social and cultural milieu in which the teaching of reading takes place, including homes and schools for instance.

On this a respondent asserted that;

All reading practices in which pupils engage tend to begin in their school or home environments with the help of their teachers, parents or siblings to encourage the pupils to read. The respondent further stated that, without support from people in their communities, pupils will fail to recognize the importance of reading.

Indeed, Gitachu (2007) asserted that adults who offer to read to young children often helped them to develop as independent readers by engaging them in conversations about what they had read. Therefore, teachers need to motivate the pupils to read in school as well as outside school in order to reduce the impact of a poor reading culture. This can be done by providing pupils with necessary reading materials. This implies that pupils cannot easily engage in reading without support from their teachers, parents, and friends, yet without this support they will not realize the benefits that accrue from engaging in reading. Using the interview and observation methods, the researcher found that the reading practices prevalent among pupils and teachers in all the schools studied were similar. The researcher observed pupils who were reading silently, which entailed pupils reading as individuals either in class, in the library or in any place of their choice, such as under trees in the school compound.

Group reading was another practice which the researcher observed. This involved teachers putting pupils into small groups of about 10, a result of the fact that these schools are characterized by large numbers of pupils. Each pupil in the group was given an opportunity to

read and share ideas about the book from which they were reading. Alternatively, each pupil in the group got an opportunity to read out loud to other pupils a paragraph in the text. In this way each pupil got a chance to participate in the reading session.

Another practice is the teacher-to-child approach in which the researcher observed interaction between the pupils and their teacher. It involved the teacher reading aloud to an individual pupil on a one-on-one basis or to all the pupils in a class from a given text and discussing the text with them. This enabled the researcher to determine whether the pupils had understood the text they had read or not. This was evidenced where the teacher asked the pupil's questions on the text that they had just read and some pupils failed to answer because they had failed to understand the meaning of some of the words in the text. As a result, the teacher had to explain the meanings of the words in order for the pupils to make sense out of the text and be able to answer his questions appropriately.

The other practices are peer or child-to-child teaching. This entails pupils who were good readers reading out to those of their peers who were weak in reading or reading to pupils in classes lower than theirs. According to a class session observed, on Tuesdays and Thursdays pupils from higher grades were permitted, after the morning break, to go to junior classes and read stories to their fellow pupils for 15 minutes as a means of instilling in them interest in reading. Table 4. 3 below provide details of the reading practices in which most pupils were engaged.

Table 4.3: Showing Details of the reading practices most pupils engaged in.

Reading Practices Pupils' Engage in	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Preferred Silent Reading	10	23%
Preferred Group Reading	15	33%
Preferred teacher-child approach	15	33%
Preferred peer or child-to- child teaching	05	11%
Total	45	100%

Source: *Field data (2024)*

According to the pupils who were interviewed, 10 respondents representing 23% preferred silent reading, 15 respondents representing 33% preferred group reading, 15 respondents representing 33% preferred the teacher-to-child approach and 05 respondents representing 11% pupils preferred peer or child-to-child teaching. This implies that most of the pupils were in favour of group reading because they got involved in reading as a class without treating it as a task. Regarding the teacher-child approach, most pupils enjoyed it because it gave pupils and teachers an opportunity to interpret difficult words in the text, hence affording the pupils a better understanding of the information and vocabulary used in the text.

Other reading practices which were revealed by the teachers from the various schools in the interview were story-writing, early morning reading sessions, timetabled reading and library lessons, and „talking“ offices, compounds and classrooms.

Storytelling and Pupils' Storybooks

Another form of reading practice that pupils engaged in was storytelling and making storybooks. The teachers who were interviewed in the various schools in which the study was carried out revealed that they engaged pupils in practices like storytelling and made them write their own storybooks as a way of encouraging them to read more and enhance their creativity. For example, pupils and teachers wrote stories or articles which were then pinned on notice boards in their classrooms.

On this note a respondent remarked that;

We encourage pupils to tell stories in class, read news at school assemblies and engage in reading competitions in order to get them involved in reading. Through such activities pupils are encouraged to read more; hence their vocabulary and speech are improved.

Early Morning Reading Sessions

The interview method revealed that each school had its own reading culture, which could mean that whenever pupils were not having a lesson they would have books to read and use morning time as reading time. However, this was done at individual school level. According to the respondent, Pupils are fresh in the morning and are likely to concentrate as they read, which keeps them interested in information material they are reading, unlike in the later hours of the day when they are exhausted after attending various lessons; their level of concentration is low. Therefore, if reading is made compulsory at this time of day, pupils are likely to improve their reading habits. The teachers suggested that the pupils' minds are fresh at this time of day and they are therefore able to concentrate on whatever information they are reading. The researcher observed pupils who read storybooks after finishing their class exercises. According to their teacher this was one way to keep them busy and encourage them to read. Thus through such reading sessions pupils are likely to acquire reading habits which will enable them to develop a reading culture.

Reading Materials

The researcher found through the interview and observation methods that most pupils in the selected schools engaged in reading textbooks because their sole purpose was to excel in their examinations. Other pupils preferred reading non-textbook reading materials such as storybooks which were referred to as readers, magazines, newspapers, teacher-made materials, pupil-made materials, charts and reading cards. Although pupils preferred reading non-textbook reading materials, they admitted that they had too few of them at their disposal to keep them interested in reading since they would only access these materials from class libraries, school libraries and resource centers, teachers, friends and parents, donors and the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Study findings suggest that the focus of MOES to-date has been to provide textbooks. However, the same ministry is the main supplier of non-textbook reading materials known as readers. In addition, MOES, through its Instructional Materials Unit, designed policies and strategies that were meant to ensure that schools received instructional materials, including the non - textbook reading materials. Indeed, MOES (2003), put in place textbooks and instructional materials were to be put into the hands of the learners for their active use at school and at home for reference. In this case, the instructional materials referred to include approved textbooks, reference books like dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, supplementary reading materials like picture books, stories, drama and poetry suitable for the pupils' age range, non-fiction books and materials, teaching and learning aids like globes and jigsaws, abacuses and science kits, charts and flash cards for teachers to use in class.

Table 4.4: Showing Materials the Pupils Preferred Reading

Reading Material	No. of Respondents(Frequency)	Percentage (%)
Story Books	15	33%
Text Books	05	11%
News papers	10	23%
Magazines	05	11%
Teacher- and pupil made materials	05	11%
Charts	05	11%
Total	45	100%

Source: Field data (2024)

Findings from table 4.4, indicated out of the 45 respondents interviewed, 15 respondents representing 33% pupils preferred reading storybooks, 5 respondents representing 11% preferred reading textbooks, 10 respondents representing 23% preferred reading newspapers, 5 respondents representing 11% preferred reading magazines, 5 respondents representing 11% preferred reading teacher and pupil made materials and 5 respondents representing 11% preferred reading charts. Tables 4.4 above represents materials the pupils preferred reading.

Although the government is trying to support reading in various ways, it lacks reading materials that can arouse pupil's interest, hence there is need to select reading materials with appropriate and interesting information to cultivate interest in reading among the pupils. The above findings imply that if pupils are provided with more non- text-book reading materials, such as storybooks, they will be encouraged to read more since story-books have interesting content like pictures and vocabulary which are likely to arouse interest in reading among the pupils as well as motivate them to engage in regular reading.

Factors that Motivate Pupils to Read Books

To assess factors that motivate pupils to read, pupils were interviewed to find out what attracted them to reading materials since most of them preferred NTBRMs as the best option to indulge and strengthen their reading habits.

Table 4.5: Showing the Factors that Motivate Pupils to Read Books

Factors that Motivate Pupils to Read	No. of Respondents(Frequency)	Percentage (%)
Illustration	25	56%
Title	15	33%
Books recommended by friends	05	11%
Total	45	100%

The findings from table 4.5 above showed that; 25 respondents representing 56% pupils said a picture (illustration) would play a fundamental role in motivating them to pick a book to read because it would make them curious about what the book was about, 15 respondents representing 33% pupils said that an interesting title would make them want to read a book, whereas 5 respondents representing 11% pupils said they only got interested in reading a book if it was recommended by a friend.

The researcher learnt this through interviewing pupils involved by asking them to vote for what would attract them to a reading material. The process involved getting different texts – one with an illustrated cover and one whose cover had only a title but no illustration – and asking the

pupils in the different schools whether they preferred reading books recommended by friends. The researcher was able to count the number of pupils who voted, by show of hands, on what motivated them to read a particular book in order to come up with the findings. The relevance of the material depends on the context and the children. Indeed, the best judges of what material is stimulating and relevant to the children are the children themselves (Magara, 2005). The above findings imply that illustrations play a fundamental role in attracting pupils to read because they make the pupils curious about the books. This is in line with the saying that „a picture is worth a thousand words“, unlike titles which might be difficult for the children to read easily as well as books recommended by friends.

Challenges Affecting Reading Culture among Pupils in Nabumali Town council UPE Schools.

Using the interview and observation methods, the researcher learnt that a number of factors played a major role in limiting pupils' interest in reading activities, which would enable them to build a firm foundation for reading. Through the interview method, the researcher found that various factors played a role in discouraging pupils from developing interest in reading. These included insufficient amounts of reading materials, inaccessibility to reading materials, lack of libraries, lack of parental involvement, inappropriate reading materials, teacher-related barriers, school-level practices, cultural relevance, and a national curriculum that does not sufficiently address reading. **These factors are discussed below:**

a) Insufficient amounts of Reading Materials

Findings from the interview revealed that reading materials in most of these schools were insufficient in quantity in almost all classes. Head teachers complained of inadequacy in variety and quantity of reading materials in schools, especially in the wake of increasing

enrollment. They felt that this was one of the barriers to promoting a reading culture in schools: **On this a respondent asserted that:**

In most cases, just a few copies of reading materials which are categorized as non- textbook reading materials commonly known as readers are supplied by MOEs for pleasure reading. If the class is large then it is a very big problem for the pupils to each get a chance to read. Therefore, pupils get discouraged to read since not all of them are able to get an opportunity to read from the NTBRMs in class and neither are they allowed to borrow them to take home to read.

The pupils' views were consistent with those of their teachers. Since schools generally did not allow pupils to borrow readers to take home, some pupils were not sure whether or not the available books were sufficient in number to borrow. In some schools the researcher found that the pupils were not aware that their schools had non-textbook reading materials because the teachers did not give them an opportunity to read in class. In these schools the standard response to the question of whether there were any reading materials in the school indicated that the children were not aware of their availability or lack thereof. This lack of awareness among pupils that their schools had reading materials suggested that their teachers never engaged them in using these reading materials. **On this a respondent reported that;**

because of the small amount of reading materials they had, they could not share them out among all the pupils because of the very large class sizes that outstripped supply of the books.

They therefore, felt that it was better for them to keep the books locked up. This implies that since pupils were not informed about the availability of reading materials in class, it became difficult for them to know what type of reading materials they could access, from whom and where, hence limiting their interest in reading. In schools where reading materials were available,

borrowing of these materials by the pupils was restricted, hence hindering their ability to engage in reading.

b) Accessibility to Reading Materials

Teachers and pupils revealed that it was not easy to access reading materials within the school and that this was as a result of certain school management practices, such as the locking up of books, imposing strict restrictions on their use, infrastructural constraints such as lack of space, absence of 56 trained librarians, inadequate supply of reading materials and lack interest in borrowing books on the part of pupils. However according to the DEO, despite increased number of reading materials in schools and the government's policy of putting the books in the hands of the pupils, pupils are not able to access reading materials because head teachers and teachers withhold the materials from them. This was witnessed during the DEO's inspection visits; that most of the materials are locked up in lockups either in the head teacher's offices or in the book stores. Therefore, materials were not optimally used since pupils did not have access to books, which reduced their interest to read. As a result of the restrictions imposed on pupils in accessing reading materials in schools as well as the books being locked up in offices, the pupils found it difficult to follow the protocol of borrowing books for various reasons. Such reasons included fear of losing the books and the number of books available for borrowing being limited, hence making them less motivated to engage in reading.

c) Lack of Libraries

The observation method revealed that some of the schools selected for this study lacked libraries or reading rooms where materials could be displayed for easy accessibility. The researcher found out that books were kept in boxes in the head teacher's office and in the

general-purpose store, which made it difficult for pupils and teachers to retrieve them for reading as well as now what reading materials they could borrow. Indeed, Magara & Batambuze (2005) noted that there was limited access to books in most of the schools because teachers seemed protective of books for fear of mutilation. However, even the schools where libraries were accessible, the pupils revealed during the interview that the library teacher would not allow them to take the books home for fear that they would lose the books or mishandle them, yet the school library had limited space where they could sit and read.

Furthermore, some pupils attributed their lack of interest in reading to lack of an environment conducive to reading. For example, the pupils admitted that they could not easily read at home because they got involved in household chores and that there was usually noise at home so they could not concentrate on what they were reading. This implies that lack of facilities like libraries where pupils can get access to books and concentrate on reading influences pupils' reading habits. For instance, without a library setting pupils do not get exposed to a variety of reading materials which are displayed and they tend to be less enthusiastic about reading. This implies that the pupils tend to become less curious about reading materials since they are not exposed to a variety from which they can make a choice since the only place where that kind of variety can be found is a school library.

d) Weak Support and Supervision from Parents

Some of the teachers interviewed in the various schools under study admitted that their pupils' reluctance to read was a result of lack of support from their parents. This is because most parents do not spare time to read with or read to their children nor do they

encourage them to borrow books from school, for fear that they might lose them and that they would have to pay for the lost books. In addition to that, the teachers interviewed said that most parents could not afford to buy NTBRMs for their children because books are expensive. The teachers added that parents were ignorant about the kind of readers they could buy for their children since the schools did not give them any advice on what was considered appropriate for the children to read. For instance, a pupil of primary six from Buganda Road Primary School revealed 58 during the interview that her parents were more interested in seeing that she excelled in her class work in order to pass examinations. Hence they bought for her textbooks rather than NTBRMs such as storybooks because they did not think that NTBRMs were important for her studies.

In addition, they were busy people who did not have time to read with her and this made her reluctant to read other books; furthermore, her parents expected her to read textbooks all the time. This limited her interest in other reading materials since she did not get exposed to other kinds of reading materials. The foregoing implies that parent participation in helping their children to read is non-existent. Therefore, there is need by the schools to educate the parents through meetings about the importance of supporting their children to acquire the habit of reading such as by engaging them in conversations about stories they have read as well as creating time to share stories with them and read to them.

e) Inappropriate Reading Materials

The teachers interviewed in the various schools in which the study was carried out revealed that there were a number of reading materials which were inappropriate for the pupils' reading activities. They singled out the Red Pepper newspaper, the „Ssenga

section" in Bukedde, adult magazines, and war books. They considered such materials to be inappropriate because of the language they used, how they were presented, their content, their questionable cultural relevance and their moral influence on the pupils. They expressed the view that these reading materials did not influence the pupils to read quality and educative information materials.

According to Magara & Nyumba (2004) they noted that resource allocation in Uganda concentrated on text books without balancing the needs of NTBRMs. Therefore, the only information materials that were available for pupils to read were textbooks which they only read in order to excel in their class work and examinations. The availability of only textbooks in schools limited the pupils' interest in reading because the textbooks bored them quite quickly. This implies that restriction of the scope of information materials limits pupils' exposure to other materials that they could read to develop interest in reading. But out of the fear that pupils might get exposed to immoral information materials, schools ensure that pupils are limited to reading particular information materials which lack variety, hence over time they lose the motivation to read.

f) Teacher-related Barriers and School-level Practices.

The findings of this study revealed that the government had been supporting reading activities by availing NTBRMs to pupils in schools. However, in the UPE schools where the study was carried out using the interview method it was found that teachers did not allow pupils to borrow readers to take home. Some of the excuses given by the teachers were that since the readers were in short supply they feared to loan them to pupils because they would lose them or mishandle them and that it was difficult on their part to

keep track of the readers borrowed by the pupils. In addition, the head teachers blamed the teachers who taught reading or the pupils who, despite the teachers' best efforts, failed to understand what they were taught. Other teachers believed that the problem lay with the national curriculum that does not place sufficient emphasis on reading. For instance;

A respondent asserted that;

The Ministry of Education removed reading from the curriculum as a subject and it is now taken as a skill in the English language hence there is no content to read or a curriculum to teach reading. Therefore, most teachers tend to have a biased attitude towards reading because they do not have a reading syllabus to guide them on how they can teach reading to the pupils.

Therefore, teachers do not encourage pupils to read since the teachers themselves have no idea how to go about teaching reading. This causes a widespread lack of commitment, creativity, innovativeness and resourcefulness among head teachers and teachers, a situation that has contributed towards a poor reading culture among both the teachers and the pupils. 60 While some schools admittedly have used locally available resources to arouse pupils' interest in reading materials, this kind of creative resourcefulness was lacking among most of the head teachers and teachers in the schools where the study was carried out. This implies that teachers contribute to the pupils' failure to read because they do not improvise to make up for the lack of a specific curriculum to teach pupils reading. Furthermore, the teachers forbade the pupils from borrowing reading materials for fear that they might lose them, hence pupils did not get motivated to visit the libraries to borrow books that would help them engage in extensive reading.

f) Cultural Relevance

During the interview, a teacher revealed that most of the materials pupils got to read were not culturally relevant because they were written by foreign authors who came from cultures different from those of the pupils and whose writings were based on their cultural backgrounds. This was a challenge to the pupils in the sense that most of the concepts found in the materials were outside the pupils' environment, making identification with the story difficult. However, Verhoeven snow (2001) noted that books that deal with subjects that are relevant to the children's daily lives and reflect their world both inside and outside school are believed to promote engaged readers. **A respondent observed that:**

Although some publishers like Macmillan, Longman, Fountain Publishers and MK Publishers have tried to write and illustrate their books relating them to the common culture of most Ugandan situations, culture in Uganda still differs since it varies from one region to another.

This makes it difficult for the pupils to identify one culture from another hence most pupils tend to have limited interest in reading materials that do not relate to their immediate environment. This implies that Uganda has few authors who can write materials relating to the culture with which the pupils can easily identify, hence foreign reading materials might not stimulate pupils' imagination and interest in reading.

h) Time

The findings of the study revealed that there was tension between the time devoted to subjects that are examined and those that are not examined. Therefore, since reading is not regarded as an

examinable subject in PLE, a lower priority is placed on reading. ***This is well-illustrated in the following comment by the respondent that;***

Our emphasis is mainly on examinable subjects because the exams are so academically-oriented.” The children naturally want to read what is going to be asked in the exam. I think it is a policy which needs to be established by the ministry where reading skills are also tested. Due to the fact that reading is not an examinable subject, teachers tend to treat teaching reading as a waste of time.

In the face of such an attitude among teachers, pupils are not encouraged to read since they are not examined in that area. Therefore, the failure of schools to create time for reading with or to the pupils affects them negatively because the pupils never get to realize the importance of reading since they lack encouragement and planned times for reading.

Strategies for Improving Reading Culture

Since various reading practices are used in the various schools selected for the study the pupils should be reading actively. However, there are a number of challenges that discourage them from making reading a part of their lives. Using the interview method, the researcher learnt from various respondents how best they thought schools; MOES, teachers, parents and DEOs could develop strategies for engaging pupils in reading. Their opinions included: providing pupils with educative and interesting NTBRMs; establishing readers’ clubs; storytelling; making reading materials locally; timetabled reading and library lessons; rewarding pupils and teachers; and talking offices, compounds and classrooms.

a) Educative and Interesting NTBRMs

Interesting stories can make reading enjoyable, which is important to children as they learn to read as well as for the development of the reading culture. Using the interview method, the researcher found that pupils had preferences in terms of the materials they wanted to read. According to the findings, the most popular reader among pupils was the storybook GuluGulu Goes to School. When the pupils were asked why they enjoyed reading this book they answered that it had interesting pictures and the language was easy to read.

Furthermore, interview findings from the pupils from Nabumali town council, stated that they enjoyed reading materials that they believed taught them something, for example a popular newsletter, „Straight Talk“, which was deemed appropriate by pupils and teachers alike because of its educative content. Hence the information materials that the pupils prefer to read determine their areas of interest and thus what they will want to read. Indeed, Gibson (2004) points out that for pupils to read they should be allowed to choose the books they would like to read. This creates a challenge for schools to be more inclusive in their selection and procurement of reading materials, such as NTBRMs, in order to motivate pupils to get interested in reading. This implies that if pupils are exposed to a wide selection of information materials they are likely to be motivated to engage in reading.

b) Readers' Clubs

The interview revealed that by the formation of readers' clubs in schools will motivate pupils to read because they will be able to share their different experiences basing on the information materials they have read. **A respondent asserted that;**

the experience they had had with readers' clubs such as Minds across Africa showed that „a reader's understanding of a text is enhanced by interacting with other readers“.

As pupils participate in book clubs they will learn from each other and work together to construct meaning (McMahon,2004), hence all the schools should be encouraged to set up readers' clubs in order to promote reading among their pupils. This implies that the pupils will get exposed to a wide variety of information materials as well as ideas that they will share with various pupils from other schools in order to arouse in them the curiosity to read and to make reading a habit.

c) Encouraging Storytelling and Children/Pupil Authors

The researcher noted that in some schools, pupils were encouraged to tell stories and in other schools, the writing of stories by pupils and teachers was an established practice. For example, *a respondent noted that;*

Pupils and teachers wrote stories or articles which were pinned up on their notice boards and in their classrooms. Two of the titles the researcher was able to observe were „My First Day at School“ and „My Favourite Food“. In addition, another respondent said that;

they encouraged each class to create their own class libraries. He said, Class teachers get a corner in the class which they transform into a library and the materials which the pupils write are displayed in that corner so that their colleagues get to read them. In this way, pupils are encouraged to think and write as well as learn to read out of curiosity.

The use of story-writing as a strategy for promoting reading could be supported by measures such as establishment of classroom libraries in the form of displayed stories and lockups in which pupils' stories are stored. This implies that if pupils are able to read their work as well as that of their friends when it is displayed in class they will strive to read more to gain better ideas for their next stories, and this will keep them reading.

d) Making Reading Materials Locally

The researcher noted that in most schools, teachers made their own reading materials, which included charts, reading cards cut out of old boxes, banana fibres, cuttings from old newspapers and magazines, games and jigsaw puzzles.

e) Timetabling Reading and Library Lessons

Studies indicate that there is need to plan for library lessons and the only means they can be carried out systematically is through timetabling. *As a respondent noted that;*

library lessons are part of the school's timetable for all classes. According to the respondent timetabling of library lessons would be a good practice if adhered to.

However, as the researcher observed, the librarian rarely showed up for lessons and the library lesson was used to teach other subjects instead. This implies that if reading is approved as a lesson on the timetable, teachers will be able to encourage pupils to read because they will be able to get them exposed to the reading materials available in the school and advise them on how best to make use of the reading materials availed by the school.

f) Early Morning Reading Sessions

Most teachers and pupils in schools selected for the study were of the view that the early morning period between 7.30 am - 8.00 am should be used by pupils for personal reading since in the morning pupils' minds are fresh and their concentration good. However, this differs from school to school since each school has its own reading practices. This implies that if various schools timetable the morning period for reading they are likely to create solid reading habits

among the pupils since they would get exposed to reading and with time make it a permanent habit.

g) ‘Talking’ Offices, Compounds and Classrooms

During the study, the researcher found that the selected schools had what they called „talking“ compounds, „talking“ offices, and „talking“ classrooms. The teachers made the researcher 66 understand that these places were described as „talking“ because information materials were displayed in them that communicated to everyone on the school campus. Examples of these were: „Wash your hands after visiting the toilet“ and „Time wasted is never gained“. These places had posters displayed with different kinds of information, at different spots on the school compound.

Most of the head teachers“ offices and the staffrooms were „talking“ places with displays of information on the activities of the various committees. In addition, teachers“ duty rosters, PLE results and the amount of UPE funds received were displayed. In some schools the trees and shrubs in the compounds were clearly labeled in everyday English as well as with their scientific names and other names commonly associated with them.

On this a respondent noted that; *“Pupils were able to read because there is strategic placement of materials like signposts on compounds, classrooms and offices hence enabling pupils pick interest in reading activities.”*

conclusion

This chapter revealed findings of the study from the selected schools, the reading practices that pupils engaged in such as group reading, individual reading, peer-to-peer reading and teacher-to-pupil reading. Story-telling and early morning reading sessions were factors that motivated pupils to read. The challenges met by both teachers and pupils in reading were also revealed,

such as insufficient quantities of books, inaccessibility to the reading materials, lack of libraries, an examination-oriented national curriculum. Teachers and pupils provided strategies for developing a reading culture such as provision of educative and interesting NTBRMs, establishment of readers' clubs, encouraging storytelling among the pupils, making reading materials locally, timetabling reading and library lessons and rewarding pupils and teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the major findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations to address the strategies for developing a reading culture among pupils in UPE schools.

General Summary

The study involved 61 respondents, of whom 45 were pupils, 16 were teachers. The study sought to analyze the reading practices among pupils in Nabumali Town council UPE schools in order to develop strategies for the development of a reading culture in primary schools. The objectives of the study were to establish reading practices in UPE schools in Nabumali Town council; to examine the major challenges to reading among pupils in UPE schools in Nabumali town council; and to develop appropriate strategies to improve the reading culture of pupils in UPE schools in Nabumali Town council. The interview and observation methods were used to derive findings. Interviews were conducted among the pupils, the teachers and the DEO and observations were made in classes.

Summary of Findings.

The study found that development of reading practices among the pupils was determined by time, availability of reading materials and the involvement of their teachers in motivating pupils to read. The most commonly used reading practices in most schools were silent reading, group reading, teacher-to-child reading, and peer teaching. However, other reading practices were reading competitions, readers' clubs, debating societies, and interest corners in the classrooms where teachers and pupils wrote articles that were pinned up in class so that other pupils could read them. Reading materials known as readers were made available to the pupils although most

of the schools had textbooks which did not inspire the pupils to read. Pupils revealed that they preferred reading NTBRMs because they had interesting titles and pictures which motivated them to read. The study revealed that pupils were able to access these books through their class libraries, friends, teachers, siblings and donors. However, the respondents revealed that various factors hampered their ability to build a firm foundation for reading, and these included insufficient amounts of reading materials, inaccessibility to reading materials, lack of libraries, lack of parent involvement, inappropriate reading materials, teacher-related barriers, lack of cultural relevance, scarcity of time, and the examination-oriented national curriculum.

Conclusions Basing on the Evidence of the Findings of the Study in Section.

The following conclusions can be drawn;

The major reading practices in UPE schools in Nabumali town council UPE schools include; group reading, teacher-to-child approach, child-to-child approach and individual reading. Group reading and teacher-to-child reading is the most common in the schools studied. This implies that children are not familiar with individual reading thus weakening their reading ability as individuals. However, there are challenges affecting the reading practices in UPE schools.

Most of the reading materials in these schools are textbooks which are mainly procured to support academic achievement of the pupils rather than NTBRMs which are more interesting and which can therefore encourage pupils to read constantly. There are limitations to reading materials availed to pupils in the form of restrictions on usage and the limited variety of NTBRMs from which pupils can choose. Therefore, reading materials are not supportive of promotion of reading among the pupils.

In addition, pupils do not have access to reading materials because they lack space or infrastructure (libraries) for storage of the materials, they lack professionals who could provide them with reading materials systematically (librarians), this implies that the library services and library staff affect how and when pupils read books. However, even, inappropriate reading materials discourage pupils from reading. Reading materials may be inappropriate because the language used is too advanced for the pupils' level of proficiency; because the content of the reading materials is not culturally relevant; or because the material is considered to be morally harmful. The way in which a particular information material is presented, in terms of the language and content, usually affects the way in which pupils will perceive that information material.

Further still, pupils do not read frequently due to the fact that there is no time allocated for reading activities, thus leading to lack of interest in reading. This implies that time is an essential requirement for a reading culture to flourish. Some of the strategies that can be introduced include introducing educative and interesting non textbook materials (NTBRMS), introducing readers' clubs, encouraging storytelling, making reading materials locally, timetabling reading and library lessons, encouraging early reading lessons and talking offices and compounds. If efforts are put in place to implement such strategies, there will be a major improvement of the reading culture of pupils in schools in Uganda.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the study findings and are driven by the belief that significant gaps in the development of reading among primary school children need to be addressed through a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to the literacy problem at

different levels of the school system. This view reflects a shift in focus, away from supply side concerns to demand side concerns at different intervention levels school and policy.

- i. There is need to increase the quantities and variety of NTBRMs to improve pupil: NTBRMs ratios in primary schools. Interesting stories can make reading enjoyable, and this is important for children as they learn to read as well as for the development of the reading culture. Hence there is need for the government to avail pupils with reading materials that are educative and interesting, especially those written by authors who relate their stories with the local setting in Uganda. This will enable pupils to identify themselves with the stories and thus develop interest in reading.
- ii. Schools should take the responsibility to develop explicitly stated objectives for developing a reading culture for all children, including children with visual or other impairments. To ensure that reading thrives in Uganda, concerted efforts would be required to improve the social and reading infrastructure to promote reading across the school curriculum and develop reading extension services
- iii. There is need to strengthen reading practices among pupils in order to help them develop a reading culture at school and at home. Schools should set up reading activities that involve all pupils. This can be done through teachers organizing debates, reading competitions, quizzes, setting up readers' and writers' clubs, and sharing of pupils' stories through storytelling. Once pupils realize that they do not have adequate knowledge as they share ideas with their peers through reading activities they would wake up to the benefits of reading. They are more likely than to become more curious about the reading various materials available to them both at school and at home and might decide to read them.

- iv. The Ministry of Education and Sports needs to develop and implement a clear policy on how to introduce Primary One pupils to reading with regard to what language to start with, when to switch or use two languages and what specific methods and books to be used by teachers when instructing pupils during reading lessons.
- v. The Ministry of Education and Sports also needs to re-orient teacher supervision from fault-finding to supportive and facilitative supervision to provide teachers with support and to enforce and sustain teachers' interest in reading. This can be done by training teachers on how they can influence pupils to develop interest in reading.
- vi. Inviting local authors to the various schools would allow them to share their experiences with the pupils about how they came up with ideas for the stories that they wrote. In this way the pupils would be inspired to read and create their own stories which they can share with their peers in class. This would enable pupils to broaden and enrich their imagination through reading widely in order to get ideas for their stories. These stories can be published later or displayed in their classrooms for other pupils to read. Hence through such activities pupils' morale to read is boosted.
- vii. The use of story-writing as a strategy for promoting reading could be supported by measures such as establishment of classroom libraries in the form of cupboards in which to store pupils' stories. Hence there is need to develop mechanisms for public-private partnerships and information-sharing on the basis of best practices and interventions that feature in private and government-aided schools.
- viii. The government should endeavor to set up school libraries and separate book storage facilities in all schools in order to provide an environment that is conducive to reading for pupils as well as accessibility to the materials the pupils would need to read. When the

libraries are in place it would be easier to schedule reading lessons on school timetables as well as systematically provide information on how to use the library as well as its resources.

- ix. Library lessons should be conducted through the library teachers to ensure that pupils use library time efficiently and effectively by perusing a variety of reading materials. Through timetabled reading many pupils would be encouraged to learn how to read. In this case each one of them would be entitled to some form of reading material when they visit the school library. Special times for individual or group reading by pupils can also be set aside. Through such activities the pupils would be able to determine their weak points as they read and be encouraged to read more. Timetabling library lessons would be a good practice if adhered to.
- x. Teachers should create reading sessions in schools where reading is not taken as a priority but as an obligation. This can be done through encouraging pupils to borrow reading materials from school as well as home and read in between break times.
- xi. Through displaying stories created by pupils, pupils reading to their peers, and teachers giving them gifts such as pencils or other reading materials as a reward, pupils are likely to become motivated to read and create more. This creates confidence in them and encourages them to read more regularly to come up with good results. Such rewards tend to encourage pupils to engage more in reading.

Areas for Further Study

The researcher recommends the following areas for further study:

- i. The MOEs has played a role of putting in place a national text book policy and implemented it through the Decentralized Instructional Materials Programme However,

there is still need for the ministry to streamline means through which they can balance supply of NTBRMs by providing a variety of reading materials which are relevant to pupils reading levels which can be used in schools to encourage reading amongst the pupils.

- ii. For pupils to engage in reading as a lifelong learner there is need for them to have role models who should encourage them to read. However, for this to be fulfilled there is need for teachers and parents to develop means through which they can support pupils“ to read.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PUPILS INTERVIEW GUIDE

The researcher is a student Busitema University who is undertaking a study on a topic: **The perceived influence of a reading culture on self-directed learning among the pupils in the selected UPE Primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.** This is to kindly request you spare some time and respond to this interview. I would like to ask a few questions regarding this topic. All your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the academic purposes only.

Age_____

Class_____

Gender _____

Objective 1: Current Practices related to reading culture among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

1. Do you usually read during your leisure time?
2. What reading materials do you read?
3. What attracts you to read any information material?
4. How do you get the information materials you read?
5. What reading activities are you involved in as a pupil?
6. How often do you read and where do you read from?
7. Is there anyone who helps you as you read? If so how do, they help you as you read?

Objective 2: Mitigating measures to factors hindering the development of the reading culture among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

8. What kind of reading materials can be used to develop a reading culture among pupils in your class?
9. What reading practices in your school are pupils actively engaged in to improve on their reading habits?
10. What type of reading materials do you think can attract pupils to read?
11. Do you think a library is important in promoting pupil's ability to read. If yes, what role does it play?
12. How have the following people encouraged you to develop a reading culture?

i) Teachers

ii) Parents

iii) Siblings

Objective 3: Factors that Hinder the development of Reading Culture among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

13. What problems do you face when reading?

14. What challenges prevent you from reading?

15. How does lack of a library/reading room limit your reading ability?

16. How does lack of reading materials affect your reading?

APPENDIX B: TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE:

The researcher is a student of Busitema University who is undertaking a study on a topic: **The perceived influence of a reading culture on self-directed learning among the pupils in the selected UPE Primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.** This is to kindly request you spare some time and respond to this interview. I would like to ask a few questions regarding this topic. All your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the academic purposes only.

Age_____

Gender_____

Responsibility _____

Qualification _____

Objective 1: Current Practices related to reading culture among the primary school learners in

Nabumali town council.

1. What kind of reading practices do you engage pupils in?
2. How often do you read to the pupils?
3. Do you have a specific language of instruction you use to teach reading and why?
4. How do pupils get access to reading materials?
5. Do pupils prefer a particular type of reading practice over another? if so why do you think so?

Objective 2: Mitigating measures to factors hindering the development of the reading culture among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

6. What reading practices should be encouraged by teachers to build a firm reading culture among pupils?

7. What role should the following people play in encouraging pupils to read?

-Teachers

- Parents

-Siblings

Objective 3: Factors that Hinder the development of Reading Culture among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

8. How does lack of reading materials affect reading of pupils?
9. How does lack of reading facilities affect pupil's reading ability?
10. How does the environment affect pupils reading?
11. Does lack of reading materials in native languages affect reading habits of pupils in schools?
If so how?

APPENDIX C: OBSERVATION GUIDE

Introduction:

This Observation Guide was used for observing the activities and facilities in schools where study will be conducted. It is one of the instruments that the researcher will use for collecting data for a research on **“The perceived influence of a reading culture on self-directed learning among the pupils in the selected UPE Primary schools in Nabumali Town council, Mbale district.”**

1. Current reading culture practices among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

pupils are interested in reading.....

Attitudes towards non text book reading materials.....

Types of reading materials pupils read.....

Reading practices pupils engage in

2. Mitigating measures to factors hindering the development of the reading culture among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

- i.** How pupils acquaint themselves to reading materials
- ii.** How teachers, parents and siblings encourage them
- iii.** Governments’ response to curriculum on point of reading.

3. Factors that Hinder the development of Reading Culture among the primary school learners in Nabumali town council.

- i.** Teachers attitudes towards reading and teaching pupils
- ii.** how to read Book storage and tidiness in primary schools?
- iii.** How inventory is carried out to ensure minimal loses of readers

THANK YOU

APENDIX D: BUDGET

ITEMS	QUANTITY	UNIT COST (USH)	TOTAL COST(USH)
RULED PAPER	1 REAM	25000	25000
REAMS PRINTER PAPER	3	25000	75000
PENS	5	700	3500
ENVELOPES	10	500	5000
STAPLER AND WIRES		20000	20000
TYPING AND PRINTING SERVICES		200000	200000
PHOTOCOPYING		50000	50000
BINDING	3	25000	75000
TRANSPORT			150000
TOTAL			603,500