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Identifying Problems being Faced by Educationists while Promoting Reading Habits: A Survey

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Abstract:

Purpose:

The basic objective of this study is to explore the problems being faced by educationists while promoting reading habits. It also reveals the best practices and strategies which may be applied by educationists to flourish reading habits among the students.

Methodology:

A quantitative research method has been used followed by survey method to meet the objectives of the study. Population of the study was the educationists of 50 schools of the private sector of Lahore, Pakistan who were teaching from Grade 5 to Grade 10. Tool of questionnaire was formulated to collect data from target population. Total 1000 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the educationists. 824 filled questionnaires were received back by the researcher. Response rate was 82.4 %. Collected data was analyzed through SPSS Software.

Research Limitation:

This study is limited to the educationists of 50 private sectors schools of Lahore, Pakistan.

Key Findings:

Results of the study show that educationists face several problems in flourishing reading habits among the children. Social media is used frequently and printed books have lost significance in the present times, and students don't have proper family background. There is no awareness about reading importance at school level. Librarians of the schools don't play an active role for the promotion of book reading.

Practical Implication:

The study offers strategies that need to be utilized for the effective promotion of reading campaign at school level.

Contribution to Knowledge:

Recommendations of this study will prove highly fruitful in enhancing reading habits among children.

Keywords:

Reading Habits, Problems to Promote Reading, Strategies to Flourish Reading

Introduction and Background of the Study:

School teachers have a great impact upon children's learning. They cast an ever-lasting impact upon their minds. They are the promoters of quality education. They are the makers of the nations. They shape up students' mind. Their role to uplift education can't be denied. They are the safeguard of the civilization. They have to cultivate necessary skills in children so that they can lead from the front in future and manage certain problems in practical life. They provide lifelong education to the children. They need to be skilled so that they can promote reading habits among children. If they have good strategies, then they can move children towards book reading (Oji, & Habibu, 2011).

Reading is a very useful activity. It is considered as a mean of understanding words and symbols. It represents human thoughts. It provides mental satisfaction. It increases man's ideas. It flourishes creativity. It provides food for thought. It is a fruitful source of getting innovation. It provides a reader a sense of mental satisfaction. It provides encouragement. It provides records of all ages in printed form. It takes back a reader to ancient age. It has an ever lasting spell upon readers. It is very important also in the present competitive age. It has different aspects. It is not a

limited activity. It is a vast area that needs to be explored wisely in order to attain the desired objectives. (Jug & Vilar, 2015).

When reading is not given importance, then children and young people may not grow well. Their emotional growth is effected a lot due to poor reading. They can't develop into mature human beings. They can't understand social matters well. They remain unable to tackle the problems efficiently. They can't make effective conversation with other fellow beings. They remain unsocial. They become passive. They don't act actively in society. They are unable to come out of their shells. They live in their own limited world. They don't floursih sensible ideas in their hearts and minds. They have limited thinking. They only prefer television. They get recreation through social networking websites. They don't give value to reading. Therefore, in practical life, they face plenty of unmanageable problems (Das, Ray & Puhan, 2016).

In the present era, price hike is also on the peak. Prices of the things are going up and up. Prices of the books have also increased a lot. Books are becoming unaffordable for the readers. They can't bear the cost of quality books. They only prefer the books of syllabus. Consequently, they also get poor grades. They remain unable to show good performance. They can't perform well in curricular activities. They tend to watch DVDs and other audio visual aids. They are easily frustrated. They face psychological problems too. They can't utilize their potential fully. According to Rubin (2002), children having poor reading skills have psychological beaviors. They are easily trapped into social problems. They don't lead a normal life. They remain unhappy. They become involved in bad activities. They become violent. They disturb others very often. They create problems for others. They become mischivious. Poor reading is associated with several unmanageable problems.

School level is a golden period in which children may become habitual of reading. They may be moved towards books at this early age. They can become lovers of reading at the very start. The same habits will go with them all life. However, if they are not attracted towards book reading, they will not become book lovers. They will only prefer studies from the books of curriculum. Eliason and Jenkins (2003) stated that parents and teachers should realize the importance of reading for their children so that they might be transformed into mature human beings. Otherwise, wrong trends will take place which will give birth to unmanageable social problems. Children might also become abnormal if they are not attracted towards book reading at the start of school level education. Foundation of the school children needs to be made better so that they could become successful in the society and embrace the challenges of life happily.

Edeole & Adejoke (2016) concluded that reading improves academic efficiency and enlightens the hearts and minds of readers. Teachers and the library are highly important to promote reading among school children. No nation can become progressive without giving value to education and reading. Teachers should promote love for reading. They need to act responsible. Their role has become more vital because of the arrival of social networking websites. Different competitions need to be conducted among school children so that they may start loving reading books for getting multiple benefits.

In Pakistan, no proper research studies have been conducted to identify problems being faced by educationists in the promotion of reading habits and culture. There is an urgent need to know barriers being faced by school-teachers in the spread of reading habits among school children in Pakistan. The results of this study are very helpful in developing reading habits among school children. This study offers practical strategies to flourish reading culture. This research is of great

value for the schools' top-level administration specifically and for policy makers of education generally.

Problem-Statement:

The study intends to identify problems being faced by educationists to promote reading habits among children from grade 5 to grade 10 in 50 private sector schools of Lahore, Pakistan. This study will also reveal measures, practical solutions, strategies and the best practices to flourish reading culture.

Habit of reading is indeed of great significance as it creates leaders for future and polishes personality and character of the readers. Unless reading habits are developed among the students from the school level, they can't become better citizens and may not lead a successful professional life so reading is of great value in making the children successful in all fields of life in the future-times.

A review of past studies highlights the need to identify problems being faced by the educationists to promote reading habits among the children so that they might perform efficiently in upcoming educational and professional lives. Problems being faced by school level teachers to flourish reading culture need to be eliminated on top priority. Efficient measures and strategies need to be taken so that reading habits may be flourished effectively.

Several studies have been conducted about the importance of reading habits however there is a lack of literature to identify problems being faced by teachers to promote reading habits and to reveal strategies needed to flourish reading culture. Previous studies have also shown that the area of problems to promote reading habits and strategies to flourish reading culture is being seriously ignored in past. This study particularly focuses upon barriers which happen to promote reading habits, and practical strategies to flourish reading culture.

This research will be highly beneficial to the top administration of the schools, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Parents need to play a positive role and school authorities should take keen interest in developing reading habits among the school-students. Special initiatives must be taken by concerned authorities so that reading habits might be developed from school level and students may become future leaders by becoming efficient readers.

Review of Literature:

Ossai-Onah (2012) identified problems which happened for the spread of reading habits in Nigerian Schools. It was observed in the study that reading habits of the children of Nigeria were different from other countries of the west. Children did not prefer books. They preferred to watch television programmes. They didn't move towards book reading. They loved latest gadgets to get recreation. They were attracted towards modern technologies. They liked internet. They didn't look books in most of the cases. The study highlighted challenges that were on climax towards reading culture. The study was conducted in 10 secondary schools. Results of the same were applied in all other schools too. The paper highlighted different barriers on way to reading culture. These hurdles including internet revolution, lack of co-curricular activities, non-integration of school telling in school syllabus and high prices of informative books. The study concluded that special steps should be taken by school teachers to promote reading culture among school children. These steps included book exhibitions, revival of story-telling tradition, low costs of books and speech competitions etc. Focal point of the research showed that school librarians should help teachers in increasing reading habits among school children.

Reading habit is a very innovative activity. It helps to bring charm and pleasures in life. It broadens man's thinking. It brings openness. It removes the elements of narrowness. It provides

thrill. A reader finds joy in reading several books. He jumps out of the box. He becomes liberal in his thinking and actions. He doesn't have a limited approach. He sees beyond the wall. He has vision. His skills are polished through reading. Oyelude (2013) conducted research on Teachers' library use and reading habits in Ido local government area. The study showed that due to advent of technological advancements, changes were taking place in teachers' lives too. They were become more versatile. They were becoming more responsible. They used library tools to promote reading culture. They also faced sometimes problems in making children lovers of book reading. They realized the importance of reading right from the starting school level.

Hassen (2016) highlighted that reading was not given value by the teachers. The teachers were well aware of the importance of reading however they ignored reading. They didn't often consult the library for reading purposes. They only focused towards books of syllabus. They preferred school curriculum. They were traditional in their thinking. They didn't do different tasks. They taught from recommended books only. They delivered lectures from the publications of syllabus. Some teachers visited the library for reading magazines. They liked popular literature. They visited the library for preparing quality lectures too. As teachers are the custodians of the civilization and their role is highly important so they needed to be creative so that they might promote reading culture among the children with an aim to make them valuable members of the society so that they might lead from the front and face challenges without losing their temperament.

Kamalova & Koletvinova (2016) mentioned that reading can be improved if it is made part and parcel of the school curriculum. Reading needs proper attention of the school teachers and concerned authorities. Children need to be attracted towards oral and written story-telling habit. Their reading habits can be increased if proper strategies are adopted. Teachers should play their leading role. They need to manage all problems. They should focus on reading based activities so

that children may get not only knowledge from reading but also fun and joy. Book clubs need to be formulated at school level. Teachers should also tell ways of reading the books properly. One book other than syllabus should be assigned to each child for reading purpose and feedback from the same back should be taken from the children. This will flourish a healthy activity in school level.

Ameyaw & Anto (2018) investigated reading habit among students and its impact upon performance. Tool of questionnaire was developed for gathering data from the target population. SPSS was utilized to analyze the gathered data. Finding of the study reveal that reading habit is highly essential to achieve academic successes. Reading improves efficiency. Lack of motivation towards reading is a major hurdle in improving reading culture. The study recommended that schools should provide some fixed time for reading purpose only. A pleasant reading environment should be provided to school children. Teachers should develop love in school children for reading at home too.

Mushtaq, Soroya, & Mahmood (2020) mentioned that academic performance and efficiency could be improved through quality reading habits. Reading improved IQ level of the students and brought innovative changes. Students became sharper and more brilliant through reading habits. Reading improved knowledge of the students and groomed their personality so that they might develop into future leaders and work for the betterment of the society through creative approaches and techniques. In every field of life, reading brought a number of benefits which could not be ignored in any way. Internet had affected reading habits to a great deal as the students became more and more attracted towards internet and did not like to read books in print so keeping in view this context, active role was intensely needed from the side of school administration to

develop such tools, methods and techniques by which students could be attracted towards reading. Students needed to be taught benefits of print and online books reading.

Mwangi & Bwire (2020) stated that lack of reading resources in schools was a great problem being faced by teachers for the spread of reading habits. There was an intense need to collect information resources in the schools so that students could become better readers and improve their information, learning, knowledge and skills through efficient reading skills. Lack of resources was a great barrier which was faced by educationists to flourish reading skills of the students. From school life, mature habits could be cultivated in the students if proper resources and motivation were provided to the educationists so that they could polish the skills of their students through innovative approaches. Friendly environment played a great role in making students book lovers because in the present age, book reading was a victim to downfall because of social media applications.

Bhatti (2021) through his study revealed that reading culture was not satisfactory in the schools of Pakistan. Overall, the rate of literacy was not good. Most of the students enrolled in the schools were from humble background and they were unaware of the importance of reading. English was considered a symbol of personality and esteem in the educational institutions of Pakistan. Students faced problems in learning English language as it was not their mother language. The study highlighted need to improve reading skills of the students so that they could show brilliant academic performance because reading had a direct link with better educational results and outstanding performance in curricular activities.

Research Questions:

Following research questions were set:

1. Which problems are being faced by educationists to promote reading habits?
2. Which practical solutions, strategies, and techniques may be adopted to flourish reading culture?

Methodology:

A quantitative research method has been used followed by survey method to meet the objectives of the study. Survey research method is the most suitable method for gathering data from a vast population so keeping in view the need of this method for the current study, this technique was applied by the researcher for getting desired results. Population of the study was the educationists of 50 schools of the private sector of Lahore, Pakistan who were teaching from Grade 5 to Grade 10. Convenience Sampling technique was utilized to gather required data from the educationists. Tool of questionnaire was formulated to collect data from target population. Total 1000 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the educationists through physical visits. 824 filled questionnaires were received back by the researcher. Response rate was 82.4 % due to consistent follow ups by the researcher. Collected data was analyzed through SPSS Software. Frequency and Descriptive analysis were done.

Following figure 1.0 shows research methodology adopted by the researcher:

Figure: 1



Results, Analysis and Interpretation:

The data collected from the questionnaire are analyzed below:

Gender of Respondents:

Table 1 shows that 11.89 % respondents were males and 88.11% respondents were females who participated in the study. It reveals that number of female teachers are more in school at private sector of Pakistan.

Table 1
Gender of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	98	11.89
Female	726	88.11
Total	824	100.0

Qualification of Respondents:

Table 2 shows that there were 44.89 % participants who were holding the degrees of B.A/BSc, 27.79 % participants were B.Ed/M.Ed, 22.69% participants were M.A/M.Sc, 5.34% participants were MS/Phil and 3.28% were holding other degrees.

Table 2
Qualification of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
BA/BSc	337	44.89
B.Ed/M.Ed	229	27.79
MA/MSc	187	22.69
MS/M.Phil	44	5.34
Other	27	3.28
Total	824	100.0

Problems being Faced to Flourish Reading Habits:

Table 3 shows that lack of awareness about reading-importance is the most prominent problem being faced by educationists. Other worth mentioning problems being faced by majority of the participants include the attraction of television cartoons & games from the side of children, attraction towards social media, high cost of the books due to inflation, no proper training from home and no love for popular literature. Respondents also face problems of focus upon syllabus related books, no active role by school level librarians and passive role of the school administration.

Table 3
Problems in Promotion of Reading Habits

	Statement	Mean	Median
1.	Attraction towards Television Cartoons & Games	3.97	4.00
2.	High cost of informative books	3.83	4.00
3.	Attraction towards social media	3.85	4.00
4.	No proper training from home	3.79	4.00
5.	No love for popular literature	3.75	4.00
6.	Focus upon syllabus related books	2.80	2.5
7.	No active role by school librarians	2.32	2.00
8.	Lack of awareness about reading-importance	4.17	4.00
9.	Passive role of school administration	2.87	3.00

Strategies and Practices Adopted for Promoting Reading Habits

Table 4 shows that interest of the school's head is the most effective strategy for the promotion of reading habits among children. Most of the respondents agreed that proper directions, positive role of the parents, active role of the school authorities, quiz society in the school, availability of interesting books in the school, book clubs, tours to libraries, budget for promotional activities, skilled library staff, incentives for book lovers in the schools, role plays in the light of different characters from the books and culture of writing book reviews by the students could promote reading habits in the school. Participants also mentioned that encouragements towards reading, establishment of proper libraries with adequate resources and services in the schools, library societies, pleasure reading literature, and culture of story telling could promote reading habits among school-children to a great extent.

Table 4*Strategies and Practices Adopted for Promotion of Reading*

Strategies to Spread Reading	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive role of the parents	824	4.12	.758
Active role of school authorities	824	4.11	.849
Encouragement towards reading	824	3.95	.780
Establishment of proper libraries	824	3.81	.868
Quiz Society	824	4.05	.835
Availability of interesting books	824	4.12	.772
Book Clubs	824	4.05	.765
Library Societies	824	3.96	.829
Tours to Libraries	824	4.05	.780
Budget for promotional activities	824	4.02	.760
Pleasure reading literature	824	3.95	.886
Culture of story telling	824	3.87	.748
Skilled library staff	824	4.03	.722
Incentives for book lovers	824	4.15	.714
Role plays	824	4.04	.744
Culture of writing book reviews	824	4.02	.730
Willingness to change	824	4.08	.749
Organizational head's interest towards book reading	824	4.19	.815
Proper directions	824	4.18	.797

Discussion:

There is no doubt about this proverb that “readers are leaders”. Reading brings revolutionary changes in one’s mind. It is the signpost of making progress. Progressive countries promote reading habits in the children from the school level through various activities and by allocating maximum financial resources however in Pakistan, situation is altogether different as government of Pakistan doesn’t give priority to reading and learning and consequently leaders are not being produced to tackle individual, social and national challenges properly on the whole. In the schools of Pakistan, leadership-traits are not developed in the children and they don’t perform well during stress-situations in upcoming life.

Reading is an important indicator of a nation’s progress in all fields of life. If reading is not given worth, then not only individuals face problems but also nations face miserable situations. Nations of the West have given great value to the reading, knowledge and learning and therefore those nations have not only become advanced in all areas of life but also lead the knowledge rankings. If reading culture is not flourished at school-level in Pakistan then unmanageable issues will take place and situation of education will become worse from bad.

Reading develops critical ideas and these thoughts give birth to creative thinking and innovative approaches lead a nation to the heights of successes. No nation can become prosperous without giving significance to reading and knowledge. Doubtlessly, future lies in unleashing the creative potential of children. Brain-storming activities need to be connected to promote reading habits at national level so that fruitful benefits may be gained. National policy is of great value in re-shaping reading trends. Demand-driven rules need to be implemented for a reading-based-society. In schools, proper environment should be developed to promote reading habits. Teachers should be enough trained and skilled to create the passion of reading among the children. Students

should also be awarded marks for reading general books other than the prescribed syllabus. Pakistan can't fall in the list of top learning places unless a great value is given to reading culture. Reading brings revolutionary changes.

Results of the study show that school teachers face different problems in spreading reading culture. They don't have a proper library in schools. Prices of the informative books are also a major problem. Internet facility is not available in schools. In most of the cases, teachers only focus upon curriculum. Professional Library staff is not available in schools. Parents don't give value to general reading. They only want high grades of their children.

There are several strategies that may be taken to promote reading habits among school-children. Story telling culture should be promoted by school teachers. Informative books other than syllabus should be distributed among children. Speech competitions should be held in schools. Gifts of books should be given to flourish love for reading. Seminars on book reading habits should be conducted. Library Societies and Clubs should be made. Proper school libraries should be built with rich information resources. Professional library staff should be deputed in school libraries. School Teachers should promote book reading habits through different creative activities. Teachers need to be innovative and liberal. Heads of the schools should take personal interest in the promotion of reading habits among the children. They must initiate creative activities in order to flourish reading culture. They should become true leaders and innovators. They must play a positive and enthusiastic role in the promotion of reading trends. They must provide budget to the teachers to take practical measures to make the children good users. They must recruit professional librarian having high formal qualification so that he might prove valuable in enhancing reading habits among the school children through different activities and training sessions. Teachers must provide proper directions to the children at early stage so that they may develop reading habits and

start reading general books with passion. Teachers are real change-agents. They can flourish reading habits of the children through encouraging initiatives for the children. If good habits are created at early phase of life, then these habits become mature and the individuals perform efficiently.

Positive role from the side of parents is of great value as home is the first institution for every individual. If parents arouse the feelings for book-reading, then children will become better readers and they will start reading quality books. A quiz society needs to be established in the school. This society will play a great role in promoting reading habits among the children and they will become better informed about facts and figures of important events. They will be able to perform well in different contests. There should be availability of the interesting books in the schools so that children may read them for pleasure. Students must be attracted towards general reading. Their mind making should be shaped so that they may not only focus upon syllabus related books but also other general knowledge books for brining creativity and innovation. Book clubs need to be developed in the school that may conduct talks about different books and develop reading habits among the children. Children must be taken for the library-tours especially to the public libraries where special section for the children is also available. Such tours will develop love in children for reading. Incentive should be provided to those children who prefer reading and perform well during different reading-activities.

In light of the results of the study and in-depth discussion, following figure 2 shows strategies for promoting reading habits:

Figure 2

Strategies for Promoting Reading Habits



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