

POVERTY AND PEER PRESSURE AS PREDICTORS OF READING CULTURE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Research evidence signals that students' reading culture is declining on daily basis; hence, this study sampled 250 students across secondary schools to investigate poverty and peer pressure as predictors of reading culture among secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria. One research question and four hypotheses guided the research. Researchers self-designed Instrument tagged Poverty and Peer Pressure as Predictors of Reading Culture Scale (PPPRCS, $R=.70$) was used for data collection. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis. The adolescents have moderately high levels of poverty (mean= 29.38, $SD=5.82$), peer pressure (mean=27.00, $SD=8.16$) but low reading culture level (mean=16.94, $SD=11.07$), a weak, negative and significant correlation between adolescents' poverty level and reading culture ($r=-0.42$; $n=250$, $p<.05$)., high, negative and significant relationship between adolescents peer pressure and reading culture ($r=-0.629$, $n=250$, $p<.05$) Furthermore, results indicate that the relative contributions of adolescents' poverty level ($\beta=.310$; $t=-8.201$, $p<.05$) and peer pressure ($\beta=.295$; $t=-5.947$, $p<.05$) to adolescents' reading culture are significant. Lastly, there is a significant composite contribution of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents' reading culture. ($R=.309$; $R^2=.095$; $F_{(2,247)}=13.716$). Based on these findings, it was recommended that educational stakeholders should endeavour to provide basic needs for students' educational materials to boost their reading culture, motivation in form of scholarship and gainful employment opportunities should be made available to the graduating students and obviously this may encourage their reading culture and enhance their learning outcomes in schools.

Keywords: Poverty, Peer pressure, Adolescent reading culture.

Introduction

The decline in reading culture among secondary school students is a growing concern, with factors such as poverty and peer pressure playing significant roles. Reading culture refers to the habit of engaging in reading activities, particularly academic programs. It serves as the foundation of the curriculum, contributing to a child's personal, social, and academic success, as well as overall well-being. Educational stakeholders emphasize reading by establishing libraries stocked with relevant educational materials for both students and teachers (Laškova & Ročāne, 2024; Mdoana-Zide, 2024; Narayan *et al.*, 2023). Nursery libraries contain picture books with minimal text to foster early reading habits. At both lower and upper basic levels, libraries provide essential educational materials, yet public school students underutilize them. Enhancing school libraries with colorful books, beanbags, and comfortable reading spaces can improve engagement.

Creating an inviting learning environment is crucial. Rugs or carpets make spaces comfortable, while outward-facing book displays and uncluttered shelves enhance accessibility. Themed displays based on authors and genres create inclusivity, while multifunctional layouts with breakout and quiet areas improve usability. A diverse non-fiction collection supports learning beyond the curriculum, fostering greater engagement and academic success.

Despite efforts to establish functional libraries, student patronage remains low due to distractions such as social media, peer pressure, and economic hardship. Poverty significantly affects reading culture, as low-income students often lack access to books, libraries, or digital resources, hindering literacy development (Goldstein & Goldstein, 2024; Yadav & Vashishtha, 2024). The absence of adult role models who prioritize reading further discourages reading habits. Additionally, students from impoverished backgrounds focus on basic survival needs, leaving little time or energy for reading. Limited access to

literacy-rich environments such as book clubs and literature circles, along with digital divides, further exacerbates the issue (Adesina, 2025; Aquiles *et al.*, 2024; Wilkinson *et al.*, 2023).

Theoretical frameworks help explain these challenges. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) suggests that individuals prioritize basic needs over cognitive activities like reading. Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory (1977) highlights the role of cultural resources in social mobility, while Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) emphasizes the importance of role models in shaping reading behavior. Lazarus' Stress and Coping Theory (1966) argues that stress from poverty limits motivation for reading, while Resilience Theory (Garmezy & Masten, 1984) posits that positive social support can encourage reading engagement despite financial difficulties.

Several studies highlight the relationship between reading habits and academic success. Fabunmi & Folorunso (2010) identified factors such as media consumption, economic hardship, and inadequate library materials as barriers to reading. Palam (2012) noted that recreational activities and mass media reduce interest in reading. Egong (2014) found a significant correlation between time management, concentration, and academic performance. Olson (2015) emphasized the need for educational programs targeting students in poverty, integrating kinesthetic activities and social-emotional learning to mitigate stress-related learning barriers. Harris & Butaud (2016) suggested that professional development, summer reading programs, and improved access to reading materials could enhance literacy among economically disadvantaged students.

Peer influence also plays a critical role in shaping reading culture. Merga (2014) found that peers can either positively or negatively impact reading habits. Bursztyn & Jensen (2014) demonstrated that students conform to social norms regarding reading when decisions are made publicly. The West Australian Study

in Adolescent Book Reading (WASABR) highlighted the social acceptability of reading among adolescents and its impact on engagement (Merga, 2014). Rosli *et al.* (2017) compared reading habits across multiple countries, emphasizing environmental influences. Sotiloye & Bodunde (2018) found that Nigerian students primarily read for exams rather than leisure, recommending the promotion of recreational reading materials. Bamise (2023) established a strong positive correlation between peer influence and reading habits.

Further research supports these findings. Maldybaevna *et al.* (2022) analyzed university students' reading habits, finding that females read more than males, with poetry being a preferred genre. Bhujbal & Verma (2025) examined the impact of peer pressure on student behavior and academic performance, identifying social media, school culture, and acceptance as major influences. Negative peer pressure led to academic underperformance and emotional stress, while positive peer interactions fostered better academic outcomes.

Tayyab *et al.* (2023) explored the impact of poverty on education in Pakistan, revealing that unemployment and illiteracy contribute to high dropout rates. Taylor *et al.* (2024) examined the neurobiological effects of socioeconomic status (SES) on reading development, suggesting that children from disadvantaged backgrounds develop stress-adapted strengths that should be harnessed to close opportunity gaps. Adewuyi (2024) found a strong relationship between academic performance, peer influence, and social media usage, recommending awareness campaigns to promote responsible social media consumption. Alaba (2023) studied student misbehavior and found that peer pressure significantly contributes to negative behaviors, emphasizing the need for counseling and strict disciplinary measures. Mgboro *et al.* (2024) established that peer pressure negatively affects academic achievement, while strong study habits have a positive impact. The study recommends promoting effective study strategies to improve academic success.

To address these challenges, stakeholders must implement strategies to enhance reading culture. Libraries should be equipped with diverse, engaging materials and provide comfortable reading environments. Schools should integrate literacy-promoting activities and establish peer reading programs to leverage positive peer influence. Additionally, reducing socio-economic barriers through financial support, access to digital resources, and mentorship programs can help students from disadvantaged backgrounds develop strong reading habits.

Overall, fostering a reading culture among secondary school students requires a multi-faceted approach that includes improving library facilities, addressing socio-economic barriers, and leveraging peer influence. By implementing these strategies, educational stakeholders can enhance literacy levels and academic performance among students. This study thus predicted the impacts of poverty and peer pressure on secondary school students reading culture in Ibadan metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Reading is a crucial academic skill that promotes knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, and cognitive development. However, in Ibadan, Nigeria, secondary school students are increasingly focusing on leisure activities rather than reading. This decline in reading culture is attributed to factors such as poverty and peer pressure. Poverty in Nigeria leads to limited access to educational materials, limiting students' motivation to engage in voluntary reading. Additionally, low-income households often lack positive role models who encourage reading, further hindering the development of a robust reading culture. Peer pressure also plays a significant role in shaping adolescent behaviors, including reading habits. Limited empirical studies have explored the combined impact of poverty and peer pressure on the reading culture of secondary school students in Ibadan. The Nigerian government and educational stakeholders have made efforts to improve literacy rates through policies, but these have not

yielded significant improvements in students' voluntary reading habits. This study aims to fill this research gap by examining poverty and peer pressure as predictors of reading culture among secondary school students in Ibadan.

Objectives of the Study

The main thrust of the study is to investigate poverty and peer pressure as predictors of reading culture among secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

- 1. correlated poverty and adolescents' reading culture;

2. examined the relationship between peer pressure and reading culture among secondary school students;
3. regressed the relative contribution of poverty, peer pressure to reading culture among secondary school students, and
4. determined the joint contribution of independent variable to the dependent variable

Research Question

What are the adolescents' levels of poverty, peer pressure and reading culture?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between poverty and adolescents' reading culture.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and reading culture among secondary school students

H₀₃: There is no significant relative contribution of poverty, peer pressure to reading culture among secondary school students

H₀₄: There is no significant joint contribution of independent variable to the dependent variable.

Methods

The study adopted the correlational type of descriptive survey design. This design is suited for the research as the study aim to predict the impacts of the independent variables (poverty and peer pressure) on the dependent measure

(secondary school students' reading habits). The population of the study comprises all the secondary school students in senior class two in Ibadan metropolis. Two hundred and fifty adolescents were randomly selected from the study locale using stratified random sampling technique.

A self-designed four-likert instrument titled: Poverty and Peer Pressure as Predictors of Reading Culture Scale (PPPRCS) comprising poverty, peer pressure and reading culture variables was used for data collection. PPPRCS first draft have 45 items in Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree response format scored in 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for the positively worded items and reverse for the negative items. PPPRCS was made available to the text expert and psychometricians. Their suggestions were incorporated for construct validity. Thereafter, it was administered to the adolescents outside the study locale and Crombach's alpha yielded: poverty, $R = 0.69$, peer pressure $R = 0.67$ and reading culture $R = 0.71$ respectively and a joint reliability of 0.70.

The participants consent were sought, the questionnaire was administered to the respondents with the assistance of teachers in the study locale and was collected on the spot. Data collected was analyzed using percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis.

Results

Table 1: Respondents Socio-demographic Variables

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	71	28.40
Female	179	71.60
Total	250	100.0
Age Group		
13-19 Years	236	94.40
20 Years & Above	14	5.60
Total	250	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	77	30.80
Islam	169	67.60
ATR	04	1.60
Total	250	100.0
Home Type		
Intact	197	78.80
Non-Intact	53	21.20
Total	250	100.0

Parents Qualification		
Literate	184	73.60
Illiterate	66	26.40
Total	250	100.0

Table 1 revealed that there are 71 (28.40 %) male, 179 (71.60 %) female, 236 (94.40 %) 13-19 years, 14 (5.60 %) 20 years and above, 77 (30.80 %) Christians, 169 (67.60 %) Islam, four (1.60 %) African Traditional Religion, 197 (78.80 %) intact homes, 53 (21.20 %) non-intact homes, 184 (73.60 %) literates, 66 (26.40 %) illiterate parents respondents in the distribution. There are more female, 13-19 years, Islam, intact homes and literate parent respondents in the distribution.

Research Question One: What are the adolescents' levels of poverty, peer pressure and reading culture?

Table 2: Adolescents' Levels of poverty, peer pressure and reading culture

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
adolescents' levels of poverty	250	27.04	31.75	29.38	5.82
adolescents' levels of peer pressure	250	24.71	29.05	27.00	8.16
adolescents' levels of reading culture	250	13.77	17.83	16.94	11.07

Table 2 revealed that the adolescents have moderately high levels of poverty (mean= 29.38, SD=5.82), peer pressure (mean=27.00, SD=8.16) but low reading culture level (mean=16.94, SD=11.07).

Hypotheses Testing

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between adolescents' poverty level and their reading culture.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Adolescents' Poverty Level and Reading Culture

	Adolescents' poverty level	Adolescents' reading culture.
Adolescents' poverty level	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	. -0.42**
	N	250

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table 3, there is a weak, negative and significant correlation between adolescents poverty level and adolescents' reading culture ($r=-0.42$; $n=250$, $p<.05$). Therefore, Ho1 is not accepted.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescents' reading culture.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of adolescents' peer pressure and adolescents' reading culture

		Adolescents' peer pressure	Adolescents' reading culture.
Adolescents' peer pressure	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.629**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 reveals that there is a high, negative and significant relationship between adolescents peer pressure and adolescents' reading culture ($r=-0.629$, $n=250$, $p<.05$). Therefore, Ho2 is not accepted

Ho3: There is no significant relative contribution of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents' reading culture.

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Relative contribution of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents' reading culture.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17.494	3.715		6.072	.000
	Adolescents' poverty level	.417	.207	.310	-8.201	.017
	Adolescents' peer pressure	.331	.219	.295	-5.947	.029

a. Dependent Variable: Adolescents' reading culture

Table 5 indicates that the relative contributions of adolescents' poverty level ($\beta=.310$; $t=-8.201$, $p<.05$) and peer pressure ($\beta=.295$; $t=-5.947$, $p<.05$) to adolescents' reading culture are significant. Therefore, Ho3 is not accepted.

Ho4: There is no significant composite contribution of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents' reading culture.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Composite contribution of contribution of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents' reading culture.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.309 ^a	.095	.091	3.1722		
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2919.917	2	1459.958	13.716	.000 ^b
	Residual	26291.174	247	106.442		
	Total	29211.091	249			

a. Dependent Variable: adolescents' reading culture

b. Predictors: (Constant), adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure

From Table 6, there is a significant composite contribution of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents' reading culture. ($R=.309$; $R^2=.095$; $F_{(2,247)} = 13.716$). Therefore, H_04 is not accepted.

Discussion

The study revealed that adolescents have moderately high level of poverty, peer pressure also high but low reading culture at the study locale. This result implied that poverty and peer pressure could prone adolescents to low reading culture which may be an offshoot of academic under achievement among adolescents. This result support Fabunmi and Folorunso (2010) whose study revealed that many variables could be responsible for poor reading culture among students and among these are computer and other media, harsh economic reality, societal demand for materialism and so on. Likewise, Merga (2014) showed that peer influence singly enhanced students reading culture. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between poverty and adolescents reading culture was not accepted. From results, it was revealed that a weak, negative and significant correlation existed between adolescent poverty level and reading culture. Therefore, the hypothesis is not accepted. This means there is significant association between poverty and adolescents reading culture.

This result agreed with Olson (2015) who laid more emphasis on the need for effective educational programming for students in poverty stricken community. The means the researcher believed that poverty could hinder learning on the ladder of academic success. However, this result deviates from Hams and Butaud (2016) that showed that poverty-adjusted students often drop out of school. This means there are other variables that could influence reading culture negatively among the learners' aside poverty and this calls for serious attention of educational stakeholder. Also. the finding corroborate the results of Alaba (2023), Mgboro *et al.* (2024) that peer pressure engender students negative behavior among which is poor reading culture.

Furthermore, the hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescents reading culture was not accepted as the result showed that there is a high, negative and significant relationship between adolescent peer pressure and reading culture. This means that there is a high, negative and significant association between adolescent peer pressure and adolescents reading culture. The result is in tandem with Bhujbal and Verma (2025) which revealed some negative impact of peer pressure on students which includes academic underperformance, emotional stress and the likes. It also laid credence to Bursztyn and Jensen (2014) study which revealed that students may conform to prevailing norms when they are observable to their peers. This is why educational stakeholders, parents, teachers and policymakers should hold the bull by the horn by taking adequate steps to ensure students are in the right path rather than doing anything that can shift their attention from reading. However, this result oppose Bamise (2023) findings which revealed positive association between peer pressure and reading culture

Additionally, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relative contribution of adolescent poverty level and peer pressure to adolescent reading culture was not accepted. The result indicated that there are significant relative contributions of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents reading culture. Poverty level and Peer Pressure to adolescent reading culture are significant. Hence, the hypothesis was not accepted. Result depicts that both poverty level and peer pressure are inimical to adolescents reading culture and previous discussion from the above attest to this claim. However, poverty level contributed higher to adolescent reading culture when compared to the adolescents peer pressure.

Lastly, the hypothesis which state that there is no significant joint contribution of the independent variable (poverty level and peer pressure) to the dependent variable (reading culture) was not accepted. The result showed significant joint contribution of adolescents' poverty level and peer pressure to

adolescents reading culture. Hence, the hypothesis was not accepted. This means there is a significant joint contribution of poverty level and peer pressure to adolescent reading culture. This support Merga (2014), Olson (2015), Hamis and Butaud (2016) which revealed that reading culture could be influenced by peer pressure and poverty level and when this happens, academic under achievement will set in and there may be high drop out among the learners. Tayyab *et al.* (2023) and Adewuyi (2024) likewise attested to the fact that some socio-economic factors are strong antecedents to students reading culture.

Conclusion

This study could be concluded thus: there is link between poverty level and adolescents reading culture; there is also association between peer pressure and reading culture; poverty level contributed greatly to the dependent variable when compared with peer pressure; and also there is joint contribution of adolescent's poverty level and peer pressure to adolescents reading culture.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, following recommendations were made.

1. Educational Stakeholders particularly parents should endeavour to provide their wards basic needs, especially children should provide with all their educational materials to boost their reading culture.
2. Parents should endeavour to monitor their children's peer and correct them with love where necessary.
3. Government at all level should motivate learners through scholarship award, gainful employment opportunities and the likes. This may motivate learners/ adolescents to learn with enthusiasm.
4. Counselling psychologists should be posted to schools without additional responsibilities. This would enable them to mount psychological interventions at school capable of promoting reading culture among learners at every stages of their academic ladder.

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