

**READING HABITS OF CHILDREN IN PRIVATE AND  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE  
PRINCE OF PEACE ACADEMY, MADINA AND THE ESTATE  
JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
INFORMATION STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) IN LIBRARY STUDIES**

**SEPTEMBER, 2006**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this study has not been submitted to any University for any degree. I am therefore responsible for any flaws in this work. Where other people's reference works have been cited, full acknowledgement has been given.

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## **DEDICATION**

**I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO MY HUSBAND, EBOW, AND MY CHILDREN PAA  
KWESI, MAAME EKUWA AND MOHER TERESA.**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I thank the almighty God for guiding me successfully through the course.

I am highly grateful to my supervisor, professor A.A. Alemna, whose invaluable contributions and suggestions helped steer the affairs of this study to a successful end.

Special thanks also go to Mrs.Cynthia Atua-Ntow of the Balme Library whose immense assistance contributed to the successful completion of this work.

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the reading habits of children in private and public schools. The study centred on two categories of schools – the Prince of Peace Academy, Madina for private schools and the Madina Estate JSS for public schools. The sample consisted of 50 pupils from each school. The questionnaire method was used to carry out the research.

Questionnaires were administered to 100 pupils from the two schools.

The findings of the study revealed that the respondents from Prince of Peace Academy had parents with good educational background with a good percentage of them having libraries at home. Interestingly, the Madina Estate JSS did not have a library. This is a great disincentive to the pupils and the teachers. This situation greatly accounts for why pupils in public schools do not perform well in both spoken and written English. Teachers in the school also need a school library to update their knowledge.

The study recommends among others, that every school, be it public or private should have a well-equipped library to promote effective teaching and learning and sustain the reading habits of children. The Ghana Education Service should issue a directive to the effect that every first and second school should have a library period on its time table during which the children will be compelled to go to the library and books distributed for them to read.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

#### A. DEFINITION OF READING

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1995) defines reading as “the act of reproducing mentally or vocally the written or printed words of a book, author etc. by following the symbols with the finger, feeling embossed symbols with the finger, example Braille designed for the blind.”

Various meanings have been assigned to the reading. According to The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2002) defines reading as the process of recognizing written or printed words and understanding their meaning. Reading is viewed as an active attempt on the part of the reader to understand a writer’s message. Emerging here are two essential issues in learning how to read. The first issue involves learning to correlate speech sounds of the language to the written symbols used to present the speech sounds. The second issue entails more sophisticated abilities of analysing, reasoning, thinking, imagining and judging as one reads. These activities require good knowledge of syntax or language structure as well as semantics.

According to Staiger and Casey (1993) reading is the ability to de-code letters and symbols- that it is infact, a process that depends upon a host of personal and environmental factors, and a habit that must be stimulated and encouraged if it’s full benefits are to be reaped.



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According to Eisemon (1997) reading is the instrument for acquiring life long learning and much of school work. Indeed the book is the basic tool of education. Ability to read is not only essential to the acquisition of knowledge but a necessary condition to the full development of mentally healthy and happy children. Reading is a skill which has to be acquired through constant practice. For a child to become permanently an avid reader, and acquire the reading habit, that child must be surrounded with books. Books become an integral part of the child's life when he sees them frequently, browses among them and samples them for himself.

Reading has many purposes for the young child and in one way or another the school library can meet these purposes. Experience of literature and other library materials is acknowledged as valuable on many aspects of child development. Three areas have been particularly singled out as being enhanced by reading and use of the variety of sources of information. These are:

- a. Intellectual and emotional development
- b. Language development
- c. Educational development

Reading and use of library materials can, therefore, have a variety of purposes:

- Enjoyment: of story experience, of language, of associated art, etc.
- Knowledge of the wider world (through both fiction and non-fiction).
- Understanding of other people: behaviour, cultures and situations.
- Self knowledge: identity (both individual and cultural, security).
- Information: both problem-solving and 'unguided' discovery.
- Confidence, in the acquisition of vocabulary, speech and language skills.
- Shared experiences between adult and child.

- Support for both formal and informal education. (School librarian, vol.48 No.1 2000).

Depending on the perspectives of different fields of study, it is possible, broadly speaking, to see reading as a practice, product or process. The first has been the interest of anthropologists and social psychologists whose concern is with reading and writing practices as linked to their uses in everyday life, not merely within schooling. The second orientation focuses on the form and meaning of written texts and their constituent parts.

The third perspective pays relatively greater attention to the role of the reader in the ongoing process of written language and the strategies that he or she draws on in constructing meaning from text. Reading is important for everybody in order to cope with new knowledge in the changing world of the technological age. The importance and necessity will hopefully continue to increase in the years to come. However, the number of those who know how to read but do not read enough is also increasing. However, people are not reading as expected and consequently educational standards keeps on falling over the years especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Students who cannot read will not be able to understand examination questions in the classroom.

They are obviously not going to perform well in the examinations. At a paper delivered at the 65<sup>th</sup> IFLA Councils and General Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand in 1999, it was realised that if developing countries did not put in adequate measures to promote reading habits in their respective countries, more people will

revert to illiteracy by the end of the century. The situation is alarming in Asia and Africa.

Many developed countries have some serious problems based on their multicultural structure. They are all trying to solve, especially the cultural adaptation problems of the ethnic communities to be able to live together. All these efforts should be multi-dimensional and long term. Reading and library use habits can be thought of as the factors which have important roles in fulfilling the multi cultural structure in a country. Effects of these habits to the cultural adaptation of the educational achievements and language are the main parts of a culture. In other words, culture is a product of education and language. Despite the wonders of modern technology and the proliferation of other forms of communication, reading is still a necessary basic skill. But librarians need to reflect on how and why children read.

Many of the influences that turn children into readers are at work well before they enter formal education. Once acquired, reading skills are used in different ways. Some children will devour the works of Ronald Dahl and Enid Blyton alongside the books recommended by librarians, teachers and parents. Others will quickly develop quite sophisticated tastes, and read selectively, perhaps the biography of someone whose work they admire, a books which reflects their hobby or leisure-time interests, or a television tie-in. Humour and books with an animal interest often appeal to a wide age range and ten-year-olds can be seen enjoying Gerald Durrell, James Herriot or Adrian Mole as much as their parents and grandparents. Another group may use their reading skills to unravel complex instructions for computer games.

Reading skills have many applications in the world of youth. What librarians must do is to ensure that libraries are there, stocked with materials to meet the needs of all potential readers. There is little point in talking about reading standards unless all children have access to plenty of books. Book ownership is important but few people afford to buy all the books they require.

For children and young people, libraries have a special role, enabling them to experiment with books and develop reading interests uninfluenced by parents or teachers.

#### **B. IMPORTANCE OF READING**

According to Stadler (1980), reading will among others,

- a. provide base (background) for grammatical efficiency of the children in both languages.
- b. contribute to the thinking in both languages.
- c. raise the communication in both languages.
- d. help the children to learn the rules of behaviour and life style of householder country.

#### **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

As the research topic indicates, children from private schools perform better than their counterparts in public schools in both written and spoken English. This phenomenon has been a matter of great concern to successive governments in Ghana. It is common knowledge that some J.S.S. 2 pupils from a public school cannot read a primary six reading book satisfactorily whereas a primary five pupil from a private school can

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successfully read a J.S.S. 3 reading book. In spoken English the situation remains the same. The irony is that professional teachers-teachers who successfully attended Training Colleges teach in public schools. On the contrary, most private schools are manned by non-professional teachers. Some of the teachers there are holders of Ordinary Level Certificates; others are Advanced Level Certificate holders and also Senior Secondary School Certificate holders.

This state of affairs has been a source of worry to successive governments since Independence. Consequently measures have been put in place to halt the trend but to no avail. Considering the amount of money the state pumps into the educational sector, governments have every reason to worry about this state of affairs. In fact, education takes a greater chunk of the state budget. The private schools do not get any financial aid from the state and yet their products occupy all the top secondary schools and the tertiary institutions.

Children who do best in literacy skills are those who come from homes where there are books, where parents spend time reading to their children and where children see their parents and older siblings engaged in reading activities. This study seeks to investigate the reading habits of children in private and public schools in order to establish whether indeed poor reading habits account for the poor performance of children in public schools in the Basic Education Certificate Examination.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study is to identify the root cause of the poor reading habits of pupils of public schools and what measures can be put in place to halt this trend. The



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**study will also find out why pupils from private schools have good reading habits and perform better in both spoken and written English.**

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To ascertain the teaching and learning skills used in public and private schools.
2. To find out the parental background of the pupils from the two schools.
3. To find out if there are supplementary readers for pupils from the two schools
4. To identify in detail the problem and library use habits of the pupils from public and private schools
5. To find out whether television viewing accounts for poor reading habits of the pupils from both schools.
6. To develop some suggestions for solution of the problem.

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is considered important for several reasons. The outcome of the study will be of immense benefit to the teacher, the pupils and the state. The outcome of the study will also help the state address the imbalances between pupils of private schools and those of public schools.

Teachers in public schools will be equipped with the necessary skills to promote effective teaching and learning to benefit pupils from these schools.

## **1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION**

The study was limited to schools- the Prince of Peace Academy in Madina representing private schools and the Madina Estate Junior Secondary School, representing public schools.

The population covered children between the ages of 12 and 16.

## **1.7 METHODOLOGY**

### **1.7.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The survey research method was used to carry out the research because it is relatively cheaper. The findings of the children of Prince of Peace Academy would be used to represent the entire population of children of private schools and those from the Estate J.S.S. would represent the children of public schools. The reason for using a sample to represent the population is to minimize cost and save time. A properly selected sample can therefore do for the entire population what a sip of soup does for the entire soup, (Kwabia, 2005). Previous studies on reading habits carried out by Whitehead, F. (1997), Amaral (1992), Greany, V. (1986) used this method, finding it to be adequate to gather similar information and data.

### **1.7.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION**

Two categories of schools are being researched into- private schools and public schools. In Ghana, as in other parts of Africa, children whose parents belong to the middle and upper classes of society attend private schools. Here, the schools are privately owned with no financial support from the state. The parents of these children pay exorbitant school fees, buy their wards textbooks and provide them with other miscellaneous items.

On the contrary, the parents of children of public schools belong to the lower class. Here the states provide everything; from remuneration of teachers to supply of textbooks and lately, the provision of Capitation Grant for every pupil. Consequently the pupils from the two types of schools have different socio-economic backgrounds.

Many research studies have pointed out that private school pupils have parents who are well educated, know the value of education and are prepared to sacrifice anything to enable them climb the education ladder. Studies have also pointed out that the children who do best in literary skills at schools are those who come from homes where there are books, where their parents spend time reading to their children and where their children see their parents and older siblings engage in reading activities.

Children from public schools on the other hand do not enjoy these privileges at home. Only a tiny fraction of them have parents who are educated. Indeed a survey carried out by the Ga District Assembly of Greater Accra Region in 2003 revealed that one third of pupils in the public schools are house helps who are only being assisted by their benefactors to acquire basic education. One can therefore deduce from what has been said that the two schools that are going to be sampled for the purpose of this study are perfect matches of private and public schools respectively.

### **1.7.3 SELECTION OF CASE**

The Prince of Peace Academy and the Madina Estate Junior Secondary School were selected as the case study because the two schools match a perfect description of a private and a public school respectively. Also, both schools are located at Madina which has a heterogeneous population.

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Furthermore, the two schools are in close proximity of each other and that will enable research work to be effectively carried out by the researcher.

#### **1.7.4 SELECTION OF SUBJECTS**

Since the topic for the research is comparison of reading habits among school children of private and public schools, the researcher would base her findings on proportionate sampling. The researcher considered the entire student population of the two schools as one unit and then takes a sample population of two classrooms of the two schools. J.S.S. 2 pupils were sampled in each school giving a total sample size of 100.

#### **1.7.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The proportionate sampling technique was adopted for the research. The sizes of the classes were the same. This method ensures that the two schools received equal number of the questionnaire. It is employed in the selection of all the other probability samples. A major requirement for the use of the proportionate sampling method on its own is that the population should be homogeneous.

#### **1.7.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

A questionnaire was distributed to the pupils of the two selected schools to solicit their views. This method is the easiest and the most preferred because pupils would be at ease when answering the questions. The interview method is cumbersome and tiring. It also takes a longer time depending on the number of people being interviewed. One hundred pupils cannot be interviewed in a day. Moreover, not every body can express himself/herself very well.

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Anybody present in the selected class received a questionnaire. They answered the questionnaire independently since they did not enter into direct contact with the researcher. They expressed their views freely without any inhibitions. More importantly they did not write their names on the questionnaire.

Some of the responses demanded “yes” or “no” answer but in some cases a brief explanation was required. The questions were based solely on reading habits. The researcher wanted to know whether pupils read purposely to pass examinations or they read to enrich their vocabulary.

#### **1.7.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher herself. There were thirty two questions in all. Each pupil was expected to answer all the questions in fifteen minutes. The researcher herself collected the entire questionnaire. Most of the questions were structured and close-ended.

#### **1.7.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Responses from the collected data were statistically analysed and interpreted. The aim of the study is to compare reading habits of pupils in public schools and private schools and to find out why those from the private schools perform better in both spoken and written English. Findings from the study would be made available to the appropriate authorities for the necessary action to be taken.

#### **1.7.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**SAMPLE:** is a fraction of the population that has been selected to represent the population.



**SAMPLING:** is the process of selecting the sample.

**SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING METHOD:** ensures that every individual in the population has a chance of being included in the sample selected.

**HOMOGENEOUS:** means the elements which make up the population are identical, either by living together in a defined territory or having a common nationality.

**HETEROGENEOUS;** means consisting of many different types of people or things.

## **1.8 ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

The work is organized under four chapters.

**Chapter one** is the introductory chapter. It contains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the statement of purpose, the objectives of the study and the significance of the study.

**Chapter two** is a review of related literature.

**Chapter three** is the methodology, analysis and presentation of research data.

**Chapter four** summarizes the findings, suggestions, recommendations and conclusion.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 IMPORTANCE OF READING

The importance of reading to the individual and to the community at large has never been questioned, and much attention has been paid to improving methods and techniques for teaching the skill of reading (Staiger and Casey, 1983). Literacy is commonly defined as the ability to read and write at a designated level of proficiency. Graff (1993-1999) more precisely defined literacy as a technical capability to decode or produce written or printed signs, symbols or letters combined into words. Traditionally, literacy has been closely associated with the alphabet and its role in written communication.

According to the World Bank Statistics Report (2000) many countries prefer to use self-reported data or simply consider people with no schooling or those unable to read and write as being illiterate. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 1998 figures depicted that men and women aged fifteen years and above, who were illiterate comprised 32 percent and 49 percent of the population respectively. To date, the region has generally not shown any marked improvement save for the urban areas, which are few and far between. This means that a significant part of the populace can neither read nor write a short simple statement about their everyday life. Consequently the large multitude of illiterates is a source of grave concern to decision-makers in many countries in the region.

Similarly, Eisemon (1997) presents the alarming scenario with a caution that if left to continue unabated, the number of illiterates would tend to increase in future. Such an

eventuality would inevitably aggravate unfavourable socio-economic repercussions thus impeding development. Therefore urgent and innovative measures have to be invoked in order to avert the imminent downward spiral.

UNESCO has long been concerned with the question of reading. The plan of action entitled "Books for All" launched during International Book Year 1972 singled out promotion of the reading habit as one of the four principal objectives for worldwide action. More recently, the UNESCO World Congress on Books (London, June 1982) adopted a set of six targets for the 1980's with the overall aim of moving 'Towards a reading society', and emphasized the need to create a reading environment in all types and at all levels of society.

According to Staiger and Casey (1983) effort to promote reading habit will be most effective if they involve virtually all segments of society at every level, from the family, community and school, through local, intermediate, and national levels of government.

Denkyi-Boamah (2005) also states that teaching methods of teaching reading in schools also have a role to play in the promotion of reading habits. The methods must be such that it is pleasurable in order to arouse the interest of children for reading so that they will not view reading as a chore and with displeasure.

A study conducted by Norton (1994) revealed that due to the high levels of illiteracy in the developing world, many children do not get a positive start on reading like their counterparts in the developed world. Whereas in the developed world books are easily available in the homes and parents who are literates read stories with their children while promoting reading from a tender age, the perception a child in the developing world gets of the book is that of a book being a serious tool for study to be used

mainly for academic success. In most of the homes books are only bought if it is necessary and after everything else has been taken care of. Majority of the parents, who are literates, either have no time to read with their children or simply lack the interest and culture of reading.

## 2.2 PROMOTING READING AMONG CHILDREN

Fayose (2003) postulates that developing an interest in reading and nurturing this interest into adulthood is the concern of library work with children. In her book: Library work with children: an African perspective she states that one of the reasons why mass literacy programmes fail in African countries is the lack of practice with the newly acquired skills and continuity. The more children read, use libraries and other information centres the better for consolidating skills and developing life-long interest in books and learning. African children generally are not motivated to read. Methods of teaching reading in the schools have a role to play in the promotion of reading habit. It is important that methods used for teaching readings in the schools are pleasurable.

Kidd and Lewsey (1987) suggest that a carefully planned, systematic reading programme has more positive and lasting effect than incidental reading programme. This suggests that if we carefully plan well we will overcome most of the problems that we have and become a reading society. Chambers (1993) gives a more concrete view that “readers are not born,” which means that readers can be made or developed and this can be more effective if children are made to take up reading at an early age. However, without books, without reading ability, our children are going to remain unaware of the opportunities science and technology and the internet give us to fight poverty, hunger and disease. They are going to be excluded from a global common

cultural heritage, which is laid down in written document. To sustain reading habits in children, all basic and secondary schools should have a proper school libraries. Each district capital should have a library that is well stocked with reading materials. It is a well known fact that extra curricular reading will be of immense benefit to the child's development.

Reading is an important means of acquiring information. We cannot imagine the educational process without it. Atta-Obeng (1999) postulates that reading is a vehicle for adventure, for exploration into the known and unknown areas of knowledge. Reading also provides a means of acquiring experience through the knowledge of what other people have been through or have written down. Reading broadens one's horizon. The man who reads widely is abreast with events be it local or international. He is widely respected by society in which he lives and he is regarded as a repository of knowledge.

Grace Ofori-Atta (2000) asserts that "without books, without reading ability, our children are going to remain unaware of the opportunities science and technology and the internet give us to fight poverty, hunger and disease. They are going to be excluded from a global common cultural heritage, which is laid down in written document". (Ghana Library Association, Newsletter. Vol.2. April, 2003, p.5). to sustain reading habits in children, all basic and secondary schools should have proper school libraries. Each district capital should have a library that is well stocked with reading materials. It is a well known fact that extra curricular reading will be of immense benefit to the child's development.

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Ogyedjator (2004) points out that a good reader uses different patterns of reading and study. Each involves the use of a variety of skills and attitudes. The pattern used depends upon the type and complexity of the reading material, the purpose for reading, and the readers own language development and familiarity with the kinds of ideas expressed resulting in kinds of reading.

Adablah (1992) asserts that, modern educationists are of the opinion that the ability to read is an invaluable tool in the developing world of today, for it greatly influences growth and development. The newly independent countries of Africa today are hungry for knowledge. They want books to increase their effectiveness in their jobs, books to broaden the base of their education, books to sharpen their wits, books to extend their mental horizon, books to widen their range of consciousness, so that they can live fuller and more meaningful lives.

To achieve sustainable human development requires people who are literates and are able to think critically and analytically. The developing world is now more than ever aware of the value of universal literacy as a link between culture and development and

as an instrument to equip its citizens with skills and knowledge required for development. Reading is a key to development. Obanya (2003) postulates that “to ensure that reading thrives in Africa, concerted action would be required in three main areas namely: improvement in the social and reading infrastructure; promotion of reading across the school curriculum and development of reading extension services”. Interest in reading, states King (1994) develops with the skills and abilities of learning to read, and is generally proportionate to the meaning one receives from reading.

According to Apronti (2003) certain conditions must be satisfied if reading for enjoyment is to flourish in any society. The first is that the people must be literate enough to view reading not as a chore or punishment but as a source of pleasure.

The second is that they must have leisure. The third is that they should have easy access to suitable reading materials. The fourth is that their leisure periods should coincide with the availability of optimal physical features for reading.

In order to encourage children to read many of the social and economic factors militating against reading should be removed. Reading itself should be seen as something worthwhile and inviting. Teachers can encourage pupils to keep a records of what they have read and discuss their readings with them. They can even recommend books which they have read as children and enjoyed to their pupils. Sometimes a child's desire to read a book arises from a special relationship with a particular teacher.

According to Afenyo (1999) language is an important factor in forming reading habits because it is medium through which one expresses his thoughts. In Africa, one major



factor in acquiring habits is the difficulty of transferring one's understanding and thinking into another language. Alemna (1982) attributes the poor reading habit to the difficulty of an individual socialising into the oral medium of communication transferring to the reading medium. High cost of books is an inhibiting factor that prevents children from reading books to enrich their vocabulary. Governments should seriously consider subsidizing the publication of all children's books and not just textbooks alone.

Igun (1984) writing on the reading habits of the students of the University of Maidiguri, Nigeria stated that most of the students did not buy the relevant books for reading on their courses. It can be deduced from this state of affairs that the students may not be interested in reading. This confirms the assertion by Bengé (1970) that reading is foreign to and unappreciated by the traditional African, who regards it as an anti-social activity. However, the students refusal to buy books relevant to their courses may be due to poverty.

In most part of Africa reading is perceived as an academic exercise and a means to pass examinations. In Kenya for example, reading was for a long time closely linked to textbooks with reading being taught as a perfunctory skill to be employed only in school time pursuits, many institutions, still do not have functional libraries or sufficient budget to acquire books. It is therefore necessary to create awareness on the importance of reading for leisure and not necessarily to pass examinations, and the need to develop reading as a skill that should be inculcated from a younger age and nurtured into habit and culture. It is against this background that the Mobile Reading Tent concept is being used in Kenya. The Reading Tent is an old concept but a new

approach for promoting reading and enhancing literacy in both the rural and urban poor communities in most parts of the world.

The Reading Tent is an old concept but a new approach for promoting reading and enhancing literacy in both the rural and urban poor communities in most parts of the world. According to Makenzi et al (2003) the Reading Tent approach focuses mainly on promoting reading for leisure and making books and other reading materials accessible to children in areas that lack adequate library services. The Reading Tent approach is an outreach tool that is being used to promote reading, stimulate a desire and love for reading, develop reading skill and a reading culture among children. A research conducted has also revealed that Africans in general do not read much. A survey conducted by Ogunrombi (1998) on the reading habits of secondary school students in Ogbomoso in Nigeria highlights the following inhibiting factors: the family background of students where few homes are conducive to reading owing to noise and lack of reading materials: the lack functional libraries in most of the schools surveyed and a similar lack of trained librarians or teacher librarians: the failure to provide library books in schools: and shortage of equipment and resources for teaching reading skills.

As rightly observed by Fayose (2003) the incentives for reading in Nigeria are purely “mercenary” namely to pass an examination and thereby possess a certificate which can fetch a good job. Most Nigerians therefore see books and reading as a means to an end. The situation was aptly described by Iziren (2004) in these words: “it is disturbing that in our country most people go to libraries to study for examinations. The man who after passing his examinations and still frequents libraries to read for

pleasure or intellectual enrichment is seen as an extraordinary man who has little else to do”.

Djoleto (1980) maintains that ‘education practices in Africa today are such that they practically do not develop in the individual the habit of reading. This creates serious problems for the first cycle school leavers who are the bulk products of the formal school education system. Indeed, the majority revert to illiteracy in no time for want of use and back up. Most of which only the book, through reading, can provide.

A questionnaire was administered to 600 secondary school students from ten schools in Ogbomosho South and North Local Government Areas in July, 1992. The questionnaire sought information on the literacy background of parents. 204 or 34% of the respondents fathers were illiterates, whilst 396 or 66% indicated that their fathers were literates. On the other hand, 329 or 54% reported that their mothers were illiterates. Of the respondents’ fathers and mothers, 14.8% and 10.7% respectively had university education while only 11.2% of the respondents have libraries in their homes. The observed trend indicated that the parents of the respondents have not cultivated the book-buying habit, evidence of low interest in reading. This finding confirms the observation of Antwi (1985) and Fayose (2003) that many children in Nigeria do not come from book-reading homes (Ogunrombi and Adio, 1998).

An interview was conducted on 300 junior secondary school pupils at a school in the former Ga District of Greater Region where the researcher was a teacher in 1998. The interview sought information on pupils who read story books at home and those who went to libraries to read. 165 or 53% of the respondents did not read story books at home, while 135 or 47% indicated that they read story books at home. On attendance

to libraries, 88 or 29% went to libraries to read, 212 or 71% did not visit libraries. Half of the parents of children in public schools in Ghana are either traders or farmers who live in rented apartments which are over-crowded with large families and therefore not conducive to reading. The competition for space does not allow for home libraries. This indicates that these groups of parents have not fully realised the importance of books to the education of their children. Most of the parents as reported by their children, would like to see them work in their shops or on their farms after school hours every day (GNAT NEWSLETTER VOL.8 NO.4, 1998). The attitude of parents and other adults to children who are making efforts to read is very important in helping them to form reading habit. Infact, in some homes children who make concerted efforts to read are often scolded and branded as lazy (Ghana National Commission on Children Newsletter vol.3 no.4, 2002)

For economic reasons child labour predominates in Africa. In most cities and big towns children are seen hawking on streets. Many young children go on hunting and fishing expeditions at the peril of their lives. These activities not only take time but sap the energy of the affected children and consequently militate against the cultivation of reading habits.

Many homes in the Sub region are crowded, noisy and poorly lit. Busia (1950) stated categorically that many homes in rural Sub-Saharan Africa lack regular power supply. He further contended that this leads to reading with hurricane lanterns, an unpleasurable way to read as a result of the accompanying heat and perspiration. Certainly, this does not promote the development and sustenance of good reading habits.

Appiah (2002) suggested that parents should provide reading spaces in their homes for children to read. They should desist from overworking children so that they will have energy for their private studies. In addition, parents and other adults should set a good example not only by reading themselves but also providing reading materials as well as the time for reading.

On this point, Bengé (1970) rightly points out that although these factors help to account for why those who are handicapped by such problems have low interest in reading, it does not account for why those who are not handicapped by these problems also have low reading interests. Therefore one must look for other factors.

### **2.3 ROLE OF MASS MEDIA**

Radio, TV, Newspapers and Magazines can help advertise reading projects. Village libraries, seminars, training workshops, interviews of reading authorities/writers/teachers and organizations involved in reading activities to promote reading, hence the help of these media personnel will be sought.

Becker (1972) suggests that teachers make a special effort to recognize the television interests of their students by preparing reading and writing activities and materials for use in the classroom that are related to television viewing. In addition to helping parents understand the effects of television, they can be encouraged to limit the amount of time their children watch it and to help them learn to choose programmes with care.

## **2.4 ROLE OF LIBRARIES, LIBRARIANS, LIBRARY PROGRAMMES**

Libraries are meant to stimulate and develop the reading interest. The following are some of the roles which libraries and librarians play in the promotion of reading habits.

1. School libraries are in a key position to participate in this promotion and should use every opportunity to make books and other reading materials available to students, teachers, parents and all those who can influence young people in their acquisition of reading habits and reading styles. According to Hannesdottir ((2000) "it is a known fact that reading habits are formed when children are quite young. It is also known that reading habits are formed through modelling, through encouragement and through the sheer fun of encountering ideas found in books".
- 2 The pleasant and positive attitude of the reader should be developed first before someone is able automatically form the habit of reading and the love for books.
3. The principal function of the librarian is to serve the course of education formally or informally. When we think of the librarian's role in education, we think first of books and what he or she does with books.
4. Librarians have a responsibility and an opportunity to go out and tell the public what they have in their libraries and find out what they want to read, improve and keep improving the set-up of the library to encourage readers to stay and browse.
5. In any effective school library programme, the librarian should have definite responsibilities in certain areas of the curriculum and should have an active teaching role. But this role must always be coordinated with what is taking place in the classroom. With his or her wide knowledge of materials and techniques for using them, the librarian can make a strong partner in the planning and implementing of the educational enterprise.

6. School librarians are in a key position to provide material to fulfil a variety of purposes and this is best done through systematic approach and planned action. They work with both teachers and children and talk about books with them. They can be a major factor in promoting the use of library and its many purposes, not only related to the academic aspects of studies but also for experience, for skills development and for enjoyment.

Connor (1990) postulates “for the school library and the school librarian to be effective in their role as instigators in the improvement of literacy skills within the school, there are several prerequisites. There are generally four basic components of a good school library programme: a good, balanced collection, a reasonably spacious and conveniently located library; a knowledgeable person in charge of the services and a broad programme of activities and services aimed at the whole school. Jinks (1994) suggest that the librarian must be a friend of the children; must enjoy their company, and enjoy working with them and satisfying their information needs.

Smith and Robinson (1980) view reading as an active attempt on the part of the reader to understand a writer’s message. Emerging here are two essential issues in learning how to read. The first issue involves learning to correlate speech sounds of the language to the written symbols used to present the speech sounds. The second issue entails more sophisticated abilities of analysing, reasoning, thinking, imagining, and judging as one reads. These activities require good knowledge of syntax or language structure as well as semantics.

According to Gray (1999) all nations of the world have developed the awareness of the importance of literacy as a factor in promoting individual welfare and social progress and as a means of improving international understanding. Reading is the means to success in all academic endeavours and personal satisfaction.

King (1990) states that reading is an intellectually demanding mental energy. It contributes in a special way to the broadening of our human experience, our self knowledge and horizon. The home environment influences reading habits. Vernon (1961) in his study of backwardness in reading, states that the child from a rich home has greater cultural advantages over the child from the poor home. The child is provided with books and the environment at home is conducive to reading. The parents stimulate and encourage him/her to learn to read. Conversely the child from the poor home lives in a crowded home where light is poorly lit. Noise is an inhibiting factor to reading.

The rate of literacy of a nation indicates its level of development. Dowuona (1970) comments that, the advancement of mankind has been made possible in the way it is today because of the means of communication provided by books.

Addo (1964) on his part states that many Ghanaians are not interested in reading widely. He blames this phenomenon on the inadequacies of the Ghanaian educational system which do not inculcate and nurture the reading habit into children. He decries the absence of professionally trained teachers for reading in our schools.



## **2.5 ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN HELPING LIBRARIES CONDUCT READING PROMOTION**

The task of encouraging positive reading interest to foster a love for reading which will promote a reading culture and society is not an easy one. All parties concerned, national institutes or private sectors should work together. All efforts should be coordinated to achieve the goal.

## **2.6 ROLE OF THE FAMILY**

Kalapinski (1995) asserts that the family has an important role in forming the world view of pupils through conversations with parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers. However, in real life the relationship between children and parents are quite different. Many parents are occupied with their own problems and have very little time for children. Many families hold the point of view that the school has the main responsibility to educate students and prepare them to lead independent lives. This is erroneous. Parents must realize that the basic formation of the individual takes place within the family circle. Parents are clearly important socializing agents. Parents who spend time reading to their children give them the best possible start on the road to literacy. Many research studies have pointed out that children who do well in literacy skills at school are those who come from homes where children see their parents and older siblings engage in reading activities.

## **2.7 ROLE OF PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SECTORS IN HELPING LIBRARIES CONDUCT READING SOCIETY**

The Professional sectors or agencies play important roles to elevate standards of library services through activities which aim to develop or to encourage activities of

reading and writing. Some of these agencies are: The National Language and Literature Agency; National Book Development Council; Reading Association; Library Association; Writer's Association; Parent Teacher Association and Women's Association etc.

The Children's Literature Foundation is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that encourages the production and use of good quality books for children. It organizes by encouraging publishers through the award for excellence the illustration of children's picture books or biennial awards for outstanding children's picture story books. The award is called Toyota Cliff biennial awards. It is awarded every two years. It also organises Book Fairs where children are exposed to locally-produced story books and encouraged to purchase them for their own use. It also organizes workshops for teachers on how to encourage reading among children. Membership comprises educators, parents, authors, reviewers, librarians and all concerned individuals and organizations.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY, DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA**

#### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the research design, population and sampling technique, research instrument, data collection procedure, a profile of two schools and data analysis and presentation.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This is a descriptive study designed to find out the reading habits of children in private and public schools using the Prince of Peace Academy, Madina to represent private schools and the Madina Estate J.S.S to represent public schools. The questionnaire method was used to carry out the research because it is more convenient and relatively cheaper. The findings of the children of the Prince of Peace Academy was used to represent the entire population of children of private schools and those of the Estate J.S.S. was used to represent the children of public schools.

The reason for using a sample to represent the population was to minimize cost and save time. A properly selected sample can therefore do for the entire population what a sip of soup does for the entire soup (Kwabia, 2005:1). Previous studies on reading habits carried out by Whitehead (1977), Amaral (1992), Grearey (1986) used this method, finding it to be adequate to gather similar information and data.

#### **3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Two categories of schools were researched into-private schools and public schools. The simple random sampling technique or representative sampling technique was adopted for the research. This method ensured that every individual in the population

had a chance to be included in the sample selected. It is employed in the selection of all the other probability samples. A major requirement for the use of the simple random method on its own is that the population should be homogeneous. According to Peil (1995) the elements which make up the population should be identical, either by living together in a defined territory or having a common nationality. Children from the two schools under study fall between thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) years of age. Also both schools are located at Madina and are in close proximity of each other. This enables research work to be effectively carried out by the researcher. The researcher considered the entire student population of the two schools as one unit and then took a sample population of two classrooms of the two schools. Fifty pupils were sampled in each school giving a total sample size of 100. Class sizes were equal in the two schools.

### **3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

A questionnaire was distributed to the pupils of the two selected schools to solicit their views. This method is the easiest and the most preferred because the pupils were at ease when answering the questions. Bell (1993) postulated that research instruments are the tools that enable the researcher to gather data. The questionnaire method is preferred to the interview schedule because the former saves time. The interview method takes a longer time because it is inconceivable to interview hundred (100) people in a day. The questions were either structured (closed ended) or unstructured (open ended). The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A is on social characteristics; section B is on reading habits; section C focused on effects of television; section D is on the use of school library and finally section E is on the use of other libraries.



The unstructured or open ended questions allowed the respondents to express themselves freely by providing their own answers. The structured or closed ended questions on the other hand required specific answers from respondents.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The researcher administered the questionnaire herself. She introduced herself to the school authorities and told them the purpose of her visit. The J.S.S. 2 teachers of the two schools assisted her to distribute the questionnaire to the pupils.

The researcher explained the questions and the mode of answering them. She told them to answer the questions independently since they would not enter into direct contact with her. She told them to express their views freely without any inhibitions. More importantly, they would not write their names on the questionnaire. Some of the responses demanded “yes” or “no” answers but in some cases a brief explanation was required. The questions were based solely on reading. Each pupil was expected to answer all the questions in fifteen minutes although some used between twenty and twenty five minutes. Hundred questionnaires were collected by the researcher.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Responses from the data were statically analyzed and interpreted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) into frequencies with the corresponding percentages and tables to illustrate the result of the study. The aim of the study is to compare reading habits of pupils in public schools and private schools and to find out why those from the private schools perform better in both spoken and written English. Findings from the study were made available to the appropriate authorities for the necessary action to be taken.

### **3.6 PROFILE OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE ACADEMY, MADINA**

The Prince of Peace Academy was founded in 1971 at Akosombo junction in Madina. It started as a primary and a nursery school. The school was moved to its present site in 1973, about two hundred metres from Accra Teachers Training College. The Junior Secondary School Department was introduced in 1987. The school is counted among the best private schools in the former Ga District of the Greater Accra Region. It has produced illustrious sons and daughters who are in responsible positions in the country. Present enrolment stands at four hundred and seventy eight pupils made up of two hundred and fifty males and two hundred and thirty eight females. The staff strength is made up of eight females and fourteen males. Although the school is privately owned there is a Head Teacher to steer the affairs of the school. He is charge of both administration and academic affairs of the school. The teachers are directly under the Head Teacher and not the Proprietress of the school. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is very active and has initiated a lot of projects in the school. In the nursery department the ages of the children range between three and five years; in the primary department the ages range between six and twelve years, whereas in the J.S.S. department the children are between thirteen and sixteen years old.

### **3.7 PROFILE OF MADINA ESTATE JUNIOR SECONDARY**

Madina Estate Junior Secondary School, formerly known as Madina Estate D/C Primary and Middle School was established on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1975. The school was established primarily to cater for the children of the inhabitants whose buildings were demolished and resettled at Madina Low-Cost Estate Houses, due to the Nima-Mamobi Highway Project. The children who came to the school were in classes 1-6, and came with only exercise books without any textbooks as the rule demanded.

Current population of the school stands at four hundred and fifteen (415) - two hundred and thirty (230) are females and one hundred and eighty five males. Like most public junior secondary schools, females outnumber males. The staff strength is fourteen (14). The school no longer operates the shift system. Due to the high population all the classes have two streams. A Head teacher is in charge of the administration of the school assisted by an assistant Head teacher.

The Parent teacher Association (PTA) of the school is not vibrant. School Management Committees (SMC) have been tasked to get involved in the day to activities of public schools. The SMC's are made up of opinion leaders and stakeholders of the communities. The SMC in charge of Madina Estate Primary and J.S.S. is not functional. Furthermore, the Estate community does not play any role in the administration of the school.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULT**

Data analysis and presentation deal solely with the analysis and presentation of data gathered with the aid of the research instrument. Data gathered from the respondents were analyzed and used as the basis of the findings of the research. The respondents in the study were pupils of the Prince of Peace Academy, Madina and the Madina Estate Junior Secondary School. The aim of the study is to find out the reading habits of children in private and public schools.

### 3.9 DEMOGRAPHIC AND OTHER BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

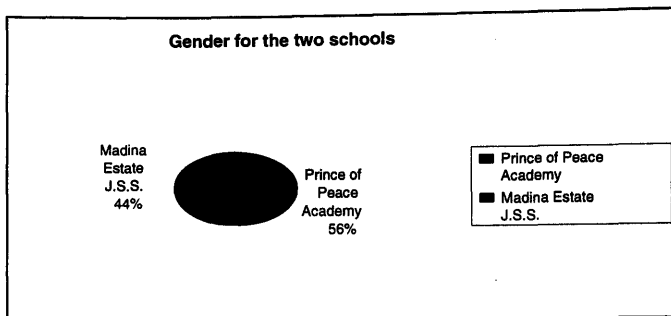
It is common knowledge that parent's educational background can to a large extent influence the reading habits of children. Consequently, information on parent's occupation and level of education was sought. Sex and age of respondents were initially sought before information on parents was sought.

**Table 1 a. GENDER OF RESPONDENTS**

Gender	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Male	29	23	29	23
Female	21	27	21	27
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

Table 1a shows the gender distribution of respondents. Out of the 100 children who responded there were 52 males and forty eight females. At the Prince of Peace Academy, the fifty respondents were made up of 29 males and 21 females. The respondents from Madina Estate J.S.S. were 23 males and 27 females. Like most public first cycle schools in Ghana, the female population outnumber that of males at the Estate J.S.S.

**Table 1a GENDER DISTRIBUTION**



**3.10 Table 1b Age Distribution**

AGE	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
12-13	11	3	11	13
14-15	35	26	35	26
16-17	4	21	4	21
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

The result of Table 1b shows that majority of the respondents in both schools are between 14 and 15 years. At the Prince of Peace Academy, only 4 of the respondents constituting 4% of the total sample are between 16 and 17 years, whereas 21 respondents constituting 21% of the total sample from the Madina Estate J.S.S. fall within the same age group. Fourteen respondent from both schools fall between 12 and 13 years of age.

**3.11 Table 2 FATHERS' OCCUPATION**

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Government Employee	25	15	25	15
Self employed	12	18	12	18
Farming	2	5	2	5
Soldier	0	5	0	5
Others	11	7	11	7
Total	50	50	100.0	

In Table 2 the occupations of the respondents' fathers are diverse. It is an undeniable fact that a parent's occupation can influence a child's reading habits. In most cases, a teacher spends time with his or her child at home teaching him/her to read and write. A shopkeeper on the other spends a greater part of his/her time in the shop and comes home very late, sometimes deep in the night. He/she hardly has time for the child. Majority of the respondents from both schools have fathers who are government employees. They constitute 40% of the total sample. 30% of the respondents have fathers who are self employed. Only 7% of them have fathers who are engaged in farming activities. This implies that the seven farmers are away from Accra for a greater part of the time since no serious farming activities go on in Accra. 5% of the respondents from the Estate J.S.S. have fathers who are soldiers. However, 18 children who constitute 18% of the respondents have fathers who are engaged in miscellaneous activities such as pastors, health consultants, security men and herbalists.

**3.12 TABLE 3 MOTHERS' OCCUPATION**

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Trader	18	35	18	35
Government employee	23	7	23	7
Hairdresser	2	4	2	4
Seamstress	3	1	3	1
Others	4	3	4	3
Total	50	50	50	50
				100.0

The results in Table 3 indicate that majority of the mothers of the respondents are engaged in trading of some sort. They constitute 53% of the total sample. Government employees also account for 30% of the total sample. Only 10% of the respondents from the two schools have mothers who are hairdressers and seamstresses. Other miscellaneous occupations such as midwives, caterers and bakers constitute 7% of the total sample.

**3.13 Table 4 FATHERS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION**

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Elementary School	5	14	5	14
Secondary School	15	18	15	18
Teachers Training College	8	8	8	8
Technical/Vocational Education	7	5	7	5
University degree	15	5	15	5
Others (please specify)	0	0	0	0
Total	50	50	50	50
				100.0

As can be seen from the above table none of the respondents has an illiterate father. Their fathers have had education in one way or the other. It is a truth universally acknowledged that educated parents know the value of education. It is therefore expected that these parents would encourage their children to read at home and in school. However, some educated parents have not fully realized the importance of books to the education of their children. Nineteen respondents from the two schools have fathers who acquired elementary school education. Secondary school education constitutes 33% of the total sample. 16 or 16% of the respondents have fathers who are Teacher Training College graduates. Technical/Vocational education constitutes 12% of the total sample whereas 20 or 20% of the respondents have fathers who are University graduates.

**3.14 Table 5 MOTHERS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION**

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S	Prince Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Elementary School	7	20	7	20
Secondary School	13	14	13	14
Teachers Training College	10	8	10	8
Technical/Vocational Education	7	3	7	3
University degree	11	5	11	5
Others (please specify)	0	0	0	0
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

Twenty seven children representing 27% of the total sample have mothers who attained elementary school education. As in table 4 none of the respondents has an



illiterate mother. Secondary school education account for 27% of the total sample. Eighteen children from the two schools have mothers who are Teacher Training College graduates. Mothers with Technical/Vocational education account for 10% of the total sample. As for University degree, sixteen children from the two schools have mothers who have attained that level of education. Two respondents from the Prince of Peace Academy have mothers who attended Ghana Institute of Journalism and Nurses Training College.

**3.15 Table 6 LIVING WITH REAL PARENTS**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Do you live with your real parents?				
Yes	41	30	41	30
No	9	20	9	20
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

As to whether the respondents live with their real parents, 71 of them constituting 71% of the total sample live with their real or biological parents whereas 29 of them do not live with their biological parents. Children who do not live with their real parents are often occupied with household chores. They also sell on the streets to supplement the family's income. They also run errands for the family. The lucky ones are sent to school by their benefactors to acquire basic education. Incidentally the two schools that are being researched into are in the Ga District. A whopping twenty out of the fifty respondents from the Estate J.S.S. do not live with their real parents.

**3.16 SECTION B TABLE 7 READING HABITS OF RESPONDENTS**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Do you read story books at home?				
Yes	37	31	37	31
No	13	19	13	19
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

As Table 7 indicated, 68 children or 68% of the total sample read story books at home whereas 32 children do not read story books at home. Out of the 32 respondents who do not read story books at home, 13 said that they did not have time to read story books at home. They are preoccupied with household chores and so there is no time to read story books. Some children also help parents in their shops. Six of the respondents representing 6% of the total sample have no story books to read at home. This confirms the assertion by Appiah (2002) that parents and other adults should set a good example not only by reading themselves but also by providing reading materials as well as the time for reading.

Five of the respondents said they were not interested in reading whereas eight respondents or 8% of the total sample preferred reading their textbooks and notes to story books.

**3.17 Table 8: NUMBER OF BOOKS READ IN THE TERM**

BOOKS READ IN THE TERM	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
None	10	19	10	19
1-5	21	13	21	13
6-10	16	10	16	10
11-14	3	8	3	8
			50	50
Total	50	50	100.0	

It can be seen from Table 8 that 29% of the respondents had not read any book this term. It might be due to either lack of books to read or lack of interest. This is not encouraging. 34 respondents constituting 34% of the total sample had read between one and five books. Twenty six respondents had read between six and ten books and only 11% of the total sample had read between eleven and fourteen books.

**3.18 Table 9 READING MATERIALS**

Which reading materials do you read most?	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Newspapers	8	8	8	8
Magazines	6	4	6	4
Story books	22	16	22	16
Textbooks and note books	14	22	14	22
			50	50
Total	50	50	100.0	

Table 9 sought to know which reading materials the respondents read most. Only sixteen respondents read newspapers. That constitutes 16% of the total sample taken. The reading of magazines account for 10% of the total sample. Thirty eight children

or 38% of the respondents read story books. Reading of textbooks and notes books account for 36% of the total sample. The reading of story books is a healthy sign to improve upon their spoken English.

**3.19 Table 10 JUNIOR GRAPHIC**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Do you read Junior Graphic?				
Yes	40	29	40	29
No	10	21	10	21
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

As indicated in Table 10 sixty nine children constituting 69% of the total sample read Junior Graphic whereas 31 children representing 31% of the total sample do not read it. The thirty one respondents who do not read the newspaper gave diverse reasons to support their claims. Twelve of them said they did not have money to purchase it; another six also claimed they did not know where to purchase it ; seven children preferred reading their notes to Junior Graphic; five children, however, preferred reading their textbooks. Only one child said he/she was not interested in the newspaper.

**3.20 Table 11 HOME LIBRARY**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Do you have a library at home?				
Yes	18	5	18	5
No	32	45	32	45
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

As seen from Table 11 only twenty three children who responded to the questionnaire had libraries in their homes. A whopping 77% of them did not have libraries in their homes. This anomaly goes to prove the assertion by Busia (1950) and Alemna (1982) that in our African society, housing problems are acute and most homes are overcrowded, making it impossible for people to engage in any meaningful studies.

### 3.21 Table 12 READING MATERIALS

Who supplies you with reading materials?	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
My parents	18	12	18	12
Friends	10	19	10	19
I borrow from libraries	10	6	12	6
I buy them	12	13	12	13
Total	50	50	100.0	

From the Table above, thirty of the total respondents said their parents supplied them with reading materials. Twenty nine said their friends supplied them with reading materials. Borrowing reading materials from libraries account for 16% of the total sample. On the other hand twenty five (25%) respondents said they bought reading materials themselves.

**3.22 TABLE 13 READING**

	FREQUENCY			PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.		Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Why do you read books?					
To pass examinations	12	13		12	13
For pleasure	3	6		3	6
To enable me speak good English	24	23		24	23
Others (pls.specify)	11	8		11	8
				50	50
Total	50	50		100.0	

Twenty (25%) of the respondents on Table 13 claimed they read books in order to pass examinations. Only 9% of them said they read for pleasure. Majority said they read books to enable them speak good English. That accounted for 47% of the respondents. However, 19 respondents read books for reasons other than what is stated in table 13.

**3.23 TABLE 14 EFFECTS OF TELEVISION**

	FREQUENCY			PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.		Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Do you have a television set at home?					
Yes	44	40		44	40
No	6	10		6	10
				50	50
Total	50	50		100.0	

From Table 14 it was clear that majority of the respondents had television sets at home. They constitute 84% of the total sample. Only 16% of the respondents did not have television sets at home.

**3.24 TABLE 15 WATCHING TELEVISION**

How many hours do you watch television everyday?	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
1 hour	7	8	7	8
2 hours	12	14	12	14
3 hours	18	18	18	18
4 hours	13	10	13	10
			50	50
Total	50	50	100.0	

From the Table 15, eighty four respondents indicated that they have television sets at home out of the total sample. Fifteen of them represent 15% of the total sample watched television everyday at home for an hour. Twenty six of them, constituting 26% of the total sample watched television everyday for two hours. Surprisingly, 36% of the respondents watched television daily for 3 hours at the expense of their books. This is not good enough. Worse still, 23% of the respondents watched television daily for 4 hours. Television viewing is one of the major causes of poor reading habits of children. They spend a greater part of their time watching television at the expense of their books.

**3.25 TABLE 16 FAVOURITE TELEVISION PROGRAMMES**

What are your favourite television programmes?	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Sports	11	11	11	11
News	0	1	0	1
Cartoons	8	8	8	8
Movies	17	14	17	14
Children's channel	12	13	12	13
Distance Learning	2	3	2	3
			50	50
Total	50	50	100.0	

The respondents stated their favourite television programmes in Table 16. whereas 22% of them had sports as their favourite television programmes. Only 1% preferred news to sports. For cartoons only sixteen of the respondents representing 16% of the total sample considered it as their favourite television programmes. Movies topped the list with 31% of the total sample. Children's channel and Distance Learning accounted for 25% and 5% respectively of the total sample.

**3.26 TABLE 17 BOOKS AND TELEVISION**

Which one do you like better?	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Reading books	32	29	32	29
Watching television	18	21	18	21
			50	50
Total	50	50	100.0	



As indicated in Table 17, 61% of the respondents enjoyed reading books rather than watching television. Consequently, 39% enjoy watching television rather than reading books. Various reasons were given for their answers.

**3.27 TABLE 18 USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Does your school have a library?				
Yes	44	40	44	40
No	6	10	6	10
			50	50
Total	50	50	100.0	

The Madina Estate J.S.S. does not have a school library; consequently questions on Tables 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 do not apply to the respondents from the school.

Table 18 indicated that 50 of the respondents had a library in their school, whereas the other 50 respondents did not have any. This state of affairs will certainly not augur well for them as they cannot do any effective reading in school. Back in their homes, household chores and other activities will prevent these children from reading. Most of the parents as reported by their children, would like to see them work in their shops, or on their farms after school hours everyday (GNAT Newsletter 1998).

**3.28 TABLE 19 STATE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Is the library well stocked with books?				
Yes	26	0	26	0
No	24	0	24	0
			50	0
Total	50	0		

Out of the fifty respondents who had a library in their school, twenty six said their school library was well stocked with books. On the contrary, twenty four of the respondents thought otherwise. They claimed the books were very old and of no relevance to their academic work.

**3.29 TABLE 20 BORROWING BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY**

How many books have you borrowed from the library?	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
None	22	0	22	0
1-2	14	0	14	0
3-4	10	0	10	0
5-6	4	0	4	0
Total	50	0	50	0

The questionnaire required the respondents to indicate the number of books they had borrowed from the school library this term. Out of the fifty respondents who had a school library, twenty two said they had not borrowed any book this term. Fourteen of the respondents, however, had borrowed between one and two books; ten had borrowed between three and four books and only four had borrowed between five and six books.

**3.30 TABLE 21 READING BORROWED BOOKS**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Do you actually read the books you borrow from the library?				
Yes	38	0	38	0
No	12	0	12	0
Total	50		50	0

As shown in Table 21, 38% of the total sample of respondents read books they borrowed from their school library, whereas 12 of them did not. They only borrowed the books for the sake of borrowing. At the 65<sup>th</sup> IFLA Councils and General Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand in 1999, it was realised that the number of those who know how to read but do not read enough is alarming (A report on the 65<sup>th</sup> IFLA Councils and General Conference, Bangkok, Thailand in 1999).

**3.31 TABLE 22 ENCOURAGEMENT**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Does your English teacher encourage you to read more books in the library?				
Yes	50	0	50	0
Sometimes	0	0	0	0
Total	50		50	0

The questionnaire sought to find out from the respondents if their English teacher encouraged them to read more books in the library. They all replied in the affirmative. This is a positive development in the promotion of reading habits among children.

**3.32 TABLE 23 SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE READING MATERIALS**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Does he/she accompany you to the library and help you select the appropriate reading materials?				
Yes	24	0	24	0
Sometimes	26	0	26	0
Total	50		50	0

It can be seen from Table 23 that 24 out of the 50 respondents who had a school library said their English teacher accompanied them to the library and help them select the appropriate reading materials. Twenty six respondents on the other hand claimed that the English teacher did that sometimes.

**3.33 TABLE 24 READING IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
How often do you go to read?				
Once a week	35	0	35	0
Once a month	11	0	11	0
Once a term	4	0	4	0
I do not go there at all	0	0	0	0
Total	50	0	50	0

The questionnaire required the respondents to indicate the number of times they visited the library in a term. As Table 24 indicates, 35 respondents visited the library once a week; 11 visited the library once a month, whereas 4 respondents went there only once in a term. Although some of the respondents claimed in Table 19 that most of the books in the school library were very old and were of no relevance to their

academic work, they all went there either to read their notes or to read their textbooks.

Some also went there to do their assignments.

**3.34 TABLE 25: USE OF OTHER LIBRARIES**

Have you registered with other libraries?	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Yes	32	25	32	25
No	18	25	18	25
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

As indicated in Table 25, fifty seven of the respondents from the two schools had registered with other libraries. Forty three on the other hand had not registered with any library. Out of the fifty seven respondents who had registered with other libraries, forty three of them had registered with the Ghana Book Trust Library which is in close proximity with the two schools. Four respondents had registered with the Ghana Library Board; 6% of the respondents claimed they had registered with the Alliance Francaise Library. Of the forty three respondents who had not registered with any library, fifteen of them attributed that to lack of time on their part; seventeen of them claimed they had no money for registration. Long distance accounted for the failure of four of the respondents to register with other libraries. Fear of misplacement of reading materials had prevented two respondents from registering with other libraries. Five of the respondents, however, claimed they had enough books at home.

**3.35 TABLE 26 READING MATERIALS**

	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE (%)	
	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.	Prince of Peace Academy	Madina Estate J.S.S.
Is the library well-stocked with reading materials?				
Yes	32	25	32	25
No	18	25	18	25
Total	50	50	50	50
			100.0	

In Table 26, the questionnaire sought to find out from the respondents whether the libraries they had registered with were well stocked with reading materials. They all replied in the affirmative. This is in contrast to the general notion held by many people that libraries in Ghana are not well stocked with reading materials.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study is on the reading habits of children in private and public schools. A comparative study of the Prince of Peace Academy, Madina and the Madina Estate Junior Secondary School. The questionnaire method was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was used because it is cheaper and it saves time.

The information obtained constituted the basis for the analysis and presentation of data. The researcher herself with the aid of teachers from the two schools distributed the questionnaires and the children used between 15 and 30 minutes to respond to the questionnaire. The study sought to find out factors militating against reading habits of the children from the two schools, how those problems could be overcome and suggestions have been put in place to remedy the situation. This chapter seeks to summarise the findings of the results obtained from the respondents, draw conclusions from the findings and make recommendations to the appropriate authorities.

#### **4.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

1. Analysis of the data revealed that the parents of the respondents had diverse educational backgrounds.
2. Contrary to public opinion that children from public schools have illiterate parents, the study revealed that all the parents of the respondents have had education of some sort.
3. Not all the respondents lived with their biological parents. This anomaly leads to a situation where household chores prevent the children from reading.

4. The Estate J.S.S. has no library but some of the children have registered with other libraries which are well-stocked with reading materials
5. The children from the Prince of Peace Academy claimed that their school library is replete with old and outdated books.
6. Some of the children borrowed books from the library without reading them.
7. Television viewing is partly responsible for the poor reading habits of the children. They spend a lot of time at home watching television at the expense of their books.
8. Having private libraries at home is alien to the children.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a parent's occupation and level of education can influence a child's reading habits. There is a positive correlation between a parent's educational level and the child's reading habits. All the parents of the respondents have had education of some sort although the children from the Prince of Peace Academy have parents who are more educated. None of the respondents has parents who are stark illiterates contrary to the general notion that children from public schools have parents who are illiterates. The trend is gradually changing. It is generally believed that reading is not a widespread practice in Africa.

This assertion is not entirely true because more than half of the respondents sampled have read quite a number of books this term although a few of them stated that household chores prevented them from doing so. Only a sizeable number of the respondent attributed poverty to their failure to buy Junior Graphic and read. The number of children who read the newspapers, however, is encouraging. They should keep that habit up.



Television viewing greatly accounts for the poor reading habits of the school children. More than half of the respondents have television sets at home and they spend a greater part of their time watching television at the expense of their books. Although some of the television programmes are educative, majority of the respondents prefer watching programmes that are of no relevance to their academic work. Though the game of football has become a favourite pastime all over the world, watching it excessively on television can never help a child broaden his or her horizon or acquire new knowledge. Parents are therefore entreated to reduce the number of hours their wards watch television at home. They should rather encourage them to read books that will help them acquire more knowledge and keep them abreast with events.

On the use of the school library, the Madina Estate J.S.S. has none. This is not good enough for both the children and the teachers. Consequently, the children are denied private reading in school and the teachers cannot read to refresh their minds. Back in their homes, household chores and other activities will preoccupy these children. Lack of library in the Estate J.S.S. should be viewed as a matter of grave concern. Most public first cycle schools in the country do not have libraries. It is a great disincentive for the children to engage in any meaningful reading activities. Little wonder that children from private schools are more fluent in both spoken and written English than their counterparts in public schools. On the use of other libraries, only half of the respondents have registered with other libraries. The lack of library at the Estate J.S.S. is partly attributable to this state of affairs,

Many of them are yet to see and know the benefits of a school library. They have been denied the right to information and to a large extent the right to acquisition of

knowledge. Their inability to register with other libraries is also due to the fact that they are not used to making use of libraries. Though the children from the Prince of Peace Academy have a school library, some of them claimed that most of the books were very old and were of no relevance to their academic work.

Despite this setback, the library serves other useful purposes. It provides a congenial atmosphere for reading. This fact is corroborated by the respondents who stated that they went to the library to do their homework, read their notes and their textbooks. Books, other than textbooks can be read for the acquisition of knowledge. A lawyer need not only confine himself/herself to law books. He/she should also read geography books to know a little about the earth's physical features and the people, plants and animals that live in different regions.

#### **4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Factors limiting reading habits in children have been identified and remedies have been enumerated to promote reading habits in children. The number of people who know how to read but do not read enough is increasing. There are but still some people, young and old, who cannot get access to reading activities and programmes. They neither have much initial interest nor lasting interest in books and reading. The reading habit has to be built up and promoted from an early age.

People should be motivated to read and informed about how to utilize reading materials to improve their own personality and their social environment.

The following points are worth noting:

1. There should be a vibrant book industry in Ghana owned by the state which would publish books at affordable prices to meet the pockets of the average

Ghanaian. The high cost of books is an inhibiting factor to reading. Supplementary readers should also be published and distributed to the schools to promote effective teaching and learning.

2. The state should also assist private publishing houses financially to enable them publish books which would be sold cheaply to school children.
3. The state should subsidize the publication of all children's books and not just textbooks alone.
4. Professionally trained teachers for reading should be sent to all first cycle schools.
5. Parents should endeavour to instil in their children the habit of buying and owing books for themselves. It is when children see their parents read that they are also motivated to read.
6. Well-equipped and well-stocked public libraries should be established in all big towns in the country and not only in regional and district capitals. In this context the role of non-governmental organizations, government sectors, libraries, schools and families are very important for mutual co-operation to promote reading habits to readers. The role of libraries is very important as libraries are very important institutions as information centres and life long educational agencies.
7. All schools from primary to tertiary level should have well-stocked libraries manned by professional librarians and library assistants.
8. The District Assemblies should take it upon themselves to build libraries in communities and stock them with reading materials. The libraries should be in close proximity to children since long distance will act as a demotivating factor. The Ministry of Education should enforce this.

9. In school, teachers should inculcate in the children the habit of reading and the schools should institute reading competitions among the children. Handsome prizes should be awarded to the winners. This should not be a nine day wonder but a termly affair. The award of prizes to the winners will motivate the other children to strive to read more. Essay competitions at the national and district levels are already in place but the schools can also institute internal reading competitions which will attract handsome prizes to be won by participants.
10. Inter schools reading competitions should also be instituted between schools.
11. Essay and reading competitions should be extended to the remotest villages to benefit rural school children.
12. Formation of Reading Clubs in schools should also be encouraged. It is from Reading Clubs that reading competitions can be sustained.
13. The Ghana Education Service should issue a directive to the effect that every first and second cycle school should have a library period on its time table during which the children will be compelled to go to the library and books distributed for them to read. They should also be given the privilege to borrow reading materials from these school libraries.
14. Individuals should develop small libraries in their homes. Reading enhances intellectual and emotional development. Libraries or studies influence reading habits and augment reading behaviour. People go to libraries to seek information and acquire knowledge to broaden their horizons.
15. The Ghana Education Service in collaboration with the Ministry of Information should introduce mobile library services to remote areas of the country.

16. The Ghana Library Association and the Ghana Library Board should open Book Clubs in the ten regions of the country.
17. Children's librarians ought to encourage reading promotion activities to encourage the children to read, love books and other information bearing resources and to develop information handling skills.
18. Problems affecting adversely the development of good reading habits must be totally removed and children made to see reading as a pleasure and not a chore.
19. Librarians and teachers should work together to develop children's interests in reading.

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**APPENDIX**

This questionnaire aims at finding out the reading habits of children in private and public schools. A comparative study of the Prince of Peace Academy, Madina and the Madina Estate Junior Secondary School. Kindly answer all the items in the questionnaire. This is in pursuit of M.A. programme at the University of Ghana Legon.

Please note that the information you provide will solely be for academic research purpose and will be treated as confidential.

**SECTION A**

**SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

**PLEASE TICK (✓) WHERE REQUIRED.**

- 1a. Sex                      Male                       Female
- 1b. Age                      -----
2. What is your father's occupation ? .....
3. What is your mother's occupation ? .....
4. What is your father's level of education?
- (i) Elementary School
- (ii) Secondary School
- (iii) Teacher Training College
- (iv) Technical/Vocational Education
- (v) University degree
- (vi) Others (please specify)
5. What is your mother's level of education?
- (i) Elementary School
- (ii) Secondary School
- (iii) Teacher Training College
- (iv) Technical/Vocational Education
- (v) University degree
- (vi) Others (please specify)
6. Do you live with your parents?    Yes        No

**SECTION B**  
**READING HABITS**

7. Do you read story books ?      Yes         No
8. If no, why.....
9. If yes, how many books have you read this term?.....
10. Which reading materials do you read most?
- (a) Newspapers
- (b) Magazines
- (c) Story books
- (d) Textbooks
11. Do you read Junior Graphic ?      Yes         No
12. If no, give reasons.....
- .....
13. Do you have a library at home?      Yes         No
14. Who supplies you with reading materials?
- (a) My parents
- (b) Friends
- (c) I borrow from Libraries
- (d) I buy them
15. Why do you read books?
- (a) To pass examinations
- (b) For pleasure
- (c) To enable me speak good English
- (d) Others (please specify)

**SECTION C**  
**EFFECTS OF TELEVISION**

16. Do you have television set at home?      Yes         No
17. If yes, how many hours do you watch television everyday?
- (a) 1 hour
- (b) 2 hours
- (c) 3 hours
- (d) 4 hours
18. Which one do you like better?

- (a) Reading books [ ]
- (b) Watching television [ ]

19. Give reason for your answer.....  
.....

20. What are your favourite television programmes?.....  
.....

21. Does your school have a library?    Yes [ ]    No [ ]

22. Is the library well stocked with books?    Yes [ ]    No [ ]

23. How many books have you borrowed from the library this term?  
.....

24. Do you actually read the books you borrow from the library?

Yes [ ]    No [ ]

25. Does your English teacher encourage you to read more books in the library?

Yes [ ]    No [ ]

26. Does he/she accompany you to the library and help you select the appropriate reading materials?    Yes [ ]    No [ ]

27. How often do you go to the school library to read?

(a) Once a week [ ]

(b) Once a month [ ]

(c) Once a term [ ]

(d) I do not go there at all [ ]

28. If d, give reasons.....  
.....

**SECTION E**  
**USE OF OTHER LIBRARIES**

29. Have you registered with other libraries other than your school library?

Yes  No

30. If yes, which library is it?.....

.....

31. If no, why? .....

32. Is the library well stocked with reading materials?

Yes  No

