The State of Reading in Tertiary Institutions: A Pragmatic Analysis of a Ghanaian University

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ABSTRACT: *Positive attitude towards learning, ability to independently think and work, ability to inquire, good command over English language are often considered characteristics of a tertiary education student. To excel, the student must be able to read and make meaning out of what is read as reading underlies all forms of academic study and is crucial to academic success (Grabe, 2009). This study investigated the state of reading among tertiary education students. The sequential explanatory mixed method design was employed for the study. Systematic and convenient sampling techniques were used to sample 1169 students from which data was sought through the use of questionnaire and observation check list. Data was analysed using both descriptive (frequency counts, means and standard deviation) and inferential (t-test and ANOVA) statistics. The study findings indicated the existence of poor reading attitude among tertiary education students as the reading culture of majority of the students was the reading of their course materials only. To improve reading habits among tertiary students, recommendations provided include: sensitization of lecturers and students, giving tasks that require students to read beyond their course materials and presentation of greater sections of courses through individual and group presentation to enhance their development of good and critical reading skills and ensure improvement in their reading habits.*

KEY WORDS: reading, reading culture, reading attitude, reading habits, tertiary education students.

INTRODUCTION

Ghana is one of the developing countries that has adopted English language as the lingua franca (official language). The teaching of English Language therefore remains a priority at all levels of education in Ghana; basic schools, secondary, and tertiary. The importance and prevalence of English language therefore cannot be over emphasized since learning and mastering it becomes a necessity for Ghanaian students learning English as a second language (NaCCA, 2019). Reading is regarded as the most vital skill for students; consequently, it is believed that the more one reads, the more one learns. In the tertiary environment where students are expected to do a lot of readings

on their own and from varied sources, it is expected of students to be able to value reading as the construction of the meaning of text (Schellings, Aarnoutse, and Leeuwe, 2006). Researchers all over have agreed that reading comprehension is an essential skill that enables students to acquire knowledge and paves the way for any good education. If readers read without comprehension, the aim of reading is not fulfilled. Reading has been a major element or skill in the study of language and other disciplines in the academic field. Without reading, ideas and facts stored up in printed materials and electronic sources cannot be tapped. Reading is indispensable in education. Students' achievements in schools largely depend on their ability to read and understand texts well. It is for this reason that one of the aims of education is learning to read. According to Mahmoud (2015), reading is the complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to derive meaning. It is a form of language processing. Reading in English language plays a very vital role in the teaching and learning of all subjects thus assisting learners to learn new ideas and concepts. In formal education, reading plays an essential role in both the instructor and the learner's lives owing to the fact that both of them are able to transform their thoughts and understanding about learning through reading a written material.

In tertiary education settings like the university, facilitators are able to assess learners mostly by reading what they write; students are also able to understand written instructions and questions in an examination through reading. Therefore, the essence of reading cannot be over emphasized as far as reading in English language in tertiary education in multilingual settings is concerned. As language is decoded and meaning is recreated, reading may also be understood as a psycholinguistic process involving the interplay of languages and cognition. The benefits of a positive reading attitude cannot be exaggerated as it provides an individual's welfare, social progress and international understanding; provides skill, knowledge and right attitude; frees one from boredom. Harmer (2007) states that reading is fruitful not only for careers, study, and pleasure, but for language acquisition. He further states that reading provides a good model for English writing, provides opportunities to study vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation, and demonstrates the way to construct sentences, paragraphs, and whole texts.

Reading is fundamental to learning, for this reason, reading researchers concur that reading underlies all forms of academic study and is crucial to academic success (Grabe, 2009). The various types of reading, such as reading for pleasure, skimming or reading to learn, all contribute to learning (Grabe, 2009). Reading for pleasure also complements formal reading instruction in the classroom and increases reading comprehension skills. However, given the 21st-century over-dependence on electronic devices, a number of university students in Ghana have not, and still do not, read for pleasure, as evidenced in a study by Anigbogu (2006). Paucity of resources and reading materials has worsened the culture of reading among a number of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. These students do not experience joy and pleasure or personal satisfaction when reading and, consequently, have not developed positive reading habits. As a result, when students are faced with the quantity and level of reading required at tertiary level, they are overwhelmed (Owusu-Acheaw, 2014). As a detailed process that includes comprehension,

word recognition, engagement, and fluency, reading is one of the language acquisition skills. The absence of this skill retards the development and function of an individual. This is because reading helps readers to gain pleasure and information through the reading of materials such as newspapers, books, journals, magazines, WhatsApp messages and other internal presentations. Also, reading is the tool that we use in finding knowledge and in assessing the already acquired knowledge to broaden our imaginations and achievements in all disciplines in tertiary institutions. The nature of reading in tertiary institution is therefore of a great importance as a pre-requisite for promoting academic success among students.

Statement of the Problem
For an academic performance, there is the need for students to cultivate effective reading and studying habits. It is however sad to note that the mass and social media appear to have contributed to poor reading among students. Beyond this, the by-products of scientific and technological inventions have adversely contributed to the declining standard of active reading among students (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2014). A body of research (for example, Horst, 2005; Savas, 2009) has shown the enormous benefits of extensive reading in improving reading proficiency. According to Savas (2009), English courses for tertiary education may not meet the needs of students fully, or maximise the improvement of language and reading proficiency, and would have to be complemented with extensive reading. Many researchers have conducted research on reading at various levels of education across the globe however, extensive reading is lacking in many reading programmes (Grabe 2009) and more so at the tertiary level. Studies on extensive reading at university level are minimal, especially studies pertaining to second language speakers (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). Hence, this study explores the state of reading in the Faculty of Educational Studies (FES) of University of Education, Winneba (UEW).

Every course of study is accomplished partly through reading as reading is an indispensable tool of learning. However, reading as a practice and an art has tended to diminish mainly because perhaps, the general expectations of these students reading ability have not been met but it must be noted that students have a key role to play for them to succeed academically. Required information, skill and more information can be acquired through reading especially in the tertiary environment. The central position that reading occupies in higher education is so widely accepted that it scarcely needs to be stated: considering the fact that, in some varieties of English, 'reading' a subject is synonymous with 'studying' a subject. Assigned reading from textbooks, journals and in modern times the internet, is a pervasive feature of university studies and is a source of student learning alongside lectures and coursework. The importance that university teachers accord to the use of textbooks is attested by the coverage given in teacher resource materials to questions such as how to motivate students to read, their reading strategies and the role of reading in courses (Davis, 2009).

Given the poor reading instruction in a number of schools, print-poor environment at home and lack of emphasis on reading at school level, a number of students in Ghana's tertiary institutions

do not only lack appropriate reading strategies but also have low motivation and little or no love for reading (Owusu-Acheaw, 2014). Thus, without adequate levels of reading proficiency, students are not adequately equipped for academic literacy requirements at the tertiary level. As a result, teaching and learning in the tertiary institution is faced with endless problems on the part of the learners due to their non-mastery of the skills implicit in reading (Fatirora, Oyekola, Hameed & Oseni, 2017). The substantial body of literature on reading in tertiary education includes studies of the correspondence (or lack thereof) between students' reading abilities and the texts they are asked to read (Fuller, Horlen, Cisneros, & Merz, 2007). Some works have been done on reading at university. Among them, Feito and Donahue (2008) studied students' annotations in assigned texts, Mann (2000) explored students' varying engagement with reading, Parry (1996) investigated how students' sociocultural backgrounds contribute to their reading strategies and Taillefer (2005) and He (2008) examined reading strategies among university students. As lecturers in the universities have high expectations of students' ability to cope with the demands of reading in par with complains about students' inability to develop good reading habits this paper investigates the state of reading among students of FES, UEW.

Purpose of the study

The study seeks to investigate the state of reading in tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study seeks to**:**

1. Investigates the reading attitude among students in the Faculty of Educational Studies, University of Education, Winneba.
2. Find out ways Faculty of Educational Studies students read.

Research Questions

The study aimed to answer the following research questions;

1. What is the reading attitude among students of the Faculty of Educational Studies, University of Education, Winneba.
1. In what ways do Faculty of Educational Studies students read?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.5 significant confidence interval.

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference between Gender and the reading attitude of FES students.

H_{02}: There is no statistically significant difference between age and the reading attitude of FES students

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant difference between department of affiliation and the reading attitude of FES students.

H_{04}: There is no statistically significant difference between the level and the reading attitude of FES students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Concept of Reading
Reading as one of the skills of literacy is the defense against solitude. It is man's pane into life as it conveys the past and the future into the present. Reading provides experience through which the individual may expand his horizons of knowledge, identity; extend and intensify his interests to gain deeper understanding of himself (Chettri, & Rout, 2013). Reading is the position of the utmost character that helps to pass on knowledge and virtue through ages. Reading has undergone tremendous changes in meaning and understanding over the years. The classical definition of reading as the extraction of visual information from a given symbol or code has informed various meanings. Quadri & Abomoge (2013) refer to reading as a key to wealth of experience that links people in a way far beyond distance or time. It can be inferred thus, that reading creates remarkable experience that unlocks the gate of success to a student. It is an important skill for learners to be able to cope with the advancing world. Reading is a conscious literacy process that influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as attitudes, beliefs and judgment of a reader (Chettri, & Rout, 2013). Reading boosts the quality of life, reinforces and merges people together in a unifying force.

Martino (2016), defines reading as a cognitive process that involves decoding symbols to arrive at meaning. Reading with purpose helps a reader to direct information towards a goal and focus his attention (Cheyenne, 2018). Language was presented with symbols but it is difficult to see how sensible it will be, if people toiled just for the sake of the symbols. The real intention was that people would look at the symbol and interpret them for the ideas they present and this process is termed as 'reading'. Reading is decoding and understanding written text (Cline, Johnstone & King, 2006; Baidoo, 2003). Decoding requires translating the symbols of written systems (including braille) into the spoken words they represent while understanding is determined by the purposes for reading. The context, the nature of the text, and the readers' strategies and knowledge (Cline, Johnstone & King, 2006) are factors that aid reading. In view of this, readers who can activate prior knowledge, determine the main ideas and significant details, efficiently decode words, make inferences, retell, synthesize, and visualize have developed a repertoire of reading skills (Serravallo & Goldberg, 2007).

In furtherance to the definitions reading is projected as the process where by a mind with nothing to operate on but the symbols of the readable matter, and with no help from outside, elevates itself by the power of its own operations (Dianna, Van & Bleskom, 2010; Martino, 2016). Hafner (2008) says reading is a process of looking at written language, symbols, converting them into speech symbols and then manipulating them so that both direct and implied ideas intended by the author

may be understood. Contributing to the discussion, Tsadidey (2002) defines reading as the ability of an individual to hold converse with written material or to get a message that has been set out in a specific code and to Chamber (2007), reading is the recognition of words for which certain combinations of letters bring about a correct recall. It includes the whole gamut of thinking responses, feeling and defining some needs, identifying solutions for meeting the need, selecting from alternative means, experimenting with choice, rejecting or retaining the chosen route and retaining some means of evaluating the result. Reading is not merely a physical or visual contact with symbols but a way of decoding, interpreting or making meaning from the symbols (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2003).

Reading Attitudes in Tertiary Institutions
Reading is an activity-oriented skill involving the mechanics of the brain and the combination of other organs before comprehension occurs. Reading would become a habit when regularly done. Cultivating the habit of reading arouses one's personal growth and social progress in general as well as academic and professional development. This habit is usually considered in relation to the amount of materials read, the frequency of reading and also the average time spent on reading (Wagner, 2002). Reading habit depicts the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and tastes of reading (Chettri & Rout, 2013). An individual structures his/her reading in a way that suits his tastes. The activity of reading is considered a habit when done repeatedly and Shen (2006) explains further by categorizing reading as how often, how much and what a student reads at a particular time. Reading, which is a long-term habit from an early age, is the prominent gateway to the knowledge space. It can be viewed as a practice that helps individuals gain creativity and develop their critical thinking skills. In this sense, the reading habit is an important tool for the development of the personality and intellectual abilities of the individual. In addition to personal and intellectual development, reading provides access to social, economic and civic life (Shen, 2006). In addition, all reading patterns related to emotional responses increase individuals' emotional satisfaction.

Extensive Reading
Extensive reading can be generally equated to reading to get information. Thus, readers read extensively occasionally to keep themselves abreast with events around them (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2003). Magazines, journals, newspaper and story books are generally meant for extensive reading with an objective to broaden the horizon of one's knowledge. Extensive reading is also referred to as pleasure reading (Day & Bamford, 2009), sustained silent reading (Garan & DeVooged, 2008) or free reading (Krashen, 2004). It is encouraging to note that this form of reading is receiving attention as an effective reading instruction for L2 learners (Grabe 2009). Extensive reading instruction requires of students to read large quantities of texts for general understanding and for pleasure (Grabe 2009). According to Anyaegbu (2016), library is one of the resources that can stimulate and develop the reading habit of students and plays a vital role in promoting reading. Reading is individualized and independent, but students can discuss common texts in a group or as a community. Extensive reading helps students to build reading speed and reading fluency in

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order to better understand language and to ensure this, students are given the option to select texts based on their own interest and proficiency level (Kirin, Poolsap & Plongthong, 2012). Whereas intensive reading (IR) aims to develop students' reading skills explicitly by teaching strategies, extensive reading encourages reading of comprehensible texts for pleasure.

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm
The pragmatic paradigm was used for this study. The study represents the pragmatic paradigm in that it utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data, uses knowledge based on participants' subjective views as depicted in the results of the interview and acknowledges the interpretation of the researcher in consonance with that of the participants and biases present in the study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This paradigm aims at finding and reinforcing the weaknesses in the study by using the mix method approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

With this approach, all types of data are obtained at the same time as one type plays a more significant role in the study than another. In this study, the dominant research approach for the study was quantitative and supported by qualitative data.

The mixed method's sequential explanatory design that consists of two distinct quantitative and qualitative phases (Creswell, 2014) was employed. Within this design, first, quantitative numeric data is collected and analysed followed by the qualitative text data collected and subsequently analysed in the sequence. The study's first phase consisted of a quantitative description of the nature of reading in tertiary institutions. A comprehensive qualitative study then accompanied the quantitative results that explained the initial quantitative results, such as significant results, outlier results, or unexpected results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The quantitative method received greater emphasis than the qualitative method because the qualitative method is to clarify and elaborate on the quantitative results collected in the first phase. The quantitative data in this study is to investigate the state of reading in tertiary institution and to answer the research questions of the study. Some respondents were selected as participants for the second qualitative phase in order to improve the researcher's understanding of the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

This study was carried out in FES, UEW. The target population included all 4676 students in the faculty. Out of the target population, 1169 students representing 25% of the population were sampled using systematic sampling technique. The sample consisted Department of Early Childhood Education (213), Department of Basic Education (422), Department of Special Education (383), Department of Counseling and Psychology (110), Department of Educational Foundations (12) and Department of Educational Administration (29). A convenience sampling technique was employed to sample six (6) students for the qualitative phase of the study because participants must be willing and available to participate (Creswell, 2015).

Questionnaire and observation checklist were used to collect data to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses. A 20-item structured questionnaire on what, when, where, how and why students read was administered. In all, 1200 questionnaires were distributed to students and out of this number, 1169 were returned. This represents a return rate of 97.4% of the total number of questionnaires distributed. The observation checklist was made up of fifteen (15) reading indicators. The questionnaire was constructed and validated using Cronbach Alpha method of establishing reliability coefficient, with a reliability coefficient of 0.78. According to Joppe (2016), a Cronbach alpha coefficient of at least 0.70 is indicative of reliability.

The data was checked for accuracy and then entered into the computer and transformed. Statistical Package and Service Solution (SPSS) version 20 was used to describe the basic features of the data. Simple tables, figures, percentages and frequencies, mean and standard deviation were used to organize, present, analysed and answer the research question and test the hypotheses. Inferential statistics such as the independent sample t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the research hypotheses. The qualitative data was analysed using rating ranged from 1 (not observed) to 2 (observed).

Data Analysis and findings

Analysis of Respondents Biographic Information

Table 1: Gender of Respondent

Gender of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Female	632	54.1
Male	537	45.9
Total	**1169**	**100.0**

Table 1 presents the results of the demographic information of the respondents. The results show that 632 (54.1%) of the respondents were females and 537 (45.9%) were males. The results show that the number of females outnumbered the number of males by 95. This implies that the majority of the respondents who took part in the study were females.

Table 2: Age Range of Respondents

Age Range of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Below 21 years	132	11.3
21-30 years	536	45.9
31-40 years	336	28.7
41-50 years	165	14.1
Total	**1169**	**100**

Table 2 shows that 132(11.3%) of the respondents were below 21 years, 536 (45.9%) were between the age range 21-30 years while 336 (28.7%) were 31 to 40 years. The number of respondents who were above within the age range 41-50 years were 165 (14.1%). The results imply that majority of the respondents were between 21-30 years.

Table 3: Department of Respondents

Department of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Basic Education	422	36.1
Special Education	383	32.8
Early Childhood Education	213	18.2
Counseling and Psychology	110	9.4
Educational Foundation	12	1.0
Educational Administration	29	2.5
Total	**1169**	**100**

Table 3 indicates that 422 (36.1%) of the respondents were from the Department of Basic Education, 383 (32.8%) were from the Department of Special Education, and 213 (18.2%) were from the Department of Early Childhood Education. The number of respondents from the Department of Counseling and Psychology were 110 (9.4%), 12 (1.0%) from the Department of Educational Foundation and 29 (2.5%) from the Department of Educational Administration. The results imply that majority of the respondents were from the Department of Basic Education while few of the respondents were from the Department of Educational Foundation and Educational Administration.

Table 4: Academic Level of Respondents

Level of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Level 100	222	19.0
Level 200	215	18.4
Level 300	340	29.1
Level 400	192	16.4
Level 800	100	8.6
Level 900	100	8.6
Total	**1169**	**100**

Source: Field Data, 2022

Table 4 shows that the number of level 100 students who took part in the study were 222 (19.0%), 215 (18.4%) were level 200 students, and 340 (29.1%) were level 300 students. The level 400 students were represented by 192 (16.4%), level 800 were 100 (8.6%) and level 900 students were

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100 (8.6%). The results show that majority of the respondents were in level three hundred and are expected to have developed positive reading attitude or habits.

Analysis of Main Data

The results for the analysis of the main data. The results of the main data are presented according to the research questions formulated for the study. The analyses and discussion in this section were done to answer the research questions and to test the research hypotheses.

1. *Research Question 1:* **What is the reading attitude among students of Faculty of Educational Studies, UEW?**

The purpose of this research question was to find out the reading attitude of tertiary education students. The data was analysed with mean and standard deviation and presented in Table 5. A mean score of 3.0-5.0 indicates agreement to a positive statement while a mean score of below 3.0 indicates disagreement. Conversely, a mean score of 3.0-5.0 indicates disagreement to a negative statement while a mean score of below 3.0 indicates agreement. However, a standard deviation of below 1.0 indicates the homogeneity (similarity) in responses while a standard deviation of 1.0 and above indicates the heterogeneity (difference) in responses.

The descriptive statistics of the reading attitude of Students in the Faculty of Educational Studies, UEW showed that majority of the respondents agreed (M= 4.6, SD= .70) that they are more interested in reading their class notes. The standard deviation of .70 shows that the responses are homogeneous and reflect the true reading attitude of students. This statement recorded the highest mean score and interestingly, the responses to this statement were similar. Also, majority of the respondents agreed (M=4.5, SD=.68) that they rarely go the library. Existing literature argues that library is one of the resources that can stimulate and develop the reading habit of students and it plays a vital role in promoting reading (Anyaegbu, 2016). Interestingly, the findings of this study show that students rarely go to the library. This matter needed serious redress since students are expected to make good use of the library to get further information on course content and also develop their horizon. Again, the standard deviation of .68 shows the homogeneity of student responses to the statement.

When students were asked to rank their agreement or disagreement to the statement "I read outside my course materials", majority of them agreed (M=4.2; SD=1.06). However, the standard deviation of 1.06 shows that the responses differ. This implies that the responses of students seem not to be the true representation of this statement. Responding to the statements "I spend less than an hour reading every day" and "I read only as the need arises", majority of respondents agreed (M= 4.2; SD=.86) and (M=4.1, SD= .91) respectively. The standard deviations of .86 and .91 show that the responses were homogeneous. Similarly, the mean and standard deviation of the statement "I read mostly for class assignments" had a mean and standard deviation of

4.0 and .83. This indicates that majority of respondents agreed to the statement and the responses from students do not differ.

Similarly, majority of the students agreed (M=3.9, SD=.72) that they read to keep up with current affairs. The standard deviation score of .72 shows the similarity in the responses. Again, the responses of students were homogeneous or did not differ from each other. I often read towards end of semester examinations and quizzes and the library is my favorite reading place", had mean scores and standard deviation scores of (M=3.6, SD=1.12; M= 3.5, SD=1.15, and M=3.5, SD= 1.27) respectively. The standard deviation scores of (1.12, 1.15 and 1.27) shows that students have different reading attitude.

Responding to the statement, "I find time to read newspapers, magazines and other materials of general interest", the students disagreed (M=2.7, SD=1.28). The standard deviation of 1.28 shows that the responses were not similar to each other. Similarly, majority of students disagreed to the "I prefer reading on my smart phone to printed text" and "I read textbooks from various fields" had a mean and standard deviation of (M=2.4, SD=.03; and M= 2.1, SD =.96) respectively. This means that students do not prefer reading on my smart phone to printed text and do not read textbooks from various field. This confirms students' response that they are more interested in reading their class notes. The standard deviation score .03 and .96 show that the responses were similar.

Responding to the statements, "I do not read to research specific topics of interest", majority of students agreed (M=2.0, SD=.77). The standard deviation score of .77 shows that there exists similarity in students' responses. Majority of students agreed (M=2.0, SD=.68) that they do not read at their hostel/house every day. This implies that students engage in other activities aside reading in their hostel every day. Similarly, majority of students agreed (M=1.9, SD = .66) that they are not interested in reading materials that are technology related. The standard deviation score of .66 indicates the similarity in responses of students. Also, the mean and standard deviation of the statement "I do not like reading romance/emotional related materials" were (M= 1.7, SD= .81). Again, there was general agreement to this statement. The statement "I do not read on daily basis" had a mean and standard deviation of (M= 1.7, SD=.83). This means that majority of the students agreed to the statement. The standard deviation of .83 shows the similarity in students' response to the statement. Results indicated that majority of the students agreed (M=1.1, SD=.56 that they do not read for entertainment. The standard deviation of .56 means the responses of the students were homogeneous; that is, they did not differ. Responding to the statement. Majority of the students agreed (M=3.6, SD=.90) that they do not like reading materials on sports/games/betting. The standard deviation score of .90 shows the homogeneity of students' responses. Finally, the statements, "I do not read library materials" had a mean and standard deviation of 1.1 and .63 respectively. Students' response to this statement was similar. The similarity of the responses was evident in the standard deviation score of .63. This response did

not come as a surprise as the results revealed that majority of students read their course notes and rarely go to the library.

The discussions indicate that majority of FES students have negative reading attitude. This must be of concern to all as students at this level are required to do both intensive and extensive reading in order to excel in their studies and academic activities. Anyaegbu (2016) revealed that students' poor reading attitude affects their academic performance. Since students can only acquire knowledge and skills in their chosen field of study through reading, developing positive reading attitude is therefore, a sine-qua-none for success in the tertiary institutions. In general, the findings of this study concur with Anigbogu (2006) that reading culture has declined in the universities and students now need something extraordinary to give them a push.

1. ***Research Question 2: In what ways do Faculty of Educational Studies students read?***

Knowledge and skills in students' course of study can be acquired through developing positive reading habits. It is in this light that the researcher sought to find out how tertiary education students read. The rating ranged from 1 (not observed) to 2 (observed).

The results reveal information about how tertiary education students read. An examination of the scores for each item measuring the presence or the otherwise of tertiary education students' reading attitude reveals that majority of the students have negative reading attitude. This confirms the results of the quantitative analysis. Results show the absence of majority of the students' reading attitude indicators. As results indicate, majority of the students observed do not read in class before lectures begin. Similarly, majority of students do not read materials different from their course books. It was not observed that majority of the students do not read at the library and majority of students observed read course materials. However, it was observed that students read soft copy materials on their phones. Similarly, the observation results show that all the students observed do not read textbooks from various fields, or stay back and read after lectures nor read for pleasure.

In reference to the statement, 'Students usually come to lectures with some reading materials' the results seem to suggest that majority of students do not come to lectures with reading materials. It was observed that only two students read motivational and inspirational books. It was also observed that students do not read online materials related to their course and newspapers at the library. They also do not read in groups. The results also show that majority of students read in comfortable positions. Finally, it was observed that majority of students do not read at the cafeteria. The findings of this study are in support with the findings of Anigbogu (2006) that reading culture has declined in the universities and students now need something extraordinary to give them a push. The findings are in line with the findings of Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi & Lean (2011) whose study revealed that students read mostly to pass examination.

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Findings therefore show that UEW's FES students have negative reading attitude. Interestingly, the total rating of the students observed were very close to one another. This is an indication that, there are similarities in the reading attitude of the students.

Table 5: Independent Sample T-Test of Gender and students reading attitude

Group	N	Mean	SD	T	Df.	Sig. f
Female	632	92.3	8.4	7.557	1167	0.000
Male	537	87.9	11.5			

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The results in Table 5 is the outcome of an independent sample t-test, which was conducted to compare the reading attitude of female and male tertiary education students. The results indicate that there was statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the reading attitude for females (M= 92.3, SD = 8.4) and males (M = 87.9, SD = 11.5); T (1167) = 7.557, p = 0.000). The magnitude of the difference in the means was moderate (Eta squared = 0.05). The results showed that the female tertiary education students had higher mean (M= 92.3) in reading attitude than the male tertiary education students (M=87.9). Based on the Sig. f, value (p= 0.000), the null hypothesis was rejected.

The results imply that gender of tertiary education students has statistically significant influence on the reading attitude of tertiary education students. The results of this finding could be because of the fact that female students outperform male students and are inclined to reading course materials, books, novels, and other materials and so are likely to engage in reading activities more than male students in reading tasks. The findings also support Shafi and Loan (2010) which showed that females enjoy reading more than males, and females spend more time on reading than male counterparts do.

Table 6: Results of ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) based on Age and reading attitude

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	751.527	3	250.509	2.443	0.63
Within Groups	119467.667	1165	102.546		
Total	**120219.194**	**1168**			

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The results on Table 6 shows one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) based on age and reading attitude. The one way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was conducted to explore the impact of the level of students on their reading attitude. The levels of students were divided into 6 groups (Group 1: level 100; Group 2: level 200; Group 3: level 300; Group 4: level 400; Group 5: level 800 and Group 6: level 900). There was no statistically significant difference at the p < 0.05 level in the

reading attitude scores for 6 groups [F (3, 1165) = 2.443; p > 0.05. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that age has no influence on tertiary students' reading attitude. Thus, tertiary education students' reading attitude is the same irrespective of students' age. The results also confirm the findings of Fatiloro, Oyekola, Hameed & Oseni (2017) which posited that college students, irrespective of the age, have the same reading habit.

Table 7: Results of ANOVA based on Level of students and reading attitude

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8291.466	5	1658.293	17.231	0.000
Within Groups	111927.728	1163	96.241		
Total	**30528.197**	**1168**			

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results on Table 7 shows one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) based on level of students and reading attitude. The one way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was conducted to explore the impact of the level of students on their reading attitude. The levels of students were divided into 6 groups (Group 1: level 100; Group 2: level 200; Group 3: level 300; Group 4: level 400; Group 5: level 800 and Group 6: level 900). There was a statistically significant difference at the p < 0.05 level in the reading attitude scores for 6 groups [F (5, 1163) =17.231; p <0.05. This implies that the level of students influences their reading attitude. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This may occur as a result of students' exposure to a lot of materials and loaded course content as students make progress to higher levels. However, the effect size calculated using eta squared, was 0.07, which implies that the actual difference in mean scores between groups was small.

Table 8: Results of ANOVA based on Students' Department and reading attitude

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3069.286	5	613.857	6.094	.000
Within Groups	117149.909	1163	100.731		
Total	**120219.194**	**1168**			

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results on Table 8 shows one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) based on students' department and reading attitude. The one way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was conducted to explore the impact of the students' department on their reading attitude. The departments were divided into 6 groups (Group 1: Basic Education; Group 2: Special Education; Group 3: Early

Childhood Education; Group 4: Counseling and Psychology; Group 5: Educational Foundation; and Group 6: Educational Administration). Findings reveal that there was statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level in the reading attitude scores for 6 Groups [F (5, 1163) =6.094; $p < 0.05$. This implies that the departmental affiliation of students has influence of their reading attitude. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. However, the effect size calculated using eta squared, was 0.03, which implies that the actual difference in mean scores between groups was small.

CONCLUSION

Reading should not occur as a result of conscious pressure resulting from academic tasks or as a way to prepare for employment. Rather, reading has to occur all the time in order to build up a person's mind and enable him/her critique analyse, create, imagine, determine their well-being and view the world in its totality (Ogbonna & Eze, 2015). The findings of the study revealed that there exists poor reading attitude among tertiary education students which is likely to have effect on their academic performance and general well-being. The findings also revealed that female tertiary education students have better reading attitude than their male counterparts do. In addition, the academic level of tertiary education students has influence on their reading attitude while age and department of affiliation have no influence. The most important finding reveals that majority of tertiary education students do not go the library or read materials outside their courses. Tertiary education students are therefore advised to cultivate good reading attitude to promote their personal and professional development.

Recommendations
University authorities are encouraged to design and roll out programmes to sensitize both lecturers and students on the need for improved reading habits among students. Also, students should be given tasks that require them to read beyond their course outline and materials to enhance their thinking capacities. Finally, lecturers should ensure that an encouraging percentage of their courses are delivered through individual and group presentation of assignments by students.

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