

UTILISATION OF READING SKILLS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The study investigated the utilization of reading skills for the career development of lecturers in polytechnics in South West Nigeria. To guide this study, three research questions were raised and hypothesized. Correlational survey research design was adopted. The population consisted 121 lecturers in public polytechnics. The instrument that was used for data collection was a multiple-choice achievement test and a structured questionnaire. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the Kuder-Richardson formula (20) and Cronbach alpha statistics were used to ascertain the internal consistency with coefficients of 0.72 and 0.76 respectively. The research questions were answered by Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Simple Linear Regression was used to test hypothesis 1, while Fisher Z statistics was used to test hypotheses 2 and 3 at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that reading skills have a positive correlation with career development. It was recommended among others that OTM lecturers should develop reading skills to decode, learn more vocabulary, read fluently and comprehend materials for their promotion speed, remuneration growth and recognition in their career development.

Keywords: Reading skills, Decoding, Fluency, Comprehension and Career Development.

Introduction

Reading is an essential lifelong skill that students and lecturers need to develop. According to Al Roomy (2022), reading is a fundamental life skill that is required to think deeply and understand the text. It is the cornerstone for success and the opportunity for personal fulfilment and career growth. Reading is defined as the process of gaining knowledge or meaning from written words, sentences or paragraphs to understand the main idea. It is the ability to comprehend the meaning of words (Muhamad, Azmi, & Hassan, 2020). Effective reading requires using critical eyes to evaluate what is read, which is central to scholarly writing. Good readers turn out to be proficiently well-educated (Abdullahi & Rouyan, 2018; Lai, 2021). An effective reader can evaluate and develop critical reading skills. Reading requires lecturers to develop the skills to read critically and understand a text (Ogunye, 2018).

The correlation between reading skills, academic career development and success has been perceived by researchers (Ennis, 2018, Salameh, Salameh, & Al-Emami, 2019; Ozensoy, 2021). Every healthy individual, including lecturers, engage in career development (Agbetunde, 2017). Career development is the continuing, and formal efforts put in by an individual to advance in one's field or endeavour (Osibanjo, Oyewunmi, & Ojo 2014). Career development is beneficial to everyone including staff and their institutions (Farooq, 2015). Saleem and Amin (2013) looked at the impact of career development and maintained that it helps to build skills for the future, greater responsibilities, enhanced growth and promotion. According to Adeniji and Osibanjo (2012), the level of career development of an individual helps sweeten workers' skills. From the foregoing, one may say that lecturers who utilise reading skills excel in their careers and overcome the difficulties of reading.

For lecturers to attain the desired level of career development, appropriate utilisation of reading skills is of utmost importance. Attama (2013) defined utilization as the process of applying resources and putting them into practical use. The researcher stressed that the utilisation of any resource cum skills differs from

individual to individual based on their needs. Uhegbu (2007) saw utilisation as appropriately putting into use acquired resources. The researcher reiterated that the utilisation of reading skills means taking advantage of the skills that are available for reading purposes. In this study, utilisation is defined as any form of use that reading skills are put to. Utilisation implies some action of putting reading skills into practical use.

Improving reading skills helps to reduce unnecessary waste of time and enables a reader to be more focused. Deploying reading skills properly has been seen as an avenue to turn students and lecturers into critical readers who overcome textual difficulties (Kim, 2020). Developing critical reading skills enables a reader to establish the soundness of claims. It helps a reader to select relevant materials from scholarly write-ups. Reading skills improve reading abilities, which leads to scholarly works, resulting in career development (Kalayci & Humiston, 2015). The main benefit of acquiring reading skills is to interpret the text correctly (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). According to Al Roomy, (2022), developing reading skills plays a crucial role in students' ability to read critically for academic success.

Over the years, researchers and international bodies have at one time or another examined the benefits of reading techniques and approaches (University of Leicester, 2009; Keshav 2016; Abidin, 2021). Similarly, Khojah and Thomas (2021) affirmed that using diverse reading techniques have positive relationship with students' career success. Ogunye (2018) identified five reading techniques, which include scanning, skimming, light reading, word-by-word reading and study-type reading. Reading techniques may help Office Technology Management (OTM) lecturers to actively engage in reading and to make effective use of their time when reading.

Consequently, lecturers need to hone the components of reading skills, which include decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Decoding implies the transformation of messages into understandable language. Vocabulary means the stock or pool of words that a reader knows and uses. Fluency is the ability to read speedily and accurately and comprehension refers to summarizing the main ideas in a text. From the foregoing, reading skills may help OTM lecturers to make effective use of their time when reading for academic purposes, which may in turn lead to their career development. To find the gap in existing literature, it is hoped that this study will explore the relationship between reading skills and career development, the difference in the relationship between reading skills, ages and years of experience of OTM lecturers in public polytechnics in South West Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars have observed that reading is fundamental to academic achievement, but it is worrisome that some lecturers appear to pay too little attention to reading probably due to laziness and lack of reading culture. It seems they lay less emphasis on reading, paying little interest in reading as they presuppose they already know how to read. They may underestimate the importance of developing reading skills. It seems also they have poor reading comprehension, insufficient vocabulary, language deficiency, poor grammatical expression, concord deficits, limited knowledge of technical terms, low reading confidence and lack of ability to read and comprehend meanings from texts. In addition, it seems most lecturers hardly have time to read because of too much teaching workload and other school responsibilities, which barely give lecturers time to read. What prevents some lecturers from reading? Could this be related to lack of time, inability to decode, poor vocabulary, lack of fluency and comprehension?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. what is the relationship between reading skills and career development of OTM lecturers?
2. what is the difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of old and young OTM lecturers?
3. what is the difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of low and high-rank OTM lecturers?

Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

1. there is no significant relationship between reading skills and career development of OTM lecturers;
2. there is no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of old and young OTM lecturers;
3. there is no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of low and high-rank OTM lecturers.

Literature Review

Reading Skills and Career Development

Reading is perceived as the foundation for academic success in school and life in general. Students and lecturers are expected to read different materials that include books, journal articles, research reports and other academic writings. According to Raheem (2015), one needs to know when and how to read, which requires developing reading skills. There is increasing demand for high level reading skills in literature (Artieda, 2017; Endris, 2018; Balan, Katenga, & Simon, 2019; Ihsan, 2019; Najnawati, 2019; Rimi, 2019; Mwangi & Bwire, 2020; Winiharti & Suprato, 2020; Ithriyah & Nurmalia, 2021; Baba & Affendi, 2020; Petrus & Shah, 2020; Ramasamy & Padma, 2020; Hassan, Azmi, Muhamad, & Abdullahi, 2021). Research indicates that there is a correlation between reading skills and academic performance (Vuong, Hoang, Nguyen, Ho, & Vuong, 2021). Reading skills are most often related to academic achievements and career development. Developing reading skills is an approach to attaining educational goals.

There are different types of reading skills, which include decoding, phonetics, vocabulary, fluency, sentence construction and cohesion, reading comprehension, reasoning and background knowledge, working memory and attention (PlanetSpark, 2021). Other researchers have identified components of reading skills such as decoding, comprehension, questioning, fluency, inferring and summarizing (Wong, 2016; Gao, 2019; Olifant et al., 2020 & Ribqotul, 2020). From the identified range of reading skills, the current study focused on the following reading skills: decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills respectively. Decoding refers to the ability to hear sounds in words and connect them to letters. This is corroborated by (Andrew & Lee, 2023), decoding relies on connecting words and sounds into understandable language. According to Herrity (2023), the skills to decode ease the work of the reader, which hinges on vocabulary level.

Vocabulary skills mean the breadth, depth and flexibility of a reader's understanding of words, which is a key determinant of reading success and career development. Vocabulary helps to decipher meanings from words and phrases (Gordana, 2021). For lecturers to improve their vocabulary, they must read novels, newspapers, magazines, journals, reports and periodicals (Raheem, 2015). Vocabulary experts have linked sound reading ability to reading fluency (Kudo & Bazan, 2009).

Fluency skill is the ability to read smoothly, confidently, speedily and accurately (Nieparent, 2021). When a lecturer reads fluently, it aids quick understanding of texts. Reading fluently comprises precision and speed. Fluency aids a lecturer's ability to understand comprehension. Comprehension skills refer to the summary of the main ideas of a text upon reading and rereading. Kudo and Bazan (2009) defined comprehension skills as the methods used to extract meaning from a written text. In the same vein, Nowak (2022) defined reading comprehension as the ability to read, think and get an understanding of what has been read. It emphasizes how a lecturer can make sense of a reading passage. One may say decoding is automatic to vocabulary, vocabulary is automatic to fluent reading, and fluent reading is automatic to comprehension. Reading skills may help OTM lecturers in polytechnics to understand, interpret and have a full grasp of read materials for scholarly publications, which may influence promotion speed, remuneration growth and recognition in their career development.

Existing literature shows pieces of evidence of the positive correlation between developing reading skills and career development. For example, Keshav (2016) carried out a study on how to read a paper at the University of Waterloo Canada. The scholarly work outlined a practical three-pass approach for reading materials, looking at the category of the paper, context, correctness, contributions and clarity of the article. Keshav study revealed that using this approach to do a literature review, helps readers to gain mastery and succeed in their professions.

In another study conducted by Gao (2019), the researcher examined how reading skills affect thinking skills. The conclusion was that reading skills have a positive influence on thinking skills, which leads to the career success among students. Similarly, Ozensoy (2021) carried out a study on the impact of reading skills on students' academic success. The findings of his study revealed that there is a significant relationship between reading skills and academic progress. The work of Karakoc, Ruegg & Gu (2022) on reading requirements of students, revealed that students have to learn to use reading skills to be able to actualise their academic goals.

In the same vein, Hassan et al (2021) examined the impact of reading habits and their correlation with reading achievement in selected Malaysian Secondary Schools. According to the researchers, reading skills influence knowledge acquisition, proficiency in English writing and other academic activities. Their study revealed a positive correlation between reading skills and reading achievement. In line with their study, Petrus and Shah, (2020), and Mwangi & Bwire, (2020) reiterated that learners who read widely are probable to achieve good academic performance.

Al Roomy (2022) investigated the effect of reading skills on reading comprehension. In conclusion, the researcher stressed that academic and life success is tied to good reading skills that impart in every facet of life including career development. The researcher found a correlation between reading skills, as the researcher stressed that students who are good at reading pass their examinations with high scores. From the foregoing, lecturers who are good readers will experience promotion and sometimes recognition in their career development.

Methods

The study examined the utilisation of reading skills for the career development of lecturers in polytechnics in South West Nigeria. Correlational survey research design was used. The population comprised 121 lecturers in ten public polytechnics in South West Nigeria. To collect data, objective questions and a structured questionnaire were utilised. The Kuder-Richardson formula (20) and Cronbach alpha statistics were used to establish the internal consistency with coefficients of 0.72 and 0.76 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research question. Simple Linear Regression was used to test hypothesis 1 while Fisher Z statistics was used to test hypotheses 2 and 3 at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between reading skills and the career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics?

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation of reading skills and career development of OTM Lecturers

Variables	N	Pearson's r	Remark
Reading skills and career development			

Key: 0.00 – 0.30 = Low; 0.31 – 0.59 = Moderate; 0.60 – 1.00 = High

The data analysis in Table 1 shows a calculated Pearson's r value of .246, falling between .00 – 0.30 which shows a low positive relationship. Therefore, there exists a low positive relationship between reading skills and the career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between reading skills and career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

Table 2: Linear regression ANOVA of reading skills on career development of OTM lecturers

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	68.408	1	68.408	7.015	.009 ^b
Residual	1062.989	109	9.752		
Total	1131.396	110			

a. Dependent variable: career development

b. Predictors: (constant), reading skills

Results from Table 2 depict a calculated F value of 7.015 and a P value of .009. The P value is less than the alpha level, so the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between reading skills and career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between reading skills and the career development of OTM lecturers.

Table 3: Regression model summary of reading skills on career development of OTM lecturers

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std error of the Estimate
1	.246 ^a	.060	.052	3.12285

a. Predictors: (constant), reading skills

Table 3 shows a calculated R-value of .246 and an R-square value of .060. Therefore, reading skills account for 6% of the career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of old and young OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

Table 4: Fishers Z of reading skills and career development by age

Age	N	r	Z'	Z	Z-table
25 - 35 years	29	0.742	0.955	1.260	1.96
36 years and above	82	0.541	0.606		

The results in Table 4 indicate a Z value of 1.260 and a table Z value of 1.96. The Z value falls in the acceptance region. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of old and young OTM lecturers is retained.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of low and high-rank OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

Table 5: Fishers Z of reading skills and career development by rank

Rank	N	r	Z'	Z	Z-table
Junior	69	0.511	0.564	-1.491	-1.96
Senior	42	0.677	0.824		

Table 5 shows a Z value of -1.491 and a table Z value of -1.96. The Z value falls in the acceptance region. Thus, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of low and high-rank OTM lecturers is retained.

Findings

The result of research question one showed that there was a low positive relationship between reading skills and the career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics. The corresponding hypothesis revealed that reading skills predict the career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

The test of hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant difference in the relationship between the utilisation of research skills and the career development of old and young OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

The test of hypothesis three revealed that there was no significant difference in the relationship between the utilisation of reading skills and career development of low and high-rank OTM lecturers in polytechnics.

Discussion

Answer to research question one reported that there was a positive relationship between reading skills and career development. Likewise, the corresponding hypothesis revealed that reading skills are significant to the career development of OTM lecturers. The findings concur with previous studies on the correlation between reading skills and career success (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011; Vuong et al., 2021; Rahmawati, 2021). These findings revealed that reading skills contribute significantly to career success. This study revealed that decoding, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension are important skills and the foundation for success among lecturers. However, these findings contradicted the findings of Hermida (2009) who reported that academic staff take reading skills for granted and feel it has no significant correlation with career development.

The test of hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of old and young OTM lecturers in polytechnics. The findings are in agreement with the findings of Lertputtarak (2008) who argued that age does not affect lecturers' ability to read. On the other hand, Nasser-Abu and Majdob (2017) argued that reading and publishing vary by age. The opinion of the researchers is that younger lecturers read and publish more articles than older ones. It is believed that a lecturer's ability to engage in reading is determined by his or her age. The explanation is that lecturers read better when they are young; it increases during middle age and later declines in old age. Both young and old OTM lecturers would advance in their careers when they appropriately utilise reading skills. It means the age of an OTM lecturers would not automatically guarantee their promotion speed, remuneration growth and recognition in their career development.

The test of hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant difference in the relationship between reading skills and career development of low and high-rank OTM lecturers in polytechnics. The findings of Shin, Jung, and Kim (2014) revealed that rank does not influence career development. On the contrary, the findings of the present study are not in agreement with the findings of Hesli and Lee (2011) who stated that rank is related to and is a significant predictor of a lecturer's career success. In addition, the findings of Rawls (2018) reported that lecturers with higher ranks are more active in reading than their lower-ranked colleagues.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of reading skills on the career development of OTM lecturers in polytechnics in South West Nigeria. According to the findings, there exists a significant correlation between reading skills and the career success of lecturers. If lecturers hone reading skills and apply appropriate reading techniques, reading difficulties would be overcome. Thus, reading ability can be facilitated by mastering and applying reading skills. In other words, reading skills dimensions, which include decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension independently and collectively relate to the promotion speed,

remuneration growth and recognition in the career development of OTM lecturers in public polytechnics. Additionally, the study explored the correlation between age and rank in the career development of OTM lecturers. This study has contributed to the literature on reading skills, but the findings were limited to lecturers in public polytechnics in South West Nigeria. The results may not be generalized to other parts of the country. Therefore, further studies need to be carried out on the influence of reading skills on lecturers' reading achievements in other geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made

1. Office Technology and Management lecturers need to develop appropriate reading skills to sift, decode, extract and comprehend read materials for publications that will lead to their promotion speed, remuneration growth and recognition in their career development.
2. Efforts should be made by institutions and the government to enhance lecturers' reading skills by providing online and offline reading materials and a conducive environment for reading

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