Original Research Article

Assessment of possible causes of poor reading culture of secondary school students in Ugunja District, Siaya County, Kenya

Received 6 May, 2015 Revised 28 July, 2015 Accepted 30 July, 2015 Published 10 August, 2015

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This study was an assessment of the possible causes of poor reading culture of secondary school students in Ugunja District, Siaya County, Kenya. The study made use of 1284 form four students, 151 teachers, 15 head teachers and 1 District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (DQASO). Through simple random sampling 424 students and 45 teachers were randomized for the study. One DQASO and 15 head teachers equally made up the sample using saturated sampling procedure. Data were collected by use of questionnaire, interview and observation schedule. The findings of the study included among others lack of resources in terms of variety. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were put forward: stakeholders to provide reading resources like computer hardware and software for internet connectivity and variety of text books that can be read by different categories of students; employ more teachers to ensure that teachers have a manageable number of students to give quality service; and, teachers be frequently in-serviced to keep abreast with current trends in education.

Key words: Analysis, influence, resources, technology, reading culture.

INTRODUCTION

In the words of Thomas Carlyle, quoted by Mbae (2010): If we think about it, all that a university or final highest school can do for us is still but what the first school began doing....teach us how to read.

Reading is essential to the full participation in modern society. It adds quality to life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. Reading empowers and emancipates citizens, and it brings people together. We learn to read in various languages, in various sciences; we learn the alphabet and letters of all manners of books. But the place where we get knowledge, even theoretic knowledge is the books themselves.

A culture of reading is inextricably intertwined with the availability of books. The publishing industry in South Africa, just like in other African countries of which Kenya is no exception, is beset by shortage of capital and skills, less than adequate marketing and distribution structure, low levels of literacy and lack of a reading culture which in essence weakens across the entire book chain (Sisulu, 2004). As Mbae (2010) put it, majority of the people who consider themselves educated stopped reading the day they graduated from college or high school. Some apologists have blamed this on inadequate relevant literature; books written for Africans/Kenyans by Africans/Kenyans which are sensitive to their culture. But this kind of argument overlooks two important facts. First, there are many books which contain universal messages, books which address a message to all humanity regardless of their geographical, tribal, economic, social, religious or political background. Secondly, no one is an island. We live in a small village and we all need to know what happens to our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. This is the gap technology fills as people can read from the internet if physical books are not available. We are part and parcel of the larger world hence, the need to read and keep informed (ibid). Of the fifteen schools in Ugunja District, only two schools seem to have adequate books to read and therefore the need to assess possible causes of poor reading culture.

The importance of independent reading has been addressed by the Kenyan Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2001). The one barrier that still needs to be addressed
however is the question of access. When discussing independent reading in North America, or even in any developed nation (Glogowski, 2008), time is not spent thinking about access to appropriate materials. It is taken for granted that students have access to libraries, either in their schools or in the community. It is also known that their parents can purchase books or magazines. In Kenya, things are different. Efforts to encourage independent reading will be pointless if the students have no access to reading materials (Glogowski, 2008). Schools in the rural areas like those in Ugunja District have small libraries or book collections, most of which do not have supplementary reading materials except the recommended course books. These schools seem to be lacking supplementary books to read in terms of variety. The study therefore sets to find out whether this could have had an effect on the development of the culture of reading.

Children from poor backgrounds cannot buy books but are thirsty for them (Ojwang’ 2011). This is supported by Waller (1998) quoting from Asenath Bole Odaga, a well-known writer of children’s books, who said that reading culture is developing but the problem is poverty. Odaga further says that the largest segment of children’s book market is for schools. African book sales are so low that even an Achebe or a Ngugi cannot survive on these royalties alone, illiteracy, poverty, and a weak infrastructure contribute to low readership. Many researchers hold the view that schools, teachers, parents and the society should provide chances for children to access a large amount of books. The researcher in this study looks at physical resources and technology that support reading in the schools, their availability or unavailability with the aim of establishing whether they affect the development of the culture of reading.

As Sisulu (2004) pointed out majority of the population cannot afford books therefore libraries are even a necessity. However, public libraries in Kenya are not adequately patronized. This could be due to the fact that they lack books needed by the clients, or, they are insufficiently stocked. Majority of these libraries are stocked with old books which are also not adequate for the readers, hence the limitation of choice on what to read as experienced in Rambula Community Library which serves the whole of Ugunja District.

A massive continual or country investment in improving access to books through public institutions such as schools and libraries is not a luxury but a matter of absolute urgency. Acclaimed African historian, academician and writer, Paul Tujambe Zeleza underlined the urgency of such a project when he wrote;

Clearly books and libraries are not a developmental luxury but are essential, especially in our so-called information age where knowledge and information have acquired the materiality of capital and commodities whose uneven accumulation dictates the wealth and poverty of countries, communities and classes.

The government’s intent on imposing taxes on textbooks and other publications (Standard Editorial, 2011), will definitely widen the “knowledge divide” between the rich and the poor. This could be a big blow as the country is still struggling to promote good reading habits amongst children and the youth. Kenya being a country that is still suffering the ravages of a colonial system of education which consigned black people to an inferior education, a culture of reading is essential not only to cultural growth (in the broadest sense) but also to economic growth and development. Not enough materials are produced and those that are produced are not widely circulated within the region. It is with these in mind that resources that support reading are analyzed as a factor that influence the reading culture in Ugunja District; their availability or inadequacy.

As Leu (2000) noted, whatever the role of those charged with the responsibility of preparing children for their literacy future, the focus has almost been the books: publishers focus on the book in their products, teachers focus on the book in their lessons, teacher educators focus on the book in their classes, and scholars focus on the book in their research. However, technology offers new tools for effective literacy instruction and also expands the definition of 21st century literacy. As the International Reading Association’s position statement on literacy and technology explains, to become fully literate in today’s world, students must become proficient in the new literacy of information and communication technologies (ICT). Therefore, literacy educators have a responsibility to effectively integrate these technologies into their literacy curriculum. (IRA, 2001:27).

Educational researchers and practitioners alike (Means & Olson, 1995; Owston, 1997; Valdez et al., 1999) assert that the potential of new technologies for learning is likely to be found not in technologies themselves but in the way in which these technologies are used as tools for learning.

Audio books, sometimes known as books on tape, are professionally recorded unabridged versions of fiction or non-fiction books. They are available on regular audio cassettes or four-track cassettes that require a special cassette player. Audio books promote interest in reading and improve students’ comprehension of text. They have also been used by students who cannot read traditional printed books because of visual or physical handicaps. When used together with written texts, audio books help improve children’s reading skills. Children can listen to the audio version of a book and follow along silently with printed version. They can also guide practice in reading aloud the text in conjunction with the audio. The use of audio books with struggling, reluctant, 2nd language learners is powerful since they act as a scaffold that allows students to read above their actual level. These are very ideal in the inclusive settings of our classes which are being propagated.

Electronic books, also known as e-books, are electronic texts that are presented visually. Whether available in CD-ROM, the Internet, or special disks, electronic books always provide the text in a visual component. Some electronic books incorporate text enhancements, such as definition of words or background information on ideas. Others offer illustrations that complement the story. The downside of
Electronic books are that they can be viewed only with a computer or special palm-sized digital reader, as the text resolution is poor. In terms of their advantages, Anderson-Inman and Horney (1999) note that electronic books are searchable, modifiable (font sizes can be increased to meet the needs of the reader, especially those with low vision), and enhanceable with embedded resources (for example definitions and details). This therefore makes reading enjoyable as students can easily understand what they are reading. However, the researcher looks at this in relation to developing reading culture in general and such resources are lacking in schools in Ugunja District.

On-line texts are those that are available on the World Wide Web. With access to the Internet-connected computer, students can find a wide variety of free on-line reading materials, including books, plays, short stories, magazines, and reference materials. This benefit is especially useful for students in schools that have few resources for the acquisition of new books like those in Ugunja District. Electronic books and on-line texts are often equipped with hypermedia – links to text, data, graphics, audio, or video. As students read the text, they are able to click on the links to access definitions of words, additional information on concepts, illustrations, animations, and video – all of which can increase their understanding of the material. Research indicates that hypermedia software has positive effects on student learning and comprehension (Anderson-Inman and Horney, 1998; Anderson-Inman et al. 1994; Leu and Hilinger, 1994)

According to National Reading Panel report (2002), the addition of speech to print presented on computers may be a promising practice and that some students can benefit from the use of computer technology in reading instruction. It noted that computers may encourage students to interact instructionally with texts for greater amounts of time than they would with only conventional instruction. In literacy instruction, technology has both traditional and authentic uses (Singh & Means, 1994). A traditional use of technology is skills reinforcement, for example, students who need additional practice in reading might work individually on computers equipped with reading comprehension software. An authentic use of technology is using it as a tool to accomplish a complex task, for example, students who are creating a written report might use the Internet for research, word processing software to write and format the text, and hypermedia software to add images. Their study was similar to the researcher because both look at the benefits of technology in the school curriculum.

As noted by Alderson (2000), whereas newspapers and any other printed material date very quickly, the Internet is continuously updated, more visually stimulating as well as being interactive, therefore promoting a more active approach to reading rather than a passive one. From a more practical point of view, the Internet is a modern day reality, most students can use it and for teachers, there is easier access to endless amounts of different types of materials. It is with these in mind that this study sets out to assess possible causes of poor reading culture of Secondary School students in Ugunja District.

**Statement of the problem**

Poor reading habits among students are a problem of concern to educators because it impacts negatively on academic achievement. The high failure rate in examinations, the increase in student drop out rate, the problem of university students relying on hand-outs rather than doing their own research, are all affecting the country socially, economically and politically. The government effort in fighting illiteracy is being thwarted by students who neither read their prescribed textbooks nor for pleasure. Students lack role models both from home and school to encourage and motivate them to read as the groups rarely read for pleasure. Students' attitude towards reading is negative as they view reading as boring and majority would rather watch home videos than read. This is compounded by the fact that teachers teach for exams and mostly use rote methods when teaching to finish the syllabus. Such methods do not develop good readership in the learners. Reports from the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) indicate that application questions are mostly poorly performed. This could be attributed to the fact that such questions need understanding before candidates write their answers. Such can only be achieved if students love reading. This research is meant to assess possible causes of reading culture of secondary school students in Ugunja District, Siaya County, Kenya.

**Purpose of study**

The purpose of this study was to assess possible Causes of Poor Reading Culture of Secondary School Students in Ugunja District, Siaya County,

**Objectives of the study**

Objectives of this study were to:

a) Establish the type of resources used by teachers when teaching.
b) Determine the availability of supplementary readers in the schools.
c) Establish the use of technology as a reading resource in the schools.

**Research questions**

The following were the questions to the research study:

a) What are the types of resources used by teachers in the schools while teaching?
b) What are the types of supplementary readers available in the schools?
c) What is the level of technology used as a reading resource in the schools?

**Significance of the study**

The findings of this study may shed light on the state of
resources in the schools and the need to improve them to enhance learning. From this study teachers may design better ways of motivating students to like reading, not only for academic, but for pleasure too.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research design

This study employed a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey was used to gather accurate information on the types of resources used in the schools from the students, teachers and head teachers. As Orodho (2003) points out, descriptive survey design is more than just a collection of data since it involves measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation of data. This is what the study was involved in, hence the choice.

#### Location of study

The study was carried out in fifteen secondary schools in Ugunja District. Ugunja District is one of the districts found in Siaya County. The district was recently carved out of Ugenya District which up to 2008 was part of the giant Siaya District. Ugunja District is bound within the following latitudes and longitudes: 0°18'N33°58'E and 0°26'N 34°33'E. The district is densely populated. According to the 1999 National Census, the district had a population of 86,563 (ROK, 2002). It covers a total area of 163.1 km² which translates into 531 persons per square kilometre, making it one of the highly populated areas in Kenya, and this impact negatively on the available resources. Agriculture sector stimulates growth in the district and supplements efforts in reducing poverty through increased income generation. The district in the recent past recorded improved enrolment in both primary and secondary schools, especially after the inception of FPE and FSE in primary and secondary schools respectively. Educational infrastructure is funded mostly through CDF though parents are the main contributors.

#### Population, sample and sampling techniques

The study population consisted of 1284 Form 4 Students, 151 Teachers, 15 Head teachers in 15 secondary schools and 1 DQASO in Ugunja District.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 424 students and 45 teachers representing 33% of the study population respectively (Table 1). Simple random sampling was used because it is a technique in which every member has an equal chance of being selected (Orodho, 2003). Saturated sampling technique was used to select head teachers and District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Head teachers were chosen because being teachers and managers of the schools, they were in a better position to give guidance to teachers on how best to teach the students and guide students on better methods of study as they also provide the required resources that influence reading.

#### Research instruments

Instruments used in data collection were questionnaires, interview schedule, observation schedule and document analysis guide. The instruments are described below.

#### Questionnaires

Orodho (2003) observes that a questionnaire is widely used in research because it is possible to give similar or standardized questions to the subject. This makes it possible to compare responses from different subjects on the same questions. It is possible to reach distant subjects by either posting the questionnaire or delivering it to them personally. By using a questionnaire a researcher could guarantee anonymity to the subject and hence encourage them to give honest responses. This consequently increases the reliability of the instruments. A questionnaire was found appropriate due to the above reasons. In this research three questionnaires were used namely; Head teacher, Teacher and Student Questionnaires respectively.

The teachers' questionnaire was based on the state of the reading resources in terms of availability, viz; available and adequate, available but inadequate, and not available. Students' questionnaire employed Likert scale and had 5 points ranging from SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U- Undecided, D- Disagree to SD- Strongly Disagree. The Likert scale allowed for the researcher to solicit students' feelings about availability and use of the reading resources in the schools.

#### Interview schedule

The interview schedule for District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer covered questions on reading culture in...
the District. The researcher preferred to use this method because probing could be done to get more information from the DQASO. Also in situations where the given information was not clear, the researcher could ask for clarification. The researcher could also read the body language of the respondent to infer about some responses.

Observation schedule

This instrument was used to observe facilities crucial in developing reading culture in the secondary schools. Observation schedule was used to collect information on reading resources to facilitate inference on availability, motivation and attitude of students towards reading.

Document analysis guide

The researcher collected K.C.S.E examination results for the years 2007-2010 from the Kenya National Examination Council on all the schools visited. The results were to enable the researcher come up with a conclusion as to whether the general performance in Ugunja District is good or otherwise. This is because reading is the core of the curriculum. The document was obtained from the DEO's office, Ugunja.

Reliability of instruments

To measure the consistency of the results from the research, a pilot study was carried out in 2 secondary schools out of the 15 schools. 128 students and 15 teachers and 2 head teachers were selected by simple random sampling who formed 10% of the population that were not part of the sample (Hopkin, 2000). The reliability of students’, teachers’ and head teachers’ questionnaire was determined by use of Cronbach’s alpha formula for internal consistency of the instruments and Cronbach alpha of 0.7 and above (α ≥ 0.7) was accepted in this study in line with Gray’s (1987:234) recommended threshold. In this study, alpha formula was selected as the appropriate method because it involved a rating of scale with five options. The results yielded an alpha level of 7.1 as the coefficient of reliability of students’ questionnaire, 0.74 for teachers’ questionnaire and 0.75 for head teachers’ questionnaire. The values were high enough to consider the instruments as reliable since they were above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Gray, 1987).

Validity

Validity according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. This study relied on face and content validity of procedures to establish that the instruments measured what they were supposed to measure. To check on both face and content validity of the research instruments, the instruments were assessed by experts in the research content area at Maseno University. The intention was to rid the instruments of unclear selection, vocabulary, sentence structures that might be too difficult, poorly constructed test items inappropriate for the outcomes being assessed.

Data collection procedures

Before the process of data collection begun in the respective secondary schools in Ugunja District, the researcher secured a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, through the School of Graduate Studies (S.G.S.) of Maseno University. The research permit is attached as Appendix G. The researcher then took copies of the research permit to the District Education Officer (DEO) and District Commissioner (DC) Ugunja, and was then given permission by the two officers to move to the schools. The DC provided the researcher with a letter of introduction (attached as Appendix H) which enabled her to get the necessary information from the schools. The researcher then distributed the letters to the head teachers of the schools for the purpose of the study. This was done each time the schools were visited for distribution of questionnaires and appointment for collection of the same given. The questionnaires were delivered to the schools in person by the researcher. It gave the researcher opportunity to clarify the items the respondents did not understand. It also allowed the researcher to gain acquaintance with teachers so as to make a comeback if more information was required.

The teachers gave out the questionnaires to the students after the researcher had delivered them at their convenience to avoid interfering with class time. All the questionnaires were collected after one week to give the respondents’ time and not hurry over the questions. During the visit to the schools the researcher checked the inventories used to record books borrowed from the libraries or resource rooms. The books available were also checked including the size of the room and the researcher asked the attendant the capacity of the students who can comfortably read in the designated rooms. Interview with DQASO was conducted by the researcher on the agreed date.

Data analysis procedures

Data collected through questionnaire was grouped into categories. It was then analyzed by use of inferential and descriptive statistics which includes frequencies, means and percentages. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies were used to enable the researcher to come up with clear counts concerning the responses. Although open-ended questions were few, responses got from them were coded. Once the code was completed, the responses were transferred into numbers. This was then tallied to establish the frequencies, which were then converted into percentages. To determine the frequencies of the
responses, the number of respondents giving similar answers was converted to illustrate levels of opinion. This enabled the researcher to arrive at valid conclusions about the research objectives.

Tables and figures were used in organizing and summarizing the research findings. The use of tables was adopted for the analysis and presentation of figures, which could not be made in narrative form to be presented. As Karake (1998) highlights, tables make it possible for patterns within figures that cannot be seen in narrative form to be realized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reading resources used in schools

In relation to reading resources used in the schools, the following question was being posed: to what extent are the reading resources available in the schools? Table 2 is a representation of the availability of resources in the schools.

The resources are given by names. In the table the frequency and percentage denote available and adequate, available but inadequate and, not available as got from the responses in the questionnaires. Available and adequate denote a situation in which a particular resource is there and in the right quantity for use by the students and teachers in a school. Available but inadequate means that the particular resource is there but the number is low for the students to effectively use. This is where the resource can be shared by more than three students hence; the ratio is more than 1:3 which is recommended as in text book use. Not available denotes a state in which the resource is not there for use in the schools.

For purposes of discussion the resources were categorized into two: physical resources and technologies that support reading. Physical resources comprise of students’ text books, teachers’ guide, periodicals story books and library; and, technologies which support reading comprise of computer laboratory, computer hardware and computer software.

Physical resources that support reading

From Table 2, it can be seen that in all the schools students’ text books and teachers’ guide are available and adequate. These are denoted by 76% and 78% of the teachers respectively. However, from the observation schedule used the researcher realized that they were just a particular type of text books used in the schools (by Kenya Literature Bureau) as the recommended course books. There was no variety to allow teachers and students to change as situation would allow. This is what brings monotony because these are the same books students have been reading throughout the time they have been in school. It is therefore little wonder, as Mbae (2004) says that some students at the completion of the cycle of education make a bonfire, burn their school text books and celebrate the end of their enslavement because the sight of books conjures ugly memories. The books were lacking in variety which could allow students to change as often as they would wish when it comes to reading.

From the table, periodicals and story books were found to be available but inadequate. This was indicated by 64% and 84% teachers respectively. Periodicals like newspapers, magazines and journals if any are mainly read by teachers as they are mostly put in staffrooms. Students may only get them after some days, making them not keep abreast with what is happening elsewhere. This goes against what Mbae (2010) said,

We live in a small village and we all need to know what happens to our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. We are part and parcel of the larger world, hence the need to read and keep informed.

Bearing in mind that in many schools only one copy of such a resource can be availed at any given time, not many students can get them to read at once. Newspapers and journals are kept in the staffroom when bought in schools without libraries and taken to the resource rooms once teachers are through with reading. This limits the students’ chances of reading and more so when variety is considered.

The two resources (periodicals and story books) supplement reading in schools and they are what can promote leisure reading. Leisure reading helps in developing a culture of reading and so if the resources are inadequate then it means that students mostly rely on course books for reading as they are in plenty in schools (76% and 78% for students and teachers respectively). Availability of story books in schools is a motivating factor for students to read, more so if they are of different types. This supports what OECD (2002) in its research found out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Available and Adequate f (%)</th>
<th>Available but inadequate f (%)</th>
<th>Not available f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students text books</td>
<td>322 (76)</td>
<td>220 (53)</td>
<td>17 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' guide</td>
<td>331 (78)</td>
<td>208 (49)</td>
<td>13 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>216 (51)</td>
<td>284 (67)</td>
<td>68 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals eg newspapers, magazines</td>
<td>187 (44)</td>
<td>271 (64)</td>
<td>102 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story books</td>
<td>153 (36)</td>
<td>356 (84)</td>
<td>55 (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=424)
that students who are active readers tend to gain in terms of both motivation and experience from reading regularly outside the context of school work. It therefore means that students are limited in getting knowledge as books are the main source of knowledge. This in essence confirms what Ojwang’ (2011) said that our students, more so those from poor backgrounds like in Ugunja District, are thirsty for books but the books are not there. Schools lack reading materials and books for children. Without adequate resources we cannot expect reading culture to be developed and this trend will continue unless the current situation in the schools is changed so that students have reading resources to be able to read for pleasure, and not just for purposes of passing of exams.

From Table 2 the physical resources that support reading like libraries were found to be available but inadequate as pointed out by 67% of the teachers. During the visit to the schools the researcher found out that only two schools in the District which account for 13% of the schools have a library, and this was also corroborated by the DQASO. The rest of the schools have resource rooms that do not qualify for libraries where books are stored and from there they are borrowed during designated time per class. However, reading does not take place in such rooms save for a few teachers who can be allowed in. Some schools were also found to have rooms that can only accommodate a single class at any given time though with limited resources. Inadequacy of libraries is testimony that reading resources (books) are also inadequate as schools can only strive to buy them once there is a safe place to store them. What other place would that be if not a library? This is very much in line with students’ views (85.5%) that all schools should have libraries which are well equipped as such are lacking. As Sisulu (2004) pointed out, libraries form the bedrock of a strong reading culture. This is what Paul Tujambe Zeleza foresaw when he wrote that books and libraries are not a developmental luxury but are essential, especially in our information age where knowledge and information have acquired the materiality of capital and commodities that dictate the wealth and poverty of countries, communities and classes. Libraries will be of no use if they are not equipped with relevant books, otherwise they will not be patronized.

**Technologies that Support Reading**

From the findings computer laboratories, computer hardware and software are not available in the schools. This was given by 67%, 67% and 64% of the students for the respective resource. During the visit to the schools by the researcher only two schools in Ugunja District were found to have the resources. It is the same schools that were found to be offering Computer Studies to their students and the subject is examinable at KCSE level. Technology is known to motivate students to read and it is no wonder that the same schools seem to do better in exams compared to the others in the District (Table 3). This therefore validates McLester’s (2001) argument that the availability of information technology to the literate and the opportunity to use critical analysis in dealing with modernity provides conducive environment for individuals to enhance their potentials. This clearly shows that these resources help the students to get reading materials that their counterparts who do not have them cannot get. The DQASO (11th May, 2011) however reported that there are organizations that are partnering with Ministry of Education in equipping some schools in Ugunja District with computers. There are some schools targeted for this and once done something positive will come from it in terms of academics. It is hoped that once this is accomplished there will be positive change in terms of reading.

Availability of computers without Internet connectivity would not be of much help to the learners. This is because as pointed out by Alderson (2000), that where as newspapers and many other print-out materials date very quickly, the Internet is continuously updated, more visually stimulating as well as being interactive, therefore promoting a more active approach to reading rather than a passive one. From the Internet students can get a variety of books to read beyond what is given within the confines of the four walls of the library. This therefore means that scarcity of reading resources can no longer be a problem to schools with Internet connectivity as students can at the touch of a button get to read information from the world over, justifying Mbae’s (2010) assertion that the world is a small village.

With inclusive education that is being propagated the world over, it means that schools should prepare to have all categories of learners in the classroom. Learners with visual impairments cannot read texts like other sighted learners. It is only by embracing the use of technology in the classrooms that schools will ensure that they do not lack reading resources. This is where technology becomes handy as the learners who are totally blind can use audio or talking books (Beers, 1998). Because electronic books can

**Table 3. Availability of Technologies that support reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Available and adequate f (%)</th>
<th>Available but inadequate f (%)</th>
<th>Not available f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer laboratory</td>
<td>114 (27)</td>
<td>170 (40)</td>
<td>284 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer hardware</td>
<td>68 (16)</td>
<td>216 (51)</td>
<td>284 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>55 (13)</td>
<td>216 (56)</td>
<td>271 (64)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=424)
be modifiable to increase font sizes, searchable and enhanceable as said by Anderson-Inman and Horney (1999) they can meet the needs of different categories of learners in an inclusive setting. All these are possible where there is availability of computers. Schools therefore have a responsibility to provide such resources to ensure that students can effectively use them. This will make them literate, as noted by Leu (2000) that the meaning of literacy in the 21st century has changed. You are considered literate if you can confidently make use of technology.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Reading resources used in schools

The study revealed that only two schools in Ugunja District have libraries. Majority (13) of the schools do have resource rooms only where some books are stored, and from where students can borrow. From the findings students make good use of the libraries where they are available. However, in almost all of the schools the main resource that was found to be available and adequate is students’ text books and teachers’ guide. For reading culture to be developed, there is need for a variety of reading materials available to the students which they can read and exchange frequently. A library provides a quiet reading environment which can help the students develop the habit of reading. There is therefore need for all the schools to have a library with well stocked reading materials to ensure that students can get the genre they need.

Supplementary readers in the schools

In most of the schools supplementary readers that students could read during leisure time were found to be scarce. Periodicals (e.g. newspapers, magazines) which supplement what teachers use were found to be inadequate in the schools. Schools can come up with different ways of acquiring supplementary readers like organising book collection for the school, or insisting that students bring a supplementary reader to the school as they join form one. These form part of the library books as schools also source for them on their own. Daily newspapers and magazines that come out monthly and weekly should also be put in the library as they form part of reference materials even at a later date.

Technologies that support reading

Computer hardware and software, which are the technologies that support reading, were found not to be available in most of the schools except two where Computer Studies is taken as a subject.

For reading culture to be developed there is need to have reading resources that students and any other person that is interested in reading can use for purposes of getting information, to be educated and to deter them from some vices in the society. But it is not a question of having reading resources; the resources should be adequate and varied which would allow the readers to make choices on what they would want to read. This is what is lacking in most of the schools and so students cannot be blamed for not developing a reading culture. This starts with the availability of reading resources in the schools. The only community library available in the district cannot adequately serve the clients because it is small and the books are equally not enough. Technology bridges the gap where books are not available and so there is need for the schools to invest in technology to ensure that current information and problem of variety is addressed.

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