



An Investigation on the Effects of Poor Reading Culture on Learner Performance

Mubanga Mukuka

St. Eugene University, Zambia

Abstract- In *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*, Flannery O'Connor grapples with the concept of goodness, questioning whether it is determined by social norms, religious grace, or self-awareness. The characters in the story, particularly the Grandmother and the Misfit, embody contradictions that challenge conventional ideas of morality. Through a series of darkly ironic events, O'Connor suggests that true goodness may be rooted in self-awareness, humility, and grace, rather than superficial respectability. This paper examines these qualities and their significance, highlighting O'Connor's use of Southern Gothic elements to convey the often complex and unexpected nature of redemption and moral understanding. This paper employs ethical and moral literary criticism to analyze the tension between outward virtue and internal transformation, offering a nuanced reading of goodness in O'Connor's world. This study explores the causes and consequences of a poor reading culture among Grade 5 learners at Kabobole Primary School in Nsama District, Northern Province of Zambia. A purposive sample of 100 participants—comprising 60 students, 35 teachers, and 5 head teachers—was selected. Data collection methods included interviews and surveys, with analysis performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Early findings suggest that lack of reading materials, limited parental involvement, and minimal encouragement from educators are major factors influencing reading habits. The results provide timely insights to guide policy recommendations and curriculum revisions as Zambia prepares for the 2025 national curriculum update.

Keywords- Reading culture, academic performance, literacy, primary education, Zambia

I. Introduction

Reading is fundamental to academic success, yet many learners in Zambia struggle due to a weak reading culture. This study investigates how poor reading habits affect learner performance, particularly in government primary schools. It also aims to recommend practical strategies to promote a positive reading culture.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the factors contributing to poor reading culture among primary school pupils.
- To examine the impact of reading culture on academic performance.
- To propose practical strategies for improving reading habits in schools.



III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies show that reading culture is influenced by multiple variables, including socioeconomic background, teacher quality, parental involvement, and access to reading resources (Fan & Chan, 2001; Orodho & Kombo, 2002). According to Chomsky (1967), language acquisition and literacy are socially and environmentally dependent. This research builds on these frameworks to understand reading behaviors in a Zambian context.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative and quantitative study used purposive sampling to select participants from Kabobole Primary School. Surveys and structured interviews were administered to pupils, teachers, and head teachers. SPSS was used to analyze data and generate descriptive statistics and correlations.

Sample Size:

- 60 pupils
- 35 teachers
- 5 head teachers

V. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The ongoing analysis reveals the following key contributors to poor reading culture:

- Inadequate Resources: Schools lack adequate textbooks and libraries.
- Parental Involvement: Many parents are disengaged from their children's education.
- Teacher Support: Teachers rarely promote reading outside of classwork.
- Overcrowded Classrooms: Limited time for individualized reading support.

VI. DISCUSSION

The lack of a reading-friendly environment in both home and school contexts hampers learners' academic development. These findings align with prior research by Reche et al. (2012), which emphasized the link between reading culture and academic outcomes. The study suggests that interventions must be both systemic and community-driven.

Recommendations

- Provide schools with sufficient textbooks and reading materials.
- Establish and equip school libraries.
- Train and deploy qualified language teachers.
- Launch reading promotion programs (e.g., school reading clubs).



- Involve parents through literacy awareness campaigns.
- Schedule dedicated reading time in school timetables.
- Improve teacher-pupil ratios to facilitate individual attention.

VIII. CHALLENGES FACED

- Time Constraints: Balancing research with family and work responsibilities.
- Financial Limitations: Self-funded research limited mobility and resources.
- Infrastructure Issues: Poor roads in Nsama District hindered school access.

IX. CONCLUSION

This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on literacy development in primary education. It underlines the urgent need for coordinated efforts by government, educators, and communities to cultivate a strong reading culture that enhances academic performance.

REFERENCES

1. Brown. (2001). *Teaching principles*. New York: [Publisher Not Specified].
2. Chomsky, N. (1967). The formal nature of language. In E. Lenneberg (Ed.), *Biological foundations of language* (pp. 59–83). New York: Wiley.
3. Fan, X., & Chan, L. (2001). *Parental involvement and students*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Farrant, J. S. (1980). *Principles and practice of education*. London: Longman.
5. Guranywa, A. (1995). *The role of school management on teachers' motivation*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.
6. Jackendoff, R. (1972). *Semantic interpretation in generative grammar*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
7. Katz, J. (1972). *Semantic theory*. New York: Harper & Row.
8. Katz, J. J., & Fodor, J. A. (1963). The structure of a semantic theory. *Language, 39*(2), 170–210. <https://doi.org/10.2307/411200>
9. Kumekpor, T. K. B. (2007). *Research methods and techniques of social research*. Accra, Ghana: Ghana Universities Press.
10. Lakoff, G. (1974). Interview with H. Parret. In H. Parret (Ed.), *Discussing language* (pp. 61–85). The Hague: Mouton.
11. Orodho, A. J. (2000). *Essentials of educational and social science research methods*. Nairobi, Kenya: Masola Publishers.
12. Orodho, A. J., & Kombo, D. K. (2002). *Research methods*. Nairobi, Kenya: Kenyatta University Institute of Open Learning.
13. Reche, G. N., Bundi, T. K., Riungu, J. N., & Mbugua, Z. K. (2012). Factors contributing to poor academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public primary schools in Mwimbi Division, Maara District, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Social Policy, 1*(1), 34–47.